

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

**A report on the quality of education in**

**Ysgol Rhiwabon  
Ruabon  
Wrexham  
LL14 6BT**

**School number: 6654044**

**Date of inspection: 5 May 2009**

**by**

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Ysgol Rhiwabon 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 Rhiwabon took place between 05/05/09 and 08/05/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by Edward Aneurin Peter Harris undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **Standard** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

- 1 Ysgol Rhiwabon is an English-medium, mixed 11-18 secondary school in the County Borough of Wrexham (UA). The school serves the community of Ruabon, situated to the south-west of Wrexham, and its surrounding area. There are 806 pupils in the school, including 102 students in the sixth form. This represents an increase in numbers from 2003, when the school was last inspected. At that time there were 577 pupils on roll, including 90 in the sixth form. The sixth form provides open access for its own students as well as those from Ysgol Y Grango and other 11-16 schools.
- 2 The school serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage together with some relatively prosperous districts. Pupils and students come from the full range of economic and social circumstances. Just over 20% of learners are entitled to free school meals. This figure is above local and national averages. The vast majority speaks English as their first language and a small minority of pupils comes from minority ethnic heritages.
- 3 Pupils at the school represent the full range of ability. Ninety-three pupils have been identified with special educational needs (SEN), of which 10 carry statements.
- 4 The headteacher is supported by a senior leadership team (SLT) comprised of one deputy headteacher, four assistant headteachers and a business manager. Apart from two assistant headteachers, all members of the SLT were appointed to their present posts since 2003. At the time of the current inspection, two assistant headteachers also carried responsibility for leading curriculum areas.

### The school's priorities and targets

- 5 The school aims to help all learners and staff to develop their full potential. This aim is underpinned by core values which clarify the right of everyone to learn, to be respected and to be safe.
- 6 The several priorities of the school improvement plan(SIP) relate to the following areas:
  - continuing to raise standards of achievement;
  - ensuring an appropriate range of approaches to teaching and assessment;
  - continuing curriculum provision in collaboration with other providers; and
  - improving the performance of individuals and teams.
- 7 The school's self-evaluation report (SER) is based on the seven key questions of the Common Inspection Framework.
- 8 Numerical targets are set, that in 2010:
  - 52% of pupils should reach at least level 5 in all three subjects combined in national curriculum (NC) assessments at the end of key stage (KS) 3; and
  - 43% of pupils should achieve at least five grades A\*-C, and 89% at least five grades A\*-G in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination or its equivalent.

## Summary

- 9 While Ysgol Rhiwabon has several good features, it also has a number of important shortcomings which need attention.
- 10 Among the school's good features are:
- a gradual improvement in standards;
  - an improvement in the quality of teaching in a small minority of subjects;
  - the support and guidance for learners; and
  - the efficient management of its resources.
- 11 However, there are shortcomings in the progress made by a significant minority of pupils, particularly at KS4. There are shortcomings, also, in teaching and assessment at KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form, and in leadership and management at all levels.
- 12 While the school has made good progress in several areas since the time the school was last inspected, there are important key issues which have not been addressed since that time. Particular shortcomings that remain are:
- the variation in the quality of teaching and assessment; and
  - the way in which leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards.
- 13 As a result of these important shortcomings, the school is not yet moving forward sufficiently so as to fulfil its true potential.

### Table of grades awarded

- 14 The following table shows the grades awarded in the seven key questions:

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

- 15 These grades match those offered by the school in its SER for key questions 1, 3 and 7. The grade inspectors awarded for key question 4 was one grade higher than that offered by the school. The grades inspectors awarded for key questions 2 and 5 were one grade lower than those offered by the school. The grade awarded for key question 6 was two grades lower.

### Standards achieved

- 16 Standards in the school have good features which outweigh shortcomings.

- 17 The team inspected the standards that pupils and students achieve in six subjects. The following table shows the grades awarded at KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>KS3</b>	<b>KS4</b>	<b>Sixth form</b>
English	2	2	2
Science	3	3	3
Information Technology	3	3	3
History	2	2	2
Art	3	2	2
Physical Education	2	2	2

- 18 In comparison with the time that the school was last inspected, these figures represent the maintenance of overall standards. On the whole, there have been improvements in English, history, art and physical education.
- 19 The decline in standards in science is an important shortcoming.
- 20 The following table shows the percentages of grades awarded at each stage in the six subjects inspected.

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>KS3</b>	5%	46%	49%	0%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	4%	37%	44%	15%	0%
<b>KS3 and KS4</b>	5%	42%	47%	6%	0%
<b>Sixth form</b>	6%	61%	33%	0%	0%
<b>Whole school</b>	5%	46%	44%	5%	0%
<b>These grades are based on observations of 82 lessons</b>					

- 21 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these figures indicate that good features outweigh shortcomings in the progress made by pupils and students since that time.
- 22 The proportion of lessons judged to be Grade 3 and better is roughly the same as at that time. However, the proportion of lessons judged to be good or very good has declined. Pupils still make better progress at KS3 than they do at KS4. These are important shortcomings.
- 23 The 15% of lessons judged to be Grade 4 were all in science in Year (Y) 11. This is a significant shortcoming.
- 24 While the proportion of lessons observed in the sixth form to be Grade 3 and above is roughly in line with that in 2003, the proportion of lessons judged to have good or very good features has declined since that time.
- 25 On the whole, results at KS3 in the NC teachers' assessments have improved. Pupils make good progress in relation to prior attainment. In two out of the last three years, the school has exceeded its overall targets. Over the same period of time, the school has improved its performance relative to that of similar schools. In 2008, results in English and mathematics and all three core subjects combined, were above average.
- 26 However, the school has failed to meet its targets for science at this level and results remain below average. This is an important shortcoming.

- 27 At KS4, in two out of the past three years, passes at the higher grades were below average when compared to those of similar schools. In 2008, they were above average.
- 28 When compared to similar schools, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and the three core subjects combined is above average. Their attainment in science is only slightly above average.
- 29 When compared to their prior attainment, the progress made by pupils at KS4 is below average, when compared to schools of a similar intake. This is an important shortcoming.
- 30 Standards of attainment in the sixth form have good features which outweigh shortcomings.
- 31 In 2008, completion rates for students who gained the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) fell above the average for Wales. The school already exceeds the national target for 2010.
- 32 However, at Advanced (A) level, results at grades A-C and A-E have been below local and national averages.
- 33 At KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form, girls outperform boys.
- 34 Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve good standards in relation to their abilities.
- 35 Pupils and students work well with one another and with their teachers. Their communication skills are good and most pupils are eager to learn. Only a very small minority of pupils behaves inappropriately in lessons.
- 36 However, there are shortcomings in learners' skills in numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT).
- 37 While bilingual skills are developed through Welsh second language lessons, pupils and students make limited use made of them throughout the school.
- 38 There are good features and no important shortcomings in learners' problem-solving and creative skills. They work well with one another. However, there are shortcomings in their skills of improving their own learning and performance.
- 39 Good features outweigh shortcomings in attendance and punctuality. Though attendance has gradually improved over the three terms prior to the inspection, overall attendance levels are below the UA average and the school's target.
- 40 There are good features and no important shortcomings in pupils' and students' personal, spiritual, moral, social, cultural and wider development. The way in which the vast majority of learners respects peers, adults and diversity in society is good. Their spiritual development is enhanced by a daily act of collective worship. The behaviour of the vast majority is good.
- 41 Pupils and students respond well to a good provision of extra-curricular activity and opportunities for involvement in the school's life.
- 42 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the way in which learners are prepared for effective participation in the work place and the community.

### **The quality of education and training**

- 43 Teaching at the school has good features which outweigh shortcomings.

- 44 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 82 lessons observed in the six subjects and 25 lessons in other subjects.

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>KS3</b>	19%	44%	35%	2%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	13%	49%	30%	8%	0%
<b>KS3 and KS4</b>	16%	46%	33%	5%	0%
<b>Sixth form</b>	13%	64%	23%	0%	0%
<b>Whole school</b>	16%	50%	30%	4%	0%
<b>These grades are based on observations of 107 lessons</b>					

- 45 These figures are in line with the average for Wales for teaching, as reported by Her Majesty's Chief inspector (HMCI) in his latest report. However, they are well below the average for lessons judged to be Grade 1 and Grade 2.
- 46 HMCI reports that, in 2007-2008, there was little significant difference between the quality of teaching at KS3 and KS4. Inspectors did not find that to be the case on this occasion. In fact, at KS4, the proportion of lessons judged to be poor was almost three times the national average. This is an important shortcoming.
- 47 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these grades show that while the proportion of teaching judged to be highly effective has increased, the proportion of teaching that is Grade 2 has not.
- 48 Inspectors observed a wide variation in the quality of teaching both within and between subjects.
- 49 In most lessons, teachers showed good subject knowledge. Where teaching was successful, teachers planned their lessons well and established constructive relationships with the class. They used a comprehensive range of resources to engage pupils and put to effective use the school's investment in ICT.
- 50 Teaching that inspectors judged to be outstanding was seen in history and physical education. Lessons were innovative and delivered to a very high standard. Teachers engaged the attention of learners through a wide variety of tasks and by questions that challenged them to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- 51 Where teaching had shortcomings, teachers' lesson plans lacked clear objectives. The pace was too slow and the level of challenge was insufficient. The work provided did not match learners' abilities, and very little guidance was given to them to help them improve. Teachers provided irregular and limited opportunities for learners to develop their bilingual skills.
- 52 In lessons where there were important shortcomings, teachers lacked effective classroom management skills.
- 53 While the school meets statutory requirements for assessment, there is considerable inconsistency in assessment practice, both within and across subjects. The quality of marking is poor in too many cases and the feedback to pupils and students is ineffective in helping learners improve their work.
- 54 While self-assessment and peer-assessment are consistently good in a small minority of subjects, in the majority of subjects, pupils are unsure of their targets and the criteria for achieving success. These are important shortcomings.

