

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

A report on the quality of education in

**Whitchurch High School
Penline Road
Whitchurch
Cardiff
CF14 2XJ**

School number: 6814050

Date of inspection: 2 March 2009

by

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Whitchurch 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 Whitchurch High School took place between 02/03/09 and 05/03/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by William Gwyn Thomas undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Whitchurch High School is an 11-18 mixed, split-site community school maintained by Cardiff Unitary Authority (UA). Key stage (KS) 3 pupils are based on the lower school site and 14-19 pupils and students on the upper school site. There are currently 2283 pupils on roll with 486 students in the sixth form, compared with 2445 at the time of the last inspection in March 2003 when there were 492 students in the sixth form. Although there has been a seven percent decrease in pupil population since the last inspection, the school continues to be the largest comprehensive school in Wales.
- 2 The school is situated in Whitchurch, a northern suburban area of the city of Cardiff, and serves a wide area including Gabalfa, Birchgrove, Coryton, Llandaff North, Rhiwbina and Whitchurch. The school's catchment includes both relatively prosperous and economically disadvantaged areas. Approximately 25% of pupils come from areas deemed to be socially disadvantaged. The current percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) is 11%. The three-year average for the school is 10.1% during 2006-2008.
- 3 Pupils and students represent the full ability range. There are 95 pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 289 have been identified as needing some support. Eight pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum (NC). There are three pupils who are "looked after" by the local authority and a further two are dual registered.
- 4 About 94% of the pupils come from homes where the predominant language spoken is English, and no pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard within the school. Eighty-nine pupils and students receive support teaching in English as an additional language.
- 5 The headteacher and one of the deputy headteachers were appointed to their posts in September 2008. The composition of the senior leadership team (SLT) includes the headteacher, two deputy headteachers, and nine assistant headteachers.
- 6 Vocationally-based courses at KS4 and in the sixth form are being developed internally and in partnership with other providers in the area. The school also delivers the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) in year (Y)12 and the International Baccalaureate (IB) in Y12/13.

The school's priorities and targets

- 7 The school's mission statement is: "To be a caring, well ordered and successful community in which all individuals who come to learn and work here are able to develop their maximum potential". The school aims are set out clearly under six main headings.
- 8 The school has prepared a detailed improvement plan for 2008-2009 which identifies three main areas for development. The areas that have been identified

comply with Estyn's seven key questions. The school also sets numerical targets for success at the end of KS3, KS4 and the sixth form that, in 2009:

- 63% of pupils should reach at least level 5, in teachers' assessments in all core subjects combined, at the end of KS3 (English 77%, mathematics 77%, and science 77%); and
- in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations, 62% of pupils should gain at least five GCSE grades A*-C, and 90% gain at least five GCSE grades, A*-G.

9 The percentage of 15 year olds targeted for 2009:

Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics	55%
Level 2 threshold	62%
Level 1 threshold	90%
Core subject indicator	55%
Leaving full time education without a recognised qualification	0.5%
Average wider points' score (not percentage)	365

10 The percentage of 17 year olds targeted for 2009:

Level 3 threshold	98%
Average wider points' score (not percentage)	580

Summary

11 Whitchurch High School is a good school and is moving forward from strength to strength. There are outstanding features in all key questions, particularly in key questions 3, 4 and 7. The school has responded well to the two key issues noted in the 2003 inspection report by improving accommodation and meeting statutory requirements for the provision of religious education in the sixth form and providing a daily act of collective worship. The inspection team agrees with five of the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report but has awarded two key questions one grade lower.

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 and interests of learners and the wider community?	1
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	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?	1

Standards

12 Results in tests, statutory assessments and examinations are good overall. Key stage 3 and KS4 results are good. They compare well with those in similar

schools in nearly all indicators in 2008. In KS4, pupil attainment levels are well above local and national averages in nearly all indicators. Sixth-form results are good in relation to the range of students' ability and qualifications offered. The IB in the sixth form makes a significant contribution to students' overall standards of achievement.

Grades awarded in the six subjects inspected	KS3	KS4	Sixth form
English	2	2	2
Mathematics	3	2	3
Information technology	2	1	1
Art and design	1	1	1
Religious education including religious studies	2	1	2
Drama	2	2	1

- 13 Standards in the six subjects inspected have at least good features outweighing shortcomings. In all but one subject, there are good features and no important shortcomings. Four subjects have outstanding features.
- 14 The overall grades for the standards of achievement observed in the six subjects inspected are also good, as shown in the grid below:

84 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	29%	55%	17%	0%	0%
All-Wales 07/08	10%	60%	27%	3%	0%

- 15 Communication skills and the skill of working with others are outstanding in the sixth form. With the exception of improving one's own learning skill which has good features outweighing shortcomings in KS3, all other key skills have standards which have good features and no important shortcomings. Since the last inspection, standards in key skills have been maintained in nearly all skills in KS3 and KS4 and have improved in the sixth form. In KS3 personalised learning is an outstanding feature.
- 16 Pupils' bilingual skills have good features outweighing shortcomings. Most pupils do not transfer their linguistic skills from one language to the other with ease.
- 17 Nearly all SEN pupils make very good progress. Many pupils with other learning difficulties make good progress in relation to their ability.
- 18 Most pupils in KS3 and many in KS4 behave well. Behaviour is exemplary in the sixth form. Respect for others has a high priority within the school which is a civilised community where nearly all pupils are courteous both within and outside the classroom. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their work. Attendance levels have improved marginally but are below the attendance levels of similar schools in Wales and the local authority. A minority of pupils are not punctual to lessons. Standards in the development of pupils' social, moral and cultural skills are good, but standards in pupils' spiritual development are less well developed.

The quality of education and training

- 19 Teaching is good overall. The quality of relationships between teachers and pupils is outstanding in most cases. Clear questioning techniques are used and expectations are high.
- 20 Overall, there is pace and challenge in lessons and resources are used well. Teachers have a good grasp of their subject knowledge and key skills are used effectively in many lessons.

- 21 The quality of teaching, in the six subjects inspected in detail and also in the other lessons visited by the inspectors, is better than the national average as reported in Estyn's annual report. The grades are shown in the grid below:

169 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Whole-school	26%	51%	22%	1%	0%
All-Wales 07/08	17%	58%	22%	3%	0%

- 22 The quality of marking is good overall but in some subject areas there is insufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve.
- 23 The school is in the process of introducing a more effective system for tracking pupils' progress and identifying those who are performing above or below expectation. Target-setting for whole classes and sets of pupils is currently being refined. All pupils are involved in self-assessment processes.
- 24 School reports of some subject departments do not give sufficient guidance to parents on how their child could improve.
- 25 The school's curriculum satisfies legal requirements for pupils of statutory school age. It offers a wide range of subject options to its pupils in KS4 and to students in the sixth-form, including a minority through collaboration. The curriculum is accessible to all and provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to achieve accreditation in all subjects except in the Welsh second language short course at KS4. However, an increasing number of pupils are being entered for this examination.
- 26 Outstanding extra-curricular activities, which enrich pupils' personal and social development, are provided by the school. Many pupils benefit from the wide range of cultural activities available.
- 27 There are effective curricular links which help pupils with transition from primary to secondary education. Transition arrangements at all key stages are outstanding.
- 28 Partnerships with other organisations and international partnerships are outstanding. There are very good links with parents. Businesses provide work-experience opportunities and outside speakers enhance the social and moral development of pupils in the school. The Careers service contributes very effectively to the options process in Y9 and Y11.
- 29 The development of entrepreneurial skills throughout the school and the way in which the school takes account of employers' needs are outstanding.
- 30 The school's contribution to the Healthy Schools' initiative is strong, but this is being hindered by the availability of high-calorie drinks and snacks. The school contributes effectively in other ways to the well-being of its pupils. Physical activities are well supported including those offered outside normal school hours. The school is constantly raising awareness of sustainability issues.
- 31 The quality of care and support to all pupils by members of staff and support services is outstanding. There is effective liaison with external agencies.
- 32 Pastoral support by key-stage managers and their teams is good. This support includes members of the SLT and non-teaching staff. Pupils receive sufficient individual attention to monitor their progress.
- 33 Appropriate support of outstanding quality is provided for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). Teachers diagnose pupils' needs carefully and implement

a range of effective support strategies. There are insufficient support resources for pupils with learning difficulties in mainstream classes.

- 34 The school ensures that it meets the needs of its pupils in all other ways.
- 35 Overall, the school's provision for equal opportunities is good. No discrimination or unpleasant behaviour is tolerated. The school council is an effective body and contributes significantly to life within the school.
- 36 Child protection procedures are well embedded.

Leadership and management

- 37 The leadership qualities of the headteacher and his senior leaders are good. Members of this team provide good leadership in their respective areas. The headteacher and his SLT work very well as a team. The leadership qualities of a few managers are to be developed further.
- 38 Nearly all policies and whole-school strategies are implemented effectively and consistently by members of staff.
- 39 Monitoring by the SLT and many of those with management responsibilities ensures that most standards are raised. However, the monitoring of learning and teaching in departments and the frequency of the monitoring are not always consistent or frequent enough by managers. Good practice evident in all aspects of school life is shared with staff.
- 40 The work and expectations of senior and middle managers are clearly defined. The quality of planning for improvement is good but the success criteria of the development plans are not sufficiently clear.
- 41 The governing body's role as critical friend is effective. The monitoring of standards and procedures is good. Governors evaluate the performance of their link departments in a critical but supportive manner.
- 42 The school is well staffed with an appropriate number of qualified and experienced staff to meet curricular and administrative needs. The management and deployment of teaching and support staff, including resources for work-force remodelling have been used to very good effect. Staff development is an outstanding feature.
- 43 The accommodation provides safe and purposeful teaching areas for all subject departments with some being outstanding. The demountables on both school sites do not provide the most stimulating learning environment. The in-house estates' and information and communications technology (ICT) support teams make an outstanding contribution to the development and maintenance of the school campus. The management and control of the budget are outstanding features. Sufficient finance is available to departments to meet the needs of teaching staff and pupils.
- 44 Due to the good quality of external tests and examination results, the quality of teaching, support for pupils, good behaviour of pupils, and the quality of the SLT and managers, the school overall, provides good value for money.
- 45 The provision of sixth-form education is cost-effective.

