

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

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

**St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School  
Ffordd Llewelyn  
Flint  
Flintshire  
CH6 5JZ**

**School Number: 6644600**

**Date of Inspection: 13/10/08**

**by**

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St Richard Gwyn Catholic 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 St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic High School took place between 13/10/08 and 16/10/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Edward Aneurin Peter Harris undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **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. St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School is an English medium, mixed 11-19 voluntary-aided comprehensive school within the Diocese of Wrexham. It serves the whole of Flintshire. Nearly all pupils and students come from homes where English is the first language. Fourteen pupils receive support in learning English as an additional language.
2. There are 941 pupils and students on roll. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls in the school though the number fluctuates from year to year. There are 129 students in the sixth form. Almost two per-cent of pupils and students travel to the school from beyond the school's catchment area. About three-quarters of pupils and students travel to school by bus.
3. The school occupies a large flat site in Flint. Pupils and students come from the full range of social and economic backgrounds, including rural areas and small towns and from families which are advantaged and disadvantaged. Just under ten per cent of pupils qualify for free school meals, a figure slightly below the Flintshire average of 11.8% and just over half of the Welsh average of 17.5%.
4. Eighteen pupils have statements of special educational needs. A further 105 pupils across the school are on the school's special educational needs register.
5. The school was last inspected in March 2003. The headteacher and his two deputy headteachers were appointed to their present posts since that time. The three assistant headteachers were appointed in 2001, 2002 and 2004 respectively.

### The school's priorities and targets

6. The school is committed to providing a Christian education in which every child succeeds. Its motto is "Learning Together in Christ" and, in its development plan, the school has identified the following priorities:
  - to challenge each pupil and student to achieve;
  - to involve pupils and students more in the assessment of their progress;
  - to provide a curriculum that promotes pupils' and students' achievement;
  - to raise standards of attendance, punctuality and behaviour; and
  - to develop teaching and support staff.
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 2009:
  - 62.1% 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
  - 64.5% of pupils should achieve at least 5 grades A\*-C, and 100% at least 5 grades A\*-G in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination.

## Summary

9. St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School is a good school that continues to improve. Since 2003 there have been improvements in the following areas:
- examination results at KS3 and KS4 ;
  - the quality of teaching;
  - the curricular provision;
  - the support and guidance for learners;
  - leadership, self-evaluation, and planning; and
  - accommodation and resources.
10. However, there are shortcomings in:
- standards of bilingualism throughout the school;
  - Advanced (A) Level results, when compared with local and national averages; and,
  - the consistency of the way in which teachers assess pupils' and students' progress.
11. Table of grades awarded

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

12. The grades for key questions 2 and 4 match those of the school in its self-evaluation report. While inspectors identified good practice in key questions 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7 they awarded grade 2 because the good practice was not judged to be sufficiently outstanding.

### Standards achieved

13. Standards in the school are good. 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	3	3	N/A
Mathematics	2	2	1
Science	2	1	2
Modern Foreign Languages	2	1	2
Art	1	1	1
Music	3	2	2

14. The following table shows the percentages of grades awarded at each stage in the six subjects inspected.

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>KS3</b>	3%	63%	34%	0%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	27%	50%	23%	0%	0%
<b>Sixth form</b>	33%	47%	20%	0%	0%
<b>Whole school</b>	18%	55%	27%	0%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 73 lessons					

15. In 73% of the lessons observed, learners achieved standards which have good features and no important shortcomings. In almost one lesson in five, standards achieved had outstanding features. In all other lessons, standards had good features which outweighed shortcomings.
16. At KS3, in the NC teachers' assessments in 2007, results were above the averages for similar schools. While achievement in mathematics was in line with what was expected and achievement in science was below what was expected, achievement in English was above what was expected.
17. The gap in the relative performance of boys and girls has narrowed in recent years.
18. At KS4, there has been an increasing trend in performance over the last three years. When compared to targets based on prior attainment, pupils' progress is outstanding. Pass rates exceed local and national averages. When compared with similar schools, GCSE pass rates are above average.
19. As at KS3, the gap in the relative performance of boys and girls has narrowed in recent years.
20. At A Level results in 2007, at grades A-C and A-E, fell below both local and national averages. Fifty per cent of the cohort passed at grades A-C and 91% with grades A-E.
21. Provisional figures for 2008 confirm similar trends for KS3, KS4 and the sixth form.
22. Standards among pupils with additional learning needs are good. Pupils make good progress towards the targets set for them.
23. Pupils and students acquire new knowledge and skills as they progress through the key stages. They have good levels of skill in communication and number. Good features outnumber shortcomings in information technology (ICT) skills at KS3 and KS4.
24. On the whole, learners have a good understanding of how well they are progressing and what they have to do in order to make good progress. However, with a small minority, this understanding is not secure.
25. While bilingual skills are developed through Welsh lessons, pupils and students make limited use made of them throughout the school.
26. Levels of attendance have improved since 2003. They are in line with Unitary Authority (UA) averages and just below the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) target.
27. Pupils and students make very good progress in their personal, moral, social and wider development. The way in which learners respect peers, adults and diversity in society is outstanding.

28. 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**

29. Teachers use a good range of methods and resources to engage pupils in their learning.

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

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
19%	57%	24%	0%	0%

31. These percentages equal the figures for all inspections in Wales 2006-2007, where 19% of lessons were judged to have outstanding features and 57% to have good features and no important shortcomings.
32. Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these grades show that teaching has improved even further from that time. Six years ago, 96% of lessons were graded 3 and above, and 62% graded 1 and 2.
33. Almost one lesson in five was observed to have teaching where the way in which teachers create a purposeful atmosphere was outstanding. However, there are inconsistencies within and between departments in the way teachers assess progress.
34. The school meets statutory requirements for assessment.
35. There are shortcomings in teachers' plans to provide appropriate opportunities for learners to develop and apply bilingual skills.
36. At KS3 and KS4 the curriculum provided is broadly based and balanced and meets the needs of pupils and students. It has coherence and progression and enables learners to develop their basic and key skills. However, the range of vocational courses at 16+ is limited.
37. The support and guidance of pupils and students have several outstanding aspects. Among them are the way in which the school:
- manages its care, guidance and support, particularly at KS4;
  - monitors the progress of pupils and students; and
  - seeks to prevent oppressive behaviour.
38. The school has a caring ethos. The way in which pupils feel valued is outstanding. Guidance and advice on vocational and academic choices are of good quality and impartial.
39. There are very good links with partner primary schools which help pupils and students settle in to school and experience continuity in their learning.
40. There is very good provision for Personal and Social Education (PSE) which takes account of health education and careers education and guidance, is well co-ordinated and makes effective use of outside providers.
41. The school takes appropriate steps to safeguard pupils' welfare. Attendance is carefully monitored and child protection procedures are robust.

42. Effective strategies are in place to identify pupils with additional learning needs and the provision to meet their needs is carefully managed and reviewed. The minority of pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress is well supported.
43. The school makes very good provision for equal opportunities. It has put in place strategies that have been effective in narrowing the gap between boys' and girls' levels of performance.
44. The policies and arrangements put in place by the school to contribute to the well-being of learners are good. The school takes reasonable action to avoid putting disabled pupils at a disadvantage and recognises and respects diversity.