- 55 The school's reporting arrangements are ineffective. While each learner receives three brief reports each year, the information they contain is insufficient to inform parents and carers of learners' progress. Reports make little reference to how learners might improve their performance. These are important shortcomings.
- 56 There are good features and no important shortcomings in the school's curricular provision.
- 57 At KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form, the curriculum provided is broadly based and balanced and meets the needs of pupils and students. It has coherence and progression and enables learners to achieve qualifications at appropriate levels.
- 58 The school has good links with Yale College and the Maelor School. Co-operation has been effective in widening the range of courses open to pupils. Students in the sixth form benefit from a comprehensive range of courses that lead to the award of the WBQ.
- 59 There are good features in the provision to develop pupils' learning skills. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school provides appropriate opportunities to develop learners' numeracy, ICT, and communication skills.
- 60 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the way in which the school promotes the language and culture of Wales. Outside lessons in Welsh as a second language, there are very few opportunities for pupils and students to develop their bilingual skills.
- 61 There is a very good range of extra-curricular activity provided by the school, particularly in sport, music and drama. The way in which the school promotes education for sustainable development is good. There is a well-supported eco-committee which has secured a national award.
- 62 The provision for work-related education (WRE) is adequate. The school has relevant links with local employers who provide suitable opportunities for work experience and advice about interview techniques.
- 63 The school meets the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.
- 64 The support and guidance of pupils and students have good features and no important shortcomings.
- 65 Pastoral care is well planned and managed. The pastoral support manager relieves the lead learners of many routine tasks so that they can concentrate more effectively on their core duty of monitoring and supporting pupils.
- 66 The quality of personal support and guidance is very good. There are beneficial partnerships with a wide range of external agencies.
- 67 Good behaviour management support has been effective in improving standards of behaviour in classrooms and around the school.
- 68 The way in which the school has developed an induction programme to manage the transition between primary and secondary school is very good.
- 69 Impartial information of good quality is provided to enable learners to make the best choice of courses for their future. While the provision for personal and

social education (PSE) is good, the provision for careers education is of inconsistent quality.

- 70 The arrangements for child protection are good but the ways in which the school seeks to monitor attendance are irregular.
- 71 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the school's arrangements to monitor pupils' and students' academic progress. The school has invested in an ICT-based pupil-tracking system. However, its effectiveness is limited by the shortcomings of the assessment data it contains.
- 72 Overall, the provision for learners with SEN is good. Individual needs are successfully diagnosed. The school's commitment to inclusion ensures that support of individual needs is effective and pupils with SEN make good progress. However, there are shortcomings in the way in which the provision is monitored.
- 73 The school is effective in supporting learners from all backgrounds, promoting equality and good relations and respecting diversity. Pupils value the school's arrangements to eliminate oppressive behaviour.
- 74 The school has a disability equality scheme and a relevant disability accessibility plan.

### **Leadership and management**

- 75 While leadership and management have some good features, there are shortcomings in important areas.
- 76 The prospectus clearly communicates the school's vision to maximise the potential of all learners. The SIP is a valuable document that clearly identifies a comprehensive range of priorities for the school's development that are focussed on raising standards of achievement.
- 77 The leadership provided by the headteacher and her SLT is effective on a day-to-day basis. They take good account of many local and national priorities and collaborate enthusiastically and effectively with other providers.
- 78 The roles of individuals in the SLT have recently been revised. While their roles are now more clearly defined, there is a significant imbalance of responsibility and the degree of their accountability is unclear. These are significant shortcomings.
- 79 Leaders and managers are not sufficiently accountable for the quality of their work. As a result, their practice is inconsistent and the quality of middle management varies from very good to poor. These are important shortcomings.
- 80 In the six subjects inspected, there are examples of very good practice and team work. There are, also, shortcomings in the planning for improvement, including target-setting, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment, and an absence of effective quality assurance procedures.
- 81 While the school provides suitable opportunities for teachers and support staff to reflect on good practice, innovation is not regularly monitored, evaluated and reviewed. These are important shortcomings.
- 82 There are established systems to manage the performance of teaching and support staff. These, together with the review visits conducted by the UA, and

external consultants are the main ways in which the school gathers first-hand evidence on the quality of classroom experiences. However, there are important shortcomings in the way in which line managers follow up consultants' recommendations.

- 83 Governors represent a wide range of community interests and are supportive of the school. Their responsibilities for monitoring the quality of school provision and outcomes have been re-defined. They are beginning to develop their role as critical friends of the school.
- 84 There are important shortcomings in self-evaluation. While the headteacher and the leadership team have an appropriate understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of the school, they have not ensured that monitoring arrangements are consistent and rigorous enough to effect improvements in standards. The school's SER identifies many of its strengths and shortcomings, though some shortcomings were not given sufficient weight.
- 85 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the way in which the school has made progress in addressing the key issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection report.
- 86 Overall, there has been a gradual improvement in standards in subjects judged to be satisfactory. Learners use their speaking and writing skills well. Their skills in numeracy, information technology and improving their own learning are less well developed.
- 87 The school has made good progress in developing a more worthwhile curriculum for those pupils at risk of disaffection, though progress in improving attendance has been limited. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements.
- 88 While the school has been successful in extending the proportion of very good teaching, inspectors judged teaching to be highly effective in only two out of the six subjects, namely, history and physical education.
- 89 The school has made relevant progress in developing the role of the form tutor.
- 90 Insufficient progress has been made in promoting self-evaluation through more rigorous monitoring and sharing good practice.
- 91 On the whole, good features outweigh shortcomings in the way in which the school uses its resources.
- 92 All subjects are taught by specialist teachers. There is a good range of non-teaching staff, including learning support staff who are well motivated.
- 93 The provision of specialist accommodation is adequate, though the school does not have a designated hall and the dining area is too small. The accommodation is well maintained.
- 94 The school has invested in a good range of ICT and library resources and uses them well.
- 95 The ways in which the school manages, controls and reviews its budget are consistently good.
- 96 Overall, good features outweigh shortcomings in the way in which the school provides good value for money.

## Recommendations

In order to make greater progress, to build on current achievement, and to fulfil its potential to be a good school, the school should focus on the following priorities.

- R1 Raise standards of achievement, particularly at KS4, and in science throughout the school.
- R2 Improve the quality of leadership and management at senior and middle levels by holding leaders and managers to account for the quality of their work, and in particular, by:
- reviewing the balance of responsibilities of members of the SLT for line managing curriculum leaders and leaders of learning;
  - challenging underperformance more rigorously; and
  - ensuring corrective action.
- R3 Continue the process of setting increasingly challenging targets and improve their use by ensuring that:
- assessment data are used more diagnostically;
  - pupils and students have a greater input to their own targets and understand how to achieve them;
  - the role of leaders of learning and curriculum leaders, as well as form tutors, are developed, and
  - a detailed annual report to parents and carers is published.
- R4 Eliminate the shortcomings in teaching by:
- better planning;
  - injecting more pace and challenge into lessons;
  - providing greater opportunities for pupils to use their bilingual skills; and
  - monitoring and sharing good practice more rigorously.
- R4 Eliminate the shortcomings in assessment by:
- improving the consistency and quality of marking;
  - improving the quality of feedback given to learners; and
  - monitoring and sharing good practice more rigorously.
- R5 Improve attendance.
- R6 Further enhance the capacity of governors to act as critical friends of the school.
- R7 Continue to work with the UA to bring about improvements to the school accommodation.

*Aspects of all these recommendations are addressed in the current SIP.*

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

## Standards

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

#### Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

#### KS3 and KS4

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

98 The team inspected the standards that pupils achieve in six subjects. The following table shows the grades awarded at KS3 and KS4.

Subject	KS3	KS4
English	2	2
Science	3	3
Information Technology	3	3
History	2	2
Art	3	2
Physical Education	2	2

99 In comparison with the time the school was last inspected, these figures show that there have been improvements in history and physical education at KS3 and in English and art at KS4. They show that standards have fallen in science at KS3 and information technology at KS4 in comparison with that time.

100 The fall in standards in science is an important shortcoming.

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

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	5%	46%	49%	0%	0%
KS4	4%	37%	44%	15%	0%
KS3 & KS4	5%	42%	47%	6%	0%
<b>These grades are based on observations of 64 lessons</b>					

102 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these figures indicate that overall standards are broadly in line with those observed when the school was last inspected.

103 Inspectors awarded the two top grades for standards in 47% of lessons compared with 54% of lessons when the school was inspected in 2003. Shortcomings were identified in 53% of lessons in comparison with 46% at that time.

