

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Rumney High School
Newport Road
Rumney
Cardiff
CF3 3XG**

School Number: 6814030

Date of Inspection: 13/10/08

by

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

The inspection of Rumney High School took place between 13/10/08 and 17/10/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Kevin Adams undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Rumney High School is an 11-16 co-educational, community school in the local authority (LA) of Cardiff. There are 786 pupils on roll, of whom a small minority come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. English is the first language of 96% of the pupils; a small number of the remainder receive support teaching in English as an additional language. The school's roll has decreased in each year, and by a third overall, since the last inspection in November 2002 when there were 1196 pupils on roll.
2. The school serves the communities of Rumney, Trowbridge and St Mellons on the eastern side of Cardiff. It describes its catchment area as predominantly economically disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is 32%, which is more than double the national average.
3. Most pupils enter the school from its four main feeder primary schools, a small number coming from various other schools. The school's intake represents the full ability range but includes a high proportion of less able pupils. Statements of special educational need (SEN) have been made for 34 pupils, and a further 129 pupils are on the school's SEN register and therefore have some form of additional learning need.
4. There have been a number of changes to the senior management team (SMT) since the last inspection. While the two assistant headteachers were in post at that time, the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher arrived at the school in 2005 and 2003 respectively and were appointed to their current positions in April 2008. Three further leadership posts were added from April 2008 to create an extended leadership team.
5. At the time of the inspection, the LA was considering proposals for the reorganisation of secondary education in the eastern part of the city and the future of the school was uncertain.

The school's priorities and targets

6. According to its mission statement, the school seeks to establish 'a pleasant, safe community in which all may experience success, feel valued, achieve their full potential, and where relationships reflect mutual respect and trust.'
7. The school aims to enable children to:
 - develop enquiring minds;
 - become highly motivated life-long learners;
 - be flexible and adaptable in facing future challenges;

- have high self-esteem – respecting themselves, others and the environment;
- be able to work independently and collaboratively;
- have a sense of personal responsibility;
- achieve their potential in all areas of the curriculum; and
- value honesty, tolerance and unselfishness.

8. The school has targeted the following priority areas for improvement in 2008-9:

Management:	restructuring the senior leadership team
Learning and Teaching:	the Rumney Good Lesson Assessment for Learning Curriculum Review and Key Skills Key Stage 2-3 Transition Assessment, Recording and Reporting
Achievement and Inclusion:	Emotional Literacy Attendance Behaviour Policy

Summary

9. Rumney High School provides a caring environment in which pupils feel safe and can make progress with their learning. Standards of achievement have improved since the last inspection and there are firm foundations for achieving further improvement. The inspection team agrees with most of the judgements in the school's self-evaluation report but has awarded one grade lower than the school's judgements for key questions 3 and 5.

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

10. Results of statutory assessments and public examinations over the last three years have been below national averages. In many respects, however, pupils' performance has been in line with expectations in relation to their ability levels and prior attainment. In key stage 3, an overall upward trend is evident despite a dip in performance in 2007. Results in key stage 4 have improved over the three years at A*-C but have declined at A*-G.
11. Inspectors awarded grades for standards in the six subjects inspected as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
English	3	2
Science	3	2
Geography	2	2
Art	3	2
Music	3	3
Physical education	2	2

12. The percentages of grades awarded for standards of attainment in individual lessons in these six subjects are:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	59%	28%	5%	0%

13. The percentage of lessons awarded grades 1 and 2 is significantly higher in key stage 4 than in key stage 3.
14. The standards that pupils achieve overall in assessments, examinations and lesson represent considerable improvement since the time of the last inspection.
15. In both key stages, pupils achieve good standards in speaking, listening, reading and working with others. The development of their other key skills and learning skills shows many good features, but their overall progress with these is more limited, particularly in key stage 3. Pupils' bilingual skills are underdeveloped.
16. Pupils with SEN achieve good standards and pupils who receive additional support with literacy and numeracy make good progress in improving their skills in those areas. Pupils from a range of different backgrounds achieve appropriately in relation to their ability.
17. Most pupils are courteous, behave well in lessons and around the school, and have a positive attitude to work. Attendance has improved slightly in recent years but absence from school still affects the standards that a number of pupils achieve and is therefore a cause for concern.

The quality of education and training

18. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils well and collaborate effectively to support them. Teachers' knowledge, planning, classroom management and relationships with pupils are good in nearly all lessons.
19. The percentages of grades inspectors awarded for teaching and assessment in the lessons they observed are shown below.

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
16%	60%	19%	6%	0%

20. Most teachers mark books regularly and provide helpful comments and clear targets for improvement. Many teachers involve pupils regularly in assessing their own work and setting targets, but this practice is not yet consistent across the school. The quality of teaching and assessment is better, overall, in key stage 4 than in key stage 3.
21. The curriculum meets legal requirements. In key stage 3, it is suitably broad and balanced and meets all pupils' needs. In key stage 4 the school provides a choice of pathways, but there is not yet enough flexibility to meet the needs of all pupils effectively.
22. Pupils develop key skills and learning skills in all subjects, but the co-ordinated planning of provision and progression in skills across the school is at an early stage of development. The school's provision for developing the basic skills of targeted groups of pupils is good.
23. The school provides a broad range of extra-curricular activities, many of which are well attended.
24. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good overall, but pupils have only limited opportunities to develop their understanding of the culture of Wales. Some assemblies and tutorials promote pupils' spiritual development; however, the school does not fulfil the statutory requirement of providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
25. The range and quality of partnerships contribute positively to the quality of education. The school gives high priority to working with parents and carers and the partnership working with the families of pupils at risk of disaffection or disengagement is particularly strong.
26. The overall quality of provision for personal and social education (PSE), work related education (WRE) and careers education and guidance (CEG) is good. However, the school does not place sufficient emphasis on promoting Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC), the Curriculum Cymreig and the development of bilingual competence.
27. The care, support and guidance that the school provides for its pupils has many outstanding features, particularly with regard to the level of staff commitment and support, collaboration with outside agencies, the comprehensive key stage 2-3 transition programme, the provision for pupils with SEN and the work of the Inclusion Unit.
28. Many aspects of the school's provision contribute effectively to the well-being of its pupils. Standards in relation to healthy eating and lifestyle are good.
29. The principle of equal opportunities for all underpins all of the school's work.