Recommendations

In order to achieve its objectives, the school should focus on the following priorities.

- *R1. Introduce a more consistent and rigorous system of monitoring by senior and middle managers to:
- raise the quality of learning and teaching;
 - improve pupils' punctuality to lessons and behaviour within the classroom;
 - improve the quality and consistency of written feedback given to pupils across the school; and
 - enhance the quality and content of reports to parents.
- * R2. Work with the UA to provide;
- greater support through additional resources, for pupils with learning difficulties in mainstream classes
 - for the urgent replacement of the ageing demountable classrooms on both sites, some of which have been condemned by the UA.
- R3. Ensure that success criteria in the departmental development plans (DDPs) and school improvement plans (SIPs) include measurable, realistic and attainable targets.
- *R4 Increase the provision and provide greater opportunities for pupils to improve their bilingual skills throughout the school.
- * The SiP addresses several of these recommendations.

The governing body is responsible for amending its current improvement 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

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

KS3 and KS4

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 47 Overall results in teacher assessments at KS3 and external examination results in KS4 demonstrate that standards have good features and no important shortcomings.
- 48 The school has been on the borderline of two free school meal (FSM) bands for benchmarking during 2006 and 2007. In 2008 the school moved into a different FSM band as 11% of its pupils were eligible for free school meals. Over a three-year period, the school's FSM is 10.1%.
- 49 Overall, over a three-year period, results compare favourably with the results of similar schools. In 2008, with the exception of mathematics, the core subjects and the CSI have been placed in the top 50% when compared with similar schools in Wales
- 50 Achievement at KS3 is below what is expected, based on prior attainment, in the three core subjects combined, and in each of them individually.
- 51 At KS4 in the GCSE examinations in 2008, 65% of pupils achieved at least five GCSE grades at A*-C, well above both the local and national average. The school was placed in the top 50% of similar schools in Wales.
- 52 Eighty-eight percent of pupils achieved the Level 1 threshold (a volume of qualifications at level 1 equivalent to 5 GCSE grades A*-G) in 2008. This is slightly above the local and national average. The school was placed in the bottom 50% of similar schools in Wales.
- 53 Sixty-five percent of pupils achieved the Level 2 threshold (a volume of qualifications at level 2 equivalent to five GCSE grades A*-C) in 2008. This is above the local and national average. The school was placed in the top 50% of similar schools in Wales.
- 54 Nearly 55% of pupils achieved the Level 2 threshold (a volume of qualifications at level 2 equivalent to five GCSE grades A*-C including mathematics and English or Welsh first language). This is well above the local and national average. In 2008 the school was placed in the top 50% of similar schools in Wales.
- 55 The 2008 results compared with those of 2007 indicate that the core subjects and the core subject indicator (CSI) have remained in the top 50% of similar schools in Wales. There had been an overall improving trend in pupils' attainment in mathematics, science and the CSI during 2006-2008.
- 56 Able pupils achieve their potential as nearly 26% of pupils gained the A*/A grades in the GCSE examinations in 2008.

- 57 Achievement at KS4 is below what is expected, based on prior attainment, in the main indicators.
- 58 Girls outperformed boys in all the core subjects and the CSI in the end of KS3 assessments in 2008. At KS4, in the GCSE examinations in 2008, girls had performed better than the boys in the threshold Level 1 and both Level 2 indicators.

Their progress in learning

- 59 Pupils' progress in many lessons is good.
- 60 The following grades were awarded for standards of achievement at KS3 and KS4 in the 60 lessons observed in the six subjects inspected:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	9%	71%	20%	0%	0%
KS4	40%	44%	16%	0%	0%
KS3+KS4	22%	60%	18%	0%	0%

- 61 In 82% of the lessons, pupils achieved standards that have good features and no important shortcomings. All lessons observed had standards where good features outweighed shortcomings.
- 62 The inspection grades exceed the grades awarded for standards in lessons for grades 1 and 2 (70%) in all secondary schools inspected in 2007-2008. They also exceed the national 2010 Vision into Action target of 98% for standards to be graded 1, 2 or 3.
- 63 Outstanding standards are evident in art and design in both key stages, and in KS4, in information technology and religious education.
- 64 Standards in the six subjects inspected have at least good features outweighing shortcomings. With the exception of standards in mathematics in KS3, standards in all the other subjects have good features and no important shortcomings.
- 65 Nearly all key skills have standards which are at least good with no important shortcomings in both key stages. The exception is the skill of improving one's own learning in KS4 where good features outweigh shortcomings.
- 66 All pupils follow the Welsh second language course in KS3 and a few follow the full course in KS4. The majority follow the short course in KS4 but a minority of pupils are not entered for accreditation.
- 67 Pupils' bilingual skills are developing as the quantity and quality of incidental Welsh are increasing. The Welsh language is evident in and around the school.
- 68 Pupils with SEN make very good progress in relation to their ability. In KS3 and KS4, many pupils of low ability achieve their potential.
- 69 The processes and procedures of assessing how well pupils have achieved are good and are improving. This is due to the new target-setting procedures, and rigorous monitoring by SLT, leaders of learning, and form tutors.
- 70 Self-assessment and peer-assessment processes are well developed. Most pupils are aware of what they have to do to improve. However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of written feedback advising pupils of how they need to improve. In these cases it is insufficiently focused and too general.

- 71 A minority of pupils in KS4 do not achieve their expected potential because of the limited quality of their coursework.
- 72 In many of the classes and subjects, pupils make good progress towards the targets which they have been set.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

- 73 Most pupils' behaviour in KS3 indicates standards which have good features and no important shortcomings. Most behave in a manner where courtesy and respect prevail. They understand the high expectations which the school has of them, both in terms of work and in terms of their behaviour and attitudes. These aspects make positive contributions to most pupils' learning.
- 74 Pupils' behaviour in KS3 is better than it is in KS4.
- 75 The school is an orderly, caring and an inclusive community. During the last academic year, 131 pupils were temporarily excluded and no pupil was permanently excluded. Many of these exclusions were attributed to the same pupils. The temporary exclusions have been substantially reduced this academic year by the school's investment in pastoral support.
- 76 Pupils' attendance and punctuality have good features outweighing shortcomings. The attendance level for 2007-2008 was 91%. This is marginally above the all-Wales figure of 90.9% for 2008 but below the attendance rates of similar schools in Wales taking into account their free school meal entitlement for 2007-2008. A minority of pupils arrive late to lessons in spite of there being a 15 minute break between lessons. A few arrive late following the lunch break.
- 77 Most pupils make good progress in their personal, social, moral and wider development. Values are at the heart of the school which consistently demands high standards of behaviour. Pupils gain much in their spiritual and moral development from the assemblies of good quality and the good relationships which exist within the school. The religious education periods and the personal and social education (PSE) programmes contribute further to moral and spiritual development. However, standards in pupils' spiritual development are less well developed. Some tutorial periods are not effective enough.
- 78 The development of pupils' social, moral and cultural standards is good. Many pupils of differing abilities take part in a wide range of outstanding extra-curricular activities provided in sport, clubs, visits and performances. These activities contribute significantly to pupils' social and cultural development. The Welsh dimension is encouraged well throughout the curriculum.
- 79 Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of equal opportunities issues. There are very good links with the community and local businesses. Partnerships with the school are strong. Careers guidance and work-related education are effective features of the school. The way in which pupils are prepared for participation in the workplace and community in KS4 is an outstanding feature.

Sixth form

Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 80 Overall, standards of attainment have been consistently good over the last three years.

- 81 Results at Advanced (A) level are close to those recorded in the previous inspection. These results do not reflect the true standards within the sixth as the impact of the IB successes are not included in the overall results in external examinations. The IB results compare very favourably with world averages. When these successes are included, the school performs well above the local and national average.
- 82 Results are good in relation to students' ability. This is because of high student achievement in the IB course. In 2007, 95% of students achieved the Level 3 threshold (a volume of qualifications at level 3 equivalent to two GCE A level grades A-E) above the local and national average.
- 83 In 2008, 91% of students achieved the Level 3 threshold close to the national average of 94%.
- 84 Students achieved success appropriate to their ability in Level 2 vocational courses.
- 85 Standards have improved as a greater proportion of sixth-form students are studying courses which are more relevant to their needs and appropriate to their ability.
- 86 The average wider points' score (AWPS) per student in 2008 was below local and national averages. Boys outperformed the girls in the AWPS in 2008.
- 87 The percentage of pupils returning to the sixth form is good and continues to improve. In September 2008, 65% of Y11 pupils returned to the sixth form, 17% went to further education and 9% went into youth employment or other services.