104 The proportion of lessons judged to have good and outstanding features was greater at KS3 than at KS4. At KS4, the two top grades were awarded for only 41% of lessons compared with 51% at KS3. At KS4, standards were judged to have shortcomings in 59% of lessons, compared to 49% at KS3.

105 The 15% of lessons where standards were judged to be poor were in science. This is a significant shortcoming.

106 Results at KS3 fall below national averages for Wales. In 2008, 54% of pupils reached at least level 5 in the core subjects combined, compared to 60% nationally.

- 107 On the whole, results at KS3 in the NC teachers' assessments have improved. Pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. In two out of the last three years, the school has exceeded its overall targets, apart from in science.
- 108 In 2007, achievement was below average when compared to schools of a similar intake. 2008 saw an improvement, apart from in science. Achievement in English, mathematics and the three core subjects combined was above average. Achievement in science remains below average.
- 109 At KS4, passes at the higher grades fall below both local and national averages. In 2008, 43% of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A\*-C, or their equivalent, compared to 52% locally and 56% nationally.
- 110 Passes at grades A\*-G are in line with local and national figures. Eighty-six per cent of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A\*-G, or their equivalent, compared to 87% locally and 86% nationally. In comparison with schools of a similar intake, these figures are above average.
- 111 In 2008, in comparison with similar schools, the percentage of pupils gaining five or more passes at the higher grades at GCSE was slightly above average. In two out of the past three years, passes were below average. In 2007 they were in the bottom 25% of similar schools.
- 112 When results at the end of KS4 are matched to prior attainment these results are below average, when compared to similar schools. This is an important shortcoming.
- 113 In 2008, at KS4, actual achievement was broadly in line with the school's targets, though the school exceeded its target for passes in all the core subjects combined.
- 114 At both KS3 and KS4, girls outperform boys.
- 115 Pupils with SEN are given good support. They make good progress and, at both key stages, they achieve good standards relative to their abilities.
- 116 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the standards of pupils' key skills.
- 117 The majority of pupils throughout the school listens well. They are attentive both to teachers and fellow pupils. They respond to instructions promptly and answer questions willingly. Many pupils speak clearly and confidently with a good grasp of technical vocabulary.
- 118 Many pupils work well together in pairs and in groups, in creative and problem-solving activities.
- 119 Standards of pupils' written work vary. On the whole, pupils' narrative writing is good in relation to their ability. The more able pupils present their opinions well. A small minority lacks confidence in structuring their writing, though drafting leads to improvement.
- 120 At both KS3 and at KS4, pupils' numeracy and ICT skills are generally not well developed outside of mathematics and information technology lessons.
- 121 While pupils' achievement in Welsh second language has good features, their bilingual skills are not well developed outside Welsh lessons.

### **Their progress in learning**

- 122 Overall, good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' progress.
- 123 Pupils acquire new knowledge and skills. In the six subjects inspected, pupils made good progress in English, history, physical education, and, on the whole, in art. In information technology, shortcomings in progress were associated with pupils' poor practical skills and their inability to improve their own learning.
- 124 Pupils with SEN do particularly well, especially where they have learning support. Pupils with support in English as an additional language make good progress.
- 125 Pupils' abilities to improve their own performance are limited. They are not fully aware of what they have to do in order to improve. Where targets are set, they often lack focus and are not subject-specific. Neither are they consistently reinforced by diagnostic marking. This has a detrimental effect on pupils' motivation to succeed and to do even better.

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

- 126 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills.
- 127 Pupils' behaviour was observed to be consistently good in the vast majority of lessons. Behaviour around the school was orderly. Pupils showed good levels of respect to staff, visitors and to one another. A calm and orderly atmosphere contributes to pupils' learning.
- 128 Attendance has improved slightly in recent years, though at 90% levels remain below school and UA targets.
- 129 There are good features and no important shortcomings in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils respond well to the daily act of collective worship.
- 130 Pupils show a comprehensive awareness of equal opportunity issues and respect diversity within the school and in society.
- 131 Pupils are appropriately prepared for the world of work. They develop the skills needed for effective participation in the workplace through the school's WRE provision.
- 132 While pupils adopt positive attitudes towards life-long learning, their ability to learn independently is not consistently developed.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals**

- 133 Standards in the sixth form have good features which outweigh shortcomings.
- 134 The team inspected the standards that students achieve in six subjects. The following table shows the grades awarded in the sixth form.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Sixth-form</b>
<b>English</b>	2
<b>Science</b>	3
<b>Information Technology</b>	3
<b>History</b>	2
<b>Art</b>	2
<b>Physical Education</b>	2

135 In comparison with the time that the school was last inspected, these figures represent the maintenance of overall standards in English, history, art and physical education. They represent a fall in standards in science and information technology.

136 The following table shows the standards achieved by students in the subjects inspected.

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>Sixth form</b>	6%	61%	33%	0%	0%
<b>These grades are based on observations of 18 lessons</b>					

137 Although the size and nature of the sample are different, in comparison with the time the school was last inspected, these figures indicate that the proportion of lessons with good and very good features has declined and that of lessons identified to have shortcomings has increased.

138 When compared with inspections of secondary schools conducted in Wales in 2007-2008, these figures show standards to be below average.

139 Advanced level passes at two or more grades A-C and grades A-E fall below UA and all-Wales averages.

140 The school has made good progress in the successes students gain from the WBQ. In 2008, completion rates fell above the average of Wales. The school already exceeds the national target for 2010.

141 In the sixth form, as at KS3 and KS4, girls outperform boys.

142 On the whole, standards in the key skills of communication, use of number and ICT have good features and no important shortcomings.

143 Good levels of communication skills are evident in class discussion. Students speak and listen well to the teacher and to one another. More able students use technical terms accurately and pose questions that are probing. Many express their views with clarity. They write at length, using subject specific vocabulary fluently and accurately.

144 Students engage in problem-solving activity and use ICT well to support their research and present their work. They handle files and folders confidently. Many use data bases, PowerPoint and spreadsheets successfully.

145 As at KS3 and KS4, students' bilingual skills are not well developed.

### **Their progress in learning**

146 Students respond well to the good support to all sixth formers, particularly to those who wish to proceed to higher education. Students make good progress towards the WBQ.

147 In many subjects, students do not have a clear understanding of their levels of achievement and what they have to do in order to improve their work.

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

148 Students enjoy very good relationships with staff and develop a sense of maturity and independence. They take seriously their responsibility for supporting younger pupils.

- 149 Students express their views openly and honestly. They develop very positive attitudes and develop good skills of leadership. Sixth-form students develop very good personal, social and learning skills.
- 150 As at KS3 and KS4, there are good features and no important shortcomings in students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They respond well to the daily act of collective worship.
- 151 Students have good levels of attendance and punctuality.
- 152 Participation in the WBQ provides sixth-form students with an appropriate programme of work-related education that enables them to become mature young people who are aware of, and respond to, the needs of others.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 153 Inspectors awarded one grade below that offered by the school in its SER. This is because the team considered the percentage of lessons with shortcomings in teaching and assessment to be significant.

#### KS3 and KS4

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

- 154 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 64 lessons observed in the six subjects and 21 lessons in other subjects at KS3 and KS4.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>6 Subjects</b>	19%	36%	39%	6%	0%
<b>Other subjects</b>	10%	76%	14%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	16%	46%	33%	5%	0%
<b>These grades are based on observations of 85 lessons</b>					

- 155 The quality of teaching and assessment is well below the average for Wales as reported by HMCI. Sixty-two percent of lessons were graded 1 and 2 compared to 75% in all inspections in Wales in 2007-2008.
- 156 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, the percentage of lessons with outstanding features has increased from 4% to 16%, and the lessons with Grades 1 and 2 increased from 54% to 62%. However, as in the last inspection, over a third of lessons were judged to have important shortcomings.
- 157 Most of the outstanding teaching was seen in physical education and in some history lessons. Where outstanding features were identified, teachers:
- used a very wide range of teaching methods and activities to motivate pupils;
  - planned lessons very carefully to provide pupils with a rich learning experience; and
  - asked searching questions to probe learners' understanding and use responses very effectively to extend learning.

- 158 In about half of the other lessons observed, elements of the above features were present, but to a lesser extent.
- 159 Teachers have good subject knowledge overall, and in a majority of lessons set clear learning objectives which they share with pupils.
- 160 In most lessons, relationships are good and teachers know their pupils well. Teachers manage behaviour well and this enables the majority of pupils to engage effectively in their learning.
- 161 In about two-thirds of the lessons observed, tasks set had appropriate challenge. These lessons proceeded with pace and pupils were expected to complete tasks to a good standard.
- 162 However, over a third of lessons were awarded a Grade 3 or 4. Almost a half of the lessons at KS4 in the six subjects inspected were identified to have had shortcomings. In particular, there was insufficient rigour in planning lessons and a lack of clear learning objectives. The pace of the lessons was slow so the amount of work completed was modest. Expectations were too low, there was insufficient challenge in the tasks set, and teachers were prepared to accept untidy and incomplete work.
- 163 The school creates a supportive atmosphere and offers learning experiences where each pupil is respected as an individual, regardless of gender, race or disability. Although some initiatives have been developed to provide more able and talented pupils with extended and more challenging work, they are not well developed across all subjects.
- 164 The school's promotion of bilingualism has good features which outweigh shortcomings. A minority of teachers uses strategies such as the calling of registers, headings for tasks in exercise books and brief discussions in lessons to good effect. However, across the school, there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to develop their bilingual skills on a regular basis.
- 165 Assessment for learning strategies have been developed during the present academic year. Progress has been made in some curriculum areas. However its full implementation is variable in achieving the desired improvements in learning.

