

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

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

**Caldicot Comprehensive School  
Mill Lane, Caldicot  
NP26 5XA**

**School Number: 6794066**

**Date of Inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

**by**

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Caldicot Comprehensive 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 Caldicot Comprehensive School took place between 26/11/07 and 30/11/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Peter Guy Carter undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Context</b>	1
<b>Summary</b>	2
<b>Recommendations</b>	11
<b>Standards</b>	12
Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?	12
<b>The quality of education and training</b>	16
Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	16
Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	21
Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	24
<b>Leadership and management</b>	27
Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	27
Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	29
Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	31
<b>Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning</b>	33
English	33
Science	35
Modern foreign languages	38
Music	40
Physical education	42
Religious education (including religious studies)	45
<b>School's response to the inspection</b>	48
<b>Appendices</b>	49
1 Basic information about the school	49
2 School data and indicators	49
3 National Curriculum assessments results	50
4 Evidence base of the inspection	52
5 Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	53



Report by Peter Guy Carter  
Caldicot Comprehensive School, 26/11/07

## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Caldicot School is an 11-18 co-educational comprehensive school maintained by the local education authority (LEA), Monmouthshire County Council. It occupies a 53-acre site including a large leisure centre whose facilities are shared to the mutual benefit of the school and the community. The school has priority use of the leisure centre during the day.
2. The school serves a wide area from Newport in the west to Chepstow in the east. It has eight partner primary schools. The area served by the school consists of council properties and private housing in approximately equal proportions. Around one third of pupils and students are transported to the school by bus.
3. There are 1517 pupils and students on roll including 234 in the sixth form. This represents an increase of 67 pupils since the last inspection in November 2001 with an increase of 32 students in the sixth form.
4. About 10% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. This figure is six percentage points lower than it was when the school was last inspected. It is similar to the average figure for Monmouthshire but significantly lower than the national average of 17.5%.
5. The intake represents the full range of ability although the majority are of average ability or below. Sixty-eight pupils have statements of special education needs (SEN) compared to 89 during the last inspection. A further 122 pupils receive support for additional learning needs (ALN). An LEA SEN unit for pupils with moderate to severe learning needs is based in the school.
6. Less than 1% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and English is the first language of all but two pupils. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language.
7. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed. She took up her post in 2002. Senior leadership and management have been reorganised. Two new deputy headteachers were appointed in 2006. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) consists of the headteacher, the two deputies, three assistant headteachers, the director of the sixth form and the finance manager.
8. The Senior Management Group (SMG), introduced in 2006, consists of all members of the SLT, the director of the sixth form, six cluster leaders, responsible for managing the work of groups of subject departments, and the estate manager. The SMG is responsible for the strategic direction of the school.



## The school's priorities and targets

9. The school's motto is 'Committed to Achievement'. Its vision statement states 'Caldicot School is committed to achievement through the promotion of excellence within a vibrant, purposeful working environment which respects the rights and needs of all individuals so that our pupils are able to acquire skills for adult life.' The school aims to ensure its pupils:
- are happy and safe within a rich learning community;
  - achieve their full potential academically and personally;
  - have the skills, knowledge and understanding to take their place as responsible citizens in society and within their community; and
  - value education as a lifelong experience that will continue into the world of work and leisure.
10. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) 2007-2010 lists priorities in four main areas:
- standards of learning for achievement;
  - teaching, training, assessment, learning experiences, support and guidance;
  - leadership, strategic management, self-evaluation and resources; and
  - the Corporate Development Plan.

## Summary

11. Caldicot School is a good school with many outstanding features. It has improved significantly in recent years. The standards achieved by its pupils and students are being driven up through dynamic leadership and systematic management procedures. The care, support and guidance and learning experiences provided for pupils and students are outstanding.
12. The following table shows the grades awarded in the seven key questions.

