

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

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

**Llanishen High School  
Heol Hir  
Llanishen  
Cardiff  
CF14 5YL**

**School number: 6814051**

**Date of inspection: 23 March 2009**

**by**

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

The inspection of Llanishen High School took place between 23/03/09 and 26/03/09. 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 Llanishen High School is an English-medium, mixed 11-18 secondary school situated in a suburban area in the north of Cardiff. It serves a compact geographical area that includes both affluent and relatively non-affluent communities. Seven percent of pupils qualify for free school meals, a figure well below the national average.
- 2 There are 1649 pupils and students on roll compared with 1666 at the time of the previous inspection in March 2003. There are 303 students in the sixth form compared to 265 in 2003.
- 3 Pupils are drawn from local primary schools and most of them do not have far to travel to get to school. The vast majority of pupils comes from English-speaking homes. No pupil comes from a home where Welsh is the first language. Approximately 20 pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language.
- 4 The school describes itself as a community comprehensive school and the full range of ability is represented at the school. Around 170 pupils are identified on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Twenty-eight pupils have a statement of special educational need. There is also a Hearing Impaired Unit (HIU) attached to the school. It draws 26 pupils and students from the wider Unitary Authority (UA).
- 5 Since the time that the school was last inspected, there have been changes to the composition of the senior leadership team (SLT). The present headteacher has been in post since 2004. Both deputy headteachers, and one out of the four assistant headteachers, were in post when the school was last inspected. Since that time, two further assistant headteachers have been appointed. In addition, the school co-opts two middle managers on to the SLT as an opportunity for their professional development.

### The school's priorities and targets

- 6 One of the school's core values is the belief that all can succeed. In putting this into practice, the school seeks to offer opportunities that include all learners. The school aims to develop each individual pupil and student and value their achievement.
- 7 In its development plan, the many priorities the school identifies are grouped under developments in the following areas:
  - the learning community;
  - school self-evaluation;
  - investing in people; and
  - the learning environment.
- 8 The school's self-evaluation report (SER) is based on the seven key questions of the Common Inspection Framework.

- 9 Numerical targets are set, that in 2010:
- 72% 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
  - 65% of pupils should achieve at least 5 grades A\*-C, and 94% at least 5 grades A\*-G in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination or its equivalent.

## Summary

- 10 While Llanishen High School has several good features, it also has a number of important shortcomings which need attention.
- 11 Among the many good features are:
- results in tests and examinations when compared to local and national averages;
  - the range of extra-curricular activities;
  - the support and guidance for learners; and
  - the provision for pupils with SEN.
- 12 However, there are shortcomings in the progress made by a significant minority of pupils, particularly at KS3. There are shortcomings, also, in teaching and assessment at KS3 and KS4, and in leadership and management at all levels.
- 13 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. In particular:
- a significant minority of pupils continues to be badly behaved around the school and in lessons;
  - tutors still do not make effective use of time with their registration classes;
  - there are significant inconsistencies in monitoring and evaluation procedures; and
  - statutory curriculum requirements remain unmet.
- 14 The school is not yet moving forward sufficiently so as to fulfil its true potential.
- 15 Thus, in accordance with the Education Act 2005, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that this school is in need of significant improvement.

### Table of grades awarded

- 16 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?	3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	3
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	3
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	3

17 These grades are all one grade lower than those offered by the school in its self-evaluation report, apart from key question three, where the grade is two grades lower.

### Standards achieved

18 Standards in the school have good features which outweigh shortcomings.

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

Subject	KS3	KS4	Sixth-form
Mathematics	2	2	1
Science	3	2	2
Information Technology	2	2	1
History	2	2	1
Art	3	3	2
Religious Education	2	2	2

20 In comparison with the time that the school was last inspected, these figures represent very good progress in improving the standards of information technology. They indicate the maintenance of overall standards in mathematics, history and religious education.

21 While standards in science at KS4 and in the sixth form were observed to be good on the whole, the deterioration of standards, since the time the school was last inspected, observed in science at KS3 and in art are important shortcomings.

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

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	5%	56%	31%	8%	0%
KS4	7%	72%	17%	4%	0%
Sixth form	24%	70%	6%	0%	0%
Whole school	9%	65%	21%	5%	0%
<b>These grades are based on observations of 85 lessons</b>					

23 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these figures indicate that overall standards have not improved significantly since that time.

24 Standards observed in the sixth form have improved, and standards at KS4 remain roughly in line with standards in 2003. However, at KS3, standards in lessons observed by inspectors have fallen since that time. This is an important shortcoming.

25 At KS3, results in the NC teachers' assessments have improved. In two out of the last three years, attainment was below average when compared with similar schools. In 2008, results in English and science were slightly above average and results in mathematics and the three core subjects combined were among the top 25%.

26 At KS4, pass rates are above local and national averages. However, when compared to similar schools, the proportion of pupils who gained passes at the higher grades in each of English, mathematics and science and five or more



grades A\*-C, in the GCSE examination or their equivalent, are below average. Passes at the higher grades in science are in the bottom 25%. These are important shortcomings.

- 27 Pupils at KS4 make good progress in relation to their attainment at the end of KS3. However, when their progress is compared with their attainment at the point of leaving primary school, it is significantly below average when compared with that of pupils in similar schools. This is an important shortcoming.
- 28 Standards of attainment in the sixth form have good features and no important shortcomings. Though Advanced (A) level results at grades A-C and A-E fell slightly below local and national averages in 2006 and 2007, in 2008 they were slightly above them.
- 29 At KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form, girls outperform boys.
- 30 Pupils with SEN make very good progress and achieve good standards.
- 31 On the whole, pupils and students work well with one another and with their teachers. Their reading and numeracy skills are good and their skills in ICT have improved considerably since the time the school was last inspected.
- 32 Pupils' speaking and listening skills have good features which outweigh shortcomings. Most pupils are eager to learn. They develop good levels of speaking and listening as they engage with their learning. However, a significant minority of pupils disrupts lessons by failing to listen to teachers, particularly supply teachers. When this happens, pupils neither listen nor speak respectfully. When interviewed, pupils expressed frustration that their progress in learning was adversely affected by such behaviour. These are important shortcomings.
- 33 Pupils' and students' writing skills have good features and no important shortcomings. Many write neatly, lucidly and at appropriate length. However, in the lessons where there were shortcomings, pupils' writing lacked the necessary detail and depth to explain the points they wished to make. They frequently had incomplete work in their books and their ability to know how to improve was limited by cursory marking.
- 34 While bilingual skills are developed well through Welsh second language lessons, pupils and students make limited use of them throughout the school.
- 35 The school has made good progress in improving levels of attendance. However, in a significant minority of cases, inspectors observed that pupils arrived late to lessons.
- 36 Good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' and students' personal, moral, social, cultural and wider development. While the way in which the vast majority of learners respects peers, adults and diversity in society is good, their spiritual development is hindered by the neglect of a daily act of collective worship. The behaviour of the vast majority is good, though that of a significant minority is poor, around the school as well as in class. This is an important shortcoming.
- 37 Pupils and students respond well to an outstanding provision of extra-curricular activity and opportunities for involvement in the school's life. They are well prepared for effective participation in the work place and the community.

## The quality of education and training

38 Teaching at the school has good features which outweigh shortcomings.

39 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 85 lessons observed in the six subjects and 34 lessons in other subjects:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	7%	53%	29%	11%	0%
KS4	26%	47%	24%	3%	0%
Sixth form	39%	39%	22%	0%	0%
Whole school	19%	49%	26%	6%	0%
<b>These grades are based on observations of 119 lessons</b>					

40 These figures show that the overall quality of teaching and assessment is below the average for Wales, as reported by Her Majesty's Chief inspector (HMCI) in his latest report. They also show that the proportion of lessons judged to have important shortcomings is twice the national average.

41 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 KS3, the proportion of lessons judged to contain shortcomings was almost four times the national average. This is an important shortcoming.

42 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these grades show that the proportion of teaching that has good or very good features has decreased since that time, while the proportion of lessons judged to have shortcomings has increased. While in 2003 the quality of teaching was judged to be a major strength of the school, inspectors on this occasion did not consider that to be the case, particularly at KS3.

43 Inspectors observed a wide variation in the quality of teaching both within and between subjects.

44 In most lessons teachers showed good subject knowledge. Where teaching had good features, teachers planned their lessons well and established constructive relationships with the class. They used a good range of resources to engage pupils and, where they had the opportunity, put to effective use the school's recent investment in information and communication technology (ICT).

45 In the small proportion of lessons at KS3, over a quarter of lessons at KS4, and almost four out of ten lessons in the sixth form, where outstanding teaching was observed, teachers engaged the attention of learners through a wide variety of tasks and by questions that challenged them to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

46 Where teaching had shortcomings, teachers' lesson plans lacked clear objectives, the work provided did not match learners' abilities, and very little guidance was given to them to help them improve. In lessons where there were important shortcomings, teachers lacked effective classroom management skills.

47 In most subjects, there are shortcomings in teachers' plans to provide appropriate opportunities for learners to develop and apply bilingual skills.

48 The school meets statutory requirements for assessment; marking and day-to-day assessment are of inconsistent quality.