### **Leadership and management**

45. The headteacher and his senior team communicate clear expectations, based on the Christian values of the school. These values and priorities are known and shared by all members of the school community and are reflected in their work. The impact this has had on the guidance and support of pupils and students, particularly at KS4, is outstanding.
46. The school has drawn up a suitable range of policies which reflect these aims and in the majority of cases, these policies are implemented effectively. The school operates well on a day-to-day basis and is a stable environment for learning.
47. Governors play an effective role in the life of the school. They take good account of UA and national priorities and meet all regulatory and legal requirements.
48. There are good links between members of the leadership team and curriculum areas. Teams and departments are well managed and led and the arrangements for setting whole school-targets are effective.
49. The arrangements to monitor and evaluate the school's performance are good. Leaders and managers gain first-hand knowledge of standards of provision and of pupils' work through a combination of light-touch and in-depth reviews. The views of pupils, parents, staff and governors are actively sought.
50. Governors receive regular reports from leaders and managers in the school. They are aware of the achievements of the school, the main challenges it faces and its priorities in addressing them.
51. The school uses its resources well. All staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Performance management arrangements for teaching staff are in line with national requirements. The quality and range of training of both teaching and support staff are good.
52. The access pupils and students have to appropriate learning resources, and the way in which the resources are used and reviewed are, on the whole, good.
53. The school has invested heavily in ICT facilities in line with a growing demand. The way in which pupils and students are able to access their learning programmes on-line is outstanding.
54. The quality of display in the classrooms and around the school is good and makes for a stimulating working environment for pupils and staff. However, wheelchair access to mobile classrooms is sometimes limited.
55. The school monitors its budget very well and provides good value for money. It meets the needs of the age and range of pupils and students.

56. With regard to the key issues of the previous inspection, the school has made good progress in raising standards in design technology, information technology and music. There are effective links between the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. There have been improvements in the areas of homework provision, accommodation and support at KS3.

## Recommendations

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

- R1. Continue to raise standards at KS3 and in the sixth form in line with improvements at KS4.
- R2. Raise standards of bilingual skills across the school.
- 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. Continue to work with the UA, and local providers to improve learning pathways opportunities at 16+.
- R5. Continue to work with the UA to improve the accommodation for disabled learners.

*The school's planning already recognises the issues identified in these recommendations.*

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving this report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

## Standards

### Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

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

57. The grade awarded by the inspection team was lower than that judged by the school in its self-evaluation report. While the team acknowledged the improvement in standards at the school since it was last inspected, inspectors did not judge standards to be outstanding.

### KS3 and KS4

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

58. 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
<b>KS3</b>	3%	63%	34%	0%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	27%	50%	23%	0%	0%
<b>KS3 &amp; KS4</b>	14%	57%	29%	0%	0%

These grades are based on observations of 58 lessons

59. These figures match the average for inspections of secondary schools conducted in Wales in 2006-2007 for lessons where standards were judged to be grade one or grade two. These results denote a significant improvement since the previous inspection. At that time, eight per-cent of lessons were judged to be good with outstanding features and 61% were judged to be good with no important shortcomings. The proportion of lessons judged to have good standards with outstanding features was greater at KS4 than at KS3.
60. On the whole, results at KS3 exceed national averages for Wales. In 2007, nearly 64% of pupils reached at least level five in the core subjects combined, compared to 58% nationally. Results in English were significantly above average. While results in mathematics were above average, in science, results were slightly below average.
61. In English, mathematics, and the three core subjects combined, results were above average when compared to similar schools. Results in science were below average when compared to similar schools.
62. Achievement in mathematics was slightly above what was expected, based on prior attainment. Achievement in English was significantly greater than what was expected, while, in the three core subjects combined, attainment was slightly above what was expected.
63. At KS4, results exceed both local and national averages. In 2007, 68% of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A\*-C compared to 53% locally and 54% nationally.
64. Ninety-seven percent of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A\*-G compared to 88% locally and 86% nationally.
65. The average points score at GCSE exceeded local and national figures as well as those of similar schools.
66. The percentage of pupils gaining grade C or above in English, mathematics and in the core subjects combined, was in line with the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining grade C and above in science was greater than average, when compared to similar schools.
67. At KS4, the school exceeded by eight percentage points its target that 60% of pupils pass five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C. Passes at grades A\*-G matched the school's target of 97%.
68. At KS3 and KS4, while girls continue to outperform boys, the gap in relative performance is less than that locally and nationally.
69. Standards in the key skills of communication and the use of number are good. Pupils read fluently and with expression. The more able have good note-taking skills. Pupils write well in a variety of forms and style. The more able re-draft their work confidently so as to produce good levels of extended writing.
70. Pupils are confident speakers and use an appropriate range of subject vocabulary. They are ready to offer ideas in class and develop their understanding through discussion. They listen well to one another and to their teachers.
71. Pupils with additional learning needs develop their skills well.

72. Standards in numeracy are good. Across a range of subjects pupils apply numbers confidently. Pupils handle data confidently.
73. Standards in ICT skills are improving. In a limited range of subject areas, many pupils use desk-top publishing, graphics packages, and the internet to good effect.
74. Pupils work well together in pairs and in groups, in creative and problem-solving opportunities.

### **Their progress in learning**

75. In comparison with attainment on entry to the school, pupils make good progress. They respond well to the encouragement provided and are effectively prepared for the next stage of education and training.
76. The vast majority of pupils is able to recall previous work and relate it to their current study in a relevant way. They work well together to clarify and solve problems.
77. On the whole, pupils have a good understanding of how well they are progressing and what they have to do in order to improve their work, though there is considerable variation within and between subjects.
78. Pupils with additional learning needs respond well to in-class support and make good progress over both key stages. They respond to challenge and the encouragement to work hard. They are aware of the key skills and exercise them at a level appropriate to their ability.
79. While all pupils at KS4 follow courses leading to recognised qualifications in Welsh second language, bilingual skills are not well developed outside Welsh lessons.

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

80. There are outstanding features in pupils' personal and social skills. The vast majority of pupils behaves well and adopts very positive attitudes to learning. There is an orderly atmosphere in the school and pupils understand the high expectations the school has of them.
81. Pupils make good use of opportunities in assemblies, PSE and other lessons, as well as through extra-curricular activities, to develop their understanding of diversity within society. They show considerable levels of respect for people from different backgrounds, both in school and in the wider community.
82. Very good relationships with adults in the school enable pupils to express their views openly and honestly. Pupils are courteous and tolerant. There are very few incidents of bullying and aggressive behaviour.
83. The overall attendance rate for the three terms prior to the inspection was 91.3%. While this figure is in line with school trends and UA averages, it falls below the national average, and fails to meet the WAG target of 93%. Punctuality at the start of the school day and at the start of lessons is good.
84. Careers guidance and work-related education are of good quality and prepare pupils extremely 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

85. On the whole, standards in the sixth-form are good. In three out of the six subjects inspected, standards were judged to be good with outstanding features. In a further two, standards were judged to be good with no important shortcomings. However, overall improvements in standards at KS4 are not reflected in results in the sixth-form.
86. The following table shows the standards achieved by students in the six subjects inspected.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>Sixth-form</b>	33%	47%	20%	0%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 15 lessons					

87. While these figures are almost double the average for inspections of secondary schools conducted in Wales in 2006-2007 for lessons where standards were judged to be grade one, they fall short by three per cent the number of lessons judged to be grade two and above.
88. While A level passes at two or more grades A-E are in line with local and national averages, passes at the higher grades have declined in relative terms.
89. As at KS3 and KS4, standards in the key skills of communication, use of number and ICT have good features and no important shortcomings.
90. Students speak and listen well to the teacher and to one another. The questions they pose are probing. They express their views with confidence and clarity. The more able students engage in extended discussion with their teachers and one another.
91. Students write at length, using subject-specific vocabulary fluently and accurately. They write critically and justify their opinions with relevant argument.
92. 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.
93. As at KS3 and KS4, students' bilingual skills are not well developed.