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

## Standards

13. The inspection team inspected the standards that pupils and students achieve in six subjects of the curriculum at Key Stage (KS) 3, KS4 and in the sixth form. The following table shows the grades awarded at each stage in the six subjects.

<b>Standards in subjects inspected</b>			
<b>Subject</b>	<b>KS3</b>	<b>KS4</b>	<b>Sixth form</b>
English	2	3	2
Science	2	3	2
Modern Foreign Languages	2	2	1
Music	2	2	2
Physical Education	2	2	2
Religious Education	2	2	1

14. The following table shows the standards achieved by pupils and students at each key stage in the six subjects inspected.

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>KS3</b>	11%	68%	18%	2%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	7%	54%	39%	0%	0%
<b>KS3 + KS4</b>	10%	63%	26%	1%	0%
<b>Sixth form</b>	18%	71%	12%	0%	0%
<b>Whole school</b>	11%	64%	24%	1%	0%
These grades are based on the observation of 89 lessons					

15. The figures in this table exceed the national targets for standards of achievement in 2007. They also compare favourably to the standards achieved in all secondary schools in Wales inspected in 2005-2006.

### **KS3 and KS4**

16. Most pupils, whatever their backgrounds, are successful in attaining their agreed learning goals. More pupils achieve good standards at KS3 than at KS4. At KS3, standards of achievement have good features and no important shortcomings in around four-fifths of lessons. At KS4, pupils achieve similar standards in just over three-fifths of lessons. Lower achievement occurs mostly in lessons in English and science at KS4.
17. The standards that pupils achieve in the key skills of communication, numeracy and Information Technology (IT) have good features and no important shortcomings. Pupils' bilingual competence is developing well. Pupils with ALN achieve standards which are good in relation to their abilities.
18. In 2004, 2005 and 2006, attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at the end of KS3, was close to the averages for schools where a similar proportion of pupils is entitled to have free school meals. In 2007 there were significant increases in the numbers of pupils who achieved National Curriculum (NC) level five or above in science and in the three core subjects combined.
19. At KS4, attainment in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations in 2004 to 2006 was generally below the averages for similar schools in Wales. Low levels of attainment in a minority of subjects resulted in unfavourable comparisons with local and national averages. In 2007, there

were some important improvements in GCSE results. There is an underlying trend of improvement in attainment at KS4.

20. Overall, standards of achievement in the subjects inspected are higher than the latest assessment and examination data indicate. This is because of recent progress made by the school in tackling underachievement. This has been especially successful at KS3.
21. Pupils make good progress in learning in most subjects. They show interest and work conscientiously. Many pupils, especially at KS3, are well motivated and respond positively to tasks set for work in class or at home. They know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
22. Almost all pupils behave well. In most lessons, inappropriate behaviour is rare. Occasionally, a few pupils, mainly at KS4, show more challenging behaviour and this adversely affects the standards they achieve.
23. Rates of attendance are very good and higher than local and national averages. Punctuality is generally good and pupils are rarely late for lessons.
24. Most pupils develop very good personal, social and learning skills. They make good use of opportunities to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their personal and social skills are evident in the positive attitudes and values they show as members of a cohesive school community.
25. Pupils develop an appropriate range of skills to enable them to participate effectively in the workplace and the community.

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

26. Overall, teaching is better in KS3 than in KS4. In those lessons where there is consistently good teaching, teachers plan stimulating and challenging activities that maintain the interest of all pupils regardless of their ability. Most teachers establish very good working relationships with their pupils that create a positive learning environment in the great majority of lessons.
27. In the few lessons where there are shortcomings, too much time is spent consolidating work that pupils already know. In these lessons, the work set lacks challenge and pupils have difficulty remaining on task
28. The school has introduced numerous successful strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. These have had an impact on standards in a number of subjects. Despite this, overall there is not enough opportunity for teachers to observe each other teaching regularly or work together to share good practice.
29. Procedures for assessing pupils' achievements are good. Teachers assess and monitor pupils' progress well in most subjects. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and provide very useful written feedback to help them improve. Although rare, there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking within

and between subject departments. On occasions marking is superficial and pupils' work is not monitored or moderated well enough.