Leadership and management

30. Senior managers have shared values, aims and expectations, and a clear understanding of what the school needs to do in order to move forward. The acting headteacher provides strong leadership and has successfully engaged the support of the staff. Revised job descriptions and the appointment of three new senior managers have resulted in a stronger management team structure which provides a firm basis for further improvements.
31. Most middle managers demonstrate appropriate leadership skills and manage their teams well. There is some inconsistency across departments in a few aspects of their work.
32. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for improvement. It gives due consideration to some, but not all, Welsh Assembly Government priority areas.
33. Governors are suitably involved in financial management and in challenging aspects of the work of the school. They carry out most statutory duties effectively but have not produced the statutory report to parents in the last year and have not ensured that the school complies fully with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
34. Most leaders and managers have a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in their particular areas of responsibility and set appropriate priorities for improvement. The school has made good progress in addressing most of the key issues from the 2002 inspection. However, it still does not comply with the statutory requirements for daily collective worship and its increased efforts to improve attendance have had limited impact.
35. The school has enough specialist staff to meet most of its needs and also has adequate resources, including information and communications technology (ICT) equipment. There are significant problems, however, with aspects of the buildings - both inside and out.
36. The acting headteacher, bursar, governors and LA officers work effectively as a team and have produced a suitable financial plan to manage the deficit budget that exists as a result of falling rolls. The school constantly reviews its provision and wherever possible takes opportunities to reduce costs. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

The school should:

R1 continue to improve standards, by

- addressing shortcomings in subjects identified in this report, particularly in key stage 3;
- securing improved co-ordination of provision for developing pupils' key skills and learning skills;*
- achieving greater consistency in the quality of assessment for learning,*

R2 in partnership with the LA, parents and carers, develop and implement further strategies in order to improve attendance;*

R3 meet statutory requirements in relation to:

- the governors' annual report to parents;
- daily collective worship for all pupils; and
- the Disability Discrimination Act;

R4 place appropriate emphasis on the development of bilingualism and the promotion of the Curriculum Cymreig and ESDGC; and

R5 work in collaboration with the LA to develop plans to improve the quality of the school buildings and environment.

*These aspects are addressed in the current school improvement plan (SIP).

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

37. This grade matches the school's own self-evaluation judgement.
38. The following table shows the standards that pupils achieved in key stage 3 and key stage 4 in the six subjects inspected.

64 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	3%	54%	38%	5%	0%
Key stage 4	15%	67%	15%	4%	0%
Whole school	8%	59%	28%	5%	0%

39. The figure of 67% of lessons at grade 1 or 2 is four percentage points below the average for all secondary schools inspected in Wales in 2006-7 but exceeds the national target of 65% set for 2010. The figure of 95% of lessons at grade 3 is one point below the 2006-7 average for all schools inspected and falls slightly short of the national target of 98%.
40. Compared with the last inspection, when all subjects were inspected, clear improvement is evident at both key stages, the overall percentage of lessons graded 1 or 2 having increased by nineteen points. This improvement is greater in key stage 4 than in key stage 3.

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

41. Pupils' attainments in public examinations and teachers' assessments in the last three years have been below national averages. In many respects, however, their performance has been in line with expectations in relation to their ability levels and prior attainment.
42. In key stage 3, results in teacher assessments in the core subjects in 2006 and 2008 placed the school in the top half and, in most cases, the highest quarter of similar schools (those with more than 30% of pupils entitled to free school meals). Performance in 2007, however, was mostly in the lower half of the group of similar schools. An overall upward trend is evident over the three years.
43. Pupils' performance in key stage 4 in 2006 and 2007 was mostly above the average level for similar schools. Results for 2008 indicate significant improvements in the achievement of A*-C grades but some decline in performance at A*-G. (Comparisons with similar schools for 2008 were not available at the time of the inspection.)

44. Pupils' attainment of five or more GCSE grades at A*-C, and their attainment of A*-C grades in all three core subjects, have improved by seven and ten percentage points respectively over the three-year period. Improvements in mathematics and science have been particularly impressive. In all these cases the gap between the performance of pupils in the school and the average for all pupils in Wales has reduced.
45. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more A*-G grades has decreased by four percentage points since 2006, while the proportion attaining one or more A*-G grades has fallen by eight points.
46. Pupils' performance against all the main indicators at both key stages shows improvement of more than ten percentage points, and a closing of the gap with Wales averages, since the time of the last inspection.
47. In most recent years, girls have outperformed boys - in some cases to a slightly greater extent than in Wales as a whole. However, in 2006 boys outperformed girls in all respects at key stage 3, and a similar pattern of attainment is evident for the same cohort at key stage 4 in 2008.
48. In the subjects inspected, there are good features and no important shortcomings in key stage 3 in geography and physical education, and good features outweigh shortcomings in art, English, music and science. In key stage 4, there are good features and no important shortcomings in art, English, geography, physical education and science, while good features outweigh shortcomings in music.
49. Pupils with SEN achieve good standards overall and most leave the school with at least one recognised qualification. More able pupils achieve well in most subjects.
50. Pupils from different backgrounds, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, looked after children, pupils whose first language is not English, and Gypsy Traveller children, achieve appropriately in relation to their ability.
51. Almost all pupils listen attentively in class and demonstrate good understanding through their responses. Most pupils speak confidently in a range of situations and the majority can communicate opinions and engage in discussion, using language appropriately. Occasionally, oral responses are brief or do not reflect sufficiently careful thought.
52. Most pupils are able to read, and demonstrate understanding of, a range of texts. They apply their reading skills appropriately in order to complete tasks in different subjects.
53. Pupils' written work reflects a variety of standards. Most pupils present their work well and provide suitable short responses. They are able to plan more extended tasks, but their finished work often displays inaccuracies of spelling

and use of grammar. A minority of pupils, across the ability and age range, produce extended written work of good quality.

54. In key stage 3, most pupils develop satisfactory ICT skills and generally use these to present their work effectively. They use the internet with purpose and occasionally enhance their work with images from digital cameras. Their skills in using spreadsheets and databases are less well developed. In key stage 4, pupils' presentation skills progress and they can process information using spreadsheets and databases to solve problems more confidently.
55. Most pupils make accurate measurements in a range of contexts and are able to use graphs and charts effectively for a variety of purposes. However, there is inconsistency in the standards pupils achieve across subjects in some aspects of mathematical skills, for example in their skills of calculation and their understanding of scale.
56. Pupils' bilingual skills are underdeveloped, especially in key stage 4. Except in Welsh lessons, pupils make very little use of Welsh and most demonstrate low levels of confidence in using the language.

Pupils' progress in learning

57. In nearly all lessons, pupils acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills related to particular subjects while also developing their thinking and communication skills. With varying levels of assistance, they are able to identify strengths and aspects for development in their own work and set targets for improvement.
58. Many of the pupils who have low reading or numeracy scores when they arrive at the school make good progress in improving their skills in those areas. The progress of more able pupils is generally good but occasionally a lack of challenge in tasks inhibits this progress. A small but significant minority of pupils, mainly of middle and lower ability, make inadequate progress due to frequent absences and, in some cases, fail to complete examination courses.
59. The majority of pupils make appropriate progress across the key stages and are suitably prepared for the next stage of their learning. Progress is generally better in key stage 4 than in key stage 3, partly due to a sense of urgency when pupils are working towards external examinations.

The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills

60. Most pupils show a keen interest in the work that they undertake. Many participate enthusiastically in lessons and are eager to contribute by answering questions. Most sustain their concentration well in lessons.

