

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw
Heol Folly
Trefddyn
Pontypool
NP4 8JD**

School Number: 6784075

Date of Inspection: 10 March 2008

by

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Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw 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 Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw took place between 10/03/08 and 13/03/08. 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.

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 **short** 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. Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw is an 11-18 mixed, designated Welsh medium Comprehensive school maintained by Torfaen Unitary Authority (UA). There are currently, 833 pupils on roll with 127 in the sixth form, compared with 761 at the time of the last inspection in February 2002 when there were 83 students in the sixth form. This is the only Welsh medium, secondary school in the former county of Gwent and it serves a number of adjacent unitary authorities.
2. Pupils come into Y7, having received their primary education in the Welsh sector. The majority who come from different parts of the old county of Gwent and those from Powys have English as their mother tongue. A large proportion of pupils come from Blaenau Gwent, which is a socially deprived area. Others attend from the city of Newport. Eleven point five percent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals.
3. Pupils of all abilities are received by the school. Nine pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 93 have been identified as needing some support. No pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum (NC). One pupil is "looked after" by the local authority.
4. Ninety four point five per cent of the pupils come from homes where the predominant language spoken is English. Five point three per cent come from Welsh speaking homes. All pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard within the school. No pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language.
5. The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 1996. The composition of the senior management team (SMT) includes the headteacher, one senior assistant headteacher and three assistant headteachers.
6. Vocationally-based courses at key stage (KS) 4 and in the sixth form are being developed internally and in partnership with other providers in the area.

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school's motto is: "Cerddwn Ymlaen". Its mission is to provide a stimulating environment - one which fosters a high quality of educational excellence in which hard work is rewarded. High expectations are the norm. The school sets out its nine aims and objectives clearly for all to understand.
8. The school has prepared a three-year development plan. A detailed development plan for 2007/10 identifies areas for development which encompass standards, teaching and assessment, bilingualism, the curriculum, pastoral care and guidance, management, self evaluation and the learning environment. Six specific areas have been identified for attention during this period. They include:
 - raising academic standards throughout the school;
 - updating the school's assessment policy and tracking pupil progress;
 - developing the curriculum;
 - providing appropriate buildings for pupils and staff;

- providing sufficient resources; and
 - promoting Welshness and developing the school's ethos.
9. The school also sets numerical targets for success at the end of KS3 and KS4 that, in 2008:
- 62% of pupils should reach at least level 5, in teachers' assessments in all core subjects combined, at the end of KS3 (English 70%, Welsh 70%, mathematics 75%, science 70%); and
 - in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations, 65% of pupils should gain at least five GCSE grades A*-C, and 95% gain at least five GCSE grades A*-G.

Summary

10. Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw is a good school with some outstanding features within several key questions. They relate specifically to:
- the development of sixth form students' personal, social and learning skills;
 - working relationships that foster learning throughout the school;
 - meeting the language and bilingual needs of all learners;
 - partnership arrangements that enrich the sixth-form curriculum; and
 - high quality personal support and guidance for learners.
11. The school has a number of shortcomings. These include:
- inconsistent line management structures;
 - an absence of specific job descriptions for all staff; and
 - inconsistency in planning, monitoring and improving performance.

Table of grades

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 the learners and the wider community?	2
4. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2
5. How effective are leadership and strategic management?	3
6. How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	3
7. How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	3

12. These grades match those of the school's self-evaluation report in key questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7. They are lower than that which the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report, in key questions 5 and 6.

Standards

13. Key Stage 3 results in each of the core subjects have fluctuated between 2005 and 2007. During this period, the core subject indicator (CSI) also varied. In 2007, pupil achievement in English, Welsh, and science was in the bottom 25%

of similar schools in Wales, where between 10% and 15% of pupils were entitled to free school meals.

14. An encouraging aspect of the school's GCSE results is that in 2007, 98% of pupils were entered and achieved at least one A*-G grade. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher grades A*/A is below the average for all schools in Wales.
15. During the last two years, there has been a reduction in the number of pupils leaving school without a recognised qualification. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades at A*-C/G has been above local authority and the average for all schools in Wales for the last three years. In 2007, the percentage of pupils achieving these grades is in the top half of similar schools.
16. In 2006 and 2007, girls outperformed boys in all key indicators at KS4, except in the core subject of science (2007).
17. Results at A level reflect appropriately students' ability in the sixth form. The percentage of students achieving two or more A levels or equivalent grades at A-C/E were above local authority and the average for all schools in Wales.

Standards in Key Skills

KEY SKILLS	KS3		KS4		SIXTH FORM	
	WELSH	ENGLISH	WELSH	ENGLISH	WELSH	ENGLISH
Speaking	1	1	1	1	1	1
Listening	2	2	2	2	1	2
Reading	2	2	2	2	2	1
Writing	3	3	3	2	3	1
Numeracy	3	3	2	2	2	2
ICT	2	2	2	2	2	2
Creative & Problem Solving	2	2	2	2	2	2
Improving Own Learning	2	2	2	2	2	2
Working With Others	1	1	1	1	1	1

18. Throughout the school, standards pupils achieve in most of their key skills are good. With the exception of writing skills in Welsh, they are predominantly strong in the sixth form. The skill of working with others is outstanding.
19. Pupils' and students' speaking skills are outstanding. With the exception of English and modern foreign language lessons, Welsh is the only language spoken within the school.
20. Pupils are aware of what they have to do to improve in most areas of the curriculum. There is some inconsistency in the target setting processes in KS3. Pupils do not reach their full potential by the end of this key stage.
21. Pupils in KS4 and sixth-form students, make very good progress. Their progress is monitored with greater rigour and this has raised standards.
22. A major strength of the school is the development of pupils' personal, social and moral skills which is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils and students behave responsibly towards one another. Lessons are conducted in a civilized manner and movement around the school is orderly.

23. Pupils show very good awareness and understanding of moral issues, beliefs and cultures. The quality of tutor periods is consistently high and this has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies contribute substantially to raising these standards. Pupils and staff take part in the assemblies.
24. The annual attendance rate was 91.1% during the previous year. This figure is below the (Welsh Assembly Government) WAG's target of 93%. It is above the national figure of 90.6% for 2007, but marginally below the attendance figure of 91.2% for similar schools in terms of the level of free school meals.
25. The school works very closely and effectively with Careers Wales and industrialists to facilitate the preparation of pupil movement to post-16 education or the world of work.

The quality of education and training

26. Where teaching is outstanding, the relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Appropriate questioning techniques enable pupils to think independently. Expectations are high and there is appropriate pace and challenge. Group work is effective.
27. The following grades were awarded for the 53 lessons observed.