Their progress in learning

- 88 Most students make good progress during their period of study in the sixth form.
- 89 Standards in five of the six subjects inspected had good features and no important shortcomings. The exception was mathematics where good features outweigh shortcomings. Standards in art and design, drama and information technology were outstanding.
- 90 The following grades were awarded for standards of achievement in the sixth form in the 24 lessons observed:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth form	46%	42%	13%	0%	0%
Wales 07/08	16%	67%	15%	2%	0%

- 91 Although the sample is small, these figures indicate that students achieve standards that have good features outweighing shortcomings in 100% of the lessons. The profile of grades awarded for standards in lessons inspected in the sixth form for grades 1 and 2 indicate that they are above the 83% reported in the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales for 2007-2008.
- 92 Students achieve standards which are good with outstanding features in their communication skills and working with others.
- 93 High order speaking skills in English were evident in class discussion. They were also evident when discussions were held with members of the school council. Most students use subject-specific terminology in discussions with one another

and with their teachers. The quality of a very few students' writing is less secure as some spelling mistakes and grammatical errors are evident.

- 94 Group work is very effective in all subject areas and this is a strength of the sixth form. These qualities assist students to maintain their good problem-solving skills.
- 95 Students achieve standards which have good features and no important shortcomings in all of their other key skills.
- 96 Some students achieve accreditation in their key skills either at levels 2 or 3 during their period of study in the sixth form. The introduction of the WBQ in Y12 in 2008 will result in more students being entered for key skills accreditation.
- 97 Students' ability to think and work bilingually is developing.
- 98 A more mature attitude to work prepares nearly all students well for progression to university or the world of work.
- 99 Nearly all students have a clear understanding of their levels of achievement and what they have to do to improve. Their work is marked and targets for improvement are given. The quality of the written feedback is mostly subject-specific.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

- 100 Students have developed good standards in their personal, social and learning skills. Their attitude to learning is positive as they are determined to make the most of all opportunities available to them.
- 101 They prepare to the best of their ability to ensure that they achieve success in their chosen pathways. They accept responsibility and have a strong social conscience.
- 102 They acquire greater awareness of issues relating to spiritual, moral and cultural development through contact with a wide range of outside speakers. However, standards of students' spiritual development are only adequate.
- 103 Students demonstrate very responsible behaviour and respect towards one another and towards all members of the school community. They gain in maturity during their period of study in the sixth-form and have a valuable experience.
- 104 They are good role models for younger pupils and to one another. Their leadership skills are good. This has enabled them to strengthen the relationships between senior and junior pupils.
- 105 Students are able to express views openly and honestly. They listen carefully to the view of others, appreciating, but not necessarily agreeing with what has been said.
- 106 The ability to work well with one another contributes significantly to the development of their problem solving skills. Nearly all have adopted and developed skills which have prepared them well for higher education. Many organise their work without supervision, particularly in Y13.
- 107 Attendance is monitored sensibly and students are developing good working habits. A minority of students arrive late to their lessons.

- 108 Students improve their social skills during the day through access to their dedicated sixth-form block. Most students organise their work well without supervision.
- 109 Students gain much from their sixth-form experiences, in their academic, personal, social moral and wider development.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 110 The school awarded itself a grade 1 in its self-evaluation report. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower because of:
- insufficient outstanding features; and
 - the variable quality of reports to parents.

KS3 and KS4

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

- 111 The following grades were awarded for the quality of teaching in the 60 lessons observed in the six subjects inspected:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	14%	66%	20%	0%	0%
KS4	40%	44%	16%	0%	0%
KS3 + KS4	25%	57%	18%	1%	0%

- 112 The grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the 121 lessons observed overall in KS3 and KS4 were:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	15%	65%	20%	0%	0%
KS4	33%	38%	27%	2%	0%
KS3 + KS4	22%	55%	22%	1%	0%

- 113 In this inspection 77% of lessons were judged to be a grade 1 or 2. This is slightly above the figure for inspections in Wales in 2007-2008 where 75% of lessons were judged to be either grade 1 or 2. Twenty-two percent of the lessons were judged to be outstanding. This is higher than the figure for inspections in Wales 2007-2008 where 17% of lessons were judged to be outstanding. The school has not exceeded the secondary school target for 2010 in Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG's) Vision into Action, that the quality of teaching should be grade 2 or better in 80% of lessons.
- 114 There were some outstanding features of the teaching in KS3 and KS4. These were:
- questioning skills challenging pupils to justify their answers; and
 - pupils taking responsibility for their own learning.
- 115 The good features of teaching evident in KS3 and KS4 were:
- effective use of teaching assistants;

- well-managed practical lessons;
- effective use of ICT; and
- clear instructions given to pupils.

116 Shortcomings in the quality of teaching were more evident in KS4. Thirty-six percent of the lessons observed in Y10 had good features outweighing shortcomings. In lessons where there were shortcomings, there was:

- lack of pace and timing;
- insufficient challenge to able and talented pupils;
- ineffective planning with no shared objectives; and
- over-reliance on the teacher.

117 The introduction of personalised learning in Y7 is an outstanding feature of the teaching. The skills'-based approach, which is delivered in subjects through five themes, ensures that pupils develop as independent learners. The wide range of teaching methods actively engages the pupils.

118 Pupils with ALN are taught well.

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

119 The school has a clear policy for assessment, recording, reporting and target-setting which offers good guidance to departments and teachers.

120 Pupils are set targets in all subjects. Most pupils are aware of their own targets and understand what they need to do to improve. There is a good balance of information on assessment grades, targets, special needs, medical data and attendance data available to all teachers on the school electronic system (SERCO).

121 There are many elements of good practice in the assessment of pupils' work. In most departments, teachers mark pupils' work carefully and regularly. They provide useful oral and written feedback to pupils, make effective use of peer and self-assessment; and use assessment for learning strategies in many lessons.

122 Parents are provided with interim and full annual reports of variable quality. The full report includes comments and targets and an opportunity for pupils and parents to respond. Most parents value the parents' evenings and the annual personal pupil interview.

123 However, the quality of the assessment of pupils' work varies across the school. A few teachers do not mark their pupils' work with sufficient rigour and fail to give pupils guidance on how to improve work.

124 Some targets set on the annual reports are too general and insufficiently subject specific. Some grades awarded do not always match the targets set for pupils. Reports are not checked and monitored carefully enough.

125 The school meets all statutory requirements for recording and accrediting pupils' achievements at KS3 and KS4.

126 The moderation and accreditation of assessment portfolios in KS3 have been successfully completed.

Sixth form

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

127 The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the 24 lessons observed in the sixth form:

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth form	54%	29%	17%	0%	0%

128 The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the 48 lessons observed in the sixth form:

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth form	35%	44%	21%	0%	0%

129 Seventy-nine percent of lessons were judged to be grade 1 or 2. This exceeds the 75% of lessons judged to be good or better during 2007-8 inspections in Wales and is close to the secondary school target for 2010 in WAG's Vision into Action, that the quality of teaching should be grade 2 or better in 80% of lessons.

130 Many of the features for a grade 1 or 2 for the quality of teaching in the sixth form are similar to those seen in KS3 and KS4. The most notable are:

- the relationship between teachers and students;
- subject knowledge of teachers; and
- the importance placed on developing students as independent learners.

131 However, the following shortcomings were evident in the quality of teaching:

- slow pace in some lessons;
- insufficient and ineffective use of plenary and planning time; and
- lack of sharing and clarity of lesson aims.

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

132 In the sixth form, the assessment, recording and reporting of students' work is good. Teachers mark and assess students' work well. In the day-to-day assessment of work, students are aware of the criteria for success and the requirements of examination boards.

133 The quality of links with parents and the information they receive on the progress of students in the sixth form are good. In most subjects, the quality of the subject comments is detailed and provides sound targets for improvement.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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134 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

135 The outstanding features include:

- a 14 - 19 curriculum at KS4 and in the sixth form that meets learners' needs;

- enrichment provided through a variety of off-site and out-of-hours activities;
- effective partnerships with interested parties and providers;
- effective work-related education that takes account of employers needs; and
- substantial opportunities available to develop entrepreneurial and other skills for lifelong learning.

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

- 136 The curriculum offered enables pupils and students of all abilities to study a broad range of subjects and gain accreditation except in Welsh second language short course. In KS3, the curriculum follows the national guidelines and covers the needs of the gifted and talented and pupils with ALN.
- 137 Effective transition arrangements are used by the school to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils from primary partner schools to Whitchurch High School. These arrangements include pastoral links and effective projects that involve many curricular areas. They also include frequent meetings and appropriate in service training (INSET). The transition arrangements from KS3 to KS4 are outstanding.
- 138 The curriculum offered allows for effective continuity and progression between years and key stages. The outstanding links with primary partner schools contribute to continuity and enhanced progression for pupils.
- 139 The curricular provision in KS4 and the sixth form is an outstanding feature of the school. At KS4, there is a wide range of academic and vocational courses that adhere to WAG's 14-19 Learning Pathways' agenda with subjects being offered in the five domains. There are over 30 subjects offered. Effective links with the local consortium and other providers extend the range of courses. An important development in the sixth form, this year, is the introduction of the WBQ qualification. This has broadened the provision to all students. The IB has been available in the sixth form for a number of years. Accreditation at Level 2 and 3 is available in the courses offered.
- 140 Provision to develop key and basic skills is good. Clear strategies are in place and this element is included in the schemes of work of all departments. This is enhanced by timetabled activities in KS3 and the involvement of the sixth form in the WBQ in Y12, which contributes very effectively to the enhancement of students' basic and key skills. All pupils at KS3 follow discrete information technology lessons and these specific skills are a good feature across the curriculum.
- 141 The opportunities available in the school for pupils and students to broaden and enrich their experiences through a variety of activities, including out-of-hours and off-site learning are an outstanding feature. Opportunities exist in music, drama, sport, visits to theatres, museums, art galleries, and abroad.
- 142 The school successfully extended its international links by developing a close partnership with Maccassar High School in Cape Town. The school is very active in supporting many charities.
- 143 Provision for the personal development of pupils is effective, except in form tutorial sessions where the spiritual development of pupils is only adequate. There is a structured PSE programme which meets statutory guidelines and is delivered to all pupils and students. School assemblies allow pupils and students the opportunity to develop spiritually. The Christian Union meetings contribute

well to this aspect. Overall, the school meets its statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

- 144 Pupils' social skills are developed in many areas of the curriculum. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning and work sensibly in groups or pairs. They respect the environment and are able to reason sensibly.
- 145 The cultural development of pupils and students is good. This is enhanced by many visits at home and abroad. Many lessons involve information about the culture of many countries including Wales.
- 146 The curriculum is enriched by outstanding partnerships, including the 14-19 consortium, primary partner schools, community organisations, employers, initial teacher training (ITT) providers, other universities and parents. The school does a great deal to receive the views of others by the effective use and analysis of questionnaires.
- 147 Religious education is delivered in accordance with the agreed syllabus and all the requirements of health education are covered. The curriculum meets all legal requirements and all external qualifications offered are approved nationally.