61. In nearly all classes, behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and courteous and respond promptly to teachers' instructions and requests. Low-level disruption occurs at times, but in only a very few lessons does the misbehaviour of a few pupils have a significant effect on the standard of their own and others' work.
62. The school's recorded attendance figure of 85% for 2007-8 is two percentage points below the average for similar schools in Wales. (Actual attendance was lower than this as Year 11 study leave has been recorded incorrectly.) Several factors affect attendance rates, including the changing balance of the school population as rolls fall, the number of pupils with poor attendance records before they come to the school and the relatively high proportion of Gypsy Traveller children in the school. Overall attendance has improved slightly in recent years but declined in 2007-8 when the school did not have the support of an education welfare officer for a large part of the year.
63. Pupils are developing the ability to work independently. They apply problem-solving skills successfully in science, geography and physical education. There are some examples of good creativity in pupils' work in art, music and English. Occasionally, particularly in Year 7 and 8, tasks are too tightly-structured to allow effective independent working and progression in skill development. Pupils' progress with developing these skills improves at key stage 4.
64. When they work with others in pairs or groups, pupils usually co-operate and support each other very well, and this helps to improve the quality of their learning. In the best examples, they adopt specific roles to ensure that groups work efficiently and they interact effectively to help one another to improve. In a few cases pupils are unable to organise themselves appropriately within groups and this limits their progress.
65. The majority of pupils are aware of their current performance level and understand what they need to do to improve. Their ability to improve their own performance over the shorter term is generally better than their longer-term planning.
66. Pupils in the Inclusion Unit reflect on, discuss and consider their actions and attitudes to work and their respect for others, and this effectively prepares them for reintegration into mainstream classes.
67. Pupils make good progress in developing their personal, social and moral skills. They establish good relationships with others and demonstrate, through their comments and actions, an appropriate understanding and respect for diversity both within the school and in the community at large.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

68. This grade matches the school's own self-evaluation judgement.
69. The following table shows the percentages of grades inspectors awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment they observed in lessons.

90 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key Stage 3	14%	56%	25%	6%	0%
Key Stage 4	18%	66%	11%	5%	0%
Whole School	16%	60%	19%	6%	0%

70. The figure of 76% of lessons at grade 1 or 2 compares favourably with the Welsh Assembly Government target for 2010 of 80% and, at the current rate of progress, the school is on track to meet that target.
71. The proportion of lessons where inspectors awarded grades 1 or 2 has increased by thirteen percentage points since the previous inspection; it is now equal to the figure for all secondary schools inspected in Wales in 2006-7. The proportion of lessons awarded grade 3 or above is three points below the corresponding average.
72. The quality of teaching and assessment is better, overall, in key stage 4 than in key stage 3. Standards are sometimes lower when lessons are delivered by temporary non-specialist teachers.

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

73. Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally very good. Nearly all teachers create a supportive atmosphere for learning which stimulates and motivates pupils of all abilities. Classroom teachers and learning support assistants know pupils well and collaborate effectively to support them. This is a strength within the school.
74. In most lessons, teachers apply effective classroom management procedures consistently and deal with any difficult behaviour immediately and effectively.
75. Most teachers have a good subject knowledge which informs their teaching, and they show enthusiasm for their subject.

76. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 receive suitable opportunities to develop their thinking skills and there are some good examples of pupils developing their decision-making and evaluative skills.
77. There are outstanding features in some lessons. These include:
- teachers' very high expectations of their pupils' achievement;
 - detailed planning that forms the basis for clear progression in learning for all pupils during the lesson;
 - stimulating questioning and constructive feedback to help all pupils to move forward in their learning;
 - demanding and varied activities with very effective use of a range of resources.
78. Good features evident in many lessons include:
- thorough planning that places an emphasis on developing skills and pupils' understanding of particular topics;
 - the effective sharing of lesson aims and objectives with the pupils;
 - effective strategies to gain pupils' interest and involve them fully from the outset;
 - a range of lively activities which engage all pupils across the ability range and challenge the more able and talented;
 - clear explanation supported by good demonstration;
 - regular feedback to pupils throughout the lesson;
 - effective use of ICT to support pupils' learning;
 - good displays of pupils' work, reference materials and other professionally produced materials.
79. Where there are shortcomings in lessons, particularly in key stage 3, these include:
- too slow a pace of learning, resulting in limited progress;
 - unsuitable resource materials which do not engage pupils' interest or are too difficult to read;
 - limited opportunities for pupils to work independently;
 - activities that are not flexible enough to allow pupils to develop their problem-solving and creative skills effectively.
80. Homework is generally relevant to the content of lessons and effective in helping pupils to make progress.

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

81. The school has a comprehensive whole-school policy for assessment and complies with statutory requirements for assessment and the regulations of examination boards.
82. There is a school 'assessment for learning' working party and the effect of its work is clearly evident in some subjects. However, practice in this area is not yet consistent across the school. Where practice is good, teachers set clear learning objectives, give suitable oral feedback and use questioning skilfully

so that pupils are aware of their progress. There are good examples of self-assessment and peer assessment in some lessons.

83. Teachers' marking is regular and up-to-date, with useful and supportive comments on how pupils can improve. However, in a few cases written comments on pupils' work are too short and general, and targets are not clear enough to be of real value.
84. The majority of pupils understand how to improve their performance in relation to national curriculum (NC) level descriptions at key stage 3 and GCSE grade criteria at key stage 4.
85. All core subject departments have achieved accreditation for their assessment of pupils' work in key stage 3. The foundation subjects are starting to produce departmental portfolios in preparation for accreditation in the next two years.
86. The school issues reports regularly. The majority of teachers' comments identify specific targets for improvement; however, some comments are not detailed enough to help parents to support their children's progress.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

87. The school awarded itself a Grade 2 for this key question. The inspection team agrees with the school that there are several very positive aspects, and notes these below. However, there are also shortcomings in that the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and makes limited provision for ESDGC and the development of pupils' bilingual skills.

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

88. The curriculum meets statutory and course requirements across both key stages.
89. The key stage 3 curriculum is appropriately balanced for all pupils.
90. In key stage 4, the school provides a choice of individual learning pathways which meet the learning needs of the majority of pupils. The local 14-19 network has produced an option menu that includes some external provision and allows middle-ability and less able pupils to select from a broad range of vocational 'extended opportunities' options. Middle-ability pupils can also choose from a number of internally-provided vocational courses, but they do not have access to the additional science course. More able pupils are

guided towards a more academic route and these pupils have access to a very limited vocational curriculum.

91. There is evidence of the application of key skills in all curriculum areas. However, the co-ordinated planning of provision and progression in these skills is at an early stage of development and pupils do not receive sufficient opportunities to develop higher levels in some of the skills.
92. The school makes good provision for developing pupils' basic skills. A range of strategies contributes to this, including the involvement of older pupils as 'reading buddies', the use of computer programmes of good quality, intensive support for targeted groups and well-chosen teaching approaches. Pupils in the target groups have achieved impressive improvements in their literacy and numeracy skills.
93. The school offers a broad range of extra-curricular activities, including clubs and visits. These complement the formal curriculum in encouraging and enabling pupils to work together effectively to develop tolerance, understanding and respect for one other, to be mutually supportive, and to develop an understanding of different cultures. The level of pupils' attendance at these activities is good.
94. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although pupils have only limited opportunities to develop their understanding of the culture of Wales. The school has recently introduced a 'Thought for the Week' programme into tutorials to encourage pupils' spiritual development. This has the potential to be successful, and promotion of spiritual development has improved in a minority of cases. Some assemblies also promote spiritual development. However, the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and is therefore not fulfilling the relevant statutory requirement.
95. The range and quality of partnerships constitute a strength of the school. In addition to those related to careers guidance and PSE, links with educational psychology, behaviour support and social services, the Youth Offending Team and Gypsy Traveller services all make very positive contributions to the quality of education.
96. Planning to ensure that pupils' education continues smoothly and effectively from primary schools into Year 7 is very well organised and is a strength of the school. Staff from local colleges provide key stage 4 pupils with a comprehensive range of information that enables them to make informed choices about their post-16 education.
97. The school has established several effective strategies that are successful in engaging with the majority of parents. These include pupil review days for all year groups, open days, parents' evenings and the 'Strengthening Families' programme. A small number of parents make an active contribution to the work of the school.