30. Reports to parents and carers are generally very informative and of good quality. On occasion, levels and grades have not been revised well enough by subject departments to ensure that target grades are sufficiently challenging.
31. The curriculum meets effectively the learning needs and interests of pupils of differing abilities at both key stages. There are several outstanding learning initiatives at all stages.
32. At KS3 statutory requirements are met. Pupils study three modern foreign languages. At KS4 there is a wide range of options including a variety of academic and vocational courses that are matched well to pupils' needs and gives them the opportunity to gain qualifications.
33. The school's extra curricular programme is outstanding. Pupils are involved in drama productions and musical events, represent the school in many sporting teams and support a number of clubs and activities including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. A particularly impressive feature is the school's extensive international links. These complement the curriculum well and enrich the learning experience for pupils.
34. The school's programme to promote pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective.
35. The school has very impressive curricular links with partner primary schools. It has close links with parents and the local community and takes appropriate account of employers' needs. It provides effective Work Related Education (WRE).
36. The school has a comprehensive policy for developing learners' bilingual competence and is committed to promoting pupils' bilingual skills.
37. The school has a very innovative pastoral structure for effective support, care and guidance of pupils. All members of the pastoral team have a very good knowledge of their pupils. Regular involvement with outside support agencies through the Multi-Agency-Group is an outstanding feature.
38. The school has developed outstanding links with parents. They are involved actively at all stages of learning and are consulted regularly on school initiatives. Parents play an important role in the Academic Mentoring Days.
39. Established transitional programmes at all key stages are a good feature. Pupils are made aware of all possible options available. There are effective pastoral and curricular links with primary schools that enable pupils to settle quickly and smoothly into the school. The 'Buddy' system operated by sixth-form students and an early Year (Y) 7 parents' evening in September facilitate the supportive nature of the induction process for new pupils.

40. A wide range of strategies is very effective in supporting pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The Personal and Social Education (PSE) and Career Education and Guidance (CEG) programmes are planned and co-ordinated effectively. Members of the year councils and Pupil Liaison Group (PLG) are very proactive and the school takes careful consideration of their opinions. This is an outstanding feature.
41. Promoting healthy lifestyles through physical activity and healthy eating and drinking is an outstanding feature. The school has been successful in gaining the Healthy Schools Award. Procedures for child protection are very effective.
42. The quality of provision for pupils with ALN and SEN is a significant strength in the school and has outstanding features. The Learning Centre is an outstanding feature of the school's provision to meet the needs of pupils with a range of moderate to severe learning difficulties. An LEA Dyslexia Centre is also sited within the Learning Centre and makes an important contribution to the quality of provision.
43. The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) provides very good leadership and guidance and is supported well by a committed team of teaching assistants. Lessons are taught effectively by SEN specialists or subject teachers. Tasks and activities are appropriate to the needs of pupils and are very often challenging. Links with subject departments are good and are strengthened by SEN staff attending subject departmental meetings. The majority of pupils and students with ALN are well motivated and make good steady progress.
44. Equality of opportunity has a high profile in the school. The values of inclusion and diversity are evident in school routines. The school creates successfully a climate of care and support for all, promoting good behaviour. Cultural diversity and racial harmony figure prominently in the religious education and PSE programmes and are highlighted in both form and year assemblies.
45. The school's systems for reporting, dealing with and monitoring the limited incidents of bullying and harassment are outstanding. The school prioritises its anti-bullying work. Both parents and pupils are confident that incidents are dealt with sensitively and swiftly.
46. The school has an Accessibility Plan and a comprehensive Disability Equality Scheme detailing reasonable adjustments to be made in the next two years. Much of the school accommodation is not readily accessible to the disabled and access is restricted to the ground floor in most buildings.