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

- 148 Work-related education is very effective and is an outstanding feature of the school. It is enhanced by the effective PSE programme provided throughout the school. Pupils and students who follow vocational courses are well catered for through the strong links that have developed with local employers. The partnership with Careers Wales contributes extensively to this development.
- 149 The school is making strides to improve the bilingual skills of its pupils. This includes increasing the numbers of pupils being entered for accreditation in Welsh second language. There are bilingual signs in the school and some registration periods are answered in Welsh. Displays in some classrooms include bilingual subject terminology. Pupils participate in the school eisteddfod and some incidental Welsh was heard during the inspection week. A few members of staff are involved in a weekly evening class at the school to improve their competency in the use of the Welsh language.
- 150 The "Cwricwlwm Cymreig" is covered in many subject areas. Nearly all pupils are familiar with the culture of Wales. Economic awareness and environmental issues are dealt with in some subjects. The geography of Wales is used well in many subjects to deal with this aspect and former school-pupils who have gained sporting recognition are used as role models.
- 151 The promotion of education for sustainable development is good within the school. There is an Eco-garden that has been developed on the upper site and the school has gained the bronze award and is currently working towards gaining a silver award. There is a co-ordinator in post and sustainable development is supported by work done in PSE and in design and technology where materials are recycled to good effect. The school currently recycles paper, cans and plastic. The school has an enthusiastic and effective Eco-committee.
- 152 The school takes account of employers' needs and this is an outstanding feature. This involves Careers Wales and local employers in classroom delivery. The work-experience programme is carefully monitored. The needs of employers,

including the sector skills' council, are considered when introducing vocational courses into the curriculum. Pupils regularly take part in the Engineering Scheme for Wales.

- 153 All pupils are given opportunities to understand and tackle social disadvantage and stereotyping. There is equality of access relating to courses for all learners. These are good features.
- 154 The opportunities available for pupils and students in the school through the various initiatives and experiences provide them with the requirements to develop their skills for lifelong learning. The school promotes pupils' confidence well and develops their abilities and encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning. These are outstanding features.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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- 155 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
- 156 There are several outstanding features in the way in which the school cares for, guides and supports its pupils. These include:
- an on-site support centre, integrating the work of school staff and a wide range of outside agencies;
 - highly effective transition arrangements;
 - a strongly developed programme of teacher-pupil interviews;
 - an extensive and highly co-ordinated programme of careers education and guidance;
 - excellent provision for pupils and students with additional learning needs; and
 - exceptional activities which help learners develop a profound understanding of diversity and the value of the contribution of others.

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

- 157 There is systematic individual support and guidance for most pupils, including SEN learners, in all years. Support services are structured by key stage, involving teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, and link establishments and multiple outside agencies. The support centre allows these to come together on site, and a "drop-in" provision on demand means that many learners' needs may effectively be met with minimal delay. This is an outstanding feature. Members of staff strive constantly to sustain a highly-effective caring and supportive atmosphere throughout the school. However, there is insufficient support in main-stream classes to meet the needs of all lower ability pupils.
- 158 Parents and carers become fully involved with school life by means of its regular newsletters and well-developed website. Pupils' planners provide regular information and a channel for communication about what learners are doing in class and for homework, and how well they are progressing. Parents are always welcome to visit or telephone to raise any concerns they may have.

- 159 Through a well-established school council, learners make their voice heard at all levels. The head boy and head girl are associate pupil governors. The council is informed of SIPs and consulted on a range of issues regarding improved provision. It ensures that pupils are well informed about current priorities.
- 160 Form tutors provide very effective support and guidance, together with learning leaders and pastoral assistants for each year. They ensure that pupils are aware of their targets and regularly monitor their progress. In addition, there is a highly developed programme of teacher-pupil interviews (TPI programme) giving objective and unbiased guidance closely focused to individual needs. This is an outstanding feature. Each learner has access to wide range of academic, pastoral and careers advice, including the services of a wide range of partners. The system includes individual mentoring. School personnel are training for formal accreditation as learning coaches but already carry out the necessary functions. Introduction to the 14-19 Learning Pathways options' menu begins early, with a conference in Y9. Learners are made aware of all possibilities both within the school and elsewhere. Year 11 pupils also have targeted academic mentoring from Cardiff University via the First Campus Scheme, and Y12 benefit from the Welsh Baccalaureate elements.
- 161 The school works in very close partnership with its cluster of partner primary schools. There are very good working relationships; pastoral links are strong. A firmly embedded transition plan runs from Y5, with occasional liaison with Y4 regarding preparation for the needs of particular individuals. It ensures the greatest possible continuity between the phases. Many subject departments provide a rolling programme of lessons for Y6 pupils who attend weekly throughout the year. There is a well-organised induction programme for primary pupils coming from further afield. Pupils are familiar with staff and surroundings and feel secure and confident when they transfer to secondary school.
- 162 The school provides a similar induction programme to prepare pupils for the transition to the upper school, and transition programmes in preparation for studies or employment post-16 are equally effective. For learners entering at other times, the school provides induction services through its tutors and "buddy" system.
- 163 All learners have a designated personal tutor who monitors their well-being. Personal and social educational provision is well structured, aligned with WAG and UA requirements, and makes use of school specialist staff and appropriate outside agencies. It is well integrated into the WBQ in Y12 but is less systematic in Y13. A strong emphasis on healthy lifestyles is, however, hindered by the ready availability of high calorie drinks and snacks.
- 164 The school has made good progress in improving levels of attendance, especially at KS4 where, at the last inspection, attendance was unsatisfactory. The rigorous procedures include prompt first-day absence telephone calls. Pastoral members of staff work in close partnership with the school's education welfare officer (EWO) and also with the primary schools to gain an idea of attendance patterns. Monitoring and targeting are improving as use of the newly-introduced Serco management information system (MIS) becomes established and refined. A sixth-form contract and a motivational rewards system throughout the school encourage good attendance. Good re-integration procedures involving the support centre and a multi-agency approach promote better attendance patterns for those learners who have been temporarily excluded.

- 165 The highly-developed provision for careers education and guidance complies with the latest WAG requirements and is an outstanding aspect. It begins in Y7 within PSE modules, growing more distinct as part of the Learning Pathways' conference in Y9. It is further developed through induction activities into KS4 and in regular interviews and a range of business and enterprise activities thereafter. All learners undertake work experience in Y10 and Y12. There are well-established links with a wide range of relevant agencies, employers, and higher education. Careers Wales has advisers based on site and learners make good use of its on-line services. The school holds Careers Wales Quality Awards, for guidance, co-ordination and partnership.
- 166 Designated senior members of staff at each key stage have responsibility for child protection. The All-Wales child protection procedures are followed. All who are involved with learners are appropriately checked; all staff are regularly reminded of requirements; pastoral staff have additional training which is regularly updated. A pilot programme in KS2-3 transition helps to identify potentially vulnerable pupils early. Child protection features in PSE programmes to help learners understand issues and look after themselves.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

- 167 The school works very closely and effectively with the primary partner schools to identify those who need additional support. The SEN co-ordinator (SENCo) leads a knowledgeable and dedicated team of teachers. There is a good relationship between the SENCo and parents, and regular consultation is undertaken.
- 168 The school policy for SEN meets the statutory requirements in the Code of Practice for Wales. A named governor for SEN plays an active role in the work of the department.
- 169 There are detailed individual educational plans (IEPs) for each pupil and they are reviewed regularly. Appropriate targets that reflect pupils' needs are set, and the school ensures that each teacher is aware of these targets by means of a pupil profile on the school's e-portal (Intranet) system.
- 170 Suitable arrangements are made for the eight pupils disappplied from elements of the NC using speech language and communication programmes.
- 171 A large team of teaching assistants works effectively to ensure that pupils make good progress. These assistants have good knowledge of the needs of individual pupils. There is very good collaboration between them, the senior teaching assistant and the SENCo and their work is well co-ordinated. The majority of the subject teachers plan appropriately to make good use of the assistants in their lessons. Their support in the classroom is effective without being intrusive.
- 172 The SEN department benefits greatly from the on-site support centre and make very good use of external agencies which visit the school regularly. This ensures that all pupils receive the necessary professional support. Members of the local community come in three times a week and take part in paired reading with individual pupils as part of a successful Volunteer Reading Group (VRG). University students also help provide additional individual support to pupils.
- 173 The school has a comprehensive behaviour and discipline policy. All pupils are aware of the standard of behaviour expected and the reward system is used as a positive method of ensuring good behaviour. The school deals effectively with

most pupils whose behaviour and attitudes are likely to impair their own progress and the progress of others, and who, as a result of this are in danger of being excluded from the school. Effective use is made of a withdrawal room where pupils are given time to complete their work and reflect on the reason for their withdrawal from lessons. There have been no permanent exclusions from school over the last three years and the on-site support centre together with other strategies, is helping to reduce the number of temporary exclusions.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