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

98. The PSE programme involves all pupils effectively in experiences that promote active citizenship, health and well-being, and lifelong learning. Careers guidance and WRE are effective in providing an increasing awareness of the world of work and in guiding pupils with respect to their option choices in Year 10. The involvement of a range of organisations and speakers enhances this programme. The overall quality of provision for PSE, WRE and CEG is good.
99. Promotion of ESDGC takes place in PSE and some curriculum areas and the school has a scheme for recycling paper and printer cartridges. However, opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in this area are limited.
100. The school makes provision for pupils to develop their skills in Welsh in the subject lessons that all year groups receive. Bilingualism is also promoted in some other contexts, including a small number of classroom displays and activities arranged as part of the Eisteddfod and St David's Day celebrations. Overall, the school has not yet given enough emphasis to developing this national priority area.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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101. This grade matches the school's own self-evaluation judgement. The inspection team awarded this grade because it identified outstanding features, particularly in relation to the commitment and support of staff, partnerships with outside agencies, transition arrangements, provision for pupils with SEN and the work of the Inclusion Unit. The team judged that the overall high quality of care and support was contributing to improvements in standards and to creating conditions in which further improvements can take place.

The quality of care, support and guidance for learners

102. Teachers and support staff demonstrate a high level of respect for the pupils in the school and a firm commitment to ensuring that all pupils receive the best possible support and opportunities to succeed. These shared values are clearly reflected in the day-to-day life of the school and help to create a happy and caring community in which every pupil is valued.
103. The key stage 2-3 transition programme is an outstanding feature that includes comprehensive arrangements to prepare pupils for the move to secondary school and to help them to settle quickly. The school collaborates effectively with its associate primary schools to plan a full range of activities

that involve many staff and pupils at each school. Very good planning ensures that this programme provides a high level of support for pupils and has a significant positive impact on their ability to cope with changing schools. The LA has recognised this aspect of the school's provision as exemplary practice.

104. The recent appointment of a designated transition teaching assistant has strengthened the arrangements. This new member of staff works in the primary schools in the summer term to get to know pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and moves with them to support them when they transfer to their new school.
105. The school makes very good use of the information it receives to place pupils into appropriate groups and to ensure that all teachers address individual pupils' needs. Teachers and support staff quickly get to know pupils well. Heads of year, assistant heads of year and form tutors remain with their groups from Year 7 to Year 11. They build very strong relationships and demonstrate a high level of commitment towards supporting the pupils in their care. The resulting high quality of care and support is an outstanding feature.
106. Staff collaborate well to track and monitor pupils, and target any whose attendance or behaviour is giving cause for concern. The school also gathers detailed data relating to pupils' performance and most staff use this effectively to monitor progress and identify and address underachievement.
107. Close working relationships between the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), Inclusion Unit co-ordinator and heads of year ensure that pupils with social, emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties are identified and referred appropriately to outside agencies for additional advice or support. The effectiveness of this collaboration over the longer term and the persistence of school staff in seeking the most appropriate support for each individual pupil constitute an outstanding feature.
108. The school gives high priority to working with parents and carers. Its partnership working with the families of pupils at risk of disaffection or disengagement is particularly strong. The introduction of pupil review days has resulted in a significant increase in the number of parents and carers attending the school to discuss their children's progress. The pupil planner includes a range of useful information and is a potentially valuable resource, but it is not used consistently enough to be fully effective in strengthening home-school links.
109. The school council is properly established and has begun to have a positive effect on school life. Its members show a good level of commitment and have a clear work plan. Separate year councils provide pupils with additional means of communicating their views.
110. Pupils' attendance and punctuality to school and lessons are monitored efficiently using a computerised system which all teachers can access during

every lesson. Staff quickly identify absentees and deal appropriately with those who persistently miss lessons or are late. The school is aware that attendance is a major issue and has worked with the LA to develop strategies aimed at securing improvements. There has been some improvement in recent years but attendance rates remain low and the school continues to give high priority to seeking effective measures to address this issue.

111. Pupils receive appropriate guidance on career choices and learning pathways within tutorials, the PSE programme, careers lessons in key stage 4, and sessions with staff from Careers Wales. The specialist adviser from Careers Wales attends annual reviews at the end of key stage 3 and gives pupils with SEN appropriate advice on learning pathways.
112. There are sound procedures to promote health and safety and the well-being of pupils. Standards of provision in relation to healthy eating and lifestyle are good. The canteen offers a choice of healthy food and staff make pupils aware of healthy eating and exercise in physical education and food technology lessons. The school nurse contributes effectively to the PSE programme at both key stage 3 and key stage 4. She draws up appropriate health care plans for pupils with disabilities and also ensures that staff receive training in dealing with pupils who have particular medical conditions.
113. The school has appropriate procedures for child protection, which all staff follow.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

114. The provision for additional learning needs has many outstanding features.
115. There are very good practices for the identification of pupils with SEN. The school builds on the information it gathers through transition processes, and meets the needs of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties very effectively in line with the SEN Code of Practice.
116. The SENCO promotes a caring ethos and displays a high level of commitment to her work. She meets subject teachers regularly and provides very good guidance in the form of detailed information about individual pupils' additional learning needs and practical advice on addressing these needs and deploying resources effectively. Her knowledge of individual pupils, the respect that she displays for them and for their views, and the thoroughness with which she manages arrangements are outstanding features.
117. Support staff are highly-skilled and have received suitable training. Effective deployment and clearly defined roles ensure that these members of staff play an active part in enhancing pupils' learning. Their work in the classroom is of consistently high quality; in some cases it is outstanding, for example when they take full responsibility for activities with particular groups of pupils and make a significant contribution to the quality of learning in lessons.