### Their progress in learning

94. Since the last inspection, most subject areas indicate an overall positive value added based on average GCSE results.
95. A high proportion of sixth-form students progresses to higher education.
96. In lessons, students make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and skills. Most maintain a steady rate of progress. The best work is achieved in Y13.
97. Students have a good understanding of how well they are doing. For the most part, their work is marked and commented upon in detail and targets for improvement are set.
98. 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 as house leaders and as student learning coaches.

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

99. Students make outstanding progress in the development of their personal, social and learning skills. They collaborate well and show commitment and concentration in lessons.
100. Sixth-form students are confident and articulate young adults who relate well to pupils, their peers, teachers and other adults in the school. They play an important part in the day-to-day running of the school in their capacity as prefects and leaders of extra-curricular activities.
101. They have good levels of attendance and punctuality.
102. 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 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

103. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the grade in the school's self-evaluation report.
104. The following grades were awarded for the teaching in the 102 lessons observed:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
19%	57%	24%	0%	0%

105. These grades match the figures for schools inspected in Wales in 2006 – 07 in lessons awarded grades one and two.
106. While the size and nature of the sample differ, these figures indicate a further improvement in the quality of teaching from the time when the school was last inspected.

#### **KS3 and KS4**

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

107. Grades awarded in the 82 lessons observed in KS3 and KS4 were:

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>KS3</b>	8%	53%	39%	0%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	21%	65%	14%	0%	0%

108. There is significantly more outstanding teaching in KS4 than at KS3.
109. Features of the lessons where teaching is outstanding include skilful questioning, supportive working relationships with pupils and high expectations of standards of work and behaviour.
110. A teaching and learning working party provides an effective forum in which teachers share and develop good practice. Many teachers draw on the knowledge of how children learn to good effect in planning lessons.

111. Good features include challenging pace and well-timed activities designed to develop pupils' thinking skills.
112. Lesson plans are clear. Teachers use a variety of activities which take into account different learning styles and sustain pupils' motivation.
113. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and in most lessons set clear learning objectives which they share with pupils.
114. Teachers are generous with their time outside timetabled lessons, in order to offer additional support in work sessions that reinforce learning.
115. Most teachers ensure very good standards of behaviour in the classroom and pupils apply themselves to their work and show respect for others.
116. The school creates a caring 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.
117. In a minority of cases, the work provided is insufficiently matched to pupils' ability and too much direction limits the opportunities for pupils to develop understanding through group or paired work.
118. There is insufficient explicit identification of the key skills, including bilingual skills, to be developed during lessons.
119. Quantitative targets, based on previous performance, are set for all pupils. Academic and personal targets are reviewed in a whole-school target review day where parents are invited to meet with pastoral tutors to discuss pupils' progress. This process contributes effectively to diagnosing and tackling underachievement.

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

120. Good features outweigh shortcomings in the assessment of pupils' work.
121. There is inconsistency in assessment practice, across and within subjects. Teachers provide pupils with oral feedback on the standard of their work and follow up any lack of understanding in subsequent lessons. Pupils' work is marked regularly in most subjects, but the marking does not give sufficiently specific written feedback on how pupils can improve the standard of their work.
122. The school meets the statutory requirements for assessment and reporting and satisfies examination board requirements.
123. Arrangements, based on standardisation and moderation, to strengthen teacher assessments at KS3 are, on the whole, effective. Teacher assessments at the end of KS3 have been validated in the core subjects of mathematics, English and science. While good progress is being made to improve the rigour of teacher assessments in the non-core subjects, it is less well developed in Welsh second language.
124. While self-assessment and peer-assessment are used as effective tools to improve the standard of pupils' work in mathematics, English, art, science and geography, they are not consistently used across the curriculum.
125. Three academic reports a year are issued to parents. These measure attainment against pupils' quantitative targets and include a grade for effort. A narrative

pastoral report is also sent home to parents each year. However, comments on the standard of pupils' work and targets for improvement lack detail.

### **Sixth-form**

126. In the 20 lessons observed in the sixth-form the grades awarded for the quality of teaching were as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
35%	50%	15%	0%	0%

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

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

128. The outstanding and good features identified at KS3 and KS4 are also present in the sixth-form. In addition, teachers give students clear indications of how they can extend their knowledge and understanding through completing independent research.

129. In the sixth-form, teachers make students fully aware of the criteria for success in external examinations.

130. Many teachers make good use of individual tutorials and revision lessons in order to give specific guidance to individual students who need support.

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

131. In many lessons, teachers mark and assess students work in detail. They provide useful written feedback that gives clear guidance on how to improve. This formative assessment is outstanding in physics and art. Effective feedback encourages students to think for themselves and assists in developing greater independence in their learning.

132. Homework is set to extend and consolidate learning and is carefully marked.

133. Quantitative targets are set for students based on their performance at GCSE. These, together with personal targets, are reviewed with subject teachers and parents once a year on target review day. This process contributes to diagnosing and tackling underachievement.

134. Reports are issued to parents three times a year and measure attainment against students' targets as well as a grade for effort. However, reports do not include teachers' comments on the strengths and shortcomings of students' work. Subject-specific targets for improvement are rare.

### **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**

135. The grade awarded by the inspection team was lower than that judged by the school in its self-evaluation report. While the team acknowledged the good features of the learning experiences provided by the school, inspectors did not judge them to be outstanding.

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

136. The school curriculum complies with current statutory requirements.
137. The curriculum at KS3 meets the requirements of the NC and denominational religious education.
138. The curriculum has appropriate breadth and balance. Pupils study French or German according to their year of entry, with the second language being offered as well in Y8 and Y9.
139. In addition, all pupils study drama as a discrete subject throughout the key stage.
140. Extra teaching groups timetabled in design technology and information technology increase learners' contact with practical facilities.
141. At KS4, the school offers a free choice of GCSE and vocational qualifications. Some of these are delivered as part of Learning Pathways 14-19, which occupies one complete option block. Several courses are delivered in partnership with other providers including Deeside College, the Welsh College of Horticulture, Flintshire Youth Service and St. John Ambulance. They include courses to meet the needs of a small group of pupils the school feels may be at risk of disaffection.
142. Welsh is timetabled for all pupils at KS3 and KS4. The limited amount of time allocated for the Welsh second language GCSE short course, taken by the majority of pupils, has an adverse impact on standards.
143. While sixth-form students have access to over 20 Advanced Supplementary (AS) and A level courses, opportunities for students to gain vocational qualifications are limited. At present the school has no links with other providers, though it plans to broaden its Learning Pathways 14-19 option menu significantly from 2009.
144. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs and for those who are gifted or talented is good. At KS4, for example, pupils are able to work towards the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Framework (ASDAN) certificate. Particularly gifted linguists may study Japanese in conjunction with Hawarden High School. Able pupils in mathematics are given the opportunity to sit the GCSE examination at the end of Y10.
145. While planning for basic skills is good in all subjects, planning for wider skills varies in quality.
146. The school provides a good variety of enriching experiences for its pupils and students. In addition to the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme, there are opportunities in sports, music and drama, and an Eisteddfod. There are regular visits to France and an established exchange with a school in Germany.
147. Provision for personal and social education, including learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is a significant strength of the school. At KS3, enrichment week includes a range of enterprise and business exploration activities.
148. At KS4, teams of teachers who share an interest or expertise in a particular theme such as education for personal relationships, study skills for lifelong learning, careers and the world of work, active and global citizenship or health

and emotional well-being deliver six-week learning modules in rotation. A similar approach is led by form tutors for sixth-form students. This helps prepare learners well for adult life.