- 174 The school emphasises that equality of opportunity is central to its purpose. The KS2 transition programme helps assure that relevant information is disseminated and appropriate measures taken. Learners are well supported by the pastoral and SEN teams. Outside agencies are involved as required. Regular data analyses overseen by an assistant headteacher allow the achievement patterns of different groups and individuals to be identified and needs addressed through the school.
- 175 A comprehensive equalities policy is regularly monitored by the equalities committee to ensure it is current, practical and appropriately applied. The school promotes gender equality well. Through its PSE programme the school seeks to challenge any stereotypes in pupils' choices and expectations. Girls and boys are equally represented on the school council.
- 176 The school works very effectively to promote good race relations in everything it does. Racial equality is included in the equalities policy and detailed records are kept of the very few incidents which occur.
- 177 Appropriate records are also maintained of any incidents of harassment or bullying.
- 178 Pupils' planners include statements of the school's expectations, which are reinforced in tutorial sessions and assemblies. Bullying and conflict resolution are addressed in the PSE programme and KS3 drama programme, and in visits by external drama groups. Members of staff from the support centre identify and train a cohort of Y9 pupils who run a "buddy" programme on the lower school site. The school deals effectively with any issues that occur. The school holds the both Cardiff Anti-Bullying Silver and the Princess Diana awards for its work in this area.
- 179 The school makes every effort to ensure that disabled people are treated equally. There are suitable policies on disability equality and access plans which are reviewed and updated regularly. The school holds the Understanding Disability Millennium Award, and is recognised by the UA for specific expertise in catering for those with severe and complex needs
- 180 The inclusive nature of the school ensures that the celebration of diversity is integral to virtually everything it does. It subscribes to the European Youth Charter on inclusion and diversity in education and for its strong links with other countries has held the British Council International School's Award since 2005. Features which raise this element to an outstanding level are the close links staff and learners have developed with the learners, staff and the wider community of Maccassar High School in Cape Town South Africa and the Liberian peace and anti-child poverty campaigner Kimmie Weeks. At a very personal level learners are growing in understanding of others of vastly different social, cultural, political, economic and linguistic backgrounds, and discovering first-hand how essentially similar and equally important they all are.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good with outstanding features

181 The school awarded itself a grade 1 in its self-evaluation report. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower because of insufficient:

- outstanding features; and
- lack of rigour in the monitoring of learning and teaching by senior leaders and middle managers.

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

182 The aims and expectations of the school are made clear to all staff, pupils and visitors. All associated with the school are committed to these aims which were formulated following full consultation.

183 High priority is placed on the continuous professional development (CPD) of all staff within the school community. However, there are training issues in relation to the quality of monitoring of learning and teaching by middle managers. There is confusion by a minority of leaders as to what constitute standards in subjects and effective teaching, training and assessment.

184 The headteacher and one of the two deputies were appointed in September 2008. The headteacher works harmoniously with his senior leaders and governing body. He leads with vision, giving clear strategic direction and is very influential in promoting school values by example. He and his two deputy headteachers are strategic thinkers and are moving the school forward to its next phase of development.

185 The headteacher is ably supported by others in his SLT, all of whom provide good leadership in their respective areas of responsibility. They maintain standards by their regular presence around the school. They are also well supported by many effective departmental leaders and leaders of learning. However, the leadership qualities of a few managers are in the process of being developed.

186 Each member of the SLT is linked to a group of departments and these management links are good overall. Monitoring is supportive but not sufficiently rigorous in some aspects of management.

187 Members of the SLT only monitor the quality of learning and teaching of departmental leaders through the performance management system. Similarly, departmental leaders only undertake the same process with their team members. Members of the SLT do not regularly observe other staff teaching to quality monitor the process on an annual or regular basis. These inconsistencies in the monitoring procedures inhibit the raising of standards.

188 Staff, departmental meetings and pastoral meetings are held regularly. Good levels of communication exist between members of staff and the SLT. Management and pastoral meetings are held on a formal and informal basis with an agenda to evaluate progress and plan for improvement.

- 189 Many middle managers understand their roles clearly and undertake these roles to good effect. However, there are inconsistencies.
- 190 Targets for pupils' performance in subjects are set regularly as part of the school's procedures. However, subject-targets for performance in NC assessment at KS3 and at GCSE have not always been sufficiently challenging. The introduction of the new target-setting procedures in September 2008 has instilled rigour and challenge into the system.
- 191 The priorities and goals identified for development are linked to improvements sought in standards and quality. However, the success criteria, and targets for improvement are insufficiently rigorous.
- 192 The school's development of national priorities, local and international partnerships is outstanding. There are very good features, particularly in the development of the skills' framework in the KS3 curriculum through a personalised learning approach. The school is a leader in its local consortium in the 14-19 Learning Pathways' initiative and collaborates effectively with other establishments. The school recently introduced the Advanced WBQ in Y12 and is a strong advocate of WAG's community-focused schools' agenda within the local authority.
- 193 The school has developed links with a wide range of partners, including local organisations and businesses, which have helped improve the quality of provision and enhanced pupils' attitudes to learning. The school was re-accredited with the British Schools' International Schools' Award in 2008.
- 194 The school actively promotes equality of opportunity for all. Everyone in the school is treated with respect and has a contribution which is valued.
- 195 The school has a firmly-established system of performance management which applies to all members of teaching, technical and administrative staff. The programme for the induction of newly-qualified teachers (NQTs), and teachers new to the school is very well organised and managed.

How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

- 196 The governing body makes an effective contribution to the leadership of the school.
- 197 It includes very able and experienced members who have supported the school over a number of years, and members recently appointed. Their individual professional expertise is used effectively, not only in the work of the governing body but also in enhancing the curricular dimension of the school. The head boy and girl sit as members of the governing body.
- 198 The governing body has high expectations of the school. All members have a good understanding of the school's main priorities through the effective working of the sub-committee structure.
- 199 The chair of governors and chairs of the sub-committees are in regular discussion with the headteacher. They ensure that these committees work productively for the benefit of the school.
- 200 The governors clearly understand their roles and act as critical friends in an effective manner. They are well informed on all aspects of school performance and receive regular reports from senior leaders.

- 201 They are fully involved in the strategic management of the school. The quality of their strategic management and involvement in the evaluation processes are good features. Discussions are detailed and challenging.
- 202 Most governors are linked to departments and aspects of the school's work. Most links are well established. Regular meetings are held to evaluate DDPs and examination results in a positive manner.
- 203 The school prospectus contains all the required information.
- 204 All regulatory requirements are met.

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

Grade 2 : Good features and no important shortcomings

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

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

- 206 The SLT and governors are well informed about the school's performance overall. The procedures for departmental self-evaluation are well embedded and understood by all staff. There are many informal procedures which are gradually being streamlined this year.
- 207 The school's self-evaluation report is a detailed and comprehensive overview of the school's performance against the seven key questions. It identifies outstanding features, strengths and areas for development. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and governors contributed to this document.
- 208 The school's grading for the seven key questions matches the inspection team in key questions 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 whilst the inspection team lowered the grades by one grade for key questions 2 and 5 as there were insufficient outstanding features identified.
- 209 There is a whole-school policy statement for monitoring and evaluation and a detailed calendar for self-evaluation and improvement planning. Departmental self-evaluation has a clear focus on standards, teaching and assessment and leadership and management by concentrating on key questions 1, 2 and 5.
- 210 Formal lesson observations are only undertaken as part of the school's performance management. There is a five-year cycle of departmental reviews which includes lesson observations, work scrutiny, pupil panels and an ICT survey. These reviews are of very good quality. The deputy headteacher and learning leaders undertake a termly review of pupils' work at each key stage. Although the process of departmental review is thorough and comprehensive the five-year cycle makes it less effective in informing the process of annual whole-school self-evaluation.
- 211 Governors are well informed about the process and outcomes of self-evaluation. The headteacher meets groups of pupils from each year group on a termly basis and disaffected pupils from KS3 and KS4. This is a recent, but significant development. Pupil voice is also heard through the school council.

- 212 Parents' views are sought through regular surveys and questionnaires, at parents' evenings and through pupil-teacher interviews in Y7, Y9 and Y10.
- 213 The school has a very impressive partnership with many outside organisations and their views are actively sought.
- 214 However, the quality of departmental analysis and use of data is inconsistent. In the best departments there is a detailed breakdown of a wide variety of data which has clear points for future action.
- 215 Departmental lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work are inconsistent and are mainly informal. This makes the information gathered less effective to inform departmental self-evaluation.
- 216 Although the links between departments and the SLT are supportive, lesson observations in addition to performance management are insufficient. The current evidence to inform the process of self-evaluation and improvement planning requires further development.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

- 217 There are good links between whole-school self-evaluation, both at whole-school and departmental levels, and planning for improvement. The SIP is a detailed and carefully planned document which sets out the school's priorities and the means of achieving them. Departmental development plans are detailed and are clearly linked to departmental self-evaluation.
- 218 However, links between DDPs and the SIP are inconsistent across departments. The SIP does not cost all resource implications. The success criteria identified in most DDPs are not costed carefully enough and success criteria are insufficiently quantifiable.
- 219 The school's resources committee ensures that adequate resources are available to support priorities identified in whole-school and departmental planning. The school's performance overall is an improving one. Many of the recently introduced procedures are beginning to impact further on the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- 220 A strength of the monitoring of planning for improvement is the formal mid-year review of both the school and departmental improvement planning.
- 221 Good progress has been made on the two key issues identified at the last inspection in improving accommodation and meeting statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and religious education in the sixth form.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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- 222 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
- 223 The outstanding features are the:
- management and deployment of teaching and support staff to deliver the school's curricular programme;
 - deployment of the in-house estates' workforce and ICT support teams.