- 49 The school makes good use of reports to inform parents and carers of the learners' achievement and progress. In many cases these contain useful information about the work covered and individual performance. However, in a significant minority of subjects, advice about how to improve further is less clear.
- 50 Pupils know their targets and the criteria for achieving success in the majority of subjects. In a few subjects, there are good examples of effective peer and self-assessment. However, in a significant minority of subjects, assessments are used less effectively to inform planning and improve learning. This is an important shortcoming.
- 51 There are good features and no important shortcomings in the school's curricular provision.
- 52 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.
- 53 The school has good links with Coleg Glan Hafren and other schools and colleges in the North Cardiff 14-19 Consortium. At KS4, learners have the opportunity of attending the college for a number of vocational courses. The school offers a wide range of options in the sixth form and is beginning to expand its provision of vocational options successfully.
- 54 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the provision to develop pupils' learning skills. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark. While the school provides many opportunities to develop learners' numeracy, ICT, and communication skills, the provision to develop pupils' key skills, is neither co-ordinated nor monitored. There are very few opportunities for pupils and students to develop their bilingual skills outside lessons in Welsh as a second language. These are important shortcomings.
- 55 There is a very good range of extra-curricular activity provided by the school, particularly in sport and the Duke of Edinburgh's award. 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.
- 56 The provision for work-related education (WRE) is of good quality. The school has good links with local employers who provide good opportunities for work experience and advice about interview techniques.
- 57 While the school, in its SER, considered its curricular provision to be outstanding, inspectors disagreed because the school does not comply with the statutory requirement to provide religious education in the sixth form and a daily act of collective worship. These issues were drawn to the school's attention in 1997 and remain important shortcomings.
- 58 The support and guidance of pupils and students have good features and no important shortcomings. The way in which the school has developed an induction programme to manage the transition between primary and secondary school is very good.
- 59 The arrangements to plan and manage the support of learners are good. There is an inclusive ethos in the school that promotes the well-being of the majority of pupils and students. The school works in effective partnership with parents,

carers and outside agencies. Impartial information of good quality is provided to enable learners make the best choice of courses for their future.

- 60 The provision for personal and social education (PSE) is good. It includes careers education, is well designed and organised.
- 61 The way in which the school has monitored attendance since the last inspection has been effective. The monitoring of punctuality has been less so. Many pupils arrive late for lessons. The arrangements for child protection are good but the way in which the school seeks to promote good behaviour has important shortcomings.
- 62 While there is a whole-school positive discipline policy it is applied inconsistently. A working party has been set up to help teachers develop better approaches to classroom management but this has yet to have a positive impact.
- 63 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. It has yet to embed itself, particularly at KS3.
- 64 The provision for learners with SEN is very good, particularly the support for pupils and students with hearing impairment. Individual needs are very well diagnosed. The school's commitment to inclusion ensures that support of individual needs is very effective and pupils with SEN make very good progress.
- 65 The school is effective in supporting learners from all backgrounds, promoting equality and good relations and respecting diversity. Pupils have ownership of the school's arrangements to eliminate oppressive behaviour.
- 66 The school does not have a disability equality scheme and its disability accessibility plan is out of date. These are breaches of statutory requirement and are important shortcomings.

### **Leadership and management**

- 67 Good features outweigh shortcomings in leadership and management.
- 68 The school development plan and the prospectus clearly identify the school's vision of providing pupils and students with a challenging education that promotes their learning, raises standards and prepares them for adult life.
- 69 The leadership provided by the headteacher and his SLT is effective on a day-to-day basis. They work well together and have identified appropriate priorities for improvement. They take good account of many local and national priorities and contribute enthusiastically to consortia arrangements.
- 70 The headteacher and the SLT act as line managers to heads of department and heads of year. However, they do not ensure that staff accountabilities are clearly understood and agreed. As a result there is inconsistency in the degree to which members of staff implement school policy and the quality of middle management varies from very good to poor. This is an important shortcoming.
- 71 There are examples of very good practice and team work. There are, also, shortcomings in the planning for improvement, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment, and an absence of effective quality assurance procedures. While the school provides many opportunities for teachers and

support staff to reflect on good practice, outcomes are not regularly monitored, evaluated and reviewed. These are important shortcomings.

- 72 There are established systems to manage the performance of teaching and support staff. These, together with the review visits conducted by the UA, are the main ways in which the school gathers first-hand evidence on the quality of classroom experiences. However, the school has not ensured that all members of the teaching staff receive an annual performance review. This is an important shortcoming.
- 73 While governors represent a wide range of community interests and are supportive of the school, they are not sufficiently challenging. As a result, they do not act as effective critical friends of the school.
- 74 Governors have not ensured that all legal and regulatory requirements are met.
- 75 The school's SER identifies many of its strengths and shortcomings, though some shortcomings were not given sufficient weight. The school takes active steps to take account of the views of staff, pupils and students. However, it has not consulted parents systematically and regularly and was unaware of the concerns about standards and behaviour at the school held by a significant minority. These are important shortcomings.
- 76 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the way the school has made progress in addressing the key issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection report.
- 77 The school has made good progress in improving the arrangements for ICT and standards in information technology and ICT across the curriculum have risen accordingly.
- 78 Good progress has been made in improving the school's accommodation. The school has devoted considerable expenditure to repair and maintenance to good effect. The recent appointment of an estates manager has resulted in measurable improvement.
- 79 The school has not made sufficient progress in improving levels of behaviour, the use of tutor time, monitoring and evaluation, and meeting statutory requirements. These are important shortcomings.
- 80 On the whole, good features outweigh shortcomings in the way in which the school uses its resources.
- 81 All subjects are taught by specialist teachers. There is a good range of non-teaching staff, including learning support staff who are well motivated.
- 82 The provision of specialist accommodation in science is good. However there are important shortcomings in the fabric of the school building.
- 83 The school has invested in a good range of ICT hardware and software and uses these resources well.
- 84 The budget reflects the priorities of the school development plan, though departments' capitation allowances are unclear. Expenditure is not monitored effectively. These are important shortcomings.
- 85 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 KS3.
- R2 Employ effective strategies to improve the behaviour of pupils, particularly at KS3.
- R3 Improve the quality of teaching, particularly at KS3, by increasing the level of challenge in lessons, by eliminating the shortcomings and sharing the good, and very good, practice identified in this report.
- R4 Ensure that assessment procedures are applied consistently across the school and improve the quality of advice given to pupils to improve their own performance.
- R5 Develop effective strategies for the provision of key skills, including bilingual skills, throughout the school.
- R6 Comply with statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form, a daily act of collective worship, and disability accessibility and equality legislation.
- R7 Improve the quality of leadership and management by refining the roles of the SLT in demonstrating and articulating high expectations, setting stretching targets, challenging underperformance and ensuring corrective action.
- R8 Improve the quality of monitoring departmental expenditure.
- R9 Enhance the role of tutors in monitoring pupils' progress
- R10 Enhance the capacity of governors to act as critical friends of the school by improving their monitoring procedures.
- R11 Continue to work with the UA to bring about improvements to the school accommodation.

*Aspects of all these recommendations are addressed in the current school development plan (SDP).*

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

86 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower than that judged by the school in its SER. Grade 3 was awarded because of shortcomings in the progress made by pupils, particularly at KS3, and the poor behaviour of a significant minority of pupils in lessons and around the school.

#### KS3 and KS4

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

87 Pupils at the school cover the full range of ability. Overall, their ability is above average.

88 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
Mathematics	2	2
Science	3	2
Information Technology	2	2
History	2	2
Art	3	3
Religious Education	2	2

89 Since the time the school was last inspected, there has been a variation in the way in which standards in the six subjects inspected have improved. Standards in information technology have improved considerably. On the whole, in mathematics, history and religious education, and in science at KS4, standards have been maintained. Standards in art, and in science at KS3, have declined.

90 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%	56%	31%	8%	0%
KS4	7%	72%	17%	4%	0%
KS3 & KS4	6%	63%	25%	6%	0%
<b>These grades are based on observations of 68 lessons</b>					

91 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.

92 Inspectors awarded the two top grades for standards in 69% of lessons compared with 72% of lessons when the school was inspected in 2003. Shortcomings were identified in 31% of lessons in comparison with 28% at that time.

93 The proportion of lessons judged to have good and outstanding features was greater at KS4 than at KS3. At KS3, the two top grades were awarded for only 61% of lessons compared with 79% at KS4. At KS3, standards were judged to have shortcomings in 39% of lessons, compared to only 21% at KS4.

- 94 Results at KS3 fall above national averages for Wales. In 2008, 76% of pupils reached at least level five in the core subjects combined, compared to 60% nationally.
- 95 2008 saw an improvement at KS3, where achievement was above average, with achievement in mathematics and all three core subjects combined in the top 25%. However, in two out of the last three years, achievement at KS3 has been below average when compared to that of similar schools, in English and the three core subjects combined, significantly so.
- 96 Shortcomings at KS3 become apparent when pupils' achievement is matched against their prior attainment. In 2008, while achievement in mathematics and all three core subjects combined was slightly above average, when compared to similar schools, achievement in English and in science was below average. In 2007, achievement was among the bottom 25% for all three core subjects, when compared to similar schools.
- 97 As at KS3, results at KS4 fall above both local and national averages. In 2008, 69% of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A\*-C, or their equivalent, compared to 56% locally and 58% nationally.
- 98 Ninety-six percent of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A\*-G, or their equivalent, compared to 85% locally and 87% nationally. In comparison with similar schools, these figures are above average.
- 99 However, in comparison with similar schools, the percentages of pupils gaining five or more passes at the higher grades at GCSE are below average. Over the past three years, passes at grade C or above in science have been among the bottom 25% of similar schools.
- 100 When results at the end of KS4 are matched to prior attainment on leaving primary school, these results are significantly below average, when compared to similar schools. This is an important shortcoming.
- 101 The school agrees targets for examination attainment with the UA. In 2008, at KS3, actual achievement was slightly below the school's targets, though the school exceeded its target for passes in all the core subjects combined.
- 102 At KS4, over the past three years, attainment has been broadly in line with expectation. In 2008, achievement was slightly higher than expected.
- 103 At both KS3 and KS4, girls outperform boys.
- 104 Pupils with SEN are given good support. At both key stages, they make good progress relative to their abilities. No pupil leaves school without a recognised qualification.
- 105 Standards in the key skills vary. Pupils' ICT skills have improved since the last inspection. The school has eliminated many of the shortcomings identified at the time the school was last inspected. They have good features and no important shortcomings.
- 106 Overall, pupils develop their number skills across a range of subjects. At KS4, standards have good features and no important shortcomings, though at KS3 there were shortcomings in the use of graphs to present data.