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

- 166 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the assessment of pupils' work.
- 167 Where good features were evident, teachers:
- assessed pupils' work accurately and regularly; and
  - provided detailed written feedback to indicate strengths and areas for improvement.
- 168 However, the quality of the assessment of pupils' work varies too much across the school. In a minority of subjects, teachers do not mark pupils' work regularly, nor with sufficient rigour. Feedback is often superficial and fails to give sufficient guidance how to improve.
- 169 The school meets the statutory requirements for assessment and reporting and satisfies examination board requirements. Teacher assessments at KS3 in the subjects that have submitted portfolios for moderation are accurate.

- 170 While self-assessment and peer-assessment are used as effective tools to improve the standard of pupils' work in English, history and modern foreign languages, they are not used consistently across the curriculum.
- 171 Qualitative targets based on previous performance are set for all pupils in both key stages. Targets are recorded on the school's information system and in pupils' planners. Teachers assess and record pupil progress towards meeting these targets three times each year with the information provided as a progress report to parents. Progress made by pupils against their targets is reviewed by form tutors after each report.
- 172 Although three progress reports are issued each year, the school does not provide a detailed report that identifies strengths and areas for improvement in each subject. With the low attendance at parents' evenings in some years, opportunities to give a full picture of progress are limited. This is an important shortcoming.

### **Sixth form**

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

- 173 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 18 lessons observed in the six subjects and four lessons in other subjects in the sixth form.

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
13%	64%	23%	0%	0%
<b>These grades are based on observations of 22 lessons</b>				

- 174 When comparing with the last inspection when all subjects were inspected, the percentage of lessons graded equivalent to Grade 1 has increased from 10% to 13%. However, the proportion of lessons at Grade 3 has increased from 8% to 23%.
- 175 The outstanding and good features identified at KS3 and KS4 were also present in a majority of sixth-form lessons. These included:
- carefully-planned lessons, with clear learning objectives;
  - in-depth teacher explanations and questioning;
  - constructive student relationships; and
  - lessons conducted at pace with suitably challenging activities.
- 176 In lessons where there were shortcomings, there was insufficient challenge in some tasks set, pace was slow and there were limited opportunities for students to work independently.

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

- 177 In many of the lessons observed, teachers marked and assessed students' work accurately. They provided useful feedback that gave students guidance how to improve.
- 178 Subject teachers set targets for students' achievement and these are compared against external indicators. While subject teachers comment on good performance or underachievement to the head of sixth form on an informal

basis, there is no regular communication of progress against targets. Form tutors review students three times each year. These meetings are more focused on general progress, pastoral matters and involvement in the life of the school than critically evaluating academic progress.

- 179 One full academic report is completed each year. Although the report provides a description of the course studied, a study skills profile and a progress indicator against the target grade, most reports lack sufficient detail to inform and give clear targets for improvement. Many reports are too generic and lack subject-specific detail in comments made.

**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**

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

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

- 181 The curriculum enables pupils of all abilities to study a broad range of subjects and to gain qualifications. At KS3 the curriculum follows the national guidelines and PSE is taught as a separate subject on a rotational basis.
- 182 Effective transition arrangements are in place to ensure the efficient transfer from partner primary schools. Work in English, science and mathematics, started in the primary schools is continued in the secondary school for the first half-term.
- 183 A good range of academic and vocational courses effectively addresses the needs of pupils. Appropriate time is allocated. The school takes good account of the Learning Pathways (LP) 14-19 and works well with the local consortium to broaden the range of courses on offer.
- 184 The sixth-form curriculum is enriched by the introduction of the WBQ. A small number of courses are taught in conjunction with other schools by means of video-conferencing facilities.
- 185 Class sizes throughout all years and key stages are appropriate to meet the individual needs of the pupils.
- 186 Basic and key skills are developed appropriately, particularly for sixth-form students via the WBQ. However, there are shortcomings in the ways in which this provision is monitored.
- 187 Beneficial opportunities are available for pupils to broaden and enrich their experiences through a variety of activities, including off-site and out-of-hours provision. All these opportunities are greatly valued by pupils, their parents and the local community.
- 188 Pupils' and students' experiences are further enriched by overseas visits, such as to France, the Gambia and Morocco, as well as to places closer to home.
- 189 The ways in which the school supports local and national charities contributes successfully to learners' personal and social development. A considerable amount of money has been raised for Red Nose Day, the Poppy appeal, the

Sunshine Trust and various cancer appeals. The school has taken a leading role in producing a talking newspaper for members of the community who suffer from visual impairment.

- 190 The personal development of learners is further promoted by an extensive PSE programme. It follows national guidelines and is delivered by all staff and supported by outside agencies.
- 191 The promotion of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school meets statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. This, together with lessons in religious education, and a cross-curricular faith day, contributes effectively to learners' spiritual and moral development.
- 192 The school provides a comprehensive range of opportunities for promoting learners' cultural development. Significant contributions are made by English, Welsh, history and art. *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is provided for ably in many areas of the curriculum. The school celebrates St David's Day and many pupils take part in eisteddfodau.
- 193 Effective partnerships have been created with interested parties including primary schools, the local consortium of secondary schools and Yale College. Partnerships exist with many organisations that enrich the curriculum being offered. An annual carol service, open to parents and the community, is held in a local church.
- 194 The curriculum satisfies the regulations of the examination boards and all legal and course requirements are met.

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

- 195 Work-related education features at KS4 and in the sixth form. The contributions made by Careers Wales are beneficial. Pupils who follow vocational courses have opportunities to study this aspect in more detail. Effective links are being developed with local employers. Pupils at KS4 have worthwhile opportunities to develop interview techniques. Work experience is arranged for all and a debriefing session is arranged to establish what pupils have learnt from the experiences gained. However, the ways in which the school provides opportunities for learners to develop enterprise skills are insufficient.
- 196 The school seeks to promote bilingual skills within the curriculum. Every attempt is made to encourage greater use of Welsh within the school and signs around the school are provided bilingually. However, this provision is not consistent, nor is it monitored.
- 197 Increasing opportunities are provided for pupils to understand the importance of sustainable development. An eco-committee has been formed with representatives from all year groups and money has been provided by the Woodlands Trust to enable trees to be planted within the school grounds. The school is working towards achieving the green flag award.
- 198 The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. Positive steps are taken to tackle social disadvantage and stereotyping.

- 199 The school is developing learning experiences that take account of employers' needs. However the participation of employers is not well developed.
- 200 Overall, good features outweigh shortcomings in the ways in which the school provides experiences to develop learners' skills for life-long learning.

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

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

201 Inspectors awarded one grade higher than the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report. This is because the team considered that the improvement in the management of pupils' behaviour was greater than the school had recognised.

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

- 202 The school has recently enhanced the role of pastoral managers. Lead learners, formerly heads of year, have wide responsibilities. They carry significant responsibility for monitoring the progress of pupils in their care.
- 203 They are well supported by the pastoral support manager, who is frequently the first point of contact with parents. This arrangement relieves lead learners of many routine tasks so that they can concentrate more effectively on their core duty of monitoring and supporting the pupils in their care. Key stage managers, themselves members of the SLT, meet lead learners regularly to seek to ensure consistency in their work.
- 204 There are good partnerships with a wide range of support services. These are used effectively to enhance the care and guidance provided.
- 205 The school works closely with parents and carers. Information evenings are well attended. There is an effective school council and students attend governors' meetings. The school has adopted some of the council's suggestions for improvements.
- 206 The school is making adequate progress in the development of the LP 14-19 options menu for learners. It provides pupils with information about the range of courses available to them, both at school and in other institutions. Careers education and guidance are integrated into the PSE programme, but in Y9 does not devote enough attention to developing the skills pupils need to make informed choices.
- 207 Careers Wales provides impartial guidance interviews to help pupils with their choices in Y9 and Y11. The school has appointed two qualified learning coaches, who provide good impartial support. The role of the learning coach is developing. As yet it is not fully embedded in the school's guidance programme.
- 208 Personal support and guidance of good quality are provided by all staff involved in the pastoral system. This provision is a strength of the school.
- 209 Pupils settle quickly and happily into their new school. There is a well-organised transition programme and good links with partner primary schools. Pupils who arrive during the school year are given a worthwhile induction period.

- 210 The PSE programme is based on the PSE and Careers Education and Guidance (CEG) frameworks. Year teams deliver this effectively, with good support from a range of external agencies.
- 211 The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' punctuality and behaviour. It responds appropriately when problems arise. However the way in which the school monitors attendance is insufficiently rigorous.
- 212 Lead learners have begun to monitor pupil progress. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this work is limited by shortcomings in the quality of the assessment data with which they are supplied and the rigour of their discussions with key stage managers.
- 213 The school pays appropriate attention to keeping pupils safe and healthy. It encourages pupils to eat healthily by providing healthy choices in the canteen and restricting vending machine sales. A designated senior member of staff has responsibility for child protection and members of staff are familiar with the school's referral procedures.