118. The school makes good provision to ensure that misbehaviour by some pupils does not affect the education of others. In recent years, in challenging circumstances, it has secured improved standards of behaviour while also making good progress in reducing the level of exclusions.
119. The school has invested heavily in establishing an Inclusion Unit that provides a nurturing environment for pupils at risk of disaffection or disengagement. A dedicated team of staff runs this unit, creating a caring environment and providing a safe haven for pupils whose social, emotional and behavioural difficulties make learning in the classroom difficult. The Inclusion Unit co-ordinator has a clear vision and manages the unit extremely effectively to ensure that pupils receive the right level of support to help them succeed and re-integrate into mainstream classes. Staff address each pupil's personal difficulties effectively while also ensuring that pupils keep up-to-date with work in all their subjects. The unit has provided support of high quality for many pupils and has contributed significantly to the reduction in exclusions in recent years. It is an outstanding feature.
120. Staff help parents who have difficulty managing the behaviour of their children to find parenting skills groups in the community. This has resulted in parents receiving appropriate support.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

121. Staff demonstrate a very good awareness of the social context of the school and provide a caring, supportive environment that allows all pupils to make progress with their learning. Support for children who are looked after, and partnership working with social services, parents and carers, have a positive effect on the outcomes for this group of vulnerable children.
122. The school has a sound anti-bullying policy and a range of effective strategies to ensure that even the most vulnerable pupils feel safe. Year 11 pupils have received training from Childline to act as buddies to younger pupils. The school has received awards from the LA in recognition of the high quality of this aspect of its work.
123. The school's race equality policy meets statutory obligations. Posters and wall displays around the school remind pupils to respect and value diversity, and assemblies, tutorials and lessons in PSE and some curriculum areas deal effectively with issues such as homophobia.
124. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds receive good support and generally achieve well at the end of key stage 4. School staff, working in collaboration with the LA service, provide outstanding support for Gypsy Traveller pupils. As a result, the attendance and integration of these pupils are better than might be expected and many achieve recognised qualifications at the end of key stage 4.

125. The school's documentation outlines the provision it makes for pupils who are disabled. However, the school does not meet fully the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and parts of the school site are very difficult for pupils with limited mobility.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

126. The school awarded a Grade 2 for this key question. The inspection team agrees that there are many good features. However, it awarded a Grade 3 because there are shortcomings in that the school does not comply with a number of statutory requirements.

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

127. Senior managers have shared values, aims and expectations, and a clear understanding of what the school needs to do in order to move forward. This shared understanding has underpinned a number of recent improvements in the school.
128. The acting headteacher provides strong leadership and has successfully engaged the support of the staff. He shows a very good understanding of the strengths of his SMT and has re-allocated responsibilities appropriately to ensure that each member of the team contributes as fully and as efficiently as possible to the management of the school. He displays a high level of commitment and determination in aspiring for all pupils to experience success.
129. The acting deputy headteacher provides valuable support to the headteacher. She demonstrates a very good knowledge of a broad range of the school's work and has played a leading part in many recent school improvement initiatives.
130. The two assistant headteachers have clearly-defined responsibilities which they carry out diligently and efficiently. The three recently-appointed additional members of the extended leadership team show a good understanding of their roles and are already beginning to make an impact in their areas of responsibility.
131. In recent years, senior managers have made an important contribution to improving provision, particularly with regard to changing approaches to managing pupils' behaviour and securing greater consistency in the quality of

teaching. Recent revisions to the team have created a stronger management structure which provides a firm basis for further improvements.

132. Each of the four members of the main SMT acts as a line manager to several departments. They provide good support for their designated departments and also monitor, evaluate and challenge their performance effectively. Their line-management links with heads of department allow middle managers to contribute to the direction of the school.
133. Communications within the school are good. Regular meetings allow staff to develop shared values about aspects such as teaching, learning and behaviour. The school has recently set up a number of working parties to develop particular aspects of practice, and a majority of the staff contribute to the work of these groups. There is a clear culture in the school of working together towards a common aim. The principle of equal opportunities for all underpins the work of all staff and this is evident both in policies and in day-to-day practice.
134. The school gives due consideration to some Welsh Assembly Government priorities. Transition arrangements are a clear strength. Since the last inspection, curricular provision at key stage 4 has broadened considerably, and discussions have begun with other schools and colleges with a view to further development of Learning Pathways. However, the school has not placed enough emphasis on developing pupils' bilingual skills or on promoting ESDGC and the Curriculum Cymreig.
135. The school sets challenging targets for achievement in examinations and assessments, and has used these to attempt to drive up standards. The use of targets and tracking systems is well established in key stage 4 and at an earlier stage of development in key stage 3.
136. Most heads of department demonstrate appropriate leadership skills, have suitably high expectations and manage their teams effectively. There is some inconsistency across departments in the planning of skill development, the implementation of assessment for learning practices and the monitoring of pupils' performance. Heads and assistant heads of year undertake their responsibilities efficiently and thoroughly.
137. Arrangements for performance management are effective and are linked to the school's self-evaluation cycle. Work on addressing the whole-school objective of improving the quality of teaching has had a clear impact on consistency of practice. The school implements induction arrangements for new teachers appropriately.

How well governors meet their responsibilities

138. Governors show a firm commitment to the work of the school and a determination for its pupils to achieve success. They have a good knowledge of the main strengths and areas for development of the school. In

meetings they often challenge the school by raising questions about information and proposals presented to them. The school's self-evaluation report and improvement plan were presented to the governing body prior to their publication. Governors discussed the detail and grades in these documents before giving them their formal approval.

139. Governors have helped to ensure efficient management of the finances of the school during a period of some difficulty caused by falling rolls. They have also had an appropriate input into recent authority-wide discussions on school re-organisation that may affect the future of the school.
140. One member of the governing body has particular responsibility for matters related to pupils with SEN and works closely with the learning support department. Other than in this case, individual governors are not involved regularly with the day-to-day work of the school.
141. Governors fulfil their regulatory and legal requirements in most respects. However, there are some shortcomings in this aspect of their work. In the last year they have not produced a report for parents nor held the statutory annual meeting. Also, they have not ensured that the school complies fully with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act of 2005 by producing a Disability Equality Scheme and meeting statutory requirements for the content of the school prospectus.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

142. This grade matches the school's own self-evaluation grade.

How effectively the provider's performance is monitored and evaluated

143. Members of the SMT have a very good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They gain relevant information from analysis of examination data, lesson observations, book reviews, their line management of departments and their day-to-day contact with staff and pupils.
144. Most middle managers are well-informed about the areas for which they have responsibility. They undertake a range of formal and informal self-evaluation processes and use the information they gain effectively to plan improvements. A self-evaluation calendar sets out the timing of formal processes over the school year.
145. The LA provides value-added data to assist the school with its analysis of examination performance and the school's link adviser provides an annual review of performance. Improved assessment and tracking procedures

within the school have created additional relevant data. Most departments make effective use of the available data to evaluate various aspects of their performance.