- 107 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. Many pupils work well together in pairs and in groups, in creative and problem-solving activities.
- 108 However, a significant minority of pupils is not fully attentive in lessons. They lack concentration, pay little regard to instructions and disrupt lessons by off-task chatter. In a minority of cases, pupils showed little respect for their teachers.
- 109 Standards of pupils' written work also 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.
- 110 In the lessons where there were shortcomings, pupils' writing lacked the necessary detail and depth to explain the points they wished to make. In addition, pupils' explanations were hesitant, their presentation was untidy, and their books frequently had incomplete work.
- 111 While pupils' achievement in Welsh second language has good features, their bilingual skills are not well developed outside Welsh lessons.

### **Their progress in learning**

- 112 Overall, good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' progress. However, there are inconsistencies between subject areas and ability groups.
- 113 In the six subjects inspected, pupils made good progress in mathematics, information technology, history and religious education. In science and art, shortcomings in progress were associated with pupils' poor practical skills, inability to improve their own learning, and, on a minority of occasions, poor attitudes to learning.
- 114 The most able pupils achieve well in tests and examinations, particularly where expectations are high and learning is not disrupted. While the school has identified pupils who are more able and talented, overall the most able are not sufficiently challenged, other than in those lessons which have good and outstanding features.
- 115 Where expectations are appropriately high, pupils of average to lower ability do well. However, a significant minority of pupils does not engage with their work and their behaviour disrupts their learning and that of others.
- 116 Pupils with SEN do particularly well, especially where they have learning support. All leave school with recognised qualifications. Pupils with support in English as an additional language make good progress.
- 117 Pupils' abilities to improve their own performance are limited. Where targets are set, they are not 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**

- 118 While, on the whole, the progress made by pupils in their personal, social, moral and wider development has good features which outweigh shortcomings, there are important shortcomings in pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.

- 119 The majority of pupils is friendly and engages well with visitors. However, in a significant minority of lessons, particularly though not exclusively at KS3, as well as on occasions at KS4, a significant minority of pupils was observed to show lack of respect for teachers and to disrupt their own learning and that of others.
- 120 Pupils and staff are frustrated by this disruption. A significant proportion of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaires and attended the parents' meeting expressed their concerns about poor standards of behaviour and their detrimental impact on their children's progress, particularly at KS3.
- 121 Behaviour around the school was orderly overall, though in a small minority of cases, behaviour was observed to be boisterous, and at times, intimidating.
- 122 Attendance has improved in recent years. At over 92%, attendance levels are now above the UA average. However, during the inspection, significant levels of poor punctuality to lessons and to assemblies were observed.
- 123 Good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Pupils make good use of opportunities in assemblies, PSE and other lessons to develop an understanding of diversity in society. They are aware of the importance of equality of opportunity and show respect for people from different backgrounds in school and the wider community.
- 124 Pupils respond well to the many extra-curricular opportunities the school provides in sport, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and for foreign travel.
- 125 However, frustration over disruption to lessons has an adverse effect on pupils' moral development. Their spiritual development is restricted by the lack of a collective act of worship in many tutor groups.
- 126 Careers guidance and work-related education of good quality prepare pupils well for the world of work. Pupils have positive attitudes towards life-long learning and develop the skills they will need for effective participation in the workplace and the community.

## **Sixth form**

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

- 127 Standards in the sixth form have good features and no important shortcomings.
- 128 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>
Mathematics	1
Science	2
Information Technology	1
History	1
Art	2
Religious Education	2

- 129 Standards in mathematics, information technology and history have outstanding features. There are no important shortcomings in science, art and religious studies.
- 130 On the whole, this represents good progress since the time the school was last inspected.

131 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>
Sixth form	<b>24%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>These grades are based on observations of 17 lessons</b>					

132 When compared with inspections of secondary schools conducted in Wales in 2007-2008, these figures are above average.

133 A level passes at two or more grades A-C and grades A-E fell slightly below UA and all Wales averages in 2006 and 2007. In 2008 they fell above local and national averages. This represents good progress.

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

135 As at KS3 and KS4, standards in the key skills of communication, use of number and ICT have good features and no important shortcomings.

136 Students speak and listen well to the teacher and to one another. The questions they pose are probing. They express their views with confidence and clarity. The more able students engage in extended discussion with their teachers and one another.

137 Students write at length, using subject-specific vocabulary fluently and accurately. They write critically and justify their opinions with relevant argument.

138 Students engage in problem-solving activity and use ICT well to support their research and present their work. They handle files and folders confidently. Many use data bases, "power-point" and spreadsheets to good effect.

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

### **Their progress in learning**

140 The school provides very good support to all sixth formers, particularly to those who wish to proceed to Higher Education.

141 Students have a good understanding of how well they are doing. This is the case at AS, A2 and BTEC levels. Their work is marked and commented upon in detail and targets for improvement are set.

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

142 Students enjoy very good relationships with staff and develop a sense of maturity and independence as they respond to the many opportunities they have to take a leading role in the school. They take seriously their responsibility for supporting younger pupils.

143 Sixth-form students develop very good personal, social and learning skills. They are confident and articulate young adults who relate well to pupils, their peers, teachers and other adults in the school.

144 They have good levels of attendance and punctuality.

145 Sixth-form students have 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

146 The grade awarded is one lower than the grade proposed by the school in its self evaluation report. The grade 3 is awarded because there are shortcomings in the teaching and assessment in a significant minority of lessons, particularly at key stages 3 and 4.

#### KS3 and KS4

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

147 At KS3 and KS4, teaching has good features which outweigh shortcomings.

148 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 68 lessons inspectors observed in the six subjects and 28 lessons in other subjects.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>KS3</b>	7%	51%	31%	9%	2%
<b>KS4</b>	29%	49%	20%	3%	
<b>KS3 and KS4</b>	18%	50%	25%	6%	2%
<b>These grades are based on observations of 96 lessons</b>					

149 These figures show that at KS3 and KS4 teaching is below average when compared with other schools in Wales. While the percentage of lessons judged to have outstanding features was slightly above the average as reported by HMCI in his latest report, the proportion of lessons judged to have shortcomings in important areas was more than twice the average for Wales in 2007-2008.

150 In his report, HMCI reported that there was little significance difference between the quality of teaching at KS3 and at KS4. Inspectors, on this occasion, did not find that to be the case. Inspectors found that at KS3 both the percentage of teaching with outstanding features was 10% below the national figure for 2007-2008 and that the proportion of teaching with shortcomings in important areas was almost four times the national average.

151 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these grades show that the proportion of teaching that has good or very good features has decreased since that time, while the proportion of lessons judged to have shortcomings has increased. While in 2003 the quality of teaching was judged to be a major strength of the school, inspectors on this occasion did not consider that to be the case, particularly at KS3.

152 In the majority of lessons, positive working relationships are established with pupils of all abilities. Most staff use their knowledge of their pupils to provide support and guidance to ensure they make progress.

153 The school has established a number of staff working groups to develop learning and teaching. These provide an effective mechanism for considering and sharing good and innovative practice within the school. As a consequence many staff incorporate up-to-date knowledge of their subject and how pupils

learn effectively within their lessons. The innovative use of ICT is a strong feature in many lessons.

- 154 In those lessons graded 2 or above teachers used a wide variety of teaching strategies and approaches to enthuse and engage pupils in active participation and to learn in different ways. They planned well-structured lessons, which ensured pupils were clear about the intended learning outcomes, built understanding and reflected upon their progress and the skills they applied. A brisk pace of learning and resource materials of high quality were appropriately matched to pupils' levels of ability to maintain concentrated effort throughout. Teachers frequently used paired group work and skillful questioning to enable pupils to discuss their reasoning and share findings.
- 155 In those lessons where inspectors observed significant shortcomings they were associated with ineffective lesson planning and inconsistency in the implementation of school policy. This frequently resulted in pupils being unclear about the purpose of their lessons. In a number of cases teachers did not expect enough of pupils, used a limited range of approaches and failed to interest and motivate them to work consistently and productively throughout the lesson. There was an over-emphasis on teachers' talk and direction and restricted use of questions. Few opportunities were provided for pupils to use their key and wider thinking and problem-solving skills, and to reflect upon their work.
- 156 Pupils arrived late to a small minority of lessons and the poor behaviour of a few pupils disrupted the learning of others.
- 157 In a majority of lessons, particularly at KS3, teachers did not set homework and home learning to progress pupils' knowledge, understanding and independent learning skills.
- 158 Awareness of Welsh culture, equal opportunities, race and gender and healthy living are addressed by teachers appropriately within their teaching. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their bilingual skills.
- 159 Learning support assistants work very effectively with teaching staff. They use their time well, ensuring pupils with learning and behavioural needs integrate successfully and make good progress in their work.

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

- 160 The school's assessment policy provides an appropriate basis for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' achievement.
- 161 Where practice was good, teachers assessed and monitored the work of pupils regularly and accurately. They marked frequently and constructively, communicating clearly to pupils what they had done well and what they needed to do to improve. Teachers involved pupils in the assessment process through peer and self-assessment and identified targets for improvement. This informed pupils of the criteria for success and ensured pupils were aware of their progress and achievement.
- 162 There are important shortcomings in assessment due to the variation in practice across the school, particularly at KS3. Not all teachers follow the school procedures consistently. A significant minority does not mark work thoroughly and frequently enough. Nor do they provide useful feedback to establish

subject-specific targets that enable pupils to evaluate their own work. Many pupils at KS3 were uncertain how to improve and make progress in their work.