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

- 214 The school's provision for pupils with SEN has many good features.
- 215 The school has established effective links with primary schools to gather relevant SEN information. The school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and head of Y7 visit pupils in primary schools to establish their learning needs. Standardised tests and informal observations and assessments, provide useful information which helps teachers to plan suitable programmes of work.
- 216 The school ensures that the SENCO receives sufficient time to plan and co-ordinate provision for pupils with SEN. However, the school's monitoring arrangements are not effective in evaluating the provision for these pupils in subject areas.
- 217 Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are well written, clear and contain specific targets. In the best examples, good adaptations of tasks and resources are made to meet the needs of the pupils. However, the quality of adaptation is inconsistent across all subjects.
- 218 Learning support assistants (LSAs) provide good support and the specific expertise of many of them greatly enhances the provision offered by the school. All LSAs record regularly detailed observation notes on the progress made by each pupil. They meet with the SENCO to discuss pupils' progress and identify areas which may need reinforcing through further adaptation or support in lessons.
- 219 The quality of provision for those pupils who are withdrawn for specific specialist support in basic skills is generally good. Learning assistants provide support of high quality in many of these lessons.
- 220 Many pupils in Y11 provide good reading and spelling support for identified pupils in Y7, in early morning sessions. They have been trained on how to listen to pupils read, and contribute well towards improving younger pupils' basic skills.

- 221 The school's curriculum for pupils with SEN at KS4 helps to improve their standards and motivate them towards further learning. Many pupils follow accredited courses.
- 222 The school works closely with several agencies that provide specialised support. Programmes of work offered by specialist support agencies are reinforced appropriately.
- 223 The school keeps parents and carers of pupils with SEN fully informed of their children's progress. Pupils and parents are invited to contribute towards reviews of their IEPs and towards annual reviews of pupils who receive a statement of SEN.
- 224 The school's provision for SEN takes into account the statutory framework for inclusive education, and meets the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice.
- 225 There are clear guidelines on how to support pupils whose behaviour may disrupt lessons. These are known to all and ensure that pupils are not hindered from learning by the behaviour of others. The school's behaviour co-ordinator offers appropriate levels of support.
- 226 Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are very well supported. The school makes effective use of external expertise to enhance this area of provision.
- 227 The school has established procedures to identify the more able and talented pupils. A few teachers provide extended tasks for them in their lessons. However, this practice is inconsistent across the school. The provision is not monitored and evaluated effectively.

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

- 228 The school recognises the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and provides a range of appropriate support to meet their needs. It takes positive steps to cater for and integrate children whose mother tongue is not English. The provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties is particularly effective. Provision for the more able and talented is underdeveloped.
- 229 The school ensures that all its pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. Its curricular provision shows no gender inequalities and its PSE programme actively promotes equality of opportunity. It complies with race relations legislation.
- 230 The school responds quickly and appropriately to all incidents of bullying. Procedures include pupils in Y7 and Y8 in the prevention of bullying. Pupils trust their lead learners and have the confidence to approach them with their concerns. They are confident that issues will be resolved speedily.
- 231 The school takes appropriate action to ensure that disabled pupils are not disadvantaged. The school's accessibility plan complies with legal requirements.
- 232 Although the school recognises and respects the diversity of its pupils, it provides only limited opportunities for pupils to learn about other societies.

## **Leadership and management**

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

#### **Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas**

233 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower than that judged by the school in its SER. Grade 4 was awarded because of the shortcomings identified in standards, teaching and learning and inconsistency in the impact of leadership and management across the school.

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

- 234 While leadership and management have some good features, there are shortcomings in important areas.
- 235 The prospectus clearly communicates the school's vision to maximise the potential of all learners. The SIP is a valuable document that clearly identifies a comprehensive range of priorities for the school's development that are focussed on raising standards of achievement.
- 236 The leadership provided by the headteacher and her SLT is effective on a day-to-day basis, though their failure to ensure that registers are consistently marked is an important shortcoming.
- 237 The roles of individuals in the SLT have recently been revised. While their roles are now more clearly defined, there is a significant imbalance between the responsibilities carried by assistant headteachers. Furthermore, the degree of their accountability is unclear. These are significant shortcomings.
- 238 Job descriptions are written appropriately to focus on developing a strong culture of learning and achievement. However, leaders and managers are not sufficiently accountable for the quality of their work. Line managers have been largely ineffective in helping curriculum leaders and leaders of learning to reflect critically on their work. As a result, their practice is inconsistent and the quality of middle management varies from very good to poor. These are important shortcomings.
- 239 In particular, there is inconsistency in the effectiveness of the SLT link with departments and insufficient monitoring and evaluation of initiatives. As a result, there is wide variation in the degree of corrective action set for, and by, departments. Consequently, the targets for subject areas and pupils do not make a sufficient impact on standards. These are important shortcomings.
- 240 As a result, there is not a common sense of purpose in the school that impacts in a positive way on the achievement of all. Clear expectations of everyone are not prevalent.
- 241 There are examples of very good practice and team work. In those departments where there are predominantly good features, there is clear direction, shared norms about learning and teaching and a large measure of consistent practice. Where practice is less good, there are shortcomings in the planning for improvement, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment, and an absence of effective quality assurance procedures.

- 242 While the school provides many opportunities for teachers and support staff to reflect on good practice, the impact of training on classroom practice has not been consistently effective.
- 243 There are established systems to manage the performance of teaching and support staff. These, together with the review visits conducted by the UA, and external consultants are the main ways in which the school gathers first-hand evidence on the quality of classroom experiences. However, line managers have not followed-up consultants' recommendations.
- 244 While the headteacher and the leadership team have an appropriate understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of the school, they have not ensured that monitoring arrangements are consistent and rigorous enough to effect improvements in standards. The school's SER identifies many of its strengths and shortcomings, though some shortcomings were not given sufficient weight.
- 245 Leaders and managers take relevant account of Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) priorities. The provision for work-related education seeks to prepare pupils and students for life-long learning. The school works well to promote healthy lifestyles and an understanding of the importance of education for sustainable development and global citizenship.
- 246 Transition arrangements with partner primary schools are very good. The school is making good progress in developing equal access to learning pathways that meet pupils' and students' individual needs. Partnerships with other providers are valuable. However, the school is not making adequate progress in the development of bilingualism and the monitoring of key skills.
- 247 The school is seeking to set increasingly challenging targets. However, the shortcomings in assessment, inconsistent monitoring by curriculum leaders and line managers and the lack of a detailed end-of-year report contribute to the limitations target setting has had on school improvement.

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

- 248 Governors represent a wide range of community interests, are supportive of the school and are involved in the school's strategic planning.
- 249 Governors work through an appropriate range of committees. They monitor the quality of provision through reports brought to them by leaders and managers. They scrutinised the SER and contributed to the discussion of the grades awarded.
- 250 However, the shortcomings in leadership and management and in self-evaluation limit their capacity to act as effective critical friends of the school.
- 251 Governors meet all statutory requirements.

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

### **Grade 4: Some good features but shortcomings in important areas**

252 The grade awarded by the inspection team is two grades lower than that judged by the school in its SER. Grade 4 was awarded because of the shortcomings in monitoring and improving teaching and assessment and inconsistencies in self-evaluation.

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

253 While self-evaluation has some good features, there are shortcomings in important areas, particularly in the action taken by leaders and managers in remedying weaknesses.

254 The SER uses a good range of first-hand evidence drawn from performance data, the contributions of learners, staff and external consultants. The report is a clear summary which identifies what the school sees as its major strengths and areas for development. While the school recognises that it has shortcomings in several areas, it has not considered well enough the gravity of some of these, nor their impact on learners' development and achievement.

255 On the whole, the structure of the self-evaluation process is appropriate. There are good links between departmental and whole-school evaluations, and between departmental and whole-school planning. Recently, the school has begun to make good use of UA and other external consultants to provide subject-specific expertise. However, their work is not complemented by regular monitoring by curriculum leaders and senior managers. These, and the failure to evaluate the impact of professional development, are important shortcomings.

256 While the restructuring of school management has devolved more responsibility for monitoring to subject departments and pastoral areas, the way in which they are held accountable for the quality of their work in self-evaluation has important shortcomings. Though all departments are line-managed by members of the SLT, there is an imbalance in their responsibilities for self-evaluation. Most subjects are line managed by two assistant headteachers who, in addition, carry responsibilities as curriculum leaders. This restricts their effectiveness in monitoring, evaluating and review. It has had a detrimental effect on their capacity to observe lessons, scrutinise books and hold departments accountable.

257 Meetings held with leaders of learning lack challenge. While key stage managers have less direct subject responsibility, their discussions with lead learners focus on pupils' support and guidance rather than on their academic progress.

258 Each curriculum area has a link governor. Their responsibilities for monitoring the quality of school provision and outcomes have been re-defined. They are beginning to develop their role as critical friends of the school. The school council has developed a strong voice and ensures learners make an increasing contribution to the work of the school. Every department and pastoral team puts forward its view. Parents' views are effectively canvassed both by questionnaires and regular parents' evenings. Transition and other collaborative partners, employers and representatives of the local community are welcome visitors to the school where their views are sought and valued.