### **Leadership and management**

47. The headteacher provides strong, dynamic direction which is transforming the school. She is supported very effectively by the SLT. Together, their leadership is outstanding. They have high expectations of pupils and staff. Working with senior managers in the SMG, they have introduced initiatives to improve performance. These are beginning to impact on standards of achievement.

48. Leaders and managers have explicit aims and values. These underpin the school's policies and are reflected in all aspects of its work. The policies promote high achievement and equality of opportunity for all pupils and staff.
49. Leaders and managers take appropriate account of national priorities. They have addressed national targets successfully and introduced initiatives which reflect the priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). Good collaborative partnerships have been developed with other schools and colleges.
50. Senior managers set challenging targets for their teams and departments to improve the quality of provision. In very few cases, however, a minority of middle managers is less effective in raising standards in their subject departments.
51. Governors make an important contribution to setting the school's strategic direction. Their commitment to the success of the school and their work in supporting it are outstanding.
52. There is a strong culture of self-evaluation that pervades the school. All members of staff contribute to it and there is a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities of leaders and managers. Cluster leaders make an outstanding contribution in monitoring and reviewing the work of their subject areas. Overall the procedures for self-evaluation are outstanding in the way in which they are applied rigorously and consistently across the school to inform strategies for improvement.
53. Leaders and managers are very successful in seeking the views of all stakeholders. A particular outstanding feature is the role of the PLG in representing pupils' views. The PLG meets regularly with the headteacher and plays a significant role in promoting the overall quality of school life. The school has also been very successful in using a broad range of external consultants to review all subject departments and other aspects of the school's work.
54. Priorities for improvement are well documented in the departmental improvement plans for subjects and also in the SIP. These are identified over a three-year cycle and are continually monitored and reviewed very effectively by senior managers. There is a close link between the priorities indicated in subjects and those across the school.
55. There have been measurable improvements in pupils' and students' attainments in external examinations in many subjects. There have also been significant improvements in the quality of learning and teaching in nearly all subjects. A few subjects, however, do not plan for improvement rigorously enough and this impacts adversely on the standards that pupils achieve, particularly at KS4.
56. Progress since the last inspection has been outstanding. This is particularly evident in the significant improvement in leadership and management that has enabled the school to move forward in all aspects. Systems of self-evaluation

and planning for improvement now form an integral part of the school and continue to be effective in improving learning and teaching.

57. The condition of the school's buildings has improved considerably since the time of the last inspection. There is a new science block and library. However, other areas of the school, such as the technology block, do not provide a suitable environment for learning. The fence around the school has improved security and given the school a new sense of identity.
58. The layout of the school makes much of it inaccessible to pupils with mobility difficulties.
59. The quantity and quality of textbooks and other learning resources have also improved, although there is a shortage of technological resources, such as interactive whiteboards.
60. Despite a rationalisation in staffing and pupil groupings, the quality of teaching has improved in most subjects. This reflects better deployment of trained teaching staff with nearly all lessons taught by teachers who are specialists in their subjects.
61. The school gives the professional development of its staff a very high priority. It has developed its own highly effective training programme to develop teachers' middle leadership skills. Around one-third of teachers have already completed this programme.
62. The school has proved adept at making such improvements against a background of financial constraints. Its budgetary system ensures expenditure is tightly controlled and all expenditure is made subject to 'best value' principles. This ensures the school provides good value for money.

## **Sixth form**

### **Standards**

63. Students achieve standards which have good and outstanding features in modern foreign languages and religious studies. The standards they achieve in English, science, music and physical education have good features and no important shortcomings.
64. The attainment of students in external examinations is good overall. In most cases they are successful in attaining their agreed learning goals. They achieve examination results at Advanced (A) level which are generally in line with local and national averages or, in some cases, higher. Results in the last two years are much better than those achieved in 2004 and 2005. There is an underlying trend of improved attainment at A level.
65. Students make particularly good progress in fulfilling their potential and are prepared well to move on to the next stage of learning. The great majority

proceed directly to higher education when they have completed their A level courses.