- 163 The school's pupil performance database tracks pupils' achievement against their targets. Departments assess pupils and formally record progress three times a year. Underachievement is addressed by middle and senior leaders. The system is most developed and effective in Y9 and at KS4. Pupils are interviewed twice a year, in Y9 and Y11. However, this process is not fully embedded in Y7 and Y8.
- 164 The requirements of examination boards, national curriculum assessment and Special Educational Needs Code of Practice are met by the school. Subject departments have been successfully involved in national standardisation and moderation arrangements. As a result, teacher assessment judgements and procedures at the end of KS3 are becoming more accurate.
- 165 Interim and annual reports to parents and carers provide good quality information about pupils' academic progress, attendance and effort in school. Most subjects give useful advice and specific targets on how pupils might improve their work. Parents are provided with an opportunity to comment on the reports, and at the consultation meetings arranged at appropriate times through the year.

### **Sixth form**

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

- 166 In the sixth form, teaching has good features and no important shortcomings.
- 167 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 17 lessons inspectors observed in the six subjects and 6 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>Sixth form</b>	39%	39%	22%	0%	0%
<b>These grades are based on observations of 23 lessons</b>					

- 168 In almost four out of 10 lessons, teaching was judged to be good with outstanding features. In an equal proportion of lessons, teaching was good and had no important shortcomings. Good features outweighed shortcomings in over one in five lessons.
- 169 The grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment are above the national average for 2007-2008. At 39%, the percentage of lessons awarded grade 1 is significantly above the national figure of 17%. The 78% of lessons graded 2 or better is just above the national average.
- 170 The best teaching observed was characterised by very good subject knowledge that enabled teachers to refine and extend students' understanding, and to provide depth, breadth and complexity within their written and oral responses. Teachers had high expectations of students' disciplined application, their meeting of deadlines and the quality of their work. Teachers used a wide range of teaching approaches and resources, including ICT, to provide pace, relevance and challenge to students' learning. Their meticulous planning ensured that examination requirements were fully met and communicated to students. Teachers provided individual support and guidance, closely matched

to students' capabilities and gave opportunities for students to work in a variety of ways to extend their thinking and develop independence in learning.

- 171 Where shortcomings were observed, they were associated with ineffective lesson planning, over-long teacher expositions and a limited range of approaches. This restricted opportunities for students to become involved in discussion and resulted in passive learning.

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

- 172 Regular assessment and constructive feedback in most cases provide students with clear indications of their achievement in relation to examination criteria and how to maintain or improve the standard of their work. Where there are shortcomings it is where marking is limited to past paper schemes and little guidance is provided. Students' notes are not often checked for accuracy and understanding. In a few cases, there were examples of uncorrected coursework.
- 173 Progress is regularly monitored against predicted grades based on prior attainment, and communicated to students. Subject teachers and senior staff provide effective support and advice for students on how they can improve their work. Regular interviews are organised for all students and individual help is available as required. In most cases targets for improvement are limited to formative comments on students' work and to those identified within their report.
- 174 The quality of arrangement for reporting students' progress to parents and carers is good. Reports of good quality provide relevant information for students and parents/carers on achievement, progress and how to obtain targeted grades.

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

<b>Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings</b>
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- 175 This grade is two grades lower than that proposed by the school. Although inspectors judged the extra-curricular provision to be outstanding, and noted good features in some areas, they also noted shortcomings. In particular, the school does not meet the statutory requirements of a daily act of collective worship and the teaching of religious education in the sixth form.

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

- 176 At KS3, the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Pupils study all NC subjects and religious education. Information technology is now taught as a discrete subject across the key stage. Learning experiences are generally well planned to ensure that pupils develop the skills to move to the next key stage.
- 177 At KS4, a good range of optional courses supplements well the core provision of English, mathematics, Welsh second language, science, physical education and religious education.

- 178 The option menu of courses for KS4 pupils includes subjects from each of the domains of learning. There is a modest range of vocational courses, which are distributed among three of the domains. A number of level 1 courses provided at Coleg Glan Hafren extends the choices available to pupils.
- 179 While sixth-form students have access to 25 Advanced Supplementary (AS) and A level courses and BTEC sport, opportunities for students to gain vocational qualifications are limited. Discussions to broaden the option menu with other providers have taken place. However, this development is not fully operational. The school does not comply with the requirement to teach religious education in the sixth form.
- 180 The school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2007. Most subjects and PSE have identified the delivery of key skills in their schemes of work. However, their impact in many lessons at KS3 and KS4 is limited. Overall, at both key stages there is insufficient co-ordination and monitoring of the delivery of key skills. Also, the recording of the successful meeting of criteria in different key skills at KS3 in pupils' planners is inconsistent across subjects.
- 181 At KS3, pupils can gain accreditation in the key skill of ICT at the end of Y9. Students in Y12 have time-tabled key skills lessons, with many successfully gaining accreditation in the skill areas of communication, working with others and improving own learning and performance.
- 182 The quality of learning experiences provided beyond the curriculum is outstanding. There is a wide variety of extra-curricular activities and these enrich pupils' experiences in the classroom. These are much appreciated and valued by pupils.
- 183 Pupils take part in a good number of subject clubs, productions, museum and theatre visits, field trips and a variety of visits abroad. A large number of pupils take part in a wide range of sporting activities, gaining considerable success at local and national levels. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is very popular and successful with 120 pupils and students working at either bronze, silver or gold levels.
- 184 Religious education lessons make a good contribution to the development of spiritual values. However, the quality of provision in assemblies and tutor groups varies too much and, overall, collective worship and other subjects across the curriculum do not contribute enough to pupils' spiritual development. The school does not comply with the requirements for an act of collective worship.
- 185 Overall, the school promotes pupils' moral and social development effectively for a good majority of pupils. The quality of relationships, respect for peers, adults and visitors for a majority of pupils and the wide support given to a range of charities by the sixth form are good. However, a minority of pupils shows a lack of respect to supply teachers, permanent teachers and visitors and disrupts the learning of other pupils.
- 186 The development of pupils' awareness of the Welsh culture and other cultures is good across many areas of the curriculum.
- 187 The school provides a comprehensive PSE programme which includes health education, sex education, substance misuse education, careers education and



the world of work. There are recent audits of this provision which takes into consideration the new guidance for the Welsh Assembly Government.

- 188 The school has developed a number of successful transition links with partner primary schools. Several departments have developed curricular links which aim to ensure continuity in the curriculum and foster pupils' progress.
- 189 The school has good links with a number of universities to help prepare learners for higher studies. Effective links are established with Initial Teacher Training (ITT) establishments for the placement of students and the impact they can make in bringing new ideas to the experiences gained by learners.

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

- 190 The school provides an effective programme of work-related education. It aims to equip pupils to take their place in a rapidly changing world of work and is delivered through the PSE programme, a variety of speakers and interviews with advisers from Careers Wales. The work-experience programme for pupils in Y11 and students in Y12 is planned and monitored well. There is good preparation and follow-up and pupils develop many appropriate skills for future employment.
- 191 Aspects of 'Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig' feature well in several subjects such as history, geography, mathematics, modern foreign languages and design and technology. Pupils study Welsh as a second language at KS3 and KS4 and there are some activities such as the School Eisteddfod for Y7 and Y8 and visits to Llangrannog and Glan Llyn which promote the Welsh language and culture. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils across the curriculum, in assemblies and in day-to-day activities to develop and practise further their bilingual skills.
- 192 The school is successful in ensuring that no pupil is disadvantaged. The school challenges stereotyping, both in its programme for PSE and in its practice in enabling pupils to choose suitable subjects with equality of access.
- 193 The school promotes education for sustainable development and global citizenship successfully. Issues of sustainable development are addressed in the PSE programme and teaching in geography and science. An active eco-committee has been successful in gaining the eco-schools silver award for recycling and energy conservation initiatives.
- 194 The school has developed productive links with businesses and a number of external agencies. These links are used well to enhance the curriculum and enable it to address the needs of the wider community.
- 195 Pupils at KS3 have a good number of opportunities to develop their understanding of enterprise in modules in the PSE programme. There are further opportunities for learners at KS4 to develop entrepreneurial skills through activities such as the Dynamo Project and enterprise activities culminating in a Trade Fair at the school's Open Evening. Many students in the sixth form raise substantial amounts of money for different charities through enterprise events.
- 196 The school has made progress in offering learning experiences that reflect national priorities. However, there are shortcomings in addressing the development of bilingual skills, key skills and the vocational programme in the sixth form.

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

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

197 The school awarded itself a grade 2 for this key question in its self-evaluation report and the inspection team confirmed many good features in relation to care, guidance and support. However, the school has no Disability Equality Scheme and its accessibility plan is out of date. There is a clear failure, by the school, to comply with statutory requirements in respect of these two issues. Therefore the inspection team awarded a grade 3.

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

198 Heads of year and their assistants work closely with form tutors to ensure the quality of care support and guidance is good. They have developed good links with external support agencies. Looked-after children are well catered for; the school attends all relevant meetings.

199 The views of pupils are taken into account through the very effective school council. The school has implemented several suggestions made by the school council including changing the uniform, providing water machines around the school, placing benches in the quad and developing a basketball court.

200 Whilst there are good features in the school's partnership with parents the school has not paid sufficient attention to their concerns regarding homework at KS3.

201 Pupils are given impartial advice from the SLT and Careers Wales regarding option choices. In Y9, pupils request the subjects they wish to study at KS4 and the school endeavours to meet pupils' individual choices by constructing option blocks that take their wishes into account. Element 4 of Learning Pathways 14 – 19 is effectively provided for.