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

- 259 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the way in which the school has made progress in addressing the key issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection report.
- 260 Overall, there has been a gradual improvement in standards in subjects judged to be satisfactory. On the whole, learners use their speaking and writing skills well. Their skills in numeracy, ICT and improving their own learning are less well developed.
- 261 The school has made good progress in developing a more worthwhile curriculum for those pupils at risk of disaffection, though progress in improving attendance has been limited. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements.
- 262 While the school has been successful in extending the proportion of very good teaching, inspectors judged teaching to be highly effective in only two out of the six subjects, namely, history and physical education. While the school's teaching and learning forum offers potentially good support, its effectiveness is limited to the few who attend.
- 263 The school has made relevant progress in developing the role of the form tutor.
- 264 Insufficient progress has been made in promoting self-evaluation through more rigorous monitoring and sharing good practice. Shortcomings in assessment procedures limit the usefulness of data used for setting and reviewing targets. SLT links with lead learners and curriculum leaders lack challenge and rigour. These links have been ineffective in holding leaders and managers to account.
- 265 The SIP draws together important strands from the departmental improvement plans. It is closely linked to the SER and is well focused. It presents the school's aims and objectives clearly, and includes measurable success criteria and costings. The management and allocation of resources to match priorities reflect efficient financial control and good challenge by the governors.

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

<b>Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings</b>
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266 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

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

- 267 Well-qualified, experienced and specialist teaching staff are deployed effectively. Most teachers operate within their subject specialism. Nearly all those who teach outside their subject are well supported by their curriculum leaders.
- 268 The workforce remodelling exercise fully meets statutory requirements. Its implementation has brought about a significant reduction in teachers' clerical and administrative workload. The increased range of support staff of good quality enhances the work of the school.

- 269 Learning support staff are generally deployed effectively. They make a positive contribution to lessons and work well with classroom teachers to support learning. However, their work is not monitored by the SENCO and there is inconsistency in their practice within and between departments.
- 270 The school has recently invested heavily in ICT, updating two computer suites to bring them in line with the WAG guidelines. The computer-to-pupil ratio is very favourable. However, curriculum areas experience difficulties in accessing suited ICT facilities to enhance their learning programmes.
- 271 The prudent distribution of departmental capitation has resulted in a good level of books and equipment across all curriculum areas. Every classroom is equipped with an interactive white board with access to the internet, though their effective use is limited in some curriculum areas.
- 272 The learning resource centre makes a significant contribution to pupils' and students' development as independent learners. Stock levels have increased by 15% since the last inspection with a correspondingly significant increase in the borrowing of books. Foreign language books have been added in the last two years to accommodate the growing linguistic mix within the school population. The centre is well managed by a full-time librarian.
- 273 The school uses its available accommodation very effectively. Most classrooms are clustered in subject suites to maximise the use of available learning resources and inter-departmental communication. The displays of pupils' work in the classrooms and along the corridors create a stimulating and positive learning environment. The facilities for physical education are excellent and are shared with the local community. The recently introduced repairs and maintenance schedule has improved the learning environment significantly for both staff and pupils. Generally the buildings and the school site are well maintained and managed through a mixture of in-house and contract arrangements.
- 274 Though dining facilities are well managed, the dining hall is too small.

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

- 275 Financial processes and procedures are robust. They are well managed by the headteacher and the business manager. They carry out regular and detailed reviews of all aspects of the school's resources to ensure cost-effectiveness and value for money. The governing body monitors detailed financial reports every term.
- 276 Budget priorities are closely linked to the SIP. Expenditure is carefully and regularly monitored. Capitation allocation to departments is by formula with regular updates to budget holders throughout the year. Departmental capitation is reviewed formally during the autumn term to reflect upon the changes to courses and pupil numbers.
- 277 The business manager actively seeks ways of securing additional funds through grants and sponsorships. The considerable amount of money raised recently has been allocated to improving the school site and security for staff and pupils. In addition funding has been secured from a local charitable trust for the creation of a new multi-media suite within the school to be operational from September 2009.
- 278 The most recent audit report in November 2008 made a number of minor recommendations, which have been fully addressed by the school.

- 279 The school's continuous professional development (CPD) programme for teaching and support staff has many good features. The performance management process is used to good effect to identify and plan training needs. Opportunities for personal development are closely linked to the school's priorities for improvement. Appropriate funding is earmarked to secure national and local courses in addition to the deployment of in-house expertise.
- 280 However, there are important shortcomings in the CPD programme. These are that the school does not :
- monitor and evaluate with sufficient rigour its impact on classroom practice;
  - monitor and support newly qualified teachers (NQTs) consistently; and
  - include science technicians in the performance management process.
- 281 The school has provided 10% of the teaching time for staff planning, preparation and assessment. This time is used effectively.
- 282 Staff Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks have been completed in accordance with the UA's regulations and procedures.
- 283 Overall, good features outweigh shortcomings in the way in which the school provides good value for money. The shortcomings in the standards achieved by learners and in leadership and management limit the school's current potential to give very good value for money.

## 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**

- 284 Results at KS3 are below UA and national figures. They are in line with what might be expected from pupils of similar ability.
- 285 GCSE results in this subject at grades A\*-C and grades A\*-G are slightly below UA and national averages. Overall these results are in line with what might be expected for pupils of similar ability.
- 286 Results at A level are below the national figure for grades A-B and in line with the figure for grades A-E. Overall these results are in line with what might be expected from students of similar ability. However, due to the size of entry, comparisons with national figures may not be reliable.

### KS3

#### Good features

- 287 A majority of pupils listens well to their teachers and to each other in pair, group and whole-class work. They do so with attention and respect. Most are able to recall previous learning and demonstrate secure knowledge of their work in response to teachers' questions. A minority demonstrates knowledge and understanding and offers extended responses.

288 All pupils read a range of appropriate non-literary texts, fiction, poetry and drama including texts that reflect the culture of Wales. They demonstrate secure knowledge of plot and character. Many pupils read aloud with accuracy and confidence; a minority does so with fluency; a few do so with appropriate expression. A minority of the most able pupils demonstrates inferential and deductive skills. Many pupils read for pleasure.

289 A majority of the pupils writes with enthusiasm for a range of purposes and audiences. Fluency broadly matches the ability level of the pupils. Around half of the pupils improve writing through careful planning and effective drafting.

290 Pupils with SEN make good progress and produce work in line with their abilities.

### **Shortcomings**

291 A significant minority of pupils does not re-draft work with sufficient rigour. Their work displays a range of technical errors.

292 A minority of pupils finds it difficult to make oral contributions and is over-reliant upon their peers.

## **KS4**

### **Good features**

293 Most pupils listen attentively. A majority is responsive to the views and ideas of others and engages readily in discussions. They collaborate effectively in small groups and negotiate outcomes on a range of topics including identifying features of effective transactional writing and speaking and listening.

294 A majority of pupils speaks well and with confidence in discussions and when answering questions. They interact productively in a manner that often takes their learning forward.

295 All pupils read an appropriate range of literary texts including prose works by Dickens and Shelley, drama by Shakespeare and Russell and poetry by Duffy and Browning. They also read a range of non-literary and media texts. Pupils know and understand their texts well. They make good progress in textual analysis.

296 A significant majority of pupils is able to respond to the range of writing opportunities presented. Many write in a variety of ways that includes creative and transactional writing. The most able pupils produce well-crafted pieces of imaginative writing and considered, supported literary criticism.

297 Most pupils with SEN make good progress in relation to their ability.

### **Shortcomings**

298 The progress of a minority of pupils is limited because of poor attendance.

299 A small minority of pupils, predominantly boys, engages in some off-task behaviour. This behaviour impacts negatively on their own learning and that of others.

## **Sixth form**

### **Good features**

300 Students co-operate effectively in pair and group discussions. They negotiate and present views with a growing confidence on a range of appropriately challenging texts including Miller's 'Broken Glass', Marlowe's 'Dr Faustus', Rhys' 'Wide Sargasso Sea' and the metaphysical poets.

301 A majority of students demonstrates an increasingly secure understanding of literary devices. Most of them know, and are able to use, technical vocabulary.

302 Students produce a range of written coursework that is at least in line with their ability. The work of the most able students is well structured and comments upon the writer's craft, use of language and impact of structure upon meaning.

### **Shortcomings**

303 A small minority of students remain passive in group discussions.

304 The writing of a few students is not sufficiently perceptive or insightful.

## **Science**

**Key Stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Key Stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Sixth form: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

305 Examination results at GCSE in the last two years have been below local and national averages for passes at A\*-C and A\*/A, although the results compare favourably with those of similar schools. These results are slightly lower than would be expected for learners of similar ability.

306 Examination results at A level in biology and chemistry over the last two years have been significantly below national averages for passes at A/B and A-E. The very small numbers of students makes statistical analysis invalid.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

307 A majority of pupils has good recall and understanding of life and living things, materials and physical processes and they can apply their understanding from previous experiences to plan new work.

308 Pupils' practical skills are competent and they work safely and sensibly. They observe and record systematically, making accurate measurements using a range of instruments such as thermometers.

309 They use knowledge and understanding to predict and design experiments such as making a model of a Mars lander.

310 They follow instructions, can draw up and complete results tables and draw graphs. They know how to eliminate variables in order to plan a fair test and can draw conclusions from their results.

311 They are aware of the practical applications of science to society, medicine, the environment and industry through exciting and topical investigational work.

312 Pupils work very well together in small groups to plan, design and solve problems. Good listening skills also contribute to their progress in science.

313 Pupils with SEN make good progress in relation to their ability.

#### **Shortcomings**

314 A minority of pupils does not make adequate progress in their rate of acquisition of new knowledge and scientific skills.

315 Many pupils do not know what they need to do to improve their work.

316 Pupils do not use scientific terminology appropriately in their discussions and explanations.

317 Pupils' ICT skills are undeveloped.

## **KS4**

### **Good features**

- 318 More able pupils have good recall and understanding of scientific facts and concepts such as radioactivity, electricity, enzyme function and hydrocarbons. They can apply their understanding from previous experiences to answer past examination papers to a good standard.
- 319 Pupils' practical skills are competent and they work safely, sensibly and with care. They follow instructions accurately and use scientific apparatus correctly.
- 320 They make observations and record them in tables, using their results to plot line graphs. They use scientific terms accurately.
- 321 They use knowledge and understanding to analyse and interpret data and graphs. They recall equations and are able to substitute data in a given equation.
- 322 They are aware of the practical applications of science to society, medicine, the environment and industry, for example in the land studies course.

### **Shortcomings**

- 323 Many pupils do not have a secure recall of previous work. They have an insecure grasp of the major scientific concepts they are required to understand.
- 324 A minority of pupils does not make adequate progress in their rate of acquisition of new knowledge.
- 325 Many pupils do not know what they need to do to improve their work.
- 326 Pupils' ICT skills are undeveloped.

## **Sixth form**

### **Good features**

- 327 Students are able to show knowledge and understanding of key principles and complex abstract scientific concepts, such as ligand formation in chemistry and some of the moral dilemmas related to biology.
- 328 They apply their knowledge to solve novel problems, in both a theoretical and practical context.
- 329 Their practical skills are confident and standard procedures are carried out accurately and safely. They plan effective investigations, record data using appropriate methods and can draw reasoned conclusions.
- 330 They are aware of the causes of variation in the outcomes of biological experimental work and are learning to use and apply statistical techniques to analyse data. They use their knowledge to solve chemical equations and calculations.
- 331 Students collaborate well to enhance their learning and are confident orally to enquire, probe and explain, using scientific terms accurately.

### **Shortcomings**

- 332 Some students do not make progress at a rate and to a depth of rigour commensurate with their ability.
- 333 Students do not know how to improve their work.
- 334 A few students have difficulty in recalling, explaining and applying knowledge.
- 335 Their ICT skills are undeveloped.

## Information and communication technology

**Key Stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Key Stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Sixth form: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

336 In the last two years, GCSE results in this subject have been below national averages for grades A\*-C.

337 A level results for the last two years were below national averages for grades A-C.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

338 Pupils are able to use a range of applications confidently and effectively. They can combine information from a variety of sources with a good sense of audience and purpose and thus achieve good standards in this area.

339 Good standards are achieved in the communicating information and data handling strands of the curriculum.

340 Pupils can create documents and presentations using presentation software, word processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets and databases.

341 They can also use sources from the internet to good effect.

#### **Shortcomings**

342 More able pupils do not achieve the standards expected of them at this stage. Less able pupils lack a clear understanding of some of the topics studied.

343 In the modelling strand of the curriculum, pupils of all abilities do not achieve the standards expected.

344 Over the key stage, many pupils have to re-learn skills learned previously. This adversely affects the standard of their work.

### **KS4**

#### **Good features**

345 Pupils display a satisfactory understanding of the basic concepts of the subject. They can identify and explain the specific characteristics of various software packages.

346 Pupils are able to find and select information from a wide range of sources. They can explore, develop and interpret this to produce appropriate solutions to problems.

347 Pupils raise the standard of their work by making good use of the e-learning environment both inside and outside the classroom.

#### **Shortcomings**

348 A significant minority of pupils fails to make satisfactory progress.

349 In addition to the shortcomings evident at KS3, many pupils' coursework is not sufficiently developed.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

350 Students display a methodical and analytical approach to problem-solving.

- 351 They can apply their knowledge and understanding to familiar problems.
- 352 Students develop a good knowledge of how to improve the standard of their work.
- 353 They use a range of software packages and are able to design and produce solutions to problems and clearly communicate these solutions.
- 354 Students make good use of the virtual learning environment both at home and at school outside of lessons to raise the standard of their work.

### **Shortcomings**

- 355 A minority of students' knowledge and understanding of the basic concepts and principles of the subject are not sufficiently developed at present.
- 356 A minority of students appears over-reliant on their teacher and do not take responsibility for their independent learning.

<b>History</b>
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**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**

- 357 Examination results at GCSE in the last two years have been marginally below the national averages for passes at grades A\*-C and grades A\*/A.
- 358 Examination results at A level in the last two years have been in line with the national averages for passes at grades A/B.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

- 359 Pupils across the ability range demonstrate excellent recall of previous knowledge which reinforces topics studied.
- 360 Pupils across the key stage show that they are aware of chronology. They can place events within the correct historical time scale as evident in their work on the Norman Conquest, and understand the importance of chronology in history.
- 361 Pupils across the key stage and the ability range show sound knowledge and understanding of the period studied.
- 362 Learners are confident and accurate in using sophisticated historical vocabulary.
- 363 All pupils are aware of the importance of evidence and its reliability. They are able to extract relevant information from a variety of historical sources, they can evaluate their importance to historians and, in line with their ability, they can make informed judgements.
- 364 As evidenced in the work on the Civil War, pupils are able to demonstrate that several interpretations of the same event are possible in history.
- 365 Pupils produce written work of a standard in line with their ability in a variety of styles, including work in tabular form, analysis of sources, diagrams and various written exercises. The more able pupils produce very good pieces of extended writing.
- 366 Pupils with SEN make good progress.

#### **Shortcomings**

- 367 A small minority of pupils does not make adequate progress.

## **KS4**

### **Good features**

- 368 Pupils demonstrate very sound knowledge of historical terminology and concepts. They make very effective use of them in both oral and written work.
- 369 Most pupils demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of the period studied, and are confident in placing events, issues and ideas within a chronological framework, as seen in the work on China and the United States of America.
- 370 Pupils are able to understand how various events in the past have effected change, with many able to distinguish between long term and short term factors that caused change. They can explain how events in the past have helped fashion the present.
- 371 Pupils demonstrate skill in being able to extract accurate and relevant information from a variety of historical sources through independent investigation. They are able to evaluate the importance to historians of different sources, and are confident in detecting bias and propaganda. They reach informed judgements on the basis of the historical evidence before them.
- 372 They are able to communicate their findings in the appropriate depth and in a variety of ways, both orally and in written tasks.
- 373 With very few exceptions, pupils in KS4 deal with historical set tasks in a well informed way and are confident in their ability to complete them. Pupils across the key stage and ability range complete a wide range of written activities. Their presentation is good.

### **Shortcomings**

- 374 As at KS3, a small minority of pupils does not make adequate progress.

## **Sixth form**

### **Good features**

- 375 In Y12 and Y13, students demonstrate good levels of in-depth knowledge and understanding of the topics being studied. They demonstrate factual knowledge in oral and written presentations.
- 376 Students are able to analyse and evaluate a range of historical interpretation and demonstrate their ability to pass judgement on the strengths and weaknesses of sources under scrutiny. Whilst doing so they are very comfortable in their use of historical terms and concepts.
- 377 Students apply their skills of chronological awareness in answering set tasks in a logical and purposeful manner.
- 378 Essay work and coursework show that students are able to construct sound historical arguments. They provide examples of very well-constructed, well-balanced and well-argued answers in their written work. The published work of professional historians is studied and discussed by the students in their written work.

### **Shortcomings**

- 379 There are no significant shortcomings.

## Art and Design

**Key stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

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

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

380 Examination results at GCSE in the last two years have been below the national averages for passes at A\*-C. however, these results represent good achievement and are higher than would be expected for pupils of similar ability.

381 In recent years, numbers sitting the A level examination have not been sufficient to reach a comparative judgement.

### KS3

#### Good features

382 Standards are regularly improving for both boys and girls. Pupils are becoming more familiar with a range of two- and three-dimensional art media.

383 They are developing strengths in understanding and research. They are becoming accustomed to looking at art and analysing its content and process.

384 They are improving their knowledge of Welsh artists and are developing an appreciation of the art of other cultures.

385 They are growing in competence in observational still-life drawing where they can accurately record shape and tone.

386 Ethnic minority pupils achieve comparable standards as their peers. Pupils with SEN achieve well because their needs are known and addressed. More able and talented pupils make good progress in more demanding tasks.

#### Shortcomings

387 The numbers of pupils achieving to the expected national average continues to be below average.

388 Their knowledge of how to use computers creatively is below average.

389 Too many pupils resort too readily to the use of raw colour when painting.

### KS4

#### Good features

390 Pupils' sketchbook work shows growing independent skills and personal direction. Their drawing skills are improved and the standard of their experimental, impressionist paintings and collages matches the national average.

391 They know how to successfully work with a broader range of media. Printmaking skills are well developed.

392 Many pupils show a sophisticated and imaginative response when working with natural forms in land-art exercises.

393 They know how to research a range of artists' work and enrich their own creative responses when working in the styles of different artists.

394 Pupils continue to respond well to the art forms of other cultures. Standards are such that pupils win national design awards.

### **Shortcomings**

395 Too many pupils restrict their written evaluation of art to facts and process.

396 Some pupils continue to use colour insensitively.

397 Too few pupils are able to build on their basic creative computer skills.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

398 Students are developing as independent creative artists. They show an inquisitive approach to their tasks and follow through their ideas imaginatively. Students with SEN achieve at the higher grades.

399 They know how to enrich their work with influences from local and other cultures. They improve their creativity through working with practising artists.

400 They know how to work successfully on different scales and in different media.

401 Sketchbook work is often quite delightfully creative in its response to world architecture. Observational drawing is a strong feature. Colour is regularly used with some subtlety. Craft skills are well established.

402 Students have a good knowledge of historical and contemporary art through regular visits to major art galleries.

### **Shortcomings**

403 There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Physical Education**

**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**

404 Over the past two years, examination results in this subject have been around local and national levels. Recent results have shown improvement. These results represent good achievement for these pupils.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

405 In competitive games activities, pupils display good standards in cricket and rounders. Pupils are able to bowl, strike, catch and field with a good level of accuracy and success. The majority of pupils uses the correct techniques in both activities.

406 Pupils demonstrate good standards in the execution of defensive and attacking tactics. A number of pupils demonstrate good standards in performing skills in both activities. Pupils show good standards in planning their own work, performing complex skills with confidence and evaluating their own work and the work of others.

407 Pupils' understanding of health, fitness and well-being is good. Individuals participate enthusiastically in challenging warming-up activities and fitness exercises. Pupils are able to monitor the physiological changes occurring as a result of exercise, and discuss the effect of activities on their personal fitness.

408 In athletic activities, pupils demonstrate good standards in sprinting skills and athletic performance. Pupils are able to sustain good levels of sprinting intensity, for appropriate periods of time.

409 Pupils with SEN make good progress in line with their abilities.

### **Shortcomings**

410 The physical condition of a number of pupils is unsatisfactory.

411 The acquisition of fine motor skills is underdeveloped in some pupils.

### **KS4**

#### **Good features**

412 Pupils demonstrate very good standards in planning, performing and evaluating their own work and the work of others. This is particularly evident in health, fitness and well-being activities and competitive games.

413 Pupils' participation in health, fitness and well-being activities that develop strength, endurance and flexibility is very good. They plan, undertake and evaluate a fitness programme. Pupils display a very good understanding of how the components of physical fitness are developed, and how these relate to an active and healthy lifestyle.

414 Pupils are able to sustain activity with correct technique, and they understand the importance of rest and recovery time. They demonstrate good work when working reciprocally in pairs. Learning is enhanced through pupils monitoring each other in specified techniques, and collecting pulse responses to exercise. A number of pupils in KS4 display good levels of fitness.

415 Pupils demonstrate good standards when executing basketball skills in the competitive games module. Pupils are able to pass, dribble, shoot and rebound with good accuracy and technique. Tactical awareness in both defence and attack is good. The work of a number of pupils is good. Pupils demonstrate good awareness of what constitutes safe and approved practice, for their own safety and the safety of others.

### **Shortcomings**

416 The physical condition of a small minority of pupils is unsatisfactory.

417 The acquisition of fine motor skills is underdeveloped in a few pupils.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

418 Students display good standards of knowledge and understanding in examination modules. They accurately analyse complex skill actions and recommend improvements for performance. Badminton skills for movement analysis are good, with performers being able to sustain, serve and rally techniques with confidence.

419 Students' knowledge and understanding in the 'Stress and Anxiety' section of the A2 syllabus is excellent. Students analyse competently complex scenarios and provide a range of alternative solutions.

420 Students' assignments for their examination course are of high quality, demonstrating a sound understanding in the production of an extended submission. These assignments include good introductions, a detailed review of literature, sound methodology, accurate analysis of results and appropriate conclusions.

### **Shortcomings**

421 A small minority of students has only a superficial knowledge of key facts and concepts related to the study.

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

The school acknowledges this report and is pleased that the inspectors recognised and highlighted so many of the school's good features. The governing body and staff are delighted that the inspection team reported so positively on the quality of care, personal support and guidance for learners. We believe that this positive ethos truly reflects our aims.

We appreciate pupils' behaviour being observed as "consistently good" and that the "calm and orderly atmosphere" is said to contribute to pupils' learning.

The school also appreciates the inspectors' recognition of the gradual improvement in standards and is pleased that the school's improvement journey saw good progress in many key indicators in 2008.

Like all schools, we have areas for development and are pleased that those identified by the inspectors are broadly in line with our own priorities and are already reflected in the school's self-evaluation report and school improvement plan.

The report will enable us to produce a detailed action plan which will address the recommendations made. A copy of this action plan will be sent to all parents.

In the meantime, we would like to recognise the support received from parents and the wider community. We thank them for this and look forward to continuing to work together to achieve success for all our learners.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Rhiwabon
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Ruabon Pont Adam Wrexham
Postcode	LL14 6BT
Telephone number	01978-822392
Headteacher	Ms Angela Williams
Date of appointment	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2006
Chair of governors	Mr J Penri Williams
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter Harris
Dates of inspection	5-8 May 2009

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	115	122	159	142	166	66	36	806

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	44	10	49.15

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	16.41
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	21.76
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	75.44%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	92.4	92.2	90.4	86.9	86.4	84.4	69.2	89.6
Term 2	89.5	88.5	85.2	84.2	94.9	74.2	76.9	88.2
Term 3	93.6	92.9	89.5	88.6	89.6	84.4	80	90.6

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	20.3%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	81

### Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2008															
Total number of pupils in Y9:142															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	5.8	25.4	50	18.1	0.7	0	0
		National	0.1	0	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	0	0	0	0	0	0	10.9	20.3	38.4	24.6	5.8	0	0
		National	0.1	0	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.3	6.7	18.1	28.9	27.5	14.8	1.3	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0.7	14.5	20.3	35.5	19.6	9.4	0	0
		National	0.1	0	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.7	5.1	19	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	54%		In Wales	60%

**Summary of Secondary School Performance (1)**

LEA/School No. 665/4044

**Pupils aged 15**

**Number of pupils aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 122**

**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	100	86	43	35	35	333
LEA Area 2007/08	100	88	54	42	40	366
Wales 2007/08	98	87	58	46	44	356
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	13	317
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	30	302

**Number of boys aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 63**

**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	100	87	35	30	32	315
LEA Area 2007/08	100	86	49	40	39	350
Wales 2007/08	98	84	53	42	41	334
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	12	311
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	33	296

**Number of girls aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 59**

**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	98	85	51	41	39	351
LEA Area 2007/08	100	90	58	45	42	381
Wales 2007/08	99	90	63	50	48	379
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	15	325
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	27	308

Summary of Secondary School Performance (1)

LEA/School No. 665/4044

**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	2.5	0.8	1.6	0	3.4	1.7
LEA Area 2007/08	5.9	0.1	8.1	0.1	3.7	0.1
Wales 2007/08	2.6	1.5	3.4	1.9	1.7	1.2
School 06/07/08	2.8	..	1.2	..	4.5	..
School 05/06/07	3.6	..	2.4	..	5	..

**Pupils aged 17**

	Number of pupils aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 30		Number of boys aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 18		Number of girls aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 12	
	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	90	640	92	588	88	717
LEA Area 2007/08	96	629	93	561	98	707
Wales 2007/08	94	631	93	596	95	659
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	..	..
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	..	..

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

## SECONDARY SSSP EXAMINATION DATA, 2006 - 2008

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<b>Free School Meals, 2006 - 2008</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
% of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	18.4	19.1	20.5
Free School Meal band	15%<FSM<=20%	15%<FSM<=20%	20%<FSM<=30%

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<b>Key Stage 4, 2006 - 2008</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
% achieving the Level 1 threshold	..	89.2	86.1
Benchmark Quartile	..	2	2
% achieving the Level 2 threshold	..	37.6	42.6
Benchmark Quartile	..	4	3
% achieving the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE at grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and Maths	..	..	35.2
Benchmark Quartile	..	..	2
% achieving the Level 2 threshold in the core subjects	..	..	35.2
Benchmark Quartile	..	..	2
Average wider points score	303.6	314.1	332.7
Benchmark Quartile	3	3	2

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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 42 days in the school and were joined by a member of the school's SLT as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 107 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;
- 65 replies to the parents' questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- samples of pupils' reports; and
- a range of pupils' work.

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

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Peter Harris	Registered Inspector Context, Summary, Recommendations, Appendices Key Questions 1 and 5
Gwynoro Jones	Lay inspector
Glyn Davies	Key Question 2 & science
Peredur Francis	Key Question 3
David Hughes	Key Question 4 & science
Glyn Griffiths	SEN
Martyn S Williams	Key Question 6
Huw Llewellyn	Key Question 7
Anthony Sparkes	English
Delyth Williams	Science (lead)
David Charles	Information Technology
Bethan Whittal	History
Eric Forster	Art
Stephen Lloyd	Physical Education
Rod Francis	Peer assessor
John Hotchkiss	Nominee

### ***Acknowledgement***

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

**Contractor:**

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