149. Together with a regular programme of daily assemblies, the provision of gardens specifically designed to promote meditation and reflection greatly enhances opportunities for learners to explore their emotional attitudes and spiritual values. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is met.
150. Throughout the school, opportunities exist for learners to exercise responsibility, for example, as part of the school council or as mentors to younger pupils. Pupils in Year (Y)7 and Y8 visit Y6 pupils in partner primary schools and sixth-form students are trained as learning coaches.
151. Learners have opportunities to raise funds for charities at home and abroad, notably in Uganda and Zimbabwe. This enables pupils and students to broaden their cultural awareness.
152. The strength of the school's links with parents has a positive impact on standards. There is an active Parent-Teacher Association, a weekly newsletter and a website that keep parents abreast of curricular matters.
153. Links with the community are good. The school newsletter is shared with all feeder parishes. Agencies such as the police, army, and the local business community contribute regularly to the PSE programme.
154. Curricular links with partner primary schools are good. An effective transition plan which ensures progression and continuity between Y 6 and 7 helps establish positive and constructive relationships which foster learning.
155. There are well-developed systems of support within the school, including flexible setting arrangements, to ensure progression in curricular and pastoral development.
156. While the school has good links with the Universities of Bangor, Chester and Liverpool to help prepare learners for higher studies, links with initial teacher training establishments are not strong.

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

157. Careers education and work-related education are good and well established throughout the school. The PSE programme has been updated to cover the new framework from September 2008 and is very comprehensive in these areas. There are good links with Careers Wales. Members of the Rotary Club play an active part, for example, by conducting mock interviews.
158. The school takes good account of employers' needs and there is regular dialogue to ensure that as far as possible employers know what the school can provide and the school in turn can respond to what employers require. Work experience in Y10 and Y12 is well planned and evaluated.
159. Through its good pastoral provision, units in PSE, and its curriculum, particularly at KS4, the school tackles social disadvantage and stereotyping successfully.
160. Pupils' awareness and understanding of sustainable development are good. Recycling is well established. Many trees have been planted to help create the

school gardens. It is a Fair Trade school, with a thriving environment club, but does not have Eco-school status.

161. There are good opportunities for learners to develop entrepreneurial skills, notably through activities such as Project Dynamo. The school council gains entrepreneurial skills through fund raising.
162. While there is an annual Eisteddfod and a 'Welsh in the Workplace' day, opportunities to promote bilingualism in the school are limited. The quality of provision for 'Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig' is inconsistent.
163. The school gives good attention to the promotion of healthy lifestyles, for which it has received an award from the UA.
164. On balance the school takes good account of WAG priorities.

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

<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>
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165. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the grade in the school's self-evaluation report.
166. There are outstanding features of note in the way in which the school:
  - plans for learners' care, support and guidance;
  - establishes effective links with parents, carers and outside agencies;
  - manages transition between Y6 and Y7; and
  - supports pupils for whom English is an additional language.

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

167. The school is caring and inclusive. All pupils and students feel secure and valued. The way in which the pastoral team plans and manages its arrangements, including monitoring social and academic progress is outstanding.
168. The school has effective links with parents and carers. Parents can access the six-weekly learning programmes, including individual lessons, on the school's web-site in order to monitor and support their child's work at home. This is an outstanding feature.
169. The school has a very effective school council system. There are year councils, a charity and environment council and an executive council which represents the whole school. School council members feel the way in which their voice is effectively heard has impacted positively on decisions regarding uniform, toilet facilities and environmental improvements.
170. The school ensures that option choice arrangements in Y9 and Y11 are effective. In Y9, form tutors ensure impartial advice is given to pupils on courses at KS4. Pupils have a wide range of academic and vocational learning pathways. Option booklets of high quality are prepared and a pupils' and parents' evening held. Pupils have a free choice in choosing options and over 95% of pupils are able to follow their preferred subjects at KS4.

171. In Y11, pupils choose from option blocks and although guidance of high quality is given and good support mechanisms are in place, the 16-19 pathways are more restricted.
172. There are outstanding features in the way in which the school arranges transition from primary schools and manages the induction programme for new pupils in Y7.
173. Both curricular and pastoral links are well established. Subject teachers teach in primary schools prior to admission. This is especially successful in the three core subjects and in art.
174. On admission form groups are assigned a sixth-form 'buddy' to help them settle in quickly. The home-school agreement outlines pupils' rights and responsibilities and a PSE module explains the pupils' charter. A wide range of strategies are employed in the first week to help pupils settle in quickly.
175. There are outstanding features in the personal support and guidance offered to pupils and students. At KS3 and KS4 pupils have access to an exceptionally well-planned PSE programme which delivers careers education and guidance of high quality ensuring pupils receive impartial advice enabling them to make informed choices.
176. The school has developed outstanding links with external specialists providing social and emotional support.
177. Pupils predicted, both by screening tests and teachers' assessment, to gain 'D' grade passes at GCSE have been mentored by trained sixth-formers acting as learning coaches and a significant number has achieved higher grades.
178. The school has very effective systems for monitoring attendance and behaviour. Electronic registration at the start of each lesson monitors punctuality and guards against 'internal' truancy. The deputy head, pastoral managers and the Inclusion Welfare Officer (IWO) monitor attendance regularly. Pupils are targeted in each year group and parents are informed when pupils' attendance falls below 90%. These measures contribute to improvements in attendance.
179. The school also uses an electronic referral system to monitor behaviour; consequently incidents of poor behaviour are swiftly brought to the attention of senior managers. Measures, including the daily academic review, ensure the school monitors performance effectively.
180. The schools arrangements for the well-being of learners are good. They have been involved in the Healthy Schools' initiative and many of the practices are evident in school life. There are a good number of chilled water machines around the school and pupils are allowed to drink water throughout the day. Pupils are encouraged to take part in the physical activities organised by the school.
181. Effective measures are in place to support child protection. A designated senior member of staff has responsibility for co-ordinating arrangements. All staff including classroom support and ancillary staff have been trained and are familiar with the referral procedures. Appropriate security measures are in place to protect pupils.

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

182. The quality of provision for additional learning needs is good and the co-ordinator and assistant co-ordinator ensure that all pupils on the SEN register

are given opportunity to achieve their potential. All pupils are fully integrated into all aspects of school life.