- resources available for teaching and learning; and
- co-ordinated and managed continuous professional development of all staff.

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

- 224 The school is well staffed with appropriately qualified, experienced and highly committed teachers. They are deployed effectively with the vast majority teaching their subject specialisms. Those who teach a few lessons outside their area of expertise receive outstanding support from departmental leaders and senior staff.
- 225 The implementation of the workforce restructuring exercise has led to an increased range of non-teaching staff. This has brought significant benefits for the teaching staff by substantially reducing their clerical and administrative workload. The management structure introduced with work-force remodeling has resulted in outstanding strategic links between support and teaching staff.
- 226 The appointment of a range of well-trained support staff provides outstanding support for the teaching staff and pupils. In addition to the full range of technical-support staff the school has appointed pastoral assistants in each year group. The pastoral assistants are receiving learning coach training which has significantly improved the guidance and advice available to pupils/students.
- 227 The appropriately qualified and experienced in-house estates' and ICT support teams make outstanding contributions to the development and maintenance of the school campus. The teams have undertaken major work such as the construction of the recreation barn, library, Dutch Barn, special needs' block, offices, music centre and a whole range of minor works. The well-motivated and enthusiastic teams deliver outstanding value for money. with building costs comparing extremely favourably to commercial rates.
- 228 The school employs twenty-nine teaching assistants who are suitably trained and provide effective assistance to identified pupils with SEN. They are very well managed and co-ordinated by the school's SENCo. However, the provision of teaching assistant support in mainstream classes is inadequate.
- 229 The school has invested heavily in its ICT resources thereby ensuring that all pupils/students and staff have access to the latest developments in computer technology. This outstanding provision has been achieved by the:
- networking of every classroom with at least one computer;
 - equipping of all departments with at least one data-projector and interactive whiteboard;
 - accessing by staff and pupils/students of electronic resources such as Moodle, Share-Point and e-Portal;
 - availability in most departments of a trolley of 16 laptops and a printer; and
 - generous computer to pupil ratio of 1:2.3.
- 230 There are two well-resourced libraries and learning centres. These are well managed by qualified librarians based in upper and lower schools. In the latter the librarian offers a number of very appropriate activities to encourage pupils to improve their literacy skills such as the Book Trek in Y7. The librarians liaise with subject departments to ensure that any purchases of new material complement

the curriculum. Both libraries service the subject departments during the school day, but are also available after-school hours to deliver learning activities.

- 231 The school and the UA have invested wisely through partnership in improving existing accommodation. The school has driven forward its new build programme in line with its five-year plan for development projects in areas which could not be solely provided by UA budgets. The accommodation provides safe and purposeful teaching areas for all subject departments. There are outstanding facilities for the teaching of physical education, music, information technology, SEN and the library. The displays of pupils' work in the classrooms and along most of the corridors are of high quality.
- 232 However, the ageing demountables on the lower and upper school sites do not provide the most stimulating and inviting environment for teaching and learning, with some having been condemned by the UA and thus require urgent replacement.
- 233 Both school sites have been extensively developed to allow free access to all facilities to those with disabilities. This provision has included the building of ramps, disabled toilets and washrooms.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money

- 234 Budget control and planning are outstanding. The bursar and the headteacher formally track actual expenditure against the planned budget on a monthly basis. Further reviews are undertaken with the UA finance officer who assists in the monitoring of progressive expenditure against the financial year. The school secures a very close relationship between the use of resources and the school's identified areas for improvement. This is a very significant strength of the school.
- 235 The regular and systematic review of all aspects of resourcing, applying best-value principles ensures efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources. Expenditure and progress are evaluated annually against departmental and school improvement targets. The governing body finance committee regularly reviews expenditure against allocated budget headings. This is an outstanding feature of the school's financial processes and procedures.
- 236 The school has been very successful in obtaining additional funding through external bodies which facilitates specific curriculum developments. These additional funds from the General Teaching Council of Wales (GTCW), Behavioural Support Grant (BSF), WBQ, Community-Focused Schools, and the Sports Council for Wales have made a very significant contribution to the educational opportunities available to all pupils/students. Long term partnership links forged with many local businesses and suppliers also reflects the ability of the school to secure sustained value for money.
- 237 The school's procedures for the management, deployment and development of both teaching and support staff are outstanding. The CPD requirements of all members of staff are identified in the performance management cycle. Members of staff are required to maintain a portfolio of evidence of training and development which is very good practice. The school makes extensive use of its internal expertise to deliver training. This is outstanding practice in terms of both staff development as providers and in obtaining value for money. The school was awarded the "Investors in People Award" in 2001 and was re-affirmed in 2004 and in 2007.

- 238 The school has successfully implemented all arrangements associated with the workload agreement and has made very good provision for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time. This time is used effectively.
- 239 Support for NQT's and those in their early years of teaching is outstanding. The provision for ITT and the graduate teacher programme (GTP) is detailed and comprehensive.
- 240 Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks have been completed for all teaching, support and volunteer staff working in the school post-April 2005. The UA will be starting a programme of rechecking staff in the near future and the school will be informed as to who requires the checks.
- 241 The school's provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, the effective deployment and development of both teaching and support staff and the efficient management and control of its budget ensure the achievement of outstanding value for money. However, at present, this outstanding value for money has not filtered through to the standards achieved by pupils/students at the appropriate stages of their school careers. Overall, the school achieves good value for money.
- 242 The sixth form provides good value for money in terms of curricular provision and organization, students' achievement in external examinations and in their contribution to the general life of the school.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

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

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

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

- 243 Examination results at GCSE in the last two years have been well above national averages for passes at grades A*-C. These results represent good achievement.
- 244 Examination results at A level in the last two years have been above and below national averages for passes at grades A-C. These results represent achievement broadly in line with students' ability. The English results in the IB are good, significantly exceeding the world-wide average.

KS3

Good features

- 245 Most pupils of all abilities make good progress and are achieving well.
- 246 They speak confidently in small groups to plan joint presentations, and when evaluating one another's work.
- 247 More able pupils have a good grasp of critical language, and most pupils can use some critical language to comment on their reading. They engage thoughtfully with a range of genres as they read independently. They can also select evidence for their views from demanding texts. They understand the important features of persuasive and information writing.

248 Many pupils of all abilities, boys as well as girls, write fluently and at length and their standards of presentation are generally high. This represents progress since the last inspection. Some can adapt their style for different types of audience, and express complex ideas in writing.

Shortcomings

249 In role play and in giving extended answers, a minority of pupils do not do well. They do not consider their audience when speaking to a larger group, and speak quietly, without expression, or too informally.

KS4

Good features

250 Most pupils achieve well in relation to their ability. They discuss effectively in small groups. They read collaboratively, some with a high level of inference. They use critical language and justify their views with evidence and quotation.

251 Most read their Shakespeare texts carefully, developing independence and recalling key points about plot and character. More able pupils can summarise complex ideas and understand the importance of historical context in their reading.

252 Many pupils write fluently and can effectively redraft to improve their writing. They understand the need for a range of vocabulary and techniques to describe mood and place, and can apply this to their own writing. Most can structure their writing with only a little guidance. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The more able use a wide range of techniques in their writing.

Shortcomings

253 A few pupils cannot identify specific strengths and weaknesses in others' writing and in their own. This restricts their rate of progress.

254 Some pupils of all abilities give undeveloped oral answers.

Sixth form

Good features

255 Students of all abilities make good progress.

256 There is good productive small group discussion in reading, analysing and evaluating texts.

257 Some students speculate and use contextual knowledge very effectively.

258 Most have a good and developing understanding of critical and linguistic concepts. They study with confidence, independence and enjoyment.

259 Some extended writing is outstanding. The most able write with commitment and flair in a range of literary styles.

260 Students contribute well in class discussions.

Shortcomings

261 A few students do not use critical terms consistently, and this slows their progress. Some of these have significant gaps in their active vocabulary when talking about texts.

262 A few develop their ideas only briefly. They focus less on the overall meaning of texts, more on the obvious features of style.

Mathematics

Key Stage 3: Grade 3 - Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

Sixth Form: Grade 3 - Good features outweigh shortcomings

263 Examination results at GCSE in the last two years have been above national averages for passes at grades A*-C and A*/A. These results represent good achievement for these students.

264 Examination results at A level in the last two years have been below national averages for passes at grades A/B. These results are lower than would be expected for students of similar ability.

KS3

Good features

265 Most pupils have a good understanding of place value and the most able have very good numerical skills using fractions, decimals and percentages confidently.

266 Most pupils have good mental mathematical skills and can recall number facts quickly and can, for example multiply by multiples of ten, a hundred and a thousand.

267 Most pupils can explain their answers orally and the more able can explain complex ideas and methods in written form.

268 All pupils complete formal investigations to a good standard and the most able generalise their solutions in algebraic terms and justify their answers using mathematical language effectively.

269 When working independently, pupils make good use of ICT to consolidate their mathematical skills to raise standards.

Shortcomings

270 The very able pupils in mixed-ability classes in Y7 and the more able within sets in Y8 are not sufficiently challenged and do not progress sufficiently.

271 Most pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to answer open-ended questions and do not explain their methods. They do not construct enough of their own mathematical ideas and strategies.

272 Many pupils are only able to solve problems when set as a series of similar questions. They are therefore unable to apply mathematical techniques in unfamiliar contexts.

273 Many lower achieving pupils do not complete enough work in lessons and do not acquire new skills or correct misconceptions of spatial concepts such as area, length, symmetry and reflection.