202 Induction arrangements at KS4 and the sixth form are good. Transition arrangements from KS2 to KS3 are outstanding. There are very purposeful links between the core subjects, Welsh and ICT and the partner primary schools. During spring and summer terms teachers of French and German deliver one hour per week of both languages to each Y6 group in the partner primaries so that by admission all pupils will have received two terms of teaching in each language. After admission, new Y7 pupils are supported by trained peer mentors or 'Buddies'; this support continues throughout Y7.

203 The school has two recognised learning coaches who are currently working with sixth-form students in preparation for the introduction of the Welsh Baccalaureate. They provide very good personal support. At KS3 and KS4, very good personal support is provided by Heads of Year, Form Tutors and by a trained counsellor. The school supports pupils with personal, social, emotional and behavioural problems through its 'Achievement Scheme' organised by the counsellor. Element 5 of Learning Pathways 14 – 19 is effectively provided for. However, in a few tutorial sessions, teachers do not always ensure pupils make effective use of their time.

204 The school has very good arrangements for monitoring attendance and this is reflected in the progress the school has made in this area. However there are many instances where pupils arrive late to lessons and this is not sufficiently addressed by the school.

- 205 Heads of year monitor pupils' behaviour and performance effectively; at KS4 the recently installed electronic tracking system is proving beneficial in supporting their work.
- 206 Pupils receive careers education and guidance of good quality; this provision is further enhanced by the very good links with Careers Wales. Element 6 of Learning Pathways 14–19 is effectively provided for.
- 207 The school has been involved with the 'Healthy Schools Initiative' for the last six years and joined the Cardiff Network of Healthy Schools in 2006. The school has identified and acted upon targets relating to Health and Fitness', 'Substance Misuse Policy' and the 'School Nutrition Action Group'. Healthy food choices are available each day and cooled water machines available for pupil use.
- 208 The school has two senior members of staff as designated child protection officers (one male and one female). New members of staff are made aware of the school's policy and procedures for child protection. Whole-school training time is allocated to child protection each year and heads of year receive extensive training.

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

- 209 Overall the quality of provision for pupils with SEN is very good.
- 210 Very good account is taken of the SEN Code of Practice for Wales and the statutory framework for inclusion.
- 211 Pupils' needs are effectively diagnosed through good liaison with feeder primary schools and the cognitive abilities test.
- 212 The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and his team ensure that all pupils on the SEN register fulfil their potential. This is reflected in the qualifications pupils with SEN gain at the end of KS4. Pupils have the opportunity to follow higher level (GCSE) courses as well as college-based National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards. There is a high degree of success and aspects of outstanding achievement in all three areas.
- 213 The number of learning support assistants has doubled since the last inspection. They are well trained and provide very good support for pupils with SEN. They hold regular weekly meetings which focus on support for individual pupils.
- 214 The SENCO has recently changed the individual education plan (IEP) format. They are now more relevant to subject teachers across the school.
- 215 Learning support groups, where pupils are withdrawn for intensive literacy work, are effectively organised and pupils benefit from the very good teaching in these groups.
- 216 The Better Reading Partnership is a good feature of provision where trained Y12 students support Y7 pupils in developing their literacy skills.
- 217 There are outstanding aspects to the provision for hearing impaired (HI) pupils. Arrangements for integration are very effectively and sensitively organised. These arrangements are tailored to meet individual needs. Most HI pupils are disapplied from the national curriculum subjects of modern foreign languages

and Welsh. During these periods they return to the HI resource base for intensive tuition.

- 218 The HI learning support assistants are well qualified and all are trained in the use of British Sign Language. They are effectively deployed and managed by the HI co-ordinator.
- 219 The HI co-ordinator ensures the well-being of pupils in the unit and organises activities to further enrich their experiences such as the unit football team which competes at local and regional levels.
- 220 The school has a programme of mentoring and enrichment activities for the more able and talented pupils. In order to counter the earlier exclusivity of this group, pupils can now self-refer.
- 221 The school has a number of good strategies in place to support pupils with behavioural difficulties such as the 'Behaviour Support Management Group', the 'Positive Behaviour Support Policy', a graduated report system, pastoral support plans and an inclusion room. However there is an inconsistent approach to implementing the positive behaviour policy across the school. Punctuality to lessons is often not challenged by teachers nor are other incidents of poor behaviour, both inside and outside the classroom, witnessed by members of the inspection team during the inspection.

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

- 222 The school is committed to equal opportunities for all and has a range of appropriate policies in place to ensure this, irrespective of learners' backgrounds. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language is well catered for by a specialist teacher from the unitary authority's Ethnic Minority Achievement Service who visits the school for one day per week.
- 223 The school is proactive in promoting gender equality and a number of lessons deal with stereotyping.
- 224 Good race relations are actively promoted through the curriculum, the PSE programme, religious education and assemblies.
- 225 The school's anti-bullying policy has been reviewed by a group of Y11 pupils and updated to include sections on 'cyber-bullying' through texting on mobile phones and the use of the internet.
- 226 The 'Buddy' system proves to be effective in reducing bullying and pupils confide incidents easily to their 'Buddy'. These are effectively followed up by staff. There have been few incidents of racial harassment over the last few years but where these have occurred they have also been effectively followed up with parental involvement. Good records of incidents and consequent actions are kept.
- 227 The school does not have a Disability Equality Scheme and as such does not comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. The school's accessibility plan was drawn up in 2004 to cover the period 2004 to 2007. It has not been updated since 2004 and is now out of date; this is a further breach of statutory requirements.
- 228 The school effectively recognises and respects diversity through its curriculum, the PSE programme, religious education and assemblies.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

229 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower than that judged by the school in its self-evaluation report. Grade 3 was awarded because of the shortcomings identified in standards, teaching and learning, inconsistency in the impact of leadership and management across the school and the failure of governors to comply with statutory requirements.

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

230 Good features outweigh shortcomings in leadership and management.

231 One of the school's core values is the belief that all can succeed. In putting this into practice, the school seeks to offer opportunities that include all learners. The school aims to develop each individual pupil and student and value their achievement.

232 The school development plan and the prospectus clearly identify the school's vision of providing pupils and students with a challenging education that promotes their learning, raises standards and prepares them for adult life. Job descriptions are written appropriately to focus on developing a strong culture of learning and achievement.

233 The majority of pupils and students reaches good levels of achievement, as is evident from results in tests and examinations and from lessons observed in the six subjects inspected.

234 There is not, however, 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. Pupils are frustrated by other pupils' behaviour and parents expressed significant levels of concern, in letters to the team and in the pre-inspection meeting. In their responses to the questionnaire, nearly one third of parents expressed concerns over standards of behaviour and nearly one half of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the standard of education provided by the school, particularly at KS3.

235 The leadership provided by the headteacher and his SLT is largely effective on a day-to-day basis. As a team, they work well together and have identified appropriate priorities for improvement. These priorities, where they have been led and managed consistently, have taken the school forward.

236 However, while policies have been written and systems set up to bring about consistency, these are not being implemented effectively so as to challenge underperformance and have a positive impact on practice.

237 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.

- 238 The quality of middle management across the school varies. In those departments where there are outstanding features, or 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.
- 239 The management of pupils' welfare is good and is consistent in the way it addresses the pastoral needs of pupils and students. However, the role of staff, particularly tutors, in monitoring and supporting learners' academic progress against their targets is not yet embedded and is less effective.
- 240 Leaders and managers take appropriate account of WAG priorities. Work-related education is a high priority as is preparing pupils and students for life-long learning. The school works well to promote healthy lifestyles and an understanding of the importance of education for sustainable development and global citizenship.
- 241 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 well developed. However, the school is not making adequate progress in the development of key skills and bilingualism.
- 242 While the school provides many opportunities for teachers and support staff to reflect on good practice, innovation is not regularly monitored, evaluated and reviewed.
- 243 Though there are established systems to manage the performance of teaching and support staff, the school has not ensured that all teachers receive an annual review. This limits the impact of staff development on improving standards and quality.

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

- 244 Governors represent a wide range of community interests, are supportive of the school and are involved in the school's strategic planning.
- 245 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 self-evaluation report and contributed to the discussion of the grades awarded.
- 246 However, they do not act as effective critical friends of the school. At the meeting held with the registered inspector prior to the inspection, governors did not indicate an awareness of some of the shortcomings identified in this report.
- 247 Statutory requirements for a disability equality scheme and accessibility plan are not met. In addition, Governors have not ensured that the breaches of statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and the provision of religious education in the sixth form, identified in 1997, have been addressed.

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

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

248 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower than the Grade 2 the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report. The team judged that there are inconsistencies and shortcomings in the self-evaluation process and a lack of progress in addressing key issues identified in the last inspection.

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

249 Whole-school and departmental self-evaluation reports are based on the Estyn Common Inspection Framework. The staff are increasingly becoming better informed about individual, team and whole-school performance.

250 The school's self-evaluation report is a detailed document, outlining strengths and areas for development but its grades differed from those of the inspection team in all the key questions due to the school's underestimation of shortcomings.

251 Self-evaluation procedures are most effective in reviewing standards of attainment. Leaders and managers meet early in the autumn term to evaluate examination results and to review departmental evaluations. They agree further targets for pupils' and students' attainment.

252 There are a number of arrangements for self-evaluation based on first-hand evidence of teaching and learning. The views of pupils and students are sought through a highly effective school council and eco-committee. In the recent past, the views of three year groups were sought through a pupil survey. In a few departments, most notably physical education, lesson observations identify areas for development and inform the process of self-evaluation.

253 However, the failure of the school to consult parents systematically and regularly and its consequent lack of awareness of their concerns about standards and behaviour are important shortcomings.

254 There is inconsistency in the understanding and execution of the monitoring processes at senior leadership and middle management level. The overall quality and extent of lesson observations beyond performance management and of the scrutiny of pupils' work, limit the effectiveness of self-evaluation of teaching and learning.