66. Their personal, social and study skills are developed very effectively, especially their capacity to work independently. They also work well with each other and are good role models for younger pupils. Students behave in a mature and responsible manner. Their attendance and punctuality are generally good.
67. Students have a clear understanding of the importance of equality of opportunity and they show respect for diversity within society. This helps them to participate effectively in the workplace and in the wider community.

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

68. Most lessons are structured very well and planned effectively. Teachers provide a wide range of suitably challenging and interesting learning experiences. Most teachers provide excellent extension activities for more able students. Homework is used very effectively to extend students' learning. Students appreciate the very positive relationship that they have with their teachers.
69. In the very few lessons where teaching is less effective, students rely too heavily on the teacher, the teacher dominates too much and the pace of the lesson is slow.
70. Overall, most students understand how well they are doing and how to improve. Marking is nearly always of a very high quality and written feedback to students is diagnostic and detailed. In a few subjects, assessment of students' work is sometimes superficial and does not provide enough information to enable students to move on successfully to the next stage in their learning.
71. Students are able to analyse their progress accurately. They reflect critically on what they are achieving and set realistic and challenging targets for improvement.
72. The system of reporting students' progress to parents or carers is being revised. In a minority of cases, subject specific targets on students' reports are not always precise enough.
73. The sixth form curriculum caters very effectively for all students. There is a broad range of A level courses as well as suitable vocational courses to meet the needs of all students. The diverse range of courses prepares students very effectively for higher and further education, training and employment.
74. Students' involvement in a wide range of activities develops well their personal, social and leadership skills.
75. The quality of care, support and guidance for students is also very good with outstanding features. There are good support systems to help students who apply for places on university courses.



76. Many students demonstrate their social skills by actively supporting younger pupils, for example, through their involvement in literacy and numeracy schemes.

### **Leadership and management**

77. The leadership and management of the sixth form are very effective and closely linked to the smooth management of the whole school. Management is equally strongly focused on monitoring and review of performance in the sixth form to enable students to achieve high standards.
78. There are good links between the sixth form and the Governing Body (GB). These are achieved, in part, through the work of the head girl and head boy who are members of the GB. They attend most GB meetings and make useful contributions.
79. Self-evaluation and planning for improvement are carried out systematically in the sixth form. Students' views are sought through the PLG, (chaired by the head girl and head boy), and the school council. Students are confident that their views are given appropriate consideration.
80. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own work in certain PSE lessons where form tutors help them to reflect critically on their recent performance and set targets for improvement.
81. The management of staffing and resources in the sixth form is efficient with many good features. There are sufficient well-qualified, specialist teachers and a good range of resources for teaching and learning. Since the last inspection, significant improvements have been made to the private study facilities for students.
82. Funds are managed well to provide education of good quality. Spending is closely linked to the school's priorities and objectives. Control of expenditure helps the school provide good value for money in the sixth form.

## **Recommendations**

In order to build on the progress made the school should implement the following recommendations.

- R1 Continue to raise standards of achievement, particularly in English and science at KS4.
- R2 Continue to improve the quality of teaching and assessment to reflect the best practice in the school.
- R3 Continue to work to improve the quality of accommodation, especially the facilities for technology.
- R4 Improve accessibility arrangements for pupils with difficulties with mobility.

Aspects of all four recommendations are addressed in the current SIP.