KS4

Good features

274 Higher-achieving pupils complete algebra work of a high quality with rigour and fluency. They can also apply algebra in other contexts to generalise and express

rules. They have a good understanding of trigonometry and can interpret complex statistical diagrams

- 275 More able pupils are quick to understand new concepts using knowledge gained in previous lessons and complete a substantial amount of work in class. They therefore make good progress through Y10 and Y11.
- 276 Pupils of average ability have a good range of numerical skills including the use of negative numbers. Many of them have a good grasp of transformation geometry and the majority of pupils have a good knowledge of angle rules.
- 277 When preparing for examinations, pupils are able to apply successfully a range of algebraic techniques in the context of examination questions and are able to correct their work independently.
- 278 Most lower-ability pupils make good progress especially when they are engaged in doing mathematical puzzles and activities such as card matching.

Shortcomings

- 279 Many pupils of average ability do not complete enough work independently and do not address misconceptions, acquire new skills or revise effectively.
- 280 Some pupils of average ability are not sufficiently aware of the links between algebra and the properties of numbers and this prevents them from solving equations accurately.

Sixth form

Good features

- 281 Most students are skilled in the use of algebra in both pure mathematics and mechanics and the skills acquired at GCSE have been successfully developed in Y12.
- 282 Most students can recall facts from previous lessons and understand new concepts quickly. They are also able to revisit work and correct misconceptions.
- 283 Students are able to place mathematics within an historical context and are aware of the importance and contributions of key mathematicians in the development of mathematics.
- 284 More able students are able to progress quickly in mechanics and are able to model simple circular motion using speed and angular velocity.

Shortcomings

- 285 Some students' solutions to examination-style problems are marred by insufficient rigour and care and the absence of commentary in most students' work limits their understanding and makes revision more difficult.
- 286 Many students are not sufficiently aware of the significance of their solutions when, for example, differentiating functions and the work of all students is only completed within the narrow context of examination style questions.
- 287 Some students are unable to transfer knowledge from one mathematical area to another in both pure mathematics and mechanics.

Information technology

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

Key Stage 4: Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features

Sixth form: Grade 1 - Good with outstanding feature

288 In the past few years, with the exception of 2007, GCSE results in this subject in the grades A*-C have been higher than local and national averages. In 2008 results were much higher than the local and national averages. Girls' results were higher than results for girls both locally and nationally. Results in the grades A*/A and B are significantly higher than local and national averages for both boys and girls.

289 A level results in the last two years were much higher than the local and national averages for grades A-C. A /B grades were significantly higher than both the local and national averages.

KS3

Good features

290 Almost all pupils have good and often very good practical computing skills. Their confidence and competence skills in handling the computer are good. Almost all pupils are able to find quickly and use information from a variety of sources including the internet without having to ask for help from their teachers.

291 The most able have a very good understanding of the theoretical aspects of their tasks and are able to explain and discuss their work well. They readily develop interesting computer games using quite complex functions.

292 Pupils' knowledge and understanding of data-capture when developing their games database skills are good. Almost all pupils communicate information using word-processing and desktop-publishing applications well.

293 Pupils with special or additional learning needs make good progress and produce work of a good standard in line with their capabilities.

Shortcomings

294 A very few pupils tend to produce the simplest solution to their game project and do not readily experiment unless directed by the teacher.

295 A few pupils produce leaflets that cannot be easily read by their audience.

KS4

Outstanding features

296 Almost all pupils' practical computing skills are outstanding. They use the hardware, together with a very broad range of software and associated peripheral equipment exceptionally well.

297 Most pupils' problem-solving skills are outstanding and feature strongly in every lesson particularly in choosing and using the more complex functions and attributes of a very broad range of software including MOODLE.

298 Most pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of higher-order computing-skills and techniques are outstanding.

Good features

- 299 Every pupil has a good knowledge and understanding of computer systems including the range of input devices for human interaction and data capture. All pupils can readily select and use a range of software packages that best fits the required task.
- 300 All pupils plan their work thoroughly and show good problem-solving and evaluation skills. They have a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of their tasks and can explain and discuss their work using a good level of technical vocabulary.
- 301 In the hair-salon project they confidently model information using a spreadsheet. They use the functions and facilities of the software very effectively to produce predictions using a range of processes, such as the "what if" facility. In other applications, they can create a sophisticated business database and set up very effective and efficient queries to search their data and model information.
- 302 Pupils with ALN make good progress and achieve their potential.

Shortcomings

- 303 There are no significant shortcomings.

Sixth form

Outstanding features

- 304 A significant number of students show an outstanding level of practical competence and computer skills including the construction and use of sub-routines in visual basic.
- 305 Most students show outstanding skills in the construction and use of very complex service systems that fulfil the needs of their chosen business applications. In addition, they produce outstanding user and maintenance documentation to support their systems.
- 306 Most students show outstanding levels of creativity in the house-styles they develop as folio covers for their manuals. The work reflects outstanding skills in using a range of word-processing and desk-top publishing techniques.

Good features

- 307 When constructing systems, all students collect a wide range of data relevant to their project, test their validity and evaluate their solutions to a very good standard.
- 308 Most A level students display the ability to apply their computing skills to problem-solving in the real world very well.
- 309 The standard of work in most students' project files is very high. Students have a good understanding and knowledge of the theory relating to computer systems.

Shortcomings

- 310 There are no significant shortcomings.

Art and design

Key Stage 3: Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features

Key Stage 4: Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features

Sixth Form: Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features

- 311 Examination results at GCSE in vocational and art and design options are consistently and significantly above national averages at grades A*-C. These results represent very good achievement. Entry Level examination pupils achieve well above local and national average grades.
- 312 Examination results at A level in art textiles are consistently and significantly above the national average at grades A-B. These results represent very good achievement. In the vocational and IB examinations students achieve well above average results.

KS3

Outstanding features

- 313 Both boys and girls make rapid progress and consistently achieve significantly above national expectation.
- 314 Their understanding of a breadth of art and of different artists is outstanding. They regularly apply this knowledge creatively. They improve rapidly because they apply their assessment process effectively.
- 315 In their investigation of art they learn how to respond to the natural and man-made environment outstandingly. They are very well informed of a range of artists associated with Wales and they regularly enrich their work with influences found in their study of the art of other cultures.
- 316 When making two and three-dimensional art-work they demonstrate outstanding creative craft skills. From experimentation they learn how to exploit the qualities of different materials. Their productivity is well above average. They use their sketchbooks effectively. Their drawing skills are very well developed and produce work of high quality.
- 317 Pupils with SEN make very good progress during the key stage. They understand how to express themselves in imaginative and well-made clay portraits.
- 318 More able and talented pupils achieve beyond expectation.

Shortcomings

- 319 There are no significant shortcomings.

KS4

Outstanding features

- 320 Pupils develop outstanding independent learning skills. Overall they achieve a full examination grade above that which would normally be expected in vocational and fine art options.
- 321 Their observational drawing ability is well above average and their creative sketchbook work is outstanding.
- 322 In their regular 'show and tell' presentations they learn how to explain and justify their personal responses. Their sharing of ideas and experiences stimulates and strengthens their development and ensures work of high quality is produced.

Shortcomings

- 323 There are no significant shortcomings.

Sixth form

Outstanding features

- 324 Both male and female students are outstandingly good creative artists. They regularly achieve standards that would not be out of place at a higher level.
- 325 They demonstrate outstanding craft responses in their creative use of textiles, millinery, photography, design, animation, jewellery, ceramics, painting and sculpture.
- 326 Students' application of art, design and craft skills of exceptional standards to real-life situations prepare them well for the world-of-work.
- 327 Following their visits to major art galleries, IB students demonstrate very good mature analysis of artwork from different periods.
- 328 Vocational students demonstrate their well-established craft skills in large-scale paintings that express their spiritual, moral and social values in imaginative and creative ways.
- 329 Creative sketchbook work in all programmes of study is consistently and outstandingly good.
- 330 Students' clear understanding of examination requirements, their meeting of course deadlines, and their consistency of practice in the self-evaluation process are all notable factors in their outstanding success.

Shortcomings

- 331 There are no significant shortcomings.

Religious education (including religious studies)
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Key Stage 3: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 4: Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features

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

- 332 Examination results at GCSE over the last two years have been well above national averages for passes at grades A*-C and A*/A. These results represent outstanding achievement.
- 333 Examination results at A level in the last two years have been below national averages for passes at grades A/B. These results are lower than would be expected.

KS3

Good features

- 334 Many pupils know how and why Christian and Sikh believers worship and celebrate their faith.
- 335 Many pupils can interpret religious concepts and symbolism.
- 336 In their study of parables the ability to empathise is good.
- 337 Many pupils show good knowledge and understanding in relation to Christian believers' baptism.
- 338 Pupils are aware that people's religious beliefs can influence their views on punishment.

339 Pupils with SEN make good progress and produce work in relation to their abilities.

340 Good and strong use is made of ICT.

Shortcomings

341 The quality of work in a minority of books is not detailed enough.

KS4

Outstanding features

342 Speaking is a major strength. In the best examples, pupils are articulate and can freely express their opinions on moral and religious issues.

343 Many pupils use research skills to justify their viewpoint with appropriate and accurate examples of high standards.

344 Many pupils improve the standards of their own work and the work of others by providing evaluative comments on the work produced.

Good features

345 Most pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the moral and religious issues raised by animal rights.

346 Nearly all pupils are aware of the ways in which people's lifestyles are influenced by their religious beliefs.

347 All students improve the standards of their work by listening carefully in class and write accurately.

Shortcoming

348 A few pupils do not extend their knowledge and understanding of religious issues. They do not participate in discussions.