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
All lessons	17%	60%	21%	2%	0%

28. The percentage of lessons graded 1 and 2 in this inspection (77%) is above the all-Wales figures in the latest Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training report for 2006-07 of 76%. The figure is also well above that achieved in the last inspection, but below the WAG's Vision into Action 2010 target of 80%.
29. Where teaching is good, teachers have a good grasp of their subject knowledge and key skills are developed within the classroom.
30. Where there are shortcomings, there is too much emphasis on subject knowledge and insufficient time to reflect on the progress made during the lesson.
31. Where assessment practices are consistent, rigorous and accurate, departments are able to monitor pupils' progress and pupils are clear on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In other instances, there are inconsistencies in the target setting processes in KS3 and in the advice given to pupils of all ages on how to improve.
32. The school is working successfully with its partner primary schools to develop and strengthen the assessment procedures in KS2 and KS3.
33. The school's curriculum offers a wide range of subject options to its pupils in KS4 and the sixth form. Links with Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymini, have extended the range of subjects, by enhancing vocational provision. The curriculum is accessible to all. Pupils with SEN in KS4 are entered for GCSE and Entry Level qualifications.
34. Good extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' personal development. Many pupils benefit from the wide range of cultural activities available.
35. Pupils' key skills are developing through classroom activities. Currently, key skills accreditation is mainly focused on the sixth form. Some work is being

undertaken in KS3 and KS4. However, there is insufficient monitoring of the impact of key skills on standards across the school.

36. Careers education is good with local employers making substantial contributions. Work-related education is prominent in the school. Entrepreneurial skills are good in KS4 and the sixth form but are underdeveloped in KS3.
37. Pupils' and students' active participation in the promotion of education for sustainable development is underdeveloped throughout the school.
38. There are outstanding features in the way pupils are cared for, guided and supported. The pastoral system is highly effective and successfully supports the personal and social development of the pupil. Transition arrangements between each key stage are carefully planned and managed.
39. Monitoring of pupils' attendance has raised attendance levels. However, the school's attendance figure is significantly affected by parents taking holidays during term time.
40. The quality of provision for pupils with SEN and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties is very good. Teachers diagnose pupils' needs carefully and implement a range of effective support strategies at an early stage.
41. The school does not currently contribute to healthy eating strategies.
42. Overall, the school's provision for equal opportunities is strong, giving all pupils as many opportunities as possible.
43. There is a comprehensive anti-bullying policy that is used to deal effectively with incidents. Child protection procedures are well embedded in the school.

Leadership and management

44. The headteacher's vision for the development of the Welshness and ethos of the school is shared by all associated with Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw. His attention has been focused on securing vastly improved accommodation for the school through constant and prolonged discussions with the local UAs it serves.
45. There are links from the SMT to all departments, but the effectiveness of these links is variable. Some departments are monitored and lesson observations are undertaken by members of the SMT, but this is done mainly by the heads of department. Quality assurance procedures are not rigorous.
46. Senior, middle-managers and staff do not have job-descriptions with specific responsibilities for which they are accountable. Too many of the SMT team have responsibilities which detract their attention from strategic issues.
47. Where the SMT has oversight of a key stage, support for year heads and their tutors, including the monitoring of standards within the pastoral teams, is very good.
48. In several instances, middle managers give clear directions and are consistent in raising standards; they lead their teams well. Where there is inconsistency, they do not monitor performance rigorously. Consequently, pupils do not reach their full potential.

49. The school's performance management procedures are not fully effective as there is no robust overview of the annual cycle. Staff do not have specific job descriptions.
50. Governors understand their roles and are involved in the strategic management of the school. They are only linked to departments through their involvement with the curriculum sub-committee.
51. The school's self-evaluation report is a detailed document which identifies strengths and areas for development. The self-evaluation processes seek the views of carers, teaching staff and the school council. The school does not have a whole-school policy for self-evaluation.
52. The school has a vast amount of data available to managers who are now beginning to use the information effectively to raise standards.
53. In several departments, the development plans are inconsistent in quality and they do not relate well to the school development plan (SDP).
54. The school is sufficiently staffed with suitably-qualified and experienced staff. Levels of administrative support for managers are only adequate while classroom support for pupils with learning difficulties is inadequate.
55. Accommodation is insufficient for the number of pupils on roll and staff on site. There are shortcomings in several areas, in particular, buildings are old and too many of the demountables are unsuitable. Under the present circumstances, the school makes best use of its accommodation.
56. Pupils' standards in information and communications technology (ICT) have been improved in KS3. The school has invested in more computers and pupils in KS3 receive a time-tables lesson of ICT each week. However, departments have difficulty in accessing the computer suites. Several classrooms have interactive white-boards which support teaching and learning.
57. The school rigorously manages its budget allocation effectively, through the headteacher and finance officer to ensure cost-effectiveness. Currently, it has a deficit budget. The governing body monitors spending appropriately. Overall, the school achieves value for money.
58. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in developing consistency in assessment, recording and reporting and the school complies with the statutory requirements for the act of daily collective worship for every pupil.
59. Satisfactory progress has been made to increase ICT provision; developing the link role between SMT and heads of department; ensuring consistency between the school and departmental plans; and dealing with issues of health and safety.
60. Unsatisfactory progress has been made in improving the quality of buildings.

Recommendations

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

- *R1. Monitor all aspects of performance management procedures and ensure they comply with national requirements.
- *R2. Review and update annually all staff job descriptions to ensure that staff are accountable to the headteacher for their agreed responsibilities.
- *R3. Formalise and standardise the monitoring processes of the senior and middle management teams to raise standards, including the quality of learning and teaching.
- *R4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the current roles of the SMT and initiate changes, where necessary, to strengthen its strategic impact.
- R5. Strengthen the self-evaluation processes to ensure coherence and consistency between the planning and monitoring process.
- *R6. Develop and standardise assessment structures in KS3, and improve the quality of advice given to pupils across the school.
- *R7. Continue to work closely with the local authorities to address the important shortcomings in the provision of accommodation, in particular, the demountable and dining facilities.

The SDP addresses several of these recommendations.*

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

KS3 and KS4

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 62. Results in teacher assessments at the end of KS3 have varied considerably over the last three years. Overall, attainment in 2007 was below the average for similar schools where between 10% and 15% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. With the exception of mathematics, the school was placed in the bottom 25%.
- 63. Teacher assessments in English, Welsh, mathematics and science were below local authority (LEA) and the national average. In 2007, the percentage of pupils achieving at least level 5 in teacher assessments at the end of KS3 is in the bottom half of similar schools in the three core subjects combined (CSI).

64. The CSI was the same as the national average in 2007. Between 2005 and 2007, overall results had fluctuated, but English results had declined continuously.
65. The KS3 2007 figures highlighted that pupils achieving at least level 5 in mathematics, science and CSI had improved compared with the previous inspection's KS3 results in 2002. English results had remained the same. Welsh results had declined significantly and were below the previous inspection figures.
66. At KS4 in 2007, the percentage of pupils achieving at least five GCSE grades at A*-C and five GCSE grades at A*-G is above LEA and national averages. When compared with similar schools in Wales, the percentage of pupils in the five A*-C category is in the top 50% of schools with similar free school meal entitlement. In 2007, the school's CSI result, when compared with similar schools in Wales, is in the top 25%.
67. Between 2005 and 2007, the percentage of pupils achieving a grade C or above in the core subjects varied. The greatest consistency was in English. During this three year period, pupil achievement in the core subjects and the CSI, was better than LEA and national averages.
68. In 2007, 56% percentage of pupils achieved the level 2 threshold (five GCSE grades at A*-C including mathematics, Welsh first language or English). This figure was well above LEA and national averages.
69. Between 2005 and 2007, girls outperformed boys in English, Welsh mathematics and the CSI. The performance of girls had improved in English and Welsh. Boys' performance had improved in mathematics and science. In 2007, boys outperformed girls in science.
70. In KS3 and KS4, pupils of all abilities achieve irrespective of their backgrounds. This is a good feature of the school. However, many pupils do not reach their full potential by the end of KS3.
71. Overall, pupils' standards in key skills have improved since the previous inspection with standards in all skills having at least good features outweighing shortcomings.
72. Pupils' skills of working with others are outstanding. They work effortlessly in pairs or larger groups, always on task and through the appropriate language.
73. Pupils' speaking skills in Welsh first language and English have improved and now are good with outstanding features. Their bilingual skills are strong as is evidenced by their use of both languages confidently. Their Welsh speaking skills are outstanding. Throughout the inspection period, Welsh was spoken constantly by all pupils.
74. Pupils' listening skills have good features and no important shortcomings. They listen to their teachers and to one another carefully. Teaching, including explanations, is given in Welsh or the appropriate target language. Pupils show good recall of previous work and use subject-specific terminology appropriately.
75. Reading skills in Welsh first language and English have good features and no important shortcomings. Those with reading difficulties have effective support. Consequently, pupils' reading ages have increased.