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

## Standards

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

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

83. This grade matches the grade in the school's self-evaluation.

#### KS3 and KS4

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

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>KS3</b>	11%	68%	18%	2%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	7%	54%	39%	0%	0%
<b>KS3 + KS4</b>	10%	63%	26%	1%	0%

These grades are based on observations of 72 lessons

85. The figures in the table above for the two key stages combined exceed the national target for 2007 for 98% of standards to be awarded grades one, two or three by one percentage point. They exceed the national target for 65% of standards to be awarded grades one or two by eight percentage points.
86. Standards of achievement are significantly higher at KS3 than KS4. The percentage of lessons in which standards were judged to be grade one or grade two at KS3 is 16 percentage points higher than the corresponding figure for KS3 for all schools inspected in Wales in 2005-2006. At KS4, standards in the school are one percentage point higher than the corresponding national figure.
87. At KS3, the standards achieved have good features and no important shortcomings in all six of the subjects inspected. Similar standards are achieved at KS4 in modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education. In English and science at KS4, standards have good features which outweigh shortcomings. Almost all of the lessons at KS4 in which standards were awarded grade three were in English and science.
88. The great majority of pupils, including those with SEN, achieve standards which are good in relation to their abilities. There are important shortcomings, however, in the standards achieved by a relatively small minority of pupils, particularly at KS4. Most pupils achieve success regardless of their social background.
89. At KS3, in the most recent assessments where comparative data is available (2004-2006), attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is close to the averages for schools where a similar percentage of pupils is entitled to receive free school meals. During these three years,

attainment in English and mathematics has compared more favourably to that in other schools than attainment in science.

90. In the most recent assessments at KS3, performance in English and mathematics has been similar to attainment in previous years. At the same time attainment in science has shown a marked increase. This has contributed to an important improvement in the proportion of pupils who achieved level five or higher in all three core subjects in 2007.
91. At KS4, results overall in GCSE examinations in the period between 2004 and 2006 were generally below, and in some cases considerably lower, than the averages for similar schools in Wales. Low levels of attainment in a minority of subjects resulted in unfavourable comparisons with local and national averages and achievement in similar schools.
92. In 2007 the percentage of pupils who achieved five or more GCSE A\* to C grades and the average GCSE points score were the second highest in the last four years. The percentage of pupils who achieved five or more GCSE A\* to G grades was the highest in four years. There is an underlying trend of improvement in attainment at KS4.
93. Overall, standards of achievement in the subjects inspected are higher than the latest assessment and examination data indicate. This is because of recent progress made by the school in tackling underachievement. This has been especially successful at KS3.
94. In most subjects, girls outperform boys. The differences between their levels of performance are generally similar to the situation nationally. In the majority of lessons inspected most girls and boys achieved standards which were appropriate for their abilities.
95. The standards that pupils achieve in the key skills of communication, numeracy and IT have good features and no important shortcomings. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in the development of pupils' key skills, especially the development of their reading and IT skills and their use of number. Pupils use their key skills well in subjects across the curriculum. This contributes effectively to the standards they achieve.
96. Pupils make good progress in developing their bilingual competence in using the Welsh and English languages. All pupils study Welsh second language and the great majority achieve good standards of knowledge and understanding. They apply this knowledge well in other subjects and in assemblies. They respond appropriately to many teachers' incidental use of the Welsh language.
97. Across the curriculum at KS3 and in most subjects at KS4 pupils of all abilities are generally successful in attaining their agreed learning targets. In some cases, particularly at KS3, they exceed expectations. There are no significant barriers to learning.