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

255 The school improvement plan (SIP) focuses upon the main priorities identified by the SLT in consultation with staff and governors. It is a detailed and extensive document. However, resources and costing, although listed, do not always include financial costs. This is also the case at departmental level.

256 Departmental improvement plans follow the same format as the SIP and in most cases there is a suitable match between school and departmental priorities. There are examples of very good practice but it is not always evident how self-evaluation feeds into planning at departmental level.

257 Departmental improvement plans do not always focus sufficiently upon quantifiable targets for improving standards. Neither are they costed.

Consequently, the procedures for monitoring and evaluating progress against targets are unclear. These are important shortcomings.

258 There is evidence to indicate that actions taken as a result of effective planning have resulted in measurable improvements in areas such as examination results, staffing to facilitate curriculum development and the establishment of the Hearing Impaired Unit.

259 With regard to the key issues from the previous inspection, progress has been made in:

- improving the school's accommodation;
- the arrangements for teaching information technology to all pupils in KS3;
- the use of data in the evaluation procedures; and
- ensuring that adequate teaching time is available for pupils to gain maximum benefit from the curriculum.

260 However, insufficient progress has been made in:

- the consistency and quality of the school's monitoring systems;
- improving pupils' behaviour around the school and in their punctuality to lessons;
- making more effective use of the time tutors spend with their registration classes at the beginning of each session; and
- in meeting statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form and for a daily act of collective worship.

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

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

261 This grade is a grade lower than that awarded by the school in its own self-evaluation report. On the whole, inspectors judged the school to make good use of its resources. However, there are important shortcomings in the way in which the school costs its development plans.

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

262 There is a good balance of experienced teachers with those who are relatively new to the profession.

263 There are enough teachers who have good subject knowledge, to ensure that the curriculum is delivered effectively and efficiently, although staff absences in a very few areas are adversely affecting standards.

264 All non-teaching staff are appropriately skilled and make an effective contribution to all aspects of the school. Classroom support staff work well with teachers and pupils with SEN have access to a wide range of professionals with appropriate expertise.

265 Learners have access to appropriate learning resources that enhance their work. The Library Resource Centre is well stocked and well used, but it is too small to cater adequately for the number of learners in the school.



- 266 Information and communications technology facilities have improved considerably since the last inspection although the ratio of computers to pupils is not high and access for learners in classrooms other than the ICT rooms is limited in some areas.
- 267 A range of activities outside school enriches the pupils' curriculum and achievement.
- 268 There has been a significant improvement in the state of the accommodation since the last inspection. A rolling programme of refurbishment has had considerable impact in many areas.
- 269 The buildings and site are very well managed, including displays of pupils' work, and provide as good a working environment as is possible.
- 270 Conditions in some areas, however, remain unsatisfactory. They detract significantly from the quality of provision for pupils and staff and are unsuitable for both school and community use.

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

- 271 In general, the school makes effective and efficient use of its resources. However, there are shortcomings.
- 272 The school is well staffed and resourced to teach the curriculum and meet the needs of all pupils.
- 273 A large majority of classes in the sixth form has viable numbers of students so that sixth form provision does not compromise funding for KS3 and KS4. The school is developing its partnerships to increase cost-effectiveness.
- 274 In several aspects, such as accommodation and learning resources, priorities for development are known and considerable savings have been made through continual seeking for cost-effectiveness. The recently appointed estate manager has made an outstanding impact in this respect.
- 275 However, there is a lack of clarity in defining priorities for the development of major programmes related to teaching and learning.
- 276 Although resource decisions are linked to the SIP, which is derived from the SER, they do not include detailed financial costings at departmental, year or whole-school level.
- 277 The governors' finance sub-committee makes an effective contribution but the role of the governing body as a whole is less rigorous in its involvement with the use of resources. The school has eliminated a deficit budget, but there is very little contingency funding.
- 278 All members of staff are deployed efficiently and economically, including teaching assistants, and the school meets statutory requirements with respect to workforce remodelling procedures. Criminal record bureau checks are carried out according to regulations.
- 279 There are many different opportunities for the professional development of all staff, but the procedures for identifying and funding the effective development of teaching staff are not systematic. Training is not linked closely to self-evaluation and planning in a significant minority of departments.

- 280 Performance management mechanisms are not effective in ensuring that staff development needs are met. The lack of costings and the lack of monitoring of the impact of training do not guarantee cost-effectiveness.
- 281 Teachers are allocated planning, preparation and assessment time (PPA). Leaders and managers are also given time, the use of which is monitored. There is no monitoring of the use of teachers' PPA time.
- 282 Departmental capitation is allocated by formula, but because many plans are not costed and spending within departments is not scrutinised thoroughly, the school is not making the best use of all its resources in order to achieve the best outcomes for pupils. This is an important shortcoming.
- 283 The headteacher and governing body keep most of the school's resources under regular and frequent review.
- 284 Overall, spending compares very favourably with similar schools in the area and in many aspects such as site maintenance, staffing costs and learning resources, the school provides value for money.
- 285 However, shortcomings in planning and monitoring expenditure on teaching and learning means that processes to ensure value for money are not secure in every respect.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Mathematics

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

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

**Sixth Form: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

286 In the last two years, examination results at GCSE have been above the UA and all-Wales averages. Results at AS and A2 have been above those for the UA and Wales.

#### KS3

##### Good features

- 287 Pupils deal effectively with all aspects of numbers and apply them appropriately.
- 288 Pupils can calculate angles in any given shape as required and can use a protractor correctly to measure or draw an angle depending on the requirements of the problem set.
- 289 The pupils, according to their ability, have a clear understanding of algebra and can solve appropriate equations be they simple or complex or calculate required values in an expression.
- 290 Pupils are able to simplify algebraic expressions and have a clear understanding of what has to be done to elicit the required answer, including changing the subject of a formula.
- 291 As they move through the key stage, pupils are able to name shapes and determine areas and volumes, according to their ability. They can express their answers in the correct form and they invariably include the units involved as required.

- 292 Pupils give their numerical answers to the required degree of accuracy and even when calculators are used give the answer in a sensible manner as is appropriate.
- 293 As they move through the key stage, pupils can transform shapes and can apply this technique in different circumstances.
- 294 When required the pupils are able to estimate an answer with the appropriate degree of accuracy and express their answer in a sensible manner.
- 295 They have an understanding of statistics and deal with data effectively to work out answers required given the problems set and can apply this to determine further answers within the context met.
- 296 Pupils with SEN make good progress.

### **Shortcomings**

- 297 A few pupils need to ensure that units are always included in the answers to make these meaningful and to increase their value for revision.
- 298 A small minority of pupils has an insecure understanding of geometrical figures.
- 299 In a few instances, there are gaps in pupils' work.

### **KS4**

#### **Good features**

- 300 Pupils have a clear understanding of probability and realise that the values must lie between zero and one. They use appropriate methods including tree diagrams to determine their answers.
- 301 They have a clear understanding of trigonometry and can use the correct ratio to calculate angles or sides from the information given and can further use the answer to solve more complex problems.
- 302 They are able to solve different equations, including simultaneous and quadratic equations, by different methods and can then solve more complex questions using the answers calculated.
- 303 They can draw linear and quadratic graphs accurately and use these graphs to determine other answers. Some have no difficulty in drawing the curves of powers greater than two.
- 304 According to the level of work studied, they deal with difficult topics and are able to tackle problems involving more than one stage.
- 305 They are able to use computers effectively to establish or apply given rules and realise the effect of changing coefficient in a given expression from the studies made.
- 306 Relative to their ability they can construct graphs in the four quadrants and use these to determine other facts.
- 307 They can explain and apply the circle theorems and apply these correctly.

### **Shortcomings**

- 308 A few pupils are not always able to recall work completed previously.
- 309 In a small minority of cases, the work set is not completed or missing work is not copied up.

## **Sixth form**

### **Outstanding features**

- 310 Students acquire new skills quickly and can use their prior knowledge to understand any new concepts they meet. This enables them to deal more effectively with more complex questions and ensures strong development in their understanding of the subject.
- 311 Students are able to study independently. This improves their understanding of the subject and is a very positive element of their work.
- 312 Students have a very clear understanding of all formulae and laws that apply in the topics studied and use them very competently in their work.

### **Good features**

- 313 In statistics, students are able to apply the required formulae and to apply these correctly and to use tables when needed to gain the necessary answers.
- 314 In the courses studied, students can transfer the knowledge gained in an area followed to other aspects of the course without any difficulty.
- 315 They are able to use calculus and can integrate, differentiate correctly using applicable rules when necessary to calculate such information as gradient, area under curves with given parameters and to determine maximum and minimum values in various curves.

### **Shortcomings**

- 316 There are no significant shortcomings.

<b>Science</b>
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**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**

- 317 Results in the last four years have been similar to those for the UA, and above those for Wales for passes at grades A\*-C. Benchmarking data, comparing similar schools, consistently place the school science results in the lower quartile for passes at A\*-C.
- 318 Over the last two years, the percentage of students who have gained AS and A Level grades A to C in biology, chemistry and physics have been significantly higher than those for the UA and for the whole of Wales. Value added data indicate that, overall, the results are better than those achieved nationally by students of similar abilities.

## **KS3**

### **Good features**

- 319 The majority of pupils is attentive and interested in their work and is able to recall recent work when questioned. They show good understanding of the basic scientific concepts in biology, chemistry and physics.
- 320 The majority develops good scientific vocabulary as they progress through the key stage.
- 321 Many pupils work confidently and effectively to complete experimental work, use scientific equipment correctly, and record their observations appropriately.

- 322 With guidance, a large majority is able to predict the outcome of their investigation and draw conclusions on the basis of their observations.
- 323 A small minority are able to evaluate the quality of their experiments and to suggest improvements to the procedures.
- 324 Many pupils with SEN take a full part in lessons, often work with others and make good progress.