76. In KS3 and KS4, Welsh written work, relative to ability, has good features outweighing shortcomings. Standards of English writing are better in KS4 only.
77. Standards pupils achieve in their numeracy skills have good features outweighing shortcomings in KS3 and good features and no important shortcomings in KS4. Numeracy skills are being raised in Y7 by the "Grym Rhif" strategy and in Y10 by a time-tabled lesson.
78. Pupils' ICT standards have good features and no important shortcomings throughout both key stages. All pupils receive a lesson of information technology on a weekly basis in KS3. Standards have improved as a consequence of this strategy and by the enhanced ICT facilities. However, departments continue to experience difficulty in accessing ICT resources.
79. Standards in problem solving, creative skills and improving one's own learning have good features and no important shortcomings.
80. Key skills are taught in specific lessons and across the curriculum. They are developing as an integral feature to enable pupils to gain accreditation. The school has begun to accredit work in key skills in KS3 and KS4.
81. Standards in KS4 have improved because pupils:
 - listen attentively;
 - speak confidently and provide extended answers that demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their work;
 - write accurately and present their work well; and
 - have a desire to succeed.

Their progress in learning

82. The overall ability of pupils entering the school varies from year to year. Based on prior attainment and ability on entry, pupils in KS3 do not make good progress. Banding and setting arrangements have been altered in an attempt to raise standards.
83. Compared with their performance in KS2, pupils did not achieve as well as was expected at the end of KS3, in 2007. Pupils underachieved significantly in science and mathematics.
84. Pupil progress from KS3 to KS4, matched to prior attainment, is very good. In 2007, significant progress had been made, especially in relation to the average points score (APS), the percentage of pupils attaining at least five GCSE grades at A*-G or equivalent, and in the CSI.
85. Ninety eight per cent of the cohort was entered for one or more entry level, GCSE short course, GCSE or equivalent in 2007. Two per cent of the cohort left school without a recognised qualification.
86. The school is successful in encouraging every aptitude, supporting identified needs and providing courses in which pupils of differing abilities and temperament achieve. Pupils with SEN make very good progress in relation to their ability.
87. Pupils acquire new knowledge and skills. The process of assessing how well they have achieved is mainly good, but requires refining. Most pupils are aware of what they have to do to improve. However, there is some inconsistency in

the quality of written feedback advising pupils of how they need to improve. This occurs within and across departments. In the books examined, the written advice given varied from good features outweighing shortcomings to good with outstanding features. Pastoral teams monitor progress and targets are entered into pupils' contact books.

88. The introduction of vocational courses in KS4 has raised the degree of appropriate challenge for lower and middle ability pupils to achieve their potential.
89. In the majority of classes and subjects, pupils are engaged in independent learning. The standards of pupils' skills in improving their own learning are also good. Many pupils are very well supported in KS4 through the mentoring schemes that operate in the school. As a result, they make very good progress.
90. The majority of pupils' key skills are developing to a good standard. These are contributing to preparing them for the expectations of life long learning.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

91. There are several outstanding features associated with the school's development of its pupils' personal, social and learning skills.
92. Pupils work exceptionally well in lessons, both individually and collaboratively. They show interest and enthusiasm in their work and when they undertake paired or group work. There is a very positive atmosphere in lessons where all seek to do their best. Most pupils demonstrate a high level of maturity and use these personal skills effectively.
93. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, both within the classroom and around the school. They show respect and behave responsibly towards one another, to members of staff and to visitors. They are considerate, courteous, especially in the narrow corridors and proud to be members of the school. The atmosphere within the school community is very calm and orderly at all times. This contributes positively to pupils' learning.
94. The school is a caring and inclusive community from where very few pupils have been temporarily excluded. During the last academic year, three pupils were permanently excluded.
95. The school succeeds in providing members of its community with positive opportunities.
96. The attendance level for 2006-2007 was 91.1%. However, this is slightly below the WAG target of 93%. Pupil punctuality to lessons is good. During the inspection, pupils' attendance was good. Attendance figures are affected by families taking holidays during the school term and by transport difficulties.
97. Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal, social, moral, and wider development. Very good progress is made in their spiritual development. The contributions of assemblies are praiseworthy as all pupils and staff participate fully in a prayer and hymn. The religious education periods and the personal and social education (PSE) programmes contribute to moral and spiritual development. The tutorial periods are also effective contributors to these developments.
98. Pupils demonstrate a sound awareness of equal opportunities issues and show great respect for diversity, both within school and in society. There are good

links with the community and local businesses. Partnerships with the school are being developed and strengthened. Through these, and values promoted by the school, pupils are prepared well for participation in the workplace and community.

Sixth form

Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals

99. Results in external examinations between 2005-2007 were above those achieved by pupils in the last inspection for two or more A level grades at A-C. The A-C pass rate in 2006 and 2007 was above LEA and national averages.
100. In 2007, students did better at A level than expected from their GCSE results. In only two out of 17 subjects studied, were the A level results below LEA and national averages.
101. In 2007, the percentage of pupils gaining two or more A levels or equivalent at grades A-E was above the previous inspection's results. The average A level points score per student for 2006 and 2007 was also above the previous inspection's figures. They were above local and national averages for these two years.
102. Boys' APS was above the girls' APS in 2007. Boys significantly outperformed girls during this period at grades A-C at A level examinations. In 2007, the gap between the APS score of boys and girls was two percentage points.
103. The school has successfully developed vocational courses which cater well for students of all abilities in the sixth form. This enables students to have continuity and progression from KS4.
104. Students achieve standards which have at least good features and no important shortcomings in all their key skills.
105. Outstanding levels of communication in both Welsh and English are evident in class discussion and on the school campus. Students' conversational skills in Spanish are also outstanding. Students give extended answers confidently to teacher questioning and the quality of discussion is high.
106. Many students use complex subject-specific terminology in discussions with one another and with the teachers. Group work is outstanding in most subject areas and this is a strength of the sixth-form. These qualities assist students to enhance their good problem-solving skills.