98. Pupils make good progress in learning in most subjects. Most pupils show interest in their work and apply themselves to it conscientiously. They make good progress in acquiring new knowledge, skills and understanding and in using them in increasingly unfamiliar contexts. Where progress is limited, for example in a few lessons at KS4, a minority of pupils, generally of average and below average ability, has difficulty recalling previous work and sustaining their concentration throughout lessons.
99. Most pupils understand how well they are doing and know their own strengths and weaknesses. They can explain what they need to do to make progress. A small minority, however, does not have a clear understanding about levels of performance or individual targets for improvement.
100. The good progress made by most pupils across the ability range helps them to transfer smoothly from one stage of education to the next. Good links with partner primary schools enable efficient transfer of information about pupils' abilities and potential. This helps the youngest pupils to achieve well when they enter the school.
101. As they progress to KS4 and, for many pupils, into the sixth form they are helped to adjust their performance to meet the requirements of examination courses.
102. Most pupils, especially those at KS3, have positive attitudes to learning. The great majority shows good levels of motivation and responds positively to tasks set for work in class or at home. These pupils show interest in their work and make good use of their time in lessons.
103. Almost all pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school. They show respect for each other and members of staff and enjoy good relationships. They are polite and welcoming to visitors to the school. In most lessons, inappropriate behaviour is rare.
104. Occasionally a few pupils, mainly at KS4, show more challenging behaviour which teachers manage effectively. Their attitudes to learning are less positive and this sometimes leads to low level disruption in lessons. This adversely affects the standards that these pupils achieve.
105. Rates of attendance are very good and have improved significantly since the last inspection. Whole school attendance for the last three terms is over 92%. This is higher than both local and national averages. Punctuality is generally good and pupils are rarely late for the start of lessons.
106. Most pupils develop very good personal, social and learning skills. They make good use of opportunities to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These opportunities are provided in many subjects, PSE lessons, assemblies and extra-curricular activities. Pupils' personal and social skills are evident in the positive attitudes and values they show as members of a cohesive school community.

107. Almost all pupils understand and respect different lifestyles, faiths and cultures. Their knowledge of diversity within society is developed through a range of activities both in and out of school. They show their concern for others in the UK and in other countries by participating in raising funds for different charities.
108. At KS4 all pupils are involved in WRE and this prepares them well for effective participation in the workplace and the community. Pupils report that they enjoy these experiences and find them relevant and useful.

### Sixth form

109. The following table shows the standards that sixth form students achieved in the six subjects inspected.

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>Sixth form</b>	18%	71%	12%	0%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 17 lessons					

110. These figures exceed both national targets for 2007, however, the sample is small and this constrains their reliability. These targets are for grades one or two to be awarded for standards in 65% of lessons and grade three or above to be awarded for standards in 98% of lessons.
111. The percentage of lessons where the two highest grades are awarded for standards is also higher than the corresponding figure for school sixth forms in Wales, inspected in 2005-2006. In this inspection grades one or two were awarded in 89% of lessons compared to 84% nationally.
112. Standards have good and outstanding features in modern foreign languages and religious studies. They have good features and no important shortcomings in English, science, music and physical education.
113. Standards in external examinations are good overall. In the most recent A level examinations 69% achieved two or more grades A, B or C. The overall pass rate (grades A to E) was 96%. These figures are slightly lower than those attained in 2006, which were significantly higher than both local and national averages. The 2007 results are much better than those attained in 2004 and 2005 and above the national averages. There is an underlying trend of improved attainment at A level.
114. Students achieve good standards in key skills. The standards they achieve in communication and numeracy have good features and no important shortcomings. Students' speaking and listening skills are particularly good. Their IT skills are outstanding. Students make good use of their key skills in subjects across the curriculum. Their bilingual competence is developed well.
115. The number of students in the sixth form is 234, an increase of 32 students since the last inspection. Around 48% of pupils in Y11 choose to progress into the sixth form and over three-quarters of them continue into Y13. The great

majority of Y13 students proceed directly to higher education when they have completed their A level courses.

116. In most cases students are successful in attaining their agreed learning goals. Their progress and performance are carefully monitored and these procedures help them to achieve success. They make particularly good progress in fulfilling their potential and are prepared well to move on to the next stage of learning.
117. Students have very good personal and social skills. They are confident and mature. They work well with each other and are good role models for pupils. Most are willing to accept responsibility and make an important contribution to the school community.
118. Students also have very good learning skills. They are interested in their studies, show good levels of motivation and make productive