146. All teaching staff contribute to self-evaluation processes and there has also been some consultation with pupils and parents. The school has recently begun to include the school and year councils more fully in its self-evaluation arrangements.
147. A recent whole-school evaluation of teaching and learning was a comprehensive exercise that provided helpful and detailed information on current practice, highlighting many strengths and also identifying particular aspects requiring improvement. Following this exercise, departments have received clear guidance and are currently addressing the identified issues.
148. The school's self-evaluation report adopts Estyn's Common Inspection Framework structure and, in this way, covers all aspects of the school's work. It provides an honest assessment of the current situation and is largely successful in identifying strengths and areas for development. Each section makes reference to relevant evidence to support evaluations. The grades that the school awards reflect the comments on each key question. The inspection team agreed with the school's judgements on five of the seven questions, awarding one grade lower for the remaining two.
149. Departmental self-evaluation reports generally identify accurately the most important strengths and areas for development. At both school and departmental levels, reports do not always describe identified shortcomings sufficiently clearly.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

150. The SIP addresses nine priorities relating to management, teaching and learning, and achievement and inclusion. It outlines suitable strategies for addressing these; more detailed action plans provide further relevant information.
151. Nearly all departmental improvement plans address those school priorities that relate to teaching and learning as well as issues identified through departmental self-evaluation. The school makes suitable funding available to ensure that plans can be implemented effectively.
152. Improvement plans are set out appropriately and contain most relevant information. They do not always express success criteria clearly enough in terms of measurable improvement of standards or quality of provision.
153. At whole-school level and in many departments, additional development work, not mentioned in the improvement plans, is taking place and is beginning to secure improvements in provision and standards.

154. The school has made good progress with addressing most of the key issues from the last inspection report. In particular, standards of achievement and behaviour have improved, there is now greater consistency of practice in relation to teaching, learning and assessment, and the school complies with statutory requirements for the provision of religious education. The school has made increased efforts to improve pupils' attendance, although with limited impact. The school still does not comply with statutory requirements for the provision of daily collective worship for all pupils.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

155. This grade confirms the school's own self-evaluation judgement. The inspection team's decision to award a grade that is higher than that which it awarded for Key Question 1 reflects the fact that the school is managing its finances well at a difficult time, that recent changes have strengthened the management of the school, and that standards are generally improving.

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

156. The school has enough qualified staff to deliver most aspects of the curriculum in key stage 3 and key stage 4. In a few cases the use of temporary teachers has become unavoidable. When temporary non-specialists deliver lessons, standards are sometimes lower.
157. The school meets statutory requirements in relation to workforce remodelling. It has developed a suitable staffing structure and makes appropriate arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time.
158. Teams of highly-skilled support staff are deployed flexibly to help the school to function effectively. Their work has a clear impact on standards for a range of pupils and they also make a very important contribution to improving the quality of the learning environment.
159. A good variety of resources allows teachers to employ a wide range of teaching strategies. The Learning Resource Centre is well equipped with new resources. These, combined with access to the internet, allow pupils to research information effectively. The school has a good stock of computers, most of which are less than three years old. Some subject areas also appropriately have their own computer suites.
160. There are significant problems with the school buildings, both inside and out. Lack of additional investment, possibly as a result of the uncertainty of the school's future, contributes significantly to these problems. The school itself invests heavily in the upkeep of the accommodation to ensure best use. However, a few areas of the school still do not provide a suitable

environment, for example the gymnasium and changing areas for physical education.

161. All subject areas have dedicated suites of rooms. Brightly decorated rooms and corridors and good quality display help to create an environment in which effective learning can take place.
162. There is a problem with litter in the school grounds and playing fields, particularly following break and lunch times.

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

163. Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of both day-to-day running costs and the longer-term financial situation. The acting headteacher, bursar, governors and LA officers work effectively as a team. They have produced a suitable financial plan to manage effectively the deficit budget caused by falling rolls. They review provision continually and, wherever possible, take opportunities to reduce costs.
164. The school gains access to funding from additional sources in order to supplement its budget. There have been some major projects as a result - for example, a new ICT room which directly impacts on standards for pupils. Where possible, the school uses its on-site staff to maintain the quality of school buildings and grounds. Contracts are reviewed regularly in order to ensure value for money.
165. Staff make very good use of the buildings and resources to ensure the most appropriate conditions for good quality learning to take place. Sensible allocation of the budget ensures that the priorities of the SIP can be addressed.
166. The school makes good use of available funding to respond to whole-school and individual continual professional development (CPD) needs. This, together with additional funding from GTCW grants, ensures that staff can respond positively to new developments. The impact of CPD on pupils' standards of achievement is the subject of regular and thorough evaluation.
167. Despite the challenge of a reducing budget, the school clearly manages to set appropriate priorities. It provides good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

Key stage 3: Grade 3 - Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings

168. In the last three years, GCSE results in English have been below national averages for grades A*-C but broadly in line with students' abilities. The most recent examination results indicate slight improvements.

Key stage 3

Good features

169. Most pupils speak confidently and are able to communicate their views about character, plot and style using appropriate language.
170. The most able and middle-ability pupils read aloud with fluency, understanding and expression.
171. The presentation of the majority of pupils' written work is good. Nearly all pupils write with interest, enthusiasm and appropriate fluency. A minority are able to select suitable words and phrases to convey emotion and use these confidently.
172. The majority of pupils can respond to a range of literature by reflecting on genre, structure and language. They are able to identify and understand the function of descriptive language, including ways of presenting information and meaning.
173. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress. Many have a good understanding of simple spelling rules. Nearly all use simple language accurately to convey meaning.

Shortcomings

174. A minority of middle-ability and lower-ability pupils have difficulty staying on task. Some are reluctant to work without the support of the teacher; they do not listen carefully or engage with initial tasks and this affects their ability to complete more complex work.
175. Some written work, across the ability range, is unfinished and contains errors of spelling and punctuation.

- 176. A minority of pupils find some vocabulary demanding and resort to guessing the meanings of words and passages.
- 177. A few classes that have been affected particularly by teacher absence have not made sufficient progress.

Key stage 4

Good features

- 178. In both oral and written work, many able pupils respond with sensitivity to challenging stimulus material. The work of a few pupils shows the use of a wide range of vocabulary, effective sentence structure and a good awareness of audience.
- 179. Around half of pupils achieve good standards in coursework, producing well-structured essays in response to literary texts.
- 180. Nearly all pupils are able to recognise and define persuasive writing techniques and use these in their own work. Most pupils are able to identify other distinguishing features and comment on their effectiveness.
- 181. Most pupils can recall accurately information from previous lessons and apply their knowledge to different texts and contexts.
- 182. A few pupils, across the ability range, are able to express opinions about character and plot and ask probing questions about literary texts.
- 183. When responding to poetry, the majority of more able pupils can identify stylistic differences and describe how these communicate meaning. Most recognise how nuance and subtlety influence interpretations.

Shortcomings

- 184. A few pupils, mostly of middle or lower ability, are not confident in commenting on the effectiveness of features in literary texts.
- 185. Around half of middle-ability and lower-ability pupils present written work which is of a superficial level, and the work of some of these pupils displays a range of technical errors.
- 186. A few pupils fail to meet deadlines and complete coursework tasks. This is almost always the result of pupil absence.

Science

Key stage 3: Grade 3 - Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings

187. In 2006 and 2007, attainment of A*-C grades in GCSE science was well below national averages. Provisional data for 2008 shows improved A*-C performance, particularly for boys. In 2006, pupils performed well below, in 2007 just below, and in 2008 above the levels of achievement expected for their ability.