Sixth form

Good features

349 Students make good progress and about half are very articulate.

350 In Y12, many students show good understanding on the existence of God and are familiar with scholarly opinions.

351 In Y13, the ability to evaluate and reflect is well developed in relation to the problem of 'evil'.

352 A few Y13 students can create their own analogies to good standards, through the medium of ICT, to explain abstract points of view.

353 In Y12 and Y13, students are able to collect information from a range of different sources effectively.

Shortcomings

354 A small minority of Y13 students do not express their views in class.

Drama

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

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

Sixth form: Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features

355 Examination results at GCSE over the last two years have been above national averages for passes at grades A*-C with a significant proportion gaining the highest A*/A grades.

356 Examination results at A level in the last two years have been above national averages for passes at grades A/B. Many students achieve these higher grades.

KS3

Good features

357 Most students from the whole-ability range make good progress as they move from Y7–Y9. They cope well with the two-week gaps between sessions and the more able recall previous work in some detail.

358 Pupils work effectively in group work. They can analyse, select and develop their ideas when solving problems of text.

359 Many pupils speak well in their group work. Vocabulary is generally good and they use relevant terminology to good effect. In their work on Hound Gelert, Y7 pupils demonstrate good understanding of reporting techniques.

360 Many pupils show good understanding in their development of characters. They recognise the need to understand the history, background and relationships between characters to make them believable to an audience.

Shortcomings

361 Several middle and lower-ability pupils are unwilling to share their knowledge and practical work in front of the whole group.

362 The concentration levels of some Y9 pupils are limited.

KS4

Good features

363 Pupils with SEN develop their own ideas to a high standard. They devise work well together and practice and refine performance independently of the teachers. They volunteer to provide props, lighting, write their own scripts and film their work to evaluate quality and as a record of progress for future lessons.

364 The majority of pupils participate to a good standard in the GCSE course.

365 Practical work demonstrates good knowledge of text and sub-text and staging techniques. Pupils use still images, gestures, facial expression and accent to enhance performances very effectively. Performance shows control and concentration. In the best examples, pupils show empathy with their characters.

366 Written work is well structured and the most able produce detailed reviews.

Shortcomings

367 Written work is sometimes too descriptive and there is no critical evaluation.

368 Some girls' communication skills are limited. They do not participate in whole-class discussion.

Sixth form

Outstanding features

369 There are a number of students in the sixth form whose standards of performance are outstanding. They make invaluable contributions to school productions. They demonstrate high levels of skill in interpreting characters for their examination courses, commitment and a range of musical and dramatic skills in the current production of Sweeney Todd.

Good features

370 Most students have good levels of knowledge and understanding of the process involved in the development of characters. They apply the process very effectively.

371 Many show good insight into the feelings and emotions of the characters. These are underpinned by thorough research of text and sub-text and consideration of background.

372 Students evaluate their and other students' work very effectively. They observe accurately and make very good use of subject-specific terminology to convey their ideas.

373 They demonstrate an increasing ability to think critically and to analyse their work both orally and in writing.

Shortcomings

374 There are no significant shortcomings.

School's response to the inspection

The school is delighted that the inspection team found that Whitchurch High School is a "good school and is moving forward from strength to strength".

We are very proud of our school and all it has to offer. As a twelve form entry school we are pleased that the quality of curriculum provision, care and support and value for money is recognised along with many other outstanding and innovative features.

We are pleased that our wide ranging partnerships with our primary partner schools, businesses, international and community links have been recognised, giving an insight and engagement with others further afield.

The school will, through its improvement plans, continue to further raise standards and meet the individual needs and celebrate the talents of all.

The school welcomes the recommendations contained in this report and looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with the UA to resource the best possible educational provision for our learners.

We wish to thank the inspection team led by Mr Gwyn Thomas for the highly professional and engaged manner in which the inspection process was conducted, enabling the school and team to work in a spirit of partnership throughout. The constructive approach of the inspection team and the feedback provided give clearly identified steps to continue school improvement.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Whitchurch High School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Penlline Road Whitchurch Cardiff
Postcode	CF14 2XJ
Telephone number	02920629700

Headteacher	Huw Jones-Williams
Date of appointment	1 September 2008
Chair of governors	Joyce Crandon
Reporting inspector	W Gwyn Thomas
Dates of inspection	2-5 March 2009

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	367	355	362	356	357	279	207	2283

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	123	26	137.4

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	16.6 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	4.5:1
Average teaching group size	22.4
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	74

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	93	93	91	89	87	91	89	90
Term 2	91	91	90	85	94	90	87	90
Term 3	95	92	92	91	91	90	85	91

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	11.0
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	131

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2008																
Total number of pupils in Y9: 354																
Percentage of pupils at each level																
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP	
English	Teacher assessment	School	-	-	-	-	-	3	6	18	36	29	8	-	-	
		National	0.1	0.6		0.5	0.4	1.5	6.1	21.3	37.1	24.2	7.9	0.3	0	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	-	-	-	1	2	2	7	13	24	24	26	1	-	
		National	0.1	0.5		0.5	0.4	1.3	6.7	18.1	28.9	27.5	14.8	1.2	0.1	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	15	31	35	12	1	-	
		National	0.1	0.6		0.5	0.2	0.7	5.1	19.0	35.6	27.2	10.8	0.1	0	

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment	
In the school	67
In Wales	60

Public Examination Results:

Pupils aged 15

Number of pupils aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 370						
Percentage of pupils aged 15 who :						
	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Core Subject Indicator (2)	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2007/08	99	88	65	55	55	369
LEA Area 2007/08	99	85	56	44	43	343
Wales 2007/08	98	87	58	46	44	356
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	19	357
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	49	351

Number of boys aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 179						
Percentage of boys aged 15 who :						
	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Core Subject Indicator (2)	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2007/08	99	86	63	50	50	352
LEA Area 2007/08	98	82	52	42	41	327
Wales 2007/08	98	84	53	42	41	334
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	16	348
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	48	342

- (1) For details on qualifications, point scores and contribution to thresholds, please see guidance at [SSSP guidance](#).
- (2) For information about which syllabuses are included in each subject area see Notes for Guidance. For the provisional SSSP this will be the traditional GCSE definition. In the final SSSP, this definition will include a wider range of qualifications.
- .. Data not available

Number of girls aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 191						
Percentage of girls aged 15 who :						
	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Core Subject Indicator (2)	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2007/08	99	90	68	60	60	385
LEA Area 2007/08	100	88	59	46	45	361
Wales 2007/08	99	90	63	50	48	379
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	21	365
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	49	360

Pupils aged 15

	Percentage of pupils aged 15 who:		Percentage of boys aged 15 who :		Percentage of girls aged 15 who :	
	achieved one or more ELQ (2) only	Left full time education without a qualification (3)	achieved one or more ELQ (2) only	Left full time education without a qualification (3)	achieved one or more ELQ (2) only	Left full time education without a qualification (3)
School 2007/08	3.5	0.5	3.9	0.6	3.1	0.5
LEA Area 2007/08	3.2	2.4	4	3.1	2.5	1.8
Wales 2007/08	2.6	1.5	3.4	1.9	1.7	1.2
School 06/07/08	3.2	..	3.1	..	3.2	..
School 05/06/07	2.8	..	2.7	..	3	..

Pupils aged 17

	Number of pupils aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 241		Number of boys aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 107		Number of girls aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 134	
	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17
School 2007/08	91	542	90	546	92	540
LEA Area 2007/08	94	623	92	608	95	636
Wales 2007/08	94	631	93	596	95	659
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	..	..
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	..	..

- (3) For details on qualifications, point scores and contribution to thresholds, please see guidance at [SSSP guidance](#).
- (4) For information about which syllabuses are included in each subject area see Notes for Guidance. For the provisional SSSP this will be the traditional GCSE definition. In the final SSSP, this definition will include a wider range of qualifications... Data not available

SECONDARY EXAMINATION DATA, 2006 - 2008

Free School Meals, 2006 – 2008	2006	2007	2008
% of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	9.6	9.6	11.0
Free School Meal band	FSM<=10%	FSM<=10%	10%<FSM<=15%
<hr/>			
Key Stage 4, 2006 - 2008	2006	2007	2008
% achieving the Level 1 threshold	..	86.4	88.1
Benchmark Quartile	..	4	3
% achieving the Level 2 threshold	..	57.8	65.4
Benchmark Quartile	..	4	2
% achieving the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE at grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and Maths	..	..	55.1
Benchmark Quartile	..	..	2
% achieving the Level 2 threshold in the core subjects	..	..	54.9
Benchmark Quartile	..	..	2
Average wider points score	355.6	343.9	369.4
Benchmark Quartile	4	4	2

For 2004 onwards, the FSM percentage was based on pupils of compulsory school age only.
.. the data item is not available

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Inspectors spent a total of 55 days in the school and were joined by one of the school's two deputy headteachers as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 169 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;
- 417 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
William Gwyn Thomas	Rgl, KQ1 and KQ5, context, summary recommendations, appendix.
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector, contributing to all key questions.
Gwilym Williams	KQ2 & contributing to KQ4
Peredur Francis	KQ3
Martyn S Williams	KQ4
Dylan Gwyer Roberts	KQ6
Huw Llewelyn	KQ7
Gwyn Jones	Mathematics
Elizabeth Hinkley	English
Martyn L Williams	Religious education including religious studies.
Keith Hopkins	Information technology
Debra Makin	Drama
Eric Forster	Art and design
David Hughes	Support and contributing to KQ5
Delyth Williams	Support and contributing to KQ5
Lyn Mills	Nominee and contributing to all meetings

Acknowledgement

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

Contractor

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