183. Pupils' needs are identified by close and effective liaison with primary schools and also by screening on admission.
184. The school takes good account of the Code of Practice for Wales and the framework for inclusive education. All pupils who require them have individual education or behaviour plans (IEPs). While these contain valuable information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses and relevant targets, they do not record the outcomes of the IEP reviews.
185. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with statements of SEN. This ensures that their needs are met in the classroom and that they have full access to the curriculum. They are effective in helping pupils to develop as independent learners.
186. Pupils withdrawn for extra literacy support make very good progress and some attain creditable passes at GCSE examinations. The school has been awarded 'Dyslexia Friendly School' status and a member of staff with a specialist qualification provides very good support for these pupils.
187. Pupils who are disapplied from modern foreign languages or Welsh second language receive extra literacy lessons and make very good progress.
188. While pupils' behaviour is extremely well monitored and pastoral support programmes put in place when required, there are no explicit support mechanisms to reduce the number of temporary exclusions. Although the number of exclusion days has been reduced by about a third over recent years, the number of pupils excluded has remained fairly constant.
189. Support for more able and talented pupils is good. Pupils are identified according to criteria that take account of subject-specific ability and more general talents. Pupils are effectively supported by an extended curriculum developed in partnership with local colleges and a neighbouring high school.
190. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by a specialist teacher. An outstanding aspect of this support is the adoption of very good strategies to enable pupils to effectively and rapidly acquire good standards of spoken and written English in order that they can fully participate in all aspects of school life.

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

191. The school is highly committed to its range of equal opportunity policies and procedures. These are effective in promoting gender and racial equality. Pupils with English as an additional language, for example, hold assemblies that celebrate both their mother tongue and their culture.
192. Effective PSE modules enhance the school's inclusive ethos in promoting respect for diversity and good race relations. Many assemblies have been held to influence whole-school thinking with regard to racial equality issues raised by the school's drama production.
193. There are very effective measures to discourage all forms of oppressive behaviour, including bullying, harassment and discrimination.

194. The school's accessibility plan does not identify specific priorities for development with regard to the buildings and site, the curriculum and the information published by the school. The plan does not have a costed timetable for improvements nor does it identify responsible personnel.
195. The school's Disability Equality Scheme lacks detail.

## **Leadership and management**

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

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

196. The grade awarded by the inspection team was lower than that judged by the school in its self-evaluation report. While the team acknowledged the improvement in leadership and management at the school since it was last inspected, inspectors did not judge leadership to be outstanding.

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

197. The headteacher and his senior team communicate clear expectations, based on the Christian values of the school. These values and priorities are known and shared by all members of the school community and are reflected in their work. The impact this has had on the guidance and support of pupils and students, particularly at KS4, is outstanding.
198. The headteacher is ably supported by a leadership group who together implement effectively school policies and procedures that are focussed on pupils' needs. They have high expectations of each other and work well together as a team.
199. 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.
200. 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.
201. While the school continues to make progress in developing equal access to a learning pathway that meets pupils' and students' individual needs, partnerships with other providers are not well developed in the sixth-form.
202. The school has put in place effective procedures to monitor the quality of its work. A rolling programme of reviews is well planned and executed. Through a combination of light-touch and in-depth reviews leaders and managers observe lessons and scrutinise pupils' and students' work and results. The outcomes of these reviews are used effectively to set appropriate priorities and targets for whole-school and department improvement plans.
203. Performance management is well established for staff at all levels. There are good systems for the induction of newly qualified teachers and staff new to the school.

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

204. Governors contribute well to the strategic management of the school. They bring a wide range of expertise and experience to their role and are committed to the aims and values of the school.
205. Governors monitor the quality of education provided by the school and the standards achieved. They work through a suitable range of committees and receive regular reports from the headteacher. They know the school well and hold it to account for many aspects of its performance.
206. Governors fulfil their regulatory and legal requirements.

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

<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
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207. The grade awarded by the inspection team was lower than that judged by the school in its self-evaluation report. While the team acknowledged the improvement in self-evaluation and improvement at the school since it was last inspected, inspectors did not judge self-evaluation to be outstanding.

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

208. Self-evaluation is an integral part of the school's philosophy. The self-evaluation report was detailed and identified many of the best features of the process. It also identified aspects requiring further consideration.
209. The school has a clearly defined system for self-evaluation through the light-touch review process. The school uses the Common Inspection Framework effectively to evaluate standards and identify areas for improvement. The system is cohesive and involves all leaders and managers.
210. Self-evaluation procedures are very effective in reviewing standards of attainment and achievement. Leaders and managers work closely together to evaluate examination results for individual pupils and departments. Leaders and managers meet with the headteacher early in the autumn term to generate action plans for further development. The regular review of action plans is a strength of the self-evaluation process.
211. The evaluation of the other aspects of school provision is not as detailed. For example, although book audits are carried out on a regular basis, the lack of more regular classroom observations beyond performance management requirements, limits the effectiveness of self-evaluation of teaching and assessment.
212. The views of staff, pupils and parents are effectively gathered in identifying priorities for the school improvement plan. The way in which parents' views are incorporated in proposed changes to reporting formats and the organisation of parents' evenings is a good example of this.
213. While subject area and whole-school reviews have been effective in informing the leaders and managers about standards and progress within initiatives, the school does not carry out a cycle of in-depth reviews of all subjects.

214. The grades for key questions 2 and 4 match those of the school in its self-evaluation report. While inspectors identified good practice in key questions 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7 they awarded grade 2 because the good practice was not judged to be sufficiently outstanding.

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

215. The school improvement plan is an effective instrument for development. It co-ordinates improvements across the school. It has clear priorities which dovetail evidence from the light -touch reviews, whole-school reviews, and recommendations from subject areas and surveys. The plan provides a clear outline of improvement strategies and brief descriptions of their intended outcomes. Cost implications, time-scales, training needs and responsibility for evaluation are clearly identified.

216. Departmental improvement plans are of good quality for most curricular areas. All of them reflect the priorities set out in the school improvement plan.

217. The school is very successful in providing resources to ensure that objectives are met. For example, the improvement in provision for ICT since the last inspection has had a positive impact on standards by creating further opportunities for teaching and learning and extension work.

218. Since the last inspection, self-evaluation procedures have had an effective impact on raising standards across the school, particularly in KS4. With regard to the key issues of the previous inspection, the school has made good progress in raising standards in design technology, information technology and music. There are effective links between the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. There have been improvements in the areas of homework provision, accommodation and support at KS3.

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

<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
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219. The grade awarded by the inspection team was lower than that judged by the school in its self-evaluation report. While the team acknowledged the efficiency of leaders and managers in using resources, inspectors did not judge the management of resources to be outstanding.

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

220. The number of teaching staff is sufficient for the school to run efficiently. Just over a fifth of the teaching staff have ten years or less teaching experience, including two newly qualified teachers.

221. Nearly all teaching staff are appropriately well qualified. Their knowledge and expertise meet the needs of all aspects of learning areas, and the wider curriculum.

222. There is a small number of staff who teach outside their specialist subjects. However, due to their teaching expertise and the level of support they receive, there is no adverse effect on the pupils' standards of achievement.

223. The ten teaching assistants provide very good support and encouragement to pupils who have additional learning needs. Their work is well co-ordinated and they work effectively with all subject teachers.