Key stage 3

Good features

188. Many pupils have good scientific knowledge, for example about chemical reactions, health and diet.
189. A majority of pupils use and apply key ideas about energy and matter effectively.
190. A majority of more able pupils can analyse information skilfully.
191. Around half of more able pupils make clear links between different aspects of science, for example by using prior information when planning scientific enquiries.
192. Most pupils write effective explanations and display work clearly as graphs and charts.
193. Nearly all pupils work safely at experiments, use apparatus well and make good observations.
194. Most pupils are good at scientific enquiry, controlling variables, collecting data, and using results to draw sound conclusions.
195. Most pupils with SEN make good progress; they develop good practical skills and a good range of scientific knowledge.

Shortcomings

196. A few pupils have poor attendance, so make poor progress in science.
197. A minority of more able pupils do not use scientific models effectively.

- 198. Around half of pupils do not measure volume or mass accurately.
- 199. Many pupils cannot draw good scientific diagrams.

Key stage 4

Good features

- 200. Most pupils have good scientific knowledge, for example about human diet, motion and radiation.
- 201. A majority of pupils understand key scientific ideas and concepts about energy and forces.
- 202. Many pupils apply their scientific knowledge and understanding well, for example to explain links between diet, exercise and obesity, or between force, acceleration and safety features of cars.
- 203. Most pupils communicate ideas clearly when speaking.
- 204. When writing, most pupils use charts, graphs and diagrams effectively.
- 205. Nearly all pupils have very good practical skills.
- 206. Most pupils analyse data thoroughly to draw good conclusions.
- 207. Most pupils conduct effective research and select evidence carefully to produce balanced arguments, for example about the good and bad features associated with mobile phones.
- 208. Pupils with SEN make good progress.

Shortcomings

- 209. A few pupils underachieve because of poor attendance.
- 210. A very few more able pupils misunderstand some key scientific ideas.
- 211. A few pupils often misinterpret what GCSE questions require them to do.

Geography

Key stage 3: Grade 2 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4: Grade 2 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

212. In the last three years, GCSE results have been above the national averages for grades A*-C. Overall, pupils of all abilities have achieved very good results in their GCSE examinations.

Key stage 3

Good features

213. Most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of a range of places, environments and issues on local, national and global scales.
214. They understand the difference between human, physical and environmental geography and are able to describe features and processes in each of these areas confidently. They have a good grasp of geographical vocabulary.
215. Most pupils can confidently name and explain geographical features and describe how these features have developed. They can explain the ways in which parts of the earth's crust move against each other to cause earthquakes and how people respond to this hazard.
216. All pupils are able to interpret information effectively from a range of maps and graphs and can present information accurately on different types of charts.

Shortcomings

217. A majority of pupils cannot demonstrate the ability to measure and record geographical features and processes.
218. Many pupils are unable to pose their own geographical questions in order to establish their own sequence of investigation.

Key stage 4

Good features

219. All pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of physical processes and physical features. They have a good understanding of the geographical words used to explain features such as river basins and weather systems.

- 220. Most pupils have a good understanding of environmental issues and links between some places and processes. For example, they can identify links between the melting of Antarctic ice and industrial development, and understand the benefits of the introduction of more sustainable technologies.
- 221. Pupils can name and explain the causes of hazards such as hurricanes, and the effects that these hazards have on people, buildings and the natural environment.
- 222. More able pupils can pose their own questions that enable them to establish a sequence of investigation in their fieldwork study. In their GCSE coursework they can also identify links between different processes in different areas.

Shortcomings

- 223. When creating their own charts, many pupils apply a narrow range of graphical techniques, mainly bar graphs and pie charts. Only a minority of pupils confidently use a broader range of techniques.
- 224. Most pupils have only a limited ability to create their own sketch maps with annotations to explain characteristic patterns and processes.

Art

Key stage 3: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4: Grade 2 – Good features and no important shortcomings

- 225. Examination results at GCSE in the last three years have been below national averages for A*-C but have shown some improvement over the period. In 2007 and 2008, pupils' results were better than expectations in relation to their abilities.

Key stage 3

Good features

- 226. Almost all pupils make good use of images and artefacts from different periods, places and cultures, including art work from India and Africa and contemporary graphic designs.
- 227. They make effective use of the internet for research and use their knowledge well to develop ideas for their own practical work.

- 228. In Years 7 and 8, almost all pupils are beginning to make good use of sketchbooks to record from observation, gather information, experiment with materials and show the development of their work.
- 229. Most pupils make effective use of a wide variety of tools, materials and processes to produce a range of artefacts in two and three dimensions.

Shortcomings

- 230. Pupils' ability to analyse the work of artists, craft workers and designers is underdeveloped.
- 231. Pupils' recording skills from first-hand sources are underdeveloped.
- 232. In Year 9, the sequential development of pupils' investigation work and the quality of their experimentation with materials and techniques are limited.

Key stage 4

Good features

- 233. Most pupils use sketchbooks purposefully to present their studies from a range of resources, to record from observation and to develop ideas and themes.
- 234. Pupils undertake thorough and personal research and use annotations well to record their opinions and feelings.
- 235. With increasing confidence, most pupils experiment creatively and independently with a carefully-selected range of materials, tools and techniques. They record skilfully, and with increasing flair, from primary and secondary sources. They develop imaginative final outcomes using a variety of materials.
- 236. Throughout the course of study, many pupils document their observations and experiences thoroughly, and the presentation of their completed work shows clearly how ideas and skills develop towards creative final pieces.
- 237. Pupils achieve good standards across a range of processes; standards in hand-built ceramics are very good, and standards in textiles are outstanding.

Shortcomings

- 238. The work of some pupils does not show clearly how they have developed their initial ideas.

Music

Key stage 3: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

239. Over the last three years, GCSE examination results have been well below national averages for passes at A*-C. With few exceptions, these results are broadly in line with pupils' ability.

Key stage 3

Good features

240. Most pupils in Year 7 sing in tune and with clear diction.
241. Many pupils in Years 7 and 8 keep good time when they perform together. Most Year 7 pupils make inventive, musical use of hand-claps when performing together in a small group. Most pupils in Year 8 make good progress in learning to play a two-part piece on tuned percussion and electronic keyboards.
242. Most Year 9 pupils use a five-note scale effectively to compose suitable melodic phrases for a twelve-bar blues piece.
243. Many pupils across the key stage appraise their own and others' music effectively, with a suitable focus on the elements of music.

Shortcomings

244. Many pupils:
- in Year 7 produce a rather harsh, unrefined vocal tone when they sing together;
 - in Year 8 find it difficult to recall simple rhythms and perform them accurately; and
 - in Year 9 do not keep good time when they perform with others. They find it difficult to play tuned percussion instruments in time to the teacher's guitar accompaniment.

Key stage 4

Good features

245. Nearly all pupils perform to a satisfactory or better standard on their chosen instrument or voice.

246. They appraise their own and others' music effectively, making suitable reference to the use of musical elements.
247. They make good use of music technology to develop their compositions. The compositions that pupils submitted for the GCSE examination in 2008 show musical imagination and creativity. They demonstrate the effective use of music technology to enhance simple musical ideas in order to increase the level of musical interest.