Their progress in learning

107. Students study from within a range of AS, A2 and vocational courses. In 2007, 100% of students achieved at least A-E passes at A level in two or more subjects. Completion rates are above LEA and national averages. Students also achieve accreditation in the core key skills of numeracy, communication and ICT.
108. The retention rate for pupils progressing from KS4 to the sixth form in 2007/08 has increased to 70%. This is due to the extension of vocational courses and that students wish to continue their education through the medium of Welsh. Most students enjoy the challenges of the sixth form and appreciate that they are able to study the subjects of their choice.

109. The school provides very good support to all sixth-form students, particularly those who wish to proceed to higher education. Additional assistance is provided for those who embark on the vocational pathways. The mature attitude to work prepares all students well for progression to university or the world of work.
110. Students have a clear understanding of their levels of achievement and what they have to do to improve in most subjects. Their work is marked and they are given targets for improvement. However, there is an inconsistency in the quality of the written feedback which is superficial at times. They are monitored and receive both written and verbal guidance from their subject teachers. They also receive strong support from the head of sixth-form. Targets for improvement are set and scrutinised rigorously.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

111. Students have developed outstanding personal, social skills and learning skills. Their attitude to learning is exemplary as they are fully engaged with their tasks and are determined to make the most of all opportunities available to them.
112. Students are well supported by staff and they show their appreciation of the opportunities made available to them.
113. They are very good role models for younger pupils and to one another. Their leadership skills are very good; some are outstanding. This has enabled them to strengthen the relationships between senior and junior pupils. They gain in maturity during their period of study in the sixth-form and have a valuable experience. The relationships between students and staff enable tuition to be conducted in a manner similar to tutorial sessions, with high quality interaction.
114. 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.
115. The ability to work well with one another has contributed to the development of their problem solving skills. Nearly all have adopted and developed skills which have prepared them well for higher education. They organise their work without supervision. This is evident, particularly in Y13.
116. Attendance is closely monitored and students acquire good working habits.
117. 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

118. This grade agrees with the school's self evaluation.

How well the teaching and training satisfy learners needs and the curriculum or course requirements

119. The table below shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the lessons observed throughout the school.

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Whole-school (53 lessons)	17%	60%	21%	2%	0%

120. The percentage of lessons given a grade 1 or 2 (77%), compares well with the national picture in 2006-07 where 76% of lessons were awarded grade 1 and 2.

121. In 21% of lessons, good features outweigh shortcomings and in 2%, which is one lesson only from the 53 observed, there are good features but shortcomings in important areas. The school does not meet the secondary target for 2010, 'Vision into Action', that the quality of teaching should be grade 2 or better in 80% of classes.

KS3 and KS4

122. The table below shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching in each lesson observed in the school in KS3 and KS4.

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key Stage 3	21%	54%	25%	0%	0%
Key Stage 4	10%	70%	15%	5%	0%
KS3 and KS4 combined	16%	61%	20%	2%	0%

123. An outstanding feature of the teaching is the very good working relationship between teachers and pupils. This relationship, which is based on respect, ensures that the pupils, learn in a friendly and supportive environment. This promotes pupils' motivation to focus and persevere.

124. The outstanding features of teaching include:

- a variety of interesting learning tasks that allow pupils to learn in different ways and to develop their key skills;
- purposeful and penetrating questioning which promotes pupils' ability to think independently;
- high expectations of what pupils can achieve in accordance with the individual's age, ability and understanding; and
- purposeful timing to ensure appropriate pace to the lessons.

125. Welsh is the main medium of learning at the school. The school meets the linguistic needs of pupils outstandingly through planning very good opportunities for them to relate, use and develop their bilingual skills within a range of everyday situations.

126. There are many good features to teaching across all lessons. These include:

- sound subject knowledge and understanding;
- a good range of teaching techniques ensuring pupils' active participation;
- good questioning techniques that extend pupils' answers;
- work linked well to pupils' interests and experiences;
- varied and purposeful class organisation, including pair and group work;

- opportunities for pupils to assess each other's work; and
 - sound and constructive class management.
127. These lessons are carefully planned and lesson objectives are shared, used and reviewed at the end.
128. Pupils with ALN are taught well and are fully integrated in classroom activities.
129. In a few lessons the shortcomings observed include:
- too much emphasis placed on acquiring information at the expense of developing new skills and an understanding of subject concepts;
 - a lack of appropriate differentiation;
 - over-long presentations by teachers and a lack of opportunities for pupils to participate fully in the lesson; and
 - limited questioning, and pupils having insufficient opportunities to develop their work in depth.
130. Many teachers give freely of their time by offering additional support to pupils in clubs and work sessions that reinforce pupils' learning.

How thorough is assessment and how is it used to plan and improve learning

131. Overall, the quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good. The procedures meet statutory requirements for assessing and reporting on the NC subjects and conform to the requirements of the examining boards in KS4 and the sixth form.
132. Procedures in some departments for levelling the quality of pupils' work in KS3 is beginning to develop effectively. These assessment developments, together with the pilot work between the school and its primary partner schools to moderate and discuss work in KS2 and KS3 are examples of good practice, is good practice and are a means of promoting better understanding regarding standards.
133. The school conforms to the assessment requirements of pupils and students with ALN.
134. The school has a good system for assessing attainment and effort successfully across the school. Although subject departments effectively adapt the school's assessment, recording and reporting policy, the policy does not offer sufficient guidance to departments to ensure consistency across the school with regard to implementing and promoting good practice, including assessment for learning. Link members of the SMT do not monitor assessment procedures in the departments for which they are responsible for with sufficient rigour.
135. The assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' progress is one of the school's strengths. There is a close link between the academic registrar, members of the SMT, subject departments, heads of year and class teachers in the use made of data to promote and raise standards. The good features include:
- setting subject assessment tasks termly across the subjects;
 - very effective use by the academic registrar of a computerised system to facilitate the collation and analysis of a wide range of information and to implement target setting and monitoring processes;

- reliable grading assessment systems, based on attainment and effort with pupils understanding the significance of the grades they receive and of their potential grades;
 - annual monitoring of each pupil's work progress by the class teachers and heads of year, and together, setting personal and subject targets for improvement; and
 - heads of year and members of the SMT mentor the progress of underachieving pupils, informing parents at an early stage.
136. In some subjects, where assessment practices are consistent and accurate, there is good practice. This is because departments and teachers:
- assist pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers to improve their understanding of their standard and the methods of improvement;
 - adapt NC attainment level descriptors to enable pupils to understand them in the context of their work;
 - make good use of oral feedback in classes to improve the learning; and
 - make good use of assessment data to identify trends.
137. In these departments, the quality of the written feedback is good with the work being corrected, and improvements and constructive comments being given that lead to the individual making good progress.
138. However, there are inconsistencies within and between a number of departments. These shortcomings include:
- inconsistent standards and assessment methods in KS3;
 - pupils' written work not marked regularly;
 - a lack of sufficient written feedback to pupils to enable them to understand what they need to do to improve their work and ensure progress;
 - the inconsistent use of 'assessment for learning' as a tool to promote and raise pupils' standards; and
 - a lack of detailed use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress and to influence future planning.
139. Clear arrangements and systems on pupil progress have been established for parents and carers. A clear picture of pupils' progress, based on levels of attainment and effort is given in each subject twice a year. Aspects of excellence and of underachievement are clearly identified. One full and one interim report are provided as well as the opportunity for discussion during a parents' evening. Subject comments are evaluative and of good quality. Subject targets on how to improve are clear. Pupils and parents can contribute to the final reports through offering comments on their progress. This is good practice.