224. The administrative officer and her staff ensure that the office, reception and reprographic areas are run efficiently. They also provide valuable support in ensuring pupils' attendance and appropriate teacher supply cover.
225. The site manager and the caretaker are responsible for the day-to-day maintenance, security and upkeep of the site. They contribute ably to the daily routines of the school.
226. Technician support in science and information technology is good. In design and technology there is a part-time technician. This is insufficient to meet the rigorous of present-day health and safety requirements.
227. The school librarian supervises the use of the library diligently. She works closely with subject specialists and the county library service to ensure a range of appropriate books is available.
228. The quality of the provision for ICT is outstanding. There are overhead projectors or interactive whiteboards in every classroom which are used effectively to improve the quality of teaching. Web-based learning packages enable parents, pupils and supply teachers to have knowledge about the content of learning programmes in all subjects and assist pupils and students with revision and research work.
229. There are also many good features in the provision of resources for teaching and learning.
230. The initial allocation of capitation to subject areas is effectively based on an agreed formula. In addition, any agreed and evaluated initiatives are supported from a supplementary fund.
231. The use of resources out of school to enrich the curriculum is good. These include quality visits to retreats, museums and theatres. The activities for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award are also a good feature.
232. There is an adequate range of up-to-date textbooks and the materials produced in-house are of good quality.
233. The library is relatively small for a school of this size. It is a very active one especially during lunch breaks. On the whole, the quality and variety of the book stock of fiction and reference books is good.
234. For sixth-form students, there is a good range of text books and equipment. Students are able to use the computers in the library as well as reference books for independent learning and research.
235. The accommodation is sufficient for the number of pupils currently on roll. It meets the academic and pastoral needs of the curriculum. The sixth-form centre has an appropriate study area and a common room.
236. Most rooms are fit for purpose and large enough to cater well for most class sizes. Since the last inspection two of the mobile classrooms have been removed and the other two refurbished. The teachers in the mobile classrooms make the most of their environment to overcome the difficulties of varying weather conditions.
237. The indoor facilities for physical education are a good resource and the range of outdoor facilities is sufficient.
238. The school has a clean fresh appearance. There are colourful and attractive displays in the classroom. Corridors are rather narrow but pupils' paintings

make an attractive display. However there are few places where pupils' work can be displayed.

239. The school grounds are kept clean and litter free. Through recommendations made by the school's council, the planting of plants, the construction of two quiet gardens and seating areas have significantly improved the school's environment.
240. There are shortcomings in the accommodation in that large areas of the building are not accessible to pupils or adults with mobility problems and parts of the grounds are liable to flood in wet weather.

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

241. The deployment and management of staff are very good and make efficient and effective use of their time, expertise and experience. The continuous professional development of all staff training is a strong feature of the school. It is linked to the school's Performance Management policy, the school improvement plan and the needs of learning areas and individuals. It is very well co-ordinated, carefully evaluated and used to have a positive impact on pupils' and students' learning.
242. The support for newly qualified teachers and for the extended professional development of recently qualified teachers is comprehensive. The school has not hosted any initial teacher training students so far this academic year, though a strong link exists with Chester University.
243. The school has implemented its strategy for the workload agreement. It has made appropriate provision in the timetable for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment. This time is used to good effect.
244. The school, after consulting all interested bodies, has successfully implemented its structure for the new teaching and learning responsibilities.
245. The financial management of the school is effective. The school conscientiously pursues all grants and sponsorships that are available.
246. The total amount of capitation is low for a school of this size. The distribution to subject areas is formula-based and fair.
247. The headteacher, the finance officer and the governing body's committee for finance efficiently manage the available budget. The finance committee meets regularly and receives detailed up-to-date reports. Financial decisions are outstanding and are well focused on the curriculum needs and the needs identified in the school improvement plan.
248. The finance officer provides the learning area managers with regular breakdowns and current balances. School spending is closely and carefully monitored.
249. The minor recommendations of the last auditor's report have been addressed.
250. Overall, the school uses its finances and resources competently and achieves good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Welsh second language

#### **KS3 Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

#### **KS4 Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

251. Results at the end of KS4 are below UA and national averages for the GCSE full course. Results are broadly in line with UA and national trends for the GCSE short course.

#### **KS3**

##### **Good features**

252. Pupils speak with appropriate pronunciation and intonation and read aloud with meaning and expression.

253. Many understand the general flow of straight-forward passages on topics that are within their experience, either by responding orally or in closed or structured written tasks. The more able pupils respond well to authentic material including poetry.

254. Most pupils give simple answers to familiar questions asked by the teacher. In pair work, they listen purposefully to each another and answer sensibly. With encouragement, many express opinions and give reasons for their views using topic-specific vocabulary.

255. Written work is usually completed to a good standard and is neatly presented. Most pupils generate a range of sentence patterns and link them together to produce work in a range of forms for a variety of purposes.

256. Pupils make good use of support and reference material available to them to produce work that is accurate. More able pupils produce more extended pieces of written work that includes detail and a wider range of language structures.

257. Pupils make effective use of ICT to word-process work mainly for display purposes.

##### **Shortcomings**

258. Pupils lack confidence. Without constant encouragement and support from their teachers, they are content to give very brief answers. They have difficulty in recalling the full range of sentence patterns learnt in previous lessons to enable them to provide more detailed answers. This restricts their ability to use Welsh in authentic contexts.

259. While pupils make good use of the support available, many are too dependent on it to read and write fluently.

#### **KS4**

##### **Good features**

260. As at KS3, pupils speak with appropriate pronunciation and intonation and read aloud with meaning and expression.

261. Pupils acquire and use a wider range of vocabulary and more comprehensive range of sentence patterns.

262. Pupils understand and respond to a broader range of oral and written topics.

263. With support, the more able pupils make an extended contribution to discussion. They can convey information, explore ideas and offer their individual points of view.

264. Pupils are able to write at length with on a range of topics. They make good use of the support and resources made available. More able pupils write at length and with accuracy.

### **Shortcomings**

265. Only in a minority of cases do pupils re-draft their work to improve its standard.

266. Pupils' ability to read for pleasure and to read independently is undeveloped.

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

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

**Sixth-form Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

267. Examination results in mathematics at GCSE over the last five years have improved significantly and are now above both national and local pass rates at grades A\* to C. These pass rates are higher than would be expected for pupils of similar ability.

268. Examination results at A level are consistently above local and national averages and are higher than would be expected for students of a similar ability. This high standard is an outstanding feature of the department.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

269. Pupils have good mental number skills and can apply them in a number of contexts both written and oral. They respond quickly and accurately during lesson starters which develop their numerical and investigational skills.

270. Pupils of average ability have a good understanding of spatial concepts such as area and perimeter and are able to acquire new skills and understanding quickly in this context.

271. Pupils of all abilities have a good understanding of decimal place value when it is used in the context of metric units and can multiply and divide by powers of ten successfully.

#### **Shortcomings**

272. Most pupils have difficulty in applying mathematical ideas and techniques outside the confines of text-book or exam style questions.

### **KS4**

#### **Good features**

273. As at KS3, pupils have good mental number skills and are able to apply them in a number of contexts. They have a positive attitude towards mathematics and complete a substantial amount of work during lessons.

274. Pupils of average ability achieve significantly high grades at GCSE compared to their potential. Many pupils respond extremely well to the support and guidance given during their revision in Y11.

275. Higher attaining pupils can apply a variety of algebraic techniques within coordinate geometry. They recognise graphs of common equations and are fluent in the use of straight-line graphs. Pupils across the whole ability range can use equations to plot graphs.

276. Pupils of average attainment can apply their knowledge of multiplying and dividing to solve problems involving prime factors and those at a lower attainment level absorb new ideas about multiples and primes quickly.

### **Shortcomings**

277. As at KS3, the majority of pupils has difficulty in applying mathematical ideas in unfamiliar contexts.

### **Sixth-form**

#### **Outstanding features**

278. Students make outstanding progress throughout the course and build upon the skills and knowledge acquired at GCSE.

279. Students in Y13 can apply calculus skills learnt in previous lessons and are fluent in the use of standard algebraic techniques.