Shortcomings

248. Many pupils make slow progress in developing their compositions. Their ability to evaluate, revise and refine their work is limited. A few of these pupils are unable to make progress without considerable support from the teacher.
249. Around half of the pupils in Year 11 find it difficult to set different parts to a common pulse when using music technology to compose a march or a waltz.

Physical education

Key stage 3: Grade 2 – Good features and no important shortcomings

Key stage 4: Grade 2 – Good features and no important shortcomings

250. Pupils' performance in GCSE over the last three years has been below the Wales average. However, a steady upward trend is evident and performance improved significantly in 2008. The majority of pupils perform in line with expectations.

Key stage 3

Good features

251. Most pupils are able to make informed decisions when working co-operatively to solve group challenges.
252. Most pupils are developing good sending and receiving skills in invasion games. They successfully create their own games in small groups, and practise and apply their skills to changing situations. More able performers respond well to more challenging tasks.
253. Most pupils demonstrate good body awareness as they work in pairs. They support one another safely and demonstrate the body tension and control

needed to maintain good stability. The majority can identify good features and areas for improvement in their own performances.

- 254. Many pupils demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of health-related factors affecting performance. They understand the importance of preparing the body adequately for rigorous activity and use this understanding, for example to create their own aerobic warm-up routines.
- 255. Pupils apply their knowledge of choreographic structures in aerobic activities to create very good work. They are able to distinguish between correct and incorrect technique and give constructive feedback to one another.

Shortcomings

- 256. In games activities, a few pupils do not work well independently of the teacher. Their skills are less well developed and their progress more limited.
- 257. A few pupils experience difficulty when engaging in tasks which require them to make judgements on each other's performances.

Key stage 4

Good features

- 258. Year 10 pupils achieve good standards in GCSE Dance Studies. Most demonstrate good body awareness as they perform basic actions confidently and competently. They apply different choreographic structures and relationships effectively when composing dances.
- 259. In games activities, most pupils following the GCSE course are developing good tactical awareness. For example, they understand how to disguise a shot in badminton and demonstrate good movement around the court.
- 260. In the GCSE and BTEC courses, most pupils are able to apply their knowledge and understanding of human movement to their own performances in a range of activities. In the BTEC course, many pupils undertake effective research to complete assignments successfully.
- 261. In the core programme, pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of attacking and defensive play in basketball. They work well in teams to plan tactics in order to outwit the opposing side. They are clear about the criteria for a successful performance and make informed judgements about their work.
- 262. In netball the majority of pupils are able to apply given criteria for successful performance in order to improve their skills and technique.

Shortcomings

- 263. Although there are some examples of good practice, pupils' ability to evaluate their own work and others' work is generally not well developed.
- 264. While most pupils complete short written tasks successfully, few produce extended written work of good quality.

School's response to the inspection

The school is very pleased that the inspection team confirmed that Rumney High School is a school with a caring environment where pupils feel safe and can make progress with their learning.

In the report, the word 'outstanding' is used to recognise a number of features within the school; these include the care and support for pupils, close working relationships with our feeder primaries, the work of the Special Needs department and the Inclusion Unit. We feel that this recognises the hard work the school puts into these areas. This, combined with an acknowledgement of good quality teaching and positive relationships throughout the school, is very pleasing.

The inspection team also acknowledges the progress made since the last inspection report and recognises the firm commitment of the governors to the work of the school and for our pupils to achieve success.

The inspectors highlight that members of the senior management team have a very good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They also confirm that the school has already identified and is working to address a number of the recommendations within the report.

The report has made recommendations that we intend to address in our 2008-9 development plan, incorporating those issues that are not already included. The staff and governors will continue to focus attention on raising standards and work with parents to improve levels of student attendance. They will also maintain those good and outstanding practices singled out in the report.

The inspection process, and this report, provides us with a valuable external audit and a firm base from which to move the school forward. A copy of the school's action plan in response to the inspection recommendations will be sent to all parents.

The school wishes to acknowledge the professional, thorough and constructive approach of the inspection team throughout the inspection process.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Rumney High School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11 - 16
Address of school	Newport Road, Rumney, Cardiff.
Postcode	CF3 3XG
Telephone number	02920 792751

Headteacher	Mr Gareth Cooke
Date of appointment	April 2008
Chair of governors	Mr Dave Bevan
Reporting inspector	Dr Kevin Adams
Dates of inspection	13 – 17 October 2008

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	151	149	136	173	177			786

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	47	7	51.2

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	15.4 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	22.0
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	69.2%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	90	87	85	82	84			85
Term 2	88	84	86	80	81			84
Term 3	85	83	82	82	93			85

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	32.5
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	77 temporary 2 permanent

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2008															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 176															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	2	11	32	33	21	1	0	0
		National	0	0	1	1	0	2	6	21	37	24	8	0	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	30	31	24	9	0	0
		National	0	0	1	1	0	1	7	18	29	28	15	1	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	27	45	22	0	0	0
		National	0	0	1	1	0	1	5	19	36	27	11	0	0

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by teacher assessment		by test	
In the school	49	In the school	N/A
In Wales	60	In Wales	N/A

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2008	181
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	33

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2008:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	86	87	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	36	54	56
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	77	85	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	28	43	44
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	90	99	98
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	61	77	79
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	84	93	95
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	16	7	6
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	4	3	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	N/A	N/A	N/A
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	N/A	N/A	N/A

For pupils aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2008	N/A
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2008	N/A
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2008	N/A

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	N/A	N/A	N/A
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	N/A	N/A	N/A

UA Unitary Authority

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Thirteen inspectors spent a total of 40 days at the school.

Before the inspection, inspectors considered a range of documentation provided by the school, met as a team and also held discussions with:

- the acting headteacher, SMT, staff, the governing body and parents.

During the inspection week, inspectors visited:

- 64 lessons in the six subjects inspected;
- 26 lessons taught by other teachers at the school;
- tutorials, registration, assemblies and extra-curricular activities.

Discussions were also held with:

- members of the SMT;
- a selection of middle managers;
- teaching and non-teaching staff;
- the Chair and two other members of the governing body;
- groups of pupils from each year group;
- members of the school council;
- headteachers of associate primary schools;
- the LA link adviser;
- support workers attached to the school.

The team also considered:

- work in all subjects from a representative sample of pupils in each year group;
- samples of work in each subject inspected;
- documentation provided by the school during the inspection week;
- responses to the questionnaire sent to parents;
- submissions to the inspection team from various interested parties including other schools, representatives of the LA and members of the local community.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Kevin Adams	Key Questions 1, 5 and 6
Mererid Morgan	Key Question 2
Richard Knowles	Key Question 3; Geography
Esther Thomas	Key Question 4
Miriam Norton	Key Question 7
Liz Heaven	Aspects of key questions 1, 4, 7
Wendy Rees	School nominee
Rod Francis	Peer assessor
Jayne Edwards	English
Mike Tibbott	Science
Lorraine Buck	Art
Gareth Adams	Music
Judith Davies	Physical education

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The inspection team is very grateful to the school, the staff, the pupils, the parents, governors and other members of the school community for their welcome and co-operation during the inspection.