### **Shortcomings**

- 325 A significant minority does not understand the work and often has difficulty remembering and applying previous work.
- 326 A significant minority does not present their work neatly. The work of a few pupils is disorganised, incomplete and often remains unfinished. Progress is hindered by their failure to complete work.
- 327 A few pupils find it difficult to plan and predict the outcome of investigations.
- 328 In a significant minority of lessons, the poor behaviour of some pupils adversely affects the learning of others.

### **KS4**

#### **Good features**

- 329 Many pupils have good knowledge and understanding of current and previous work. They make very good progress.
- 330 A majority of pupils has well-developed practical skills. When given the opportunity, they are able to plan investigations, record measurements in suitable tables, with the correct units and draw appropriate graphs. Most pupils are able to draw conclusions from their findings and evaluate their work.
- 331 Many pupils listen attentively, participate keenly in question and answer sessions using suitable scientific vocabulary. They ask questions to further their understanding.
- 332 Many pupils with SEN respond well within a caring and supportive environment. As a result, they make good progress.

#### **Shortcomings**

- 333 A few pupils are insecure in their knowledge, understanding and application of science.
- 334 A few pupils often fail to complete or correct their work.
- 335 The progress of a small minority is affected by their absenteeism.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

- 336 Most students achieve good standards in relation to their abilities and are making good progress in the three subjects.
- 337 Most students have good recall of previous work. They demonstrate a good understanding of the complex topics studied.
- 338 Most students complete practical work competently, interpret graphical data well, and can distinguish between accuracy and reliability. They are able to

confidently apply mathematical techniques when, for example calculating mean and standard deviation.

### **Shortcomings**

339 A small minority of students does not have the expected depth of understanding of work at this level.

340 A few students have difficulty completing mathematical calculations.

## **Information and communication technology**

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

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

**Sixth Form: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

341 In the past few years GCSE results have been continually improving. In 2008 results in the grades A\* to C in the short course were higher than national averages. In the full course, results were much higher than both the local and national averages.

342 A level results in the last two years were higher than the local and national averages for grades A-C. In 2008 the AS results in the grades A, B and C was significantly higher than both local and national averages. These results represent outstanding achievement for the students involved.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

343 Nearly all pupils have good and often very good practical computing skills. Their confidence and competence skills in handling software icons, menus and functions are universally good.

344 Almost all pupils are able to find quickly and effectively use information from a variety of sources including the internet without having to ask for help from their teachers.

345 The most able have a very good understanding of the theoretical aspects of their tasks and are able to explain and discuss their work well.

346 Most pupils are making good progress in their knowledge and understanding of searches and sort functions when handling data in a database.

347 Almost all pupils communicate information using word processing, desktop publishing, presentation and digital blue video capturing applications well.

348 Pupils with SEN make good progress and produce work of a good standard in relation to their capabilities.

#### **Shortcomings**

349 A very few pupils lack confidence and need the support of their teachers regularly. They tend to produce the simplest solution to the work set.

350 A very few pupils do not give sufficient consideration to the style and contents of their communication slides to ensure that they are readily and easily read and understood by their audience.

351 A few pupils are unsure of the technical terminology of the subject and do not readily use technical terms when describing their work

## **KS4**

### **Good features**

- 352 Almost all pupils' practical computing skills are good and often very good. They use the hardware, together with a very broad range of software and associated peripheral equipment very well.
- 353 Every pupil has a good knowledge and understanding of computer systems including the range of input devices for human interaction and data capture. They can readily select and use a range of software packages that best fits the required task.
- 354 All pupils plan their work thoroughly. Problem-solving skills are good. The most able have a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of their tasks and can explain and discuss their work using an appropriate level of technical vocabulary.
- 355 Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve to their potential.

### **Shortcomings**

- 356 The work files of a very few pupils lack sufficient structure and attention to detail. Their initial system design work is occasionally weakly presented and occasionally lacks detail. They do not test or evaluate their systems with sufficient rigour.
- 357 A few pupils are unsure of the subject's technical terminology. They do not use technical terms with confidence when answering questions or describing their work.

## **Sixth form**

### **Outstanding features**

- 358 A significant number of students show an outstanding level of practical competence and computer skills including the construction and use of sub-routines in visual basic when required. The standard of work in most students' project files is very high. Students have a very good understanding and knowledge of the theory relating to computer systems.
- 359 Most students show outstanding skills in the development and use of very complex service systems that fulfil the needs of their chosen business applications. In addition they produce outstanding user and maintenance documentation to support their systems.
- 360 Most students show outstanding levels of creativity in their house styles for their folio covers and user manuals. The work reflects outstanding skills in using a range of word-processing and desk-top publishing techniques.

### **Good features**

- 361 When constructing systems, most students collect a wide range of data relevant to their project, test their validity and evaluate their solutions to a good standard.
- 362 Most A level students display the ability to apply their computing skills to problem-solving in the real world very well.

### **Shortcomings**

- 363 There are no significant shortcomings.

## History

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

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

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

### KS3

#### Good features

- 364 Pupils have good levels of background knowledge and a secure understanding of chronology. They recall their previous learning successfully and they apply this information effectively when considering challenging historical problems.
- 365 From Y7 onwards, pupils adopt good investigative approaches in examining historical problems. They use a variety of sources of evidence effectively to compare and contrast differing interpretations of historical events and developments. As a result, they provide convincing explanations of the causes of change occurring over time.
- 366 In Y7 and Y8, pupils have good levels of knowledge and understanding of, for instance, the debate surrounding the murder of Thomas Becket. Year 8 pupils make good progress in extracting relevant information from sources of evidence to ascertain the causes of the Civil War.
- 367 By Y9, pupils become increasingly confident in testing their sources of evidence for bias, reliability and usefulness. They evaluate the sources carefully, using them to develop well-balanced oral and written arguments.
- 368 By the end of KS3, pupils have secure skills in distinguishing between the short-term and the long-term causes of change. Most pupils achieve good standards in selecting, organising and communicating information through a wide range of writing tasks, such as essays and source evaluations. Pupils use a good range of historical vocabulary and make good progress in developing their thinking skills.
- 369 Pupils with SEN make good progress.

#### Shortcomings

- 370 A small minority of pupils does not complete written assignments.
- 371 There are too many variations in pupils' levels of understanding.
- 372 Pupils' skills of evaluating sources are insecure.

### KS4

#### Good features

- 373 Pupils build successfully on the historical knowledge and skills acquired in KS3. They demonstrate a growing maturity in the depth of their response to tasks and challenges.
- 374 They are increasingly well focused upon providing reasonable and convincing explanations for the motivation and attitudes of people in the past by asking more complex questions of the sources. Average and above average ability pupils in Y10 and 11 achieve good standards in identifying and explaining, for example, the variety of ways in which people opposed apartheid in South Africa.



- 375 By Y11, most written work shows good standards of research, selection and organisation of relevant information. Extended writing skills develop well and most KS4 pupils produce well-presented and well-organised written work.
- 376 Pupils use ICT tools very effectively to enhance their written work and to develop their research skills. Pupils have secure knowledge and understanding of the particular historical and cultural development of Wales.
- 377 They make good progress in applying their knowledge and understanding from other curricular areas to raise their standards in written work and to extend their problem-solving and independent learning skills.

### **Shortcomings**

- 378 As at KS3, a small minority of pupils does not regularly complete their written assignments.
- 379 They show variable standards in the depth with which they tackle problems and some of their work lacks adequate detail to provide a satisfying response to the question they are considering.
- 380 A minority of pupils also find source evaluation problematic.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Outstanding features**

- 381 The written work of a significant number of students, in particular their coursework, provides outstanding examples of analytical and interpretative skills. They demonstrate outstanding levels of knowledge and understanding together with a very good ability to construct sophisticated and articulate arguments. The presentation of such pieces of work is exemplary.
- 382 Students are able to use footnotes and bibliographies accurately, showing a good awareness of their purpose for the reader.
- 383 Many students have outstanding research skills. They are able to learn independently and to select and organise their material to the best effect.

#### **Good features**

- 384 The large number of students who opt to study history in Y12 and 13, have very good levels of knowledge and understanding both of the complexities of Hitler's policies in Germany from 1933 to 1945 and also of the political, social, economic and religious policies and historical interpretations of the Tudor state. They achieve a very good grasp of the historiography of both periods and are secure in their knowledge of the orthodox and the revisionist views of professional historians who are experts in these fields. Their ability to construct well-argued opposing and balanced oral and written arguments, based on relevant evidence, is very good and they are very successful in identifying and examining a variety of complex factors when addressing challenging historical problems.
- 385 Most students achieve very good standards in the evaluation and analysis of sources of evidence. The depth of their analysis demonstrates a growing maturity and insight. They have a very good ability to assess the significance of the attributions of these sources, using their understanding to arrive at convincing conclusions.

386 Students in both Y12 and Y13 have very good skills in developing oral arguments. Fluent and articulate contributions to discussions show a growing confidence.

387 Students display a mature approach to the development of their independent learning skills. They take personal responsibility for extending their research activities and taking a pride in ensuring that they reach high standards in the quality of their learning.

### **Shortcomings**

388 There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Art and Design**

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

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

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

389 In the most recent GCSE examination, results at grades A\*-C were significantly below local and national averages. These results represent significant under-achievement. In the A level examination, results at grades A-B were below local and national averages. These results represent under-achievement.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

390 Many pupils arrive with variable art experiences and skills. By the end of Y9 the percentage of pupils working at the expected level is in line with national averages. This indicates good progress.

391 They make progress in the acquisition and use of the essential elements of line, tone, colour, texture and pattern. They develop their observational drawing skills to the expected level.

392 They have an awareness and appreciation of the art of other cultures through imaginative painting and drawing exercises.