280. Higher ability Y12 students are able to apply a range of mathematical techniques in an unfamiliar context and are able to refine their methods and correct misconceptions independently.

#### **Good features**

281. Students reason and explain their work logically using appropriate mathematical language.

282. Students use mathematical diagrams, graphs and notation well in communicating their understanding.

### **Shortcomings**

283. There are no significant shortcomings.

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

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

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

284. Examination results in this subject at GCSE in the last two years have been well above local and national averages for passes at A\*-C. These results represent very good achievement for most of these pupils. At A level, students' achievements are generally in line with expectations. However the physics results represent very good achievement for these students.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

285. Many pupils across the ability range possess a sound knowledge and understanding of the KS3 programme of study.

286. More able pupils can recall and apply scientific concepts well to solve a range of problems.

287. Many pupils work with purpose and co-operate well when engaged in practical activities. They follow instructions well and carry out tasks safely.

288. Pupils generally use scientific terms accurately when discussing their work.

289. Pupils with additional learning needs take an active part in lessons and make good progress.

### **Shortcomings**

290. A small minority of average and lower ability pupils has a less secure recall and understanding of the current and previous work. They are unsure of scientific terms and how to use scientific reasoning.

## **KS4**

### **Outstanding features**

291. Many pupils have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the more complex principles within the KS4 programme of study. This is reflected in the high percentage of pupils attaining A\* - C grades in GCSE examinations referred to above.

292. The vast majority of pupils at KS4 recall work well. They apply with confidence their understanding of key scientific facts in familiar and unfamiliar situations.

### **Good features**

293. Pupils develop good investigative skills. They use their knowledge and understanding to guide their planning. Pupils carry out the related experimental work purposefully and safely.

294. Many pupils develop a good awareness and understanding of the contribution that science makes to society, industry, the environment and the economy.

295. Pupils communicate effectively using text, diagrams and graphs.

296. Nearly all pupils engage competently in the practical aspects of science lessons and work with enthusiasm.

### **Shortcomings**

297. A small minority of pupils fails to complete and correct their work.

## **Sixth-form**

### **Good features**

298. Students in physics make very good progress in analysing data, explaining phenomena and solving problems.

299. The majority of students in biology, chemistry, physics and applied science makes good progress. They have a secure recall and understanding of key concepts and principles.

300. The majority of students is able to apply their knowledge and understanding to a number of tasks involving the analysis of data and problem solving to consolidate their knowledge of the topic.

301. Students have good practical skills handling a range of apparatus with confidence. They make systematic observations and record data accurately. Students make good use of graphs to present and analyse results.

302. Students use advanced scientific terminology with confidence.

### **Shortcomings**

303. A small minority of students has a less secure knowledge and understanding of aspects of the work covered.

## **Modern foreign languages**

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

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

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

304. Examination results in French and German for passes at grades A\*-C at GCSE in 2006 and 2007 were well above UA and Welsh averages. This represents outstanding achievement.

305. Examination results at A level in 2006 were above UA and Welsh averages in German but below them in French; results in both languages in 2007 were below average for the UA and Wales. These results were broadly in line with students' ability.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

306. In both languages, most pupils read and understand printed or clearly handwritten text well. Many of them scan texts well to pick out essential detail.

307. Most pupils build up steadily a good vocabulary and variety of language structures, re-using them well to extend the range of what they say and write.

308. By Y9 most pupils hold short conversations and write in sentences about things they have done or could do. They usually make correct verb and adjective agreements.

309. Pupils who study both languages from Y8 make good progress, and develop good accents.

310. Pupils with additional learning needs or who have English as an additional language respond well to individual support from their teachers and achieve appropriately high standards. Pupils in Y8, for example, speak confidently in response to classroom surveys. Their written work is of a good standard in relation to their ability.

#### **Shortcomings**

311. A minority of pupils lacks confidence when speaking independently and depend greatly on support from their teachers. They are reluctant to start conversations and do not often use more than one tense outside the present.

### **KS4**

#### **Outstanding features**

312. In both languages, the majority of pupils writes with great confidence and competence. They use a pertinent vocabulary together with a wide range of appropriate language structures.

313. They demonstrate a high level of accuracy, thanks to careful redrafting, particularly in their use of different tenses and in the way they link their ideas together.

314. Their coursework is very well presented, and includes many examples of original and creative pieces.

### **Good features**

315. In both languages, most pupils grasp the essential parts of what they hear or read, having little need for prompts or recourse to reference materials.

316. They apply earlier learning well to help them understand complex sentences and unfamiliar language.

317. Many pupils speak with good accents.

### **Shortcomings**

318. A small minority of pupils lacks confidence when speaking at length. They hesitate unduly and do not pronounce words as well as they should.

319. A few pupils do not check their work carefully enough to reduce errors in grammar and spelling.

### **Sixth-form**

#### **Good features**

320. In German, most students read and understand authentic news articles well. They are quick to re-use the new language they meet in their own work.

321. They write accurately at length, using a good variety of language to develop their ideas clearly.

322. They are usually confident in conversation, especially when expressing and justifying opinions.

323. In French, most students listen well and readily follow their teacher or authentic recorded language.

324. They understand the main points of written or printed texts.

325. They write notes and short pieces competently.

#### **Shortcomings**

326. In German, students occasionally have difficulties when talking about more complex or abstract ideas.

327. In French, most students do not often speak at length and lack confidence in dealing with unfamiliar topics.

328. In both languages, a minority of students uses a narrow range of language in written work, and does not write at great length or with sustained accuracy.

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

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

**Sixth-form: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

329. Examination results at GCSE are consistently and significantly above the local and national average at grades A\*-C for both boys and girls. These results represent very good achievement.

330. Examination results at A level in 2007 were above the national average. This represents good achievement.

### **KS3**

#### **Outstanding features**

331. In tests at the end of Y9 both boys and girls regularly achieve well above the local and national average.

332. Nearly all pupils develop an above average understanding of art. They acquire above average two-dimensional craft skills and develop well informed views on art from purposeful investigation.

#### **Good features**

333. Pupils develop very good traditional craft skills in individual three-dimensional ceramics and low relief card work. They also develop an appreciation of the new through group work in land-art.

334. They have a growing knowledge of artists associated with Wales and an appreciation of the art of other cultures, aided by working with a visiting artist.

#### **Shortcomings**

335. First-hand knowledge and awareness of both historical and contemporary art are limited by a reliance on secondary sources.

### **KS4**

#### **Outstanding features**

336. When painting from the natural environment, pupils consistently demonstrate outstandingly good skill and a subtlety of response.

337. Pupils with additional learning needs consistently achieve the higher grades at GCSE. This is a rare achievement.

338. Gifted and talented pupils realise their potential in response to their individual, more demanding tasks.

#### **Good features**

339. In examinations pupils regularly achieve beyond expectation.

340. They understand the importance of thorough personal research when planning a topic. They meet course deadlines and, because they frequently take up opportunities for extra work in their own time, their output is generally well above the average.

341. They are developing a thoughtful and critical judgement. When writing about art, they are accustomed to expressing and justifying their personal views.

342. Many pupils use their growing creativity and skill to express their spiritual beliefs and to comment on current social and moral issues.

#### **Shortcomings**

343. Only a very few pupils incorporate their knowledge of the Welsh language in support of their painting and printmaking.

344. Nearly all pupils restrict their creative development to two-dimensional work.

## **Sixth-form**

### **Outstanding features**

345. Students regularly demonstrate outstandingly good progress in their development as independent artists. They regularly achieve beyond expectation in examinations.
346. Their clear understanding of examination requirements, their meeting of course deadlines, and their consistency of practice in the self-evaluation process are all outstandingly good features of their success.

### **Good features**

347. They know how to research, prepare and develop their personal topic-work to a standard that, for nearly all, is regularly above average.
348. They further their well-established craft skills in large-scale paintings that express their spiritual, moral and social values in imaginative and creative ways.
349. When writing about art they are able to justify their personal views by extremely thorough research. Their use of the art vocabulary is well embedded in their dialogue and notation.
350. Their practice and their knowledge of both historical and contemporary art are well informed by their visits to major art galleries.

### **Shortcomings**

351. There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Music**

### **KS3 Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

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

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

352. Standards at KS3 represent an improvement since the last inspection.
353. GCSE results are broadly in line with national averages.
354. Results in music technology at A level are unreliable when compared with local and national averages because of the small number of students entered.

## **KS3**

### **Good features**

355. Pupils are familiar with and make good use of music technology to create music.
356. Pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge of “blues” music as well as an ability to apply its musical characteristics in order to compose music of their own.
357. Pupils use percussion instruments effectively to develop their knowledge of rhythms. They are able to combine and synchronise a variety of rhythms and timbres for performance in groups.
358. Pupils show good skills of appraising music. They understand lesson objectives and evaluating each other’s work in order to improve.
359. Most pupils work with others in order to perform and create music to an appropriate standard.

360. Pupils with additional learning needs and from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress.

### **Shortcomings**

361. A minority of pupils fail to demonstrate technical competence and accuracy. They lack confidence in performance.

362. A minority of pupils lack perception in appraising their own music and that of others.

### **KS4**

#### **Good features**

363. Most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of music terminology as well as the characteristics of music history.

364. Most pupils have a good level of skill in the use of music technology which they demonstrate in their compositions.

365. Pupils use musical instruments in practical ways to reinforce their knowledge and understanding of specialised and less familiar areas of the curriculum, such as the music of India.

366. As at KS3, pupils show good skills of appraising music. They understand lesson objectives and evaluating each other's work in order to improve.

#### **Shortcomings**

367. A minority of pupils has an insecure knowledge of the history of music.

### **Sixth-form**

#### **Good features**

368. Most students make good progress in music technology. They make good use of the school's up-to-date facilities to develop their skills.

369. Students produce music portfolios of a good standard for external examinations which reflect various skills such as the creation of suitable instrumentation, texture and timbre.

370. By analysing and appraising, students increasingly show sound knowledge and understanding of various styles of popular music.

371. Students develop thinking and problem-solving skills by planning and developing musical elements for their portfolios as well as communication skills by appraising and analysing music.

#### **Shortcomings**

372. A small minority of students has poor composition skills.

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

We are pleased that the report recognises many of the successful features of the school and praises those initiatives and areas which show particular outstanding merit.

The school is pleased that the report identifies pupils and students as having very positive attitudes to learning and noticeably excellent relationships with staff. It is particularly pleasing that the report highlights pupils behaviour and respect for others as exemplary and is an outstanding feature of the school. How they progress in their personal, social, moral and spiritual development has also been recognised as very good.

Inspectors have identified excellence in the school's development of teaching and learning, including pupil learning styles and thinking skills. These supported by the educational resource materials available for students and parents on the school website, are a real strength of the school. It is good to see that all lessons observed were judged as good or better. The high quality of teachers and support staff and their appropriate skills were acknowledged as strengths of the school. Particularly pleasing is the inspectors' acknowledgement of the outstanding quality of care and guidance given to all children. This is highlighted as underpinning excellent levels of attendance and pupil achievement. Pupils with Additional Learning Needs and those with English as an Additional Language are identified as being supported, guided and cared for at a very high level.

Attainment, particularly at GCSE, is praised in the report as outstanding. This acknowledges the increasing trend in achievement that has been made over the past three years. Students at all levels in GCSE achieve above and beyond their initial targets.

Inspectors acknowledge the value of the investment made particularly in e-learning and subsequent computer resources. The way in which pupils and students are able to access learning programmes on-line is described as outstanding. The school is praised for its competent and creative use of the available finances. It is encouraging that of the few recommendations made in the report, the majority have already been addressed within the school's own development plans.

We would like to acknowledge the support and feedback from our parents whose responses to the inspection questionnaire and parental meeting are commented upon as being outstanding.

Likewise, we would like to recognise the outstanding commitment and dedication shown by the Governing Body prior to and during the inspection. The school is proud of the excellent progress made from the previous good inspection and looks forward in the future to celebrating further exceptional achievements for the benefit of all students.

The Headteacher, Governors and school community would like to acknowledge the work of the Registered Inspector and his inspection team and the professionalism shown during the inspection period.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Albert Avenue Flint Flintshire
Postcode	CH6 5JZ
Telephone number	01352 736900

Headteacher	Mr Derek Doran
Date of appointment	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2005
Chair of governors	Mrs M Probert
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter Harris
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	168	161	156	163	164	78	51	941

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	51	6	54.85

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	16.62:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	
Average teaching group size	21.81
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	76.21%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	94.7	93	91.9	91.8	90.8	90.7	94.5	92.5
Term 2	94.1	93.1	92.7	91.8	90.6	92.3	94.6	92.7
Term 3	93.1	90	90	90.3	91.9	86.1	95.2	90.6

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	9.27
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	49

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum Assessment Results Summer 2007

#### End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2007													
Total number of pupils in Y9: 165													
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			N	D	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
English	Teacher assessment	School	0.6	0	0	0	0	2.4	18.5	29.2	31.5	17.9	0
		National	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.3	1.5	7.4	21.6	35.8	23.9	8.0	0.2
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0.6	0	0	0	0	3.6	20.2	25.0	37.5	13.1	0
		National	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.3	1.1	7.4	18.4	25.0	30.4	15.7	0.8
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0.6	0	0	0	0	3.0	25.6	33.9	31.0	6.0	0
		National	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.5	6.0	18.8	34.1	27.6	11.5	0

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment			
In the school	63.7	In Wales	58

#### Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2007	158
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	48

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2007:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	97	89	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	68	53	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	97	88	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	46	41	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	98	95	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	89	78	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	98	93	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	2	7	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	1	3

<b>For pupils aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>	
Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2007	103
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2007	44
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2007	12

	<b>School</b>	<b>UA</b>	<b>Wales</b>
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	50	61	67
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	91	93	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	16	19	20

## **Appendix 4**

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

Inspectors spent a total of 43 days in the school and were joined by the school's deputy headteacher as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection. During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 102 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;
- 373 replies to the parents' questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- samples of pupils' reports; and,
- a range of pupils' work.

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

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Peter Harris	Rgl, KQ1, KQ5
Justine Barlow	Lay Inspector
Janet Hughes	KQ2
Martyn S Williams	KQ3, Modern foreign languages
Paul Donovan	KQ4, Special educational needs
Glyn Davies	KQ6, Science
Heddwyn Evans	KQ7
Bethan Clement	Welsh second language
Gwyn Jones	Mathematics
Andrew Mathews	Science
Eric Forster	Art
Hywel Lewis	Music

### *Acknowledgement*

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

#### **Contractor**

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