Sixth form

140. The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the lessons observed in the sixth form.

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth form (9 lessons)	22%	56%	22%	0%	0%

141. An outstanding feature of teaching is the very good working relationship which is developed between teachers and students. Individual students receive strong

support and encouragement to develop into independent learners. In these lessons, teachers have up-to-date and thorough subject knowledge. There are very high expectations and students are encouraged to develop as independent learners; there is purposeful use of the interactive whiteboard and an emphasis on a range of activities that enable the students to develop complex subject concepts.

142. The school plans outstanding opportunities for the development of students' bilingualism, through specific activities, collective assemblies and through preparing them for the bilingual workplace and further or higher education.
143. The shortcomings identified in KS3 and KS4 are present in some lessons in the sixth form. These include over-long preliminary presentations by teachers and students receiving information passively for part of the lesson and questioning too limited to encourage students to think and respond at length.
144. There are outstanding and effective systems to monitor students' progress in the sixth form. With the help of the class tutors, the head of the sixth form:
 - analyses subject assessment data each half term, to have an accurate overview of students' efforts and achievements;
 - provides opportunities for students to undertake an academic review at the beginning of their courses;
 - maintains an effective link with subject teachers with regard to students' progress;
 - undertakes regular interviews with students, monitors their files and sets targets for improvement;
 - mentors underachieving students; and
 - regularly ensures students clearly understand their estimated and potential grades.
145. There is good use of assessment for learning to promote higher standards in some subjects where teachers share success criteria with the students. They encourage them to assess their own work and that of their peers, constructively. The best marking offers constructive feedback on how to improve. However, there are inconsistencies across departments with regard to the quality of written feedback and with marking in some subjects being superficial and less evaluative.
146. The quality of the links with parents and the information they receive on the progress of students in the sixth form is outstanding. Parents are regularly informed of how well students are coping with their work and are given the opportunity to respond in writing. In Y12 and Y13, they are sent annual and interim reports and the subject comments are detailed and provide targets for improvement. At the end of Y12, students receive a leaflet which includes specific subject targets to concentrate on before returning to Y13.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

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

148. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and is fully accessible to all. Pupils with SEN are well catered for and the school provides additional challenges for the more able and talented pupils. All pupils are given the opportunity to gain appropriate qualifications.
149. The curriculum is broad and balanced. At KS3, good curriculum links with partner primary schools ensure that the work builds systematically on previous knowledge. Pupils benefit from being able to study two modern foreign languages (French and Spanish), drama and ICT. Specific lessons in literacy help pupils cope with the language demands of their subjects as well as developing their key skills.
150. Although many departments plan to develop pupils' key skills effectively at KS3 and KS4, the provision is not co-ordinated at whole-school level.
151. The school is flexible in planning its KS4 curriculum. It consults pupils annually before planning and finalising the options choices. This ensures that almost all pupils are able to follow their first choice of courses at KS4. Good professional guidance is provided to match pupils to appropriate courses. An increasing range of vocational options is made available.
152. There is a broad range of subjects, vocational and academic, available in the sixth form. It has been considerably enhanced by outstanding curriculum co-operation with Ysgol Cwm Rhymni, another Welsh-medium school. This partnership working has enhanced the learning pathways of pupils in KS4 and students in the sixth form. Vocational courses have strengthened the quality of the option domains for the students.
153. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities. There are many sporting opportunities, clubs, visits and special events. A notable feature of this provision is that opportunities are provided to pupils and students to use their Welsh in social settings outside the school. This strengthens their Welsh ethos which contributes to their social and cultural development. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is encouraged in several subjects and also by tutor group themes such as "Fair Trade".
154. A well planned and managed PSE programme makes significant contributions to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Both morning assemblies and religious education lessons contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The requirements of the PSE Framework are met fully.
155. The school receives pupils from several primary schools that are quite a distance way from the local community it serves. Nevertheless, it communicates effectively with parents and has good links with local employers.

Links with partner primary schools are good. Currently, there are no partnerships with initial teacher training (ITT) establishments.

156. The school meets all legal and course requirements.

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

157. The school provides effective work related education. Good quality careers education is integrated into the PSE programme. The partnership with Careers Wales is well established. Work experience, both in Y10 and in Y12 is well planned and managed. Pupils are well prepared beforehand and follow up activities allow them to reflect on what they have learned. Student participation in activities such as the “Engineering Education Scheme for Wales”, gives sixth-form students an insight into industry.

158. The quality of provision in both English and Welsh is good. The success with which the school develops pupils’ bilingual competence is outstanding. Pupils from English speaking homes use Welsh to a high standard, not only in their lessons, but also in their social contact with other pupils. Welsh is the language of the school community as a whole. The requirements of *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* are developed in several subjects to enable pupils develop their understanding of Welsh culture.

159. The school promotes equality of access for all. It ensures that social disadvantage does not prevent pupils participating in extra-curricular activities.

160. The school has developed good links with local employers through its links with the 14-19 network in Torfaen. They support work experience and several employers participate in activities such as “Dynamo” and “Young Enterprise” to assist in developing pupils’ and students’ entrepreneurial skills.

161. A number of activities, including the “Fair Trade Week”, help pupils develop their understanding of global citizenship.

162. The school has responded well to several national priorities. There are good links with partner primary schools to aid progression to the secondary school. Very good progress is being made in preparing pupils and students for 14-19 Learning Pathways. The breadth of the curriculum at KS4 and in the sixth form, the strong partnership with another provider, the emphasis placed on languages within the school and its work related education programmes have placed the school in a strong position to move further towards meeting the requirements of the Learning Core. However, the co-ordination of key skills is under-developed.

163. Education for sustainable development is underdeveloped. The way in which the school engages in activities which contribute to sustainability is limited to paper re-cycling and light energy saving devices.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

164. This grade matches the school’s self-evaluation grade.

165. Within this section, there were some outstanding features which included:
- extremely effective pastoral system very well led by the two heads of school;
 - effective heads of year and class tutors;
 - excellent pastoral links with the partner primary schools;
 - transition arrangements for year 6 pupils;
 - early identification, effective planning meet the additional and behavioural needs of pupils; and
 - the pastoral and academic support of pupils with ALN.

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

166. Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw has a warm, caring and supportive ethos where staff and pupils work very closely together. The planning, management and co-ordination of care and support are outstanding.
167. Very effective pastoral teams fulfil their duties very efficiently, monitoring the well being and behaviour of learners in their care. They integrate pastoral and curricular support very well. The pastoral care of pupils is given high priority and pupils benefit tremendously from the school's determination to fully include them in both academic and social life.
168. The excellent pastoral links that commence in Y5 with the six partner primary schools ensure a smooth and effortless transition for pupils.
169. The induction programme for Y6 pupils and their parents is very well established. A transition group steers and develops a comprehensive transition programme. It includes 'Cwrs Haf', a summer course held at the school. A further week of activities is held at Glanllyn residential Urdd camp during the first week in September. This enables pupils to foster social links in an informal atmosphere. It also provides Welsh language support and develops pupils' confidence before their transfer to the comprehensive school.
170. Curriculum and extra-curricular activities are arranged between the primary schools and the secondary school to support the transition project. Sixth-form students and teachers invest a considerable amount of time and effort into ensuring that pupils are well introduced to the school. Year 7 pupils and their parents praise and value their support.
171. In planning the provision of personal support and guidance, the school takes due account of the statutory framework. There is a broad and balanced PSE programme for all pupils. The provision is carefully structured and includes appropriate health education and careers guidance. The school enriches pupils' experiences further by inviting specialist speakers to talk about their services and other relevant topics. The PSE programme is delivered very effectively and valued by all.
172. The school has prompt and effective measures to deal with any form of bullying. It deals effectively with all discipline matters by adhering to the school's policy which is based on praise and respect. Personal and social education lessons and assemblies are used purposefully to support the school's policies and an anti-bullying charter is successfully operated.
173. Good relationships exist between the school, parents and a Parents' Association which is very active and supportive. Parents and carers respond

well to communications from the school and this ensures effective dialogue. Pupils' personal diaries provide parents with valuable information about school activities.

174. Pupils receive good impartial advice about choosing appropriate courses in Y9, Y11 and the sixth form. This is provided by a range of speakers, including representatives from Career Wales. Additional support is provided during the PSE programme in KS4 and general studies lessons in the sixth form.
175. At KS4 and the sixth form, pupils have specific careers lessons with a clear and comprehensive programme of work. There is personal work experience for every pupil and many opportunities arise to discuss important issues related to the world of work.
176. The school has a welfare officer who works meticulously and monitors carefully to ensure high pupil attendance. There are difficulties involving parents taking their children on holidays during term-time. Since September, 100 families have taken children on holidays. Pupils are frequently late in the morning due to transport difficulties.
177. The school council's role within the school is developing. Currently, students benefit from opportunities to take some leading roles. However, there are insufficient opportunities to develop their decision making skills. The council is not chaired by one of the pupils or students.
178. The school encourages all pupils to be actively involved in many sporting and recreational activities to ensure good levels of fitness. It is in the process of embarking on the Torfaen healthy schools' initiative. However, there are shortcomings in its arrangements for a healthier style of living. These currently include:
 - unhealthy menus;
 - vending machines dispensing sugary drinks and chocolate;
 - totally inadequate dining facilities for a school of over 800 pupils; and
 - food being eaten everywhere on site by staff and pupils.
179. There are robust child protection arrangements in place. The nominated persons for child protection procedures are the heads of lower and upper school that have a caring and pragmatic approach to their duties. They are well supported by the designated governor. The well documented policy and procedures for child protection are fully understood by staff. All school staff have received appropriate training and are fully aware of the need for vigilance. They constantly check the well being of pupils.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

180. The identification and assessment of pupils with SEN is an outstanding feature. The processes are thorough and result from the very good liaison between the school and its partner primary schools. The SEN co-ordinator (SENCo), head of lower school and head of Y7, collaborate closely with the primary schools to ensure appropriate continuity after pupils transfer to the secondary school.
181. Pupils with SEN enter a caring, efficient and informed school which enables them to make good and often very good progress.

182. There is access to a broad and balanced curriculum for every pupil with SEN at KS3 and KS4, and opportunities for them to study vocational courses in the sixth form. All have the opportunity to gain accreditation at the end of KS4.
183. The very good pastoral support programmes and an effective school behaviour policy have reduced pupil exclusions.
184. The SENCo provides good direction and meets regularly with heads of year and heads of department to share information regarding individual needs and classroom strategies. However, the school does not make best use of her experience or time due to her work commitment to the English department.
185. The SEN staff have good positive working relationships with pupils, students, parents and outside agencies, including the school psychologist.
186. Two learning support assistants (LSAs) who were former pupils, provide very effective in-class support for pupils on the SEN register. They receive good support from the SENCo and liaise well with subject teachers. However, the level of LSA support for pupils with additional needs in main-stream lessons is inadequate. The use of former pupils on annual contracts does not allow for continuity.
187. Pupils' individual education plans are well structured understood and regularly reviewed. Pupils' statements of SEN are reviewed annually.
188. An experienced teacher for specific learning difficulties, employed by the local authority, provides quality support for 13 pupils.
189. Sixth-form students provide meaningful support to pupils with their reading and spelling. Under the guidance of a co-ordinator, they also support pupils well with their numeracy and literacy skills.
190. Year 7 pupils, who are gifted and talented in one or more of the core subjects, have received additional support to develop their academic ability further.
191. The new designated governor for SEN is very supportive of the work of the school and she is very aware of SEN issues.
192. The school complies with all statutory requirements associated with provision for pupils with additional needs.
193. The learning support centre lacks resources and space. It does not provide the necessary environment for the confidential nature or the work of the SENCo.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

194. All pupils are given sensitive and effective support when problems arise. They do not have serious concerns about oppressive behaviour or any form of harassment. They know that the school deals with any incidents quickly and effectively. This is an outstanding feature.
195. Good features are also evident in the provision of equal opportunities.
196. The school provides equal opportunity for all individuals regardless of their social, educational, ethnic or linguistic background. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are accepted and integrated naturally into school life.
197. There is no discrimination on the basis of gender, academic ability, physical disability or any other grounds and this is completely evident in the life and

work of the school. Pupils and parents are confident that the school responds without delay to any case of unfairness or discrimination.

198. Good quality careers advice is available to all. Through the PSE programme, assemblies, the subject areas of religious education, modern foreign languages, art, humanities and extra curricular activities, pupils' understanding of equal opportunities and how to appreciate the diversity of races and cultures is well developed.
199. The school has worked closely with the local authority to adapt the site for disabled learners. An accessibility audit and plan has been completed but there are no visible time scales. At present disabled pupils do not have full access to all of the school buildings.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

200. The school awarded itself a grade 2 in its self-evaluation report. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower because good features outweigh shortcomings. These shortcomings relate to:

- insufficient progress in strengthening the line management structures;
- informal and inconsistent monitoring of staff and departments; and
- an absence of job descriptions with identified responsibilities.

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

201. The aims and expectations of the school are made clear to all governors, staff, pupils and visitors. All associated with the school are committed to the aims of developing further the Welsh ethos and ensuring all pupils use the Welsh language to a high standard.
202. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity for all, regardless of linguistic, cultural or social background. Everyone in the school is treated with respect and has the opportunity to contribute to the school's development. All views are valued. There is a strong family ethos and a sense of belonging within the school. The success of students in their achievements, academic, cultural, sporting and social skills-reflects the strength of this policy.
203. The school has successfully taken into account national priorities. In-particular, the school is currently working very closely with Ysgol Cwm Rhymni to meet WAG's 14-19 Learning Pathways agenda. Effective links have been made with providers of education and training in the community. Social inclusion is a good feature of the school and pupils are now motivated and committed to post-16 and Higher Education.
204. The headteacher and his SMT have a visible and effective presence around the school. He is committed to providing the best possible facilities for all; especially the drive to replace out-dated buildings with a new school. Discussions on this issue have take up an inordinate amount of his time. This is because Ysgol

Gwynllyw is the only Welsh-medium secondary school serving several unitary authorities.

205. The headteacher is supported by four assistant headteachers. Although they support one another, their effectiveness as senior managers is severely constrained. They have too many functions to perform, and there are only some clear lines of responsibility.
206. Each member of the SMT, including the headteacher, is linked to a cluster of departments. The links between senior managers and the departments they line manage, have been developed, but vary in their effectiveness. There is inconsistency in the degree of rigour with which the SMT assures quality and reviews the work of individual subject departments and pastoral teams. The current three year review cycle of departments is too long and the cycle is not completed. Classroom observations of certain departments have not been undertaken by senior managers but have been completed by middle managers. However, there is an inconsistency regarding the formality of the monitoring.
207. Each assistant headteacher has a low teaching commitment. Two members have responsibilities as heads of key stages. They are committed to monitoring and supporting their tutors and heads of year who also have inadequate time to fulfil their roles. These roles do not allow them to undertake their senior management roles effectively. There are too many administrative responsibilities associated with the roles of all members of SMT.
208. No named person has specific responsibility for teaching and learning, self-evaluation or departmental reviews.
209. Very good features of leadership and management at middle-management levels are evident in English, history, modern foreign languages and music. In the most effective departments, there is a clear focus on teaching and learning, exemplified by detailed schemes of work and assessment, and good programmes of quality assurance. Middle-managers and heads of year of high quality are committed to raising standards by monitoring work on a formal and informal basis.
210. Not all middle-managers understand their roles clearly. In some departments, there is a lack of leadership, and there are shortcomings to be eliminated. There is insufficient rigour in monitoring, and planning for improvement is inadequate.
211. Line managers are unable to attend their link departmental meetings as all meetings are scheduled for the same evening.
212. The school ensures the professional development of teaching, administrative and technical staff according to individual and school needs. Potential managers are afforded opportunities to shadow middle managers as deputy heads of year.
213. The school has a system of performance management but not all departments have completed the cycle in the expected time period. There are no individual job descriptions which identify the specific responsibilities of staff. This is a shortcoming. Although targets are set for each individual teacher's professional development and for pupil progress, the degree of accountability is questionable. The process is not monitored with sufficient rigour.

214. The programme for the induction of newly-qualified teachers, and teachers new to the school is very well organised and managed.

How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

215. The governing body includes members who have supported the school over a number of years. Those recently appointed members should strengthen and widen the expertise of this body. The individual expertise of certain governors is used very effectively in the work of the governing body. The role of this body is evolving as it becomes more involved in influencing the strategic direction of the school.

216. The well established governors clearly understand their roles and act as critical friends in an effective manner. They possess sound knowledge of the running of the school. They are informed on all aspects of school performance either from the headteacher or appropriate members of the SMT.

217. There are two main sub-committees of the governing body, one of which is the curriculum committee. This group receives regular reports from school departmental managers who meet members of this sub-committee with all the members of staff from their department. Only members of this sub-committee have links with staff.

218. Governors do not have direct links with departments. Consequently, it is difficult for them to act as critical friends to staff. Neither do they undertake lesson observations.

219. The chair of governors and chairs of the sub-committees are in regular discussion with the headteacher and ensure that these committees work productively for the benefit of the school. The chair is regularly in the school to discuss issues with the headteacher and any other member of staff who wishes to see him. He has a scheduled cycle of meetings with individual staff to hear their views and ideas.

220. Through the inspection process, governors have become more involved in the strategic management of the school. The quality of their strategic management and involvement in the evaluation processes are developing.

221. A new member of the governing body links directly with the SEN department. The designated governor is fully supportive of the work of the learning support department and is committed to ensuring its success.

222. All regulatory requirements are not met. Staffs within the school have not been issued with specific job-descriptions for which they are accountable. Their roles have not been reviewed nor agreed on an annual basis. Only generic job-descriptions exist.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

223. The school awarded itself a grade 2 in its self-evaluation report. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower because good features outweigh shortcomings. These shortcomings relate to:

- an absence of a whole-school policy on self-evaluation; and

- the irregular and inconsistent monitoring cycle.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated.

224. The school's self-evaluation report is a detailed and honest document which outlines the school's strengths and the areas of provision that it believes require further development. Its grades differed from those of the inspectors in two of the key questions.
225. Each department is linked to a member of the SMT and these links are supportive and often very successful in raising the standards of pupil work. However, these links are inconsistent and mostly informal.
226. Good features of the monitoring process include:
- the scrutiny of departmental and management minutes by each member of the SMT;
 - regular meetings on a rotational basis between the chair of governors and individual staff; and
 - full departmental meetings with the governing body's curriculum sub-committee.
227. The SMT undertakes individual reviews on each department once every three years and there is good monitoring of pupils by the pastoral team. Within a number of departments, staff observe each others' lessons and scrutinise pupil work in order to monitor their own work and raise the standards of pupil achievement.
228. There is a wealth of data available to departments. They are now beginning to use this information strategically.
229. Each department produced a graded self-evaluation report based on the seven key questions of the Common Inspection Framework. This is a recent development. However, departments have been writing reports outlining strengths and areas for development for a number of years.
230. Strategies to include the views of parents and support staff in the self-evaluation process are being developed. Pupils are consulted through the school council.
231. There are a number of shortcomings associated with current procedures. These include:
- an absence of a whole-school policy outlining the processes and timetable for the school's annual cycle of self-evaluation;
 - a lack of clarity for all staff and managers;
 - an irregular monitoring cycle by senior management;
 - no clear focus on standards of pupils work;
 - inconsistent links between the SMT and heads of department; and
 - inconsistent monitoring of classroom teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work by departments.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

232. The SDP is a detailed document which sets out clearly the school's priorities for the next three years. Departmental development plans are inconsistent in quality and do not always relate to themes from the whole-school development plan.
233. The school is trialling a new pupil tracking system in Y7. This should assist departments to track pupil performance at KS3.
234. The school's identified priorities are carefully costed. Even though the school operates with a deficit budget, it actively monitors expenditure to achieve best value. The school has been successful in accessing General Teaching Council of Wales (GTCW) grants and receives funds raised by the Friends of Gwynllyw.
235. Progress on the main recommendations of the previous inspection report has been variable. Good progress has been made in developing consistency in assessment, recording and reporting. The school meets the requirement for the daily act of collective worship. However, progress on a number of other issues has been satisfactory. These include:
- the provision for ICT across the curriculum;
 - developing the link role between senior management and heads of department;
 - ensuring better consistency between the whole-school development plan and departmental development plans; and
 - issues of health and safety.
236. Unsatisfactory progress has been made in improving the quality of buildings.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

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

238. The staffing compliment is sufficient to deliver the broad and well balanced curriculum. All staffs are subject specialists who are effectively deployed to harness their knowledge and considerable commitment to providing a quality curriculum programme for all pupils.
239. The curriculum is delivered by a team of 50.80 full-time equivalent staff. There is a good balance between experienced teachers and those new to the profession. The pupil teacher ratio of 16.20:1 is favourable. The contact ratio of 75.4% is better than the national average.
240. The deployment of support, technical and administrative staff is appropriate within the available resources. However, the level of support for the teaching staff within the classroom, ICT and technology is inadequate.
241. There has been an improvement in the availability of computer equipment since the previous inspection. There are two well equipped ICT rooms with additional facilities housed in the library for the exclusive use of sixth form students.

242. However, there remains a shortage of equipment to allow full access by departments for pupils to develop their ICT skills across the curriculum.
243. The school operates from a position of limited financial resources. There is a shortage of learning and teaching resources for staff and pupils. Many departments lack basic equipment such as books, stationery, specialist materials and equipment. The library is not available to KS3 and KS4 pupils to develop and support their independent research skills.
244. The provision of a sports centre has transformed the physical education and sporting opportunities available to pupils. However, there continues to be important shortcomings in the school's accommodation:
- insufficient accommodation to cater for the number of pupils and staff;
 - 'drab and shabby' nature of older buildings;
 - sixteen unsatisfactory temporary mobile classrooms;
 - totally inadequate dining facilities;
 - health and safety issue surrounding the collection of food and eating arrangements; and
 - unsatisfactory facilities and resources for the delivery of technology.
245. Pupil numbers are projected to increase annually to reach 1096 pupils by 2012. The present accommodation cannot support this increase as current numbers exert a severe strain on available space and resources.

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

246. There are many good features in the planning and management of the school's limited resources. These are the:
- systematic and rigorous management of the available budget to ensure cost-effectiveness in all areas of expenditure by the headteacher and bursar;
 - half-termly review and analysis of the budget by the resources sub-committee;
 - regular budgetary planning meetings between the headteacher and bursar and the authority's financial officers; and
 - frequent and detailed monitoring of all income and expenditure by the bursar.
247. The audit report completed in 2005 indicated that the school's financial practices were satisfactory. A number of recommendations made in the report have been addressed.
248. The school pursues all opportunities to seek additional funding through grants and sponsorship. *Cyfeillion Gwynllyw* contribute approximately £3,000 per annum for the purchase of departmental resources. Positive use is made of this additional funding to enhance the opportunities for all pupils and students.
249. Arrangements for the professional development of teaching and support staff are sound based on whole school, departmental and the individual training requirements of staff. A number of departments have benefited significantly from GTCW grants over the past three years.

250. Newly qualified staff are very well supported and guided by an extensive programme of activities and mentoring. However, the ITT programme has been suspended during the current academic year owing to enforced staff changes.
251. Workforce reform and remodelling have been successfully completed following staff consultation. The structure will be fully operational by September 2008. The allocation of time for staff planning, preparation and assessment is good. However, individual teaching and support staff do not possess a detailed job description.
252. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks have been completed for all teaching, support and volunteer staff working at the school.
253. Despite the shortcomings in the quality of the accommodation and lack of financial resources, the school delivers value for money. This is reflected in the standards achieved by the pupils, the quality of curriculum delivery and the excellence of the support and guidance provided.
254. However, the school is currently operating a deficit budget brought about by the low per capita funding over the last ten years. The governors have been granted permission to operate a deficit budget of up to a maximum of £120,000 for the 2007/08 and 2008/09 financial years. Current projections indicate that the school will return to a balanced budget by 2010.

School's response to the inspection

The school is very pleased with the inspectors' positive findings including the following:

- The headteacher's vision for developing the Welshness and the ethos of the school is shared by all those concerned with Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw. Pupils' Welsh speaking skills are outstanding. Throughout the period of inspection, pupils spoke Welsh regularly.
- Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw has a warm, caring and supportive ethos where staff and pupils collaborate very closely. The planning, management and the coordination of care and support are outstanding.
- There are outstanding features in the way the school cares for, guides and supports its pupils. Pastoral care is extremely effective enabling them to make good and often very good progress.
- In KS3 and KS4, pupils of all ability achieve whatever their background. This is a good feature of the school. Examination results in KS5 were higher than LEA and national averages. Students also receive accreditation in the basic skills of numeracy, communication and ICT.
- Despite shortcomings in the quality of accommodation and a deficiency in financial resources, the school provides value for money. This is reflected in the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of curricular provision and the excellence of the support and guidance provided.

The Senior Management Team, staff and governors will give detailed attention to the recommendations for improvement by drawing up a school improvement plan to include the following issues:

- Pupils' and students' active participation in promoting sustainable development is underdeveloped across the school.
- Currently, the school does not contribute to healthy eating strategies.
- The school's performance management procedures are not entirely effective because there is no detailed overview of the annual cycle. Members of staff do not have specific job descriptions, only generic job descriptions exist.
- The accommodation is inadequate for the number of pupils on roll and the number of staff on site. There has been unsatisfactory progress in improving the quality of accommodation.
- Based on their prior attainment in KS2, the pupils did not attain as well as expected at the end of KS3 in 2007.
- The lack of a whole school policy outlining the processes and the timetable for the school's annual self- evaluation cycle.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Heol Folly Trefddyn Pontypool Torfaen
Postcode	NP4 8JD
Telephone number	01495 750405

Headteacher	Mr H Ellis Griffiths
Date of appointment	September 1996
Chair of governors	Reverend Meirion Thomas
Reporting inspector	Mr William Gwyn Thomas
Dates of inspection	10/03/08 to 14/03/08

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	155	141	143	124	143	76	51	833

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	46	4.8	50.8

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	16.2:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average teaching group size	21.78
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	75.4%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	93%	93%	91%	90%	90.3%	91.1%	89.3%	91.7%
Term 2	90%	89%	91%	86%	95.5%	88.3%	90.7%	90.3%
Term 3			91.7%	89.5%	85.4%	90.8%	86.5%	89.7%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	11.52%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	30

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2007															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 123															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher	School	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	33	36	23	2	0	0
	assessment	National	0.2	0	1	0.4	0.3	2	7	22	36	24	8	0.2	0
Welsh	Teacher	School	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	36	34	19	6	0	0
	assessment	National	1	0	1	1	0.1	1	5	20	37	27	9	0.1	0
Mathematics	Teacher	School	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	30	23	34	10	2	0
	assessment	National	0.2	0	1	0.3	0.3	1	7	18	25	30	16	1	0
Science	Teacher	School	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	27	44	11	9	0	0
	assessment	National	0.2	0	1	0.3	0.1	1	6	19	34	28	12	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	57		In Wales
			58

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2007	135
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	50

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2007:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	96	89	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	63	52	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	94	87	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	51	37	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	98	96	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	85	76	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	98	93	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	2	5	4
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	2	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	0	-	-
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	0	-	-

For pupils aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2007	47
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2007	45
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2007	4

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	78	71	67
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	100	93	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	21	20	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	8	-	-
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	0	-	-

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Inspectors spent a total of 30 days in the school and were joined by the school's assistant headteacher as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 53 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;
- 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 Registered Inspector	Context, Summary, Recommendations. Appendix Key Questions 1 and 5
Gwynoro Jones Lay Inspector,	Contributing to all key questions
Manon Wyn Sion	Key Question 2
David Hughes	Key Question 3
David B Morgan	Key Question 4
Dylan Gwyer Roberts	Key Question 6
Huw Llewelyn	Key Question 7
Gwyn Jones	Contributing to all key questions
Helen Rogers	Nominee

Acknowledgement

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

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