393 They are learning how to evaluate their work and developing judgement about art. When writing about art, they express their personal opinions and judgements.

394 Pupils with SEN make good progress. Ethnic minority pupils achieve at a comparable rate to their peers.

395 The more able and talented pupils make good progress towards early exam success because they respond very well to their more demanding tasks.

#### **Shortcomings**

396 Pupils have little knowledge of art relating to Wales.

397 Only a minority of pupils learn about working with three-dimensional materials.

398 Pupils' first-hand knowledge of art is limited because they do not take part in the good practice of visiting art galleries or working with visiting artists.

### **KS4**

#### **Good features**

399 Pupils take greater responsibility for their independent learning.

400 They know how to exploit the available two and three-dimensional media.

- 401 They understand how to research a topic with some thoroughness. They improve their knowledge of a wider range of artists' and designers' work and apply this knowledge to their own original work.
- 402 They show that they know how to use computers creatively and to support their research.
- 403 Sketchbook work regularly demonstrates creative outcomes with supportive annotation.
- 404 Vocational-design pupils demonstrate an understanding of how to apply images and letterforms imaginatively to graphic package-design.
- 405 They use their knowledge of examination requirements well to complete the required body of work.

### **Shortcomings**

- 406 The progress of a minority of pupils is limited by their poor behaviour in class.
- 407 While standards are rising, pupils are not yet achieving to their potential.
- 408 Pupils do not have a sufficient grasp of how they can use the assessment process to improve their work.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

- 409 Students are developing as mature independent creative artists.
- 410 Individual students' exploitation of architectural photography is outstandingly good. The quality of their imaginative printmaking and animation is very good.
- 411 They know how to use their art to express their social and moral views.
- 412 They improve their knowledge of contemporary and historical art by visiting major art galleries. They improve their knowledge of the human form through regular figure drawing.
- 413 When writing about art they express thoughtful personal responses.
- 414 They understand the examination requirements. They know how to work to deadlines and how to use their assessment process to improve their work.

### **Shortcomings**

- 415 There are no significant shortcomings.

<b>Religious education (including religious studies)</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**

- 416 On the whole, examination results at GCSE are in line with national averages.
- 417 Examination results at A level are below local and national averages.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

- 418 Many pupils recall accurately key events and people in the foundations of Christianity and Sikhism, giving examples of important shared values such as equality and charity.

- 419 Many pupils describe clearly the Hindu cycle of life, a majority naming important gods and using correct terms.
- 420 A majority interprets well major Sikh and Hindu celebrations and acts of worship, showing clearly how beliefs are expressed through a variety of activities and symbols.
- 421 Many identify the similarities and differences in the way Christians and Jews mark important events such as weddings and funerals, and also see how there may be different attitudes within the same faith.
- 422 A majority of pupils also gives thoughtful responses to important social issues such as divorce and bereavement, exploring their own beliefs and values well.
- 423 Pupils with SEN make good progress.

### **Shortcomings**

- 424 A small minority of pupils does not have a secure grasp of important religious language; a few need much prompting to recall correctly names and terms.
- 425 A small minority of pupils does not explore personal values and beliefs in any depth.

### **KS4**

#### **Good features**

- 426 Most pupils recall important Christian teachings on profound questions of human relationships, life and death.
- 427 Most pupils also recognise that different Christian traditions interpret Biblical teachings in different ways, and that other faiths may differ radically.
- 428 Many pupils put forward good reasons to support their views on the behaviour of celebrities and its impact on the values of modern society.
- 429 Many also reflect well on deeper matters of right and wrong, exploring the questions for example whether a loving God could allow suffering or if terrorists could ever go to heaven.
- 430 Most pupils use their learning well to respond to important questions of modern medical, legal and political ethics.
- 431 Many pupils use religious language correctly.

#### **Shortcomings**

- 432 A few pupils do not respond to profound issues in much depth. They do not identify what influences their own values and beliefs, which makes it hard for them to draw comparisons with others' views.
- 433 A few pupils do not recall religious terms well, so use them incorrectly.

### **Sixth form**

- 434 The school does not provide the statutory requirement for religious education in the sixth form.

#### **Good features**

- 435 In debates, many students make pertinent connections between the advance of scholarship in psychology and its impact on religious beliefs.

- 436 Many show a good understanding of how the range of moral choices facing people expands as scientific knowledge advances.
- 437 Many support their arguments with a good range of evidence, and present this using appropriate terms.
- 438 A majority of students includes focused personal insights in their work.
- 439 A few write with a very mature approach, presenting their findings clearly, expressing themselves in a style well matched to their purpose and which gives good emphasis to their well-balanced conclusions.

### **Shortcomings**

- 440 A few students do not construct their written arguments well. They do not include sufficient evidence to support a clear focus. The language they use does not add weight to their conclusions.
- 441 A very few do not analyse issues well. These students do not give great consideration to alternative perspectives, so their own views remain underdeveloped.

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

As this is a report in which the “good features outweigh the shortcomings,” there are many aspects of school life involving students, staff and the wider community, that should be celebrated.

Pupils and parents/guardians have our absolute assurance, that we will both continue with all the good and outstanding features that have been recognised in the report, as well as addressing all the aspects that the inspectors identified to require further improvement. Everything will be followed up by the school and the governing body.

As acknowledged by the inspection team, aspects of this follow up action are already in our improvement planning procedures, and some of them, will as ever, involve communication and liaison with parents and guardians. As such we will move forward with each of these actions at the appropriate point.

In the meantime, the school would like to thank the members of the wider community that have supported us and look forward as ever to the continued interest and support of students and parents/guardians.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Llanishen High School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Heol Hir Llanishen Cardiff
Postcode	CF14 5YL
Telephone number	02920 680800
Headteacher	Mr Robert Smyth
Date of appointment	January 2004
Chair of governors	Mr Alun Lewis
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter Harris
Dates of inspection	23-26 March 2009

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	265	269	269	275	268	180	123	1649

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	87	19	92.6

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17.2:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	
Average teaching group size	24.3
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	78%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	93.5	93.2	91.7	89	96.3	91	72	93
Term 2	94.5	94.2	92	91	89.6	83	71	92
Term 3	95.1	93.6	92.8	91.6	92.7	83	78	93

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	7%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	10

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2008															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 275															
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	3	16	34	32	12	2	0
		National	0	1	0	0	0	1	7	21	36	24	9	0	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	12	26	34	26	0	0
		National	0	1	0	0	1	1	8	20	28	27	14	1	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14	30	41	14	0	0
		National	0	1	0	0	0	1	6	21	35	26	10	0	0

D Pupils excepted under statutory arrangements from part of the National Curriculum

A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence

F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence

W Pupils who are working towards level 1

EP Exceptional Performance, where pupils at key stage 3 perform above level 8

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment		
In the school	76	In Wales
		60

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

**Pupils aged 15**

**Number of pupils aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 269**

**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	96	69	57	56	411
LEA Area 2007/08	99	85	56	44	43	343
Wales 2007/08	98	87	58	46	44	356
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	18	399
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	48	380

**Number of boys aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 137**

**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	94	66	55	53	395
LEA Area 2007/08	98	82	52	42	41	327
Wales 2007/08	98	84	53	42	41	334
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	17	381
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	46	360

**Number of girls aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 132**

**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	100	97	72	60	59	428
LEA Area 2007/08	100	88	59	46	45	361
Wales 2007/08	99	90	63	50	48	379
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	19	417
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	50	401

(1) For details on qualifications, point scores and contribution to thresholds, please see guidance at [SSSP guidance](#).

(2) For information about which syllabuses are included in each subject area see Notes for Guidance. For the provisional SSSP this will be the traditional GCSE definition. In the final SSSP, this definition will include a wider range of qualifications.

.. Data not available



Llanishen High School

**SSSP**

Summary of Secondary School Performance (1)

LEA/School No. 681/4051

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	1.5	0	2.2	0	0.8	0
LEA Area 2007/08	3.2	2.4	4	3.1	2.5	1.8
Wales 2007/08	2.6	1.5	3.4	1.9	1.7	1.2
School 06/07/08	0.5	..	0.7	..	0.2	..
School 05/06/07	0.2	..	0.2	..	0.2	..

Pupils aged 17

	Number of pupils aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 166		Number of boys aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 91		Number of girls aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 75	
	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	96	658	96	632	96	689
LEA Area 2007/08	94	623	92	608	95	636
Wales 2007/08	94	631	93	596	95	659
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	..	..
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	..	..

- (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

**Public Examination Results:**

**SECONDARY EXAMINATION DATA, 2006 - 2008**

**Llanishen High School**

681

4051

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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	8.2	8.2	7.5
Free School Meal band	FSM<=10%	FSM<=10%	FSM<=10%

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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	..	97.2	95.5
Benchmark Quartile	..	1	2
% achieving the Level 2 threshold	..	63.3	68.8
Benchmark Quartile	..	3	3
% achieving the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE at grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and Maths	..	..	57.2
Benchmark Quartile	..	..	3
% achieving the Level 2 threshold in the core subjects	..	..	55.8
Benchmark Quartile	..	..	3
Average wider points score	379.8	404.9	411.1
Benchmark Quartile	3	2	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 58 days in the school and were joined by a member of the school's senior leadership team as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 119 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;
- 101 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
Mr Peter Harris	Rgl, Context, Summary, Recommendations, KQ1, KQ2, Appendices
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Andrew Herdman	KQ2
Glyn Davies	KQ3, Science
Paul Donovan	KQ4
Anthony Sparks	KQ6
Delyth Williams	KQ7, Science
Peredur Francis	Mathematics
Keith Davies	Science (lead)
Keith Hopkins	Information technology
Anne Newman	History
Eric Forster	Art
Martyn S Williams	Religious education
Huw Rogers	Nominee
Tracy Senchal	Peer Assessor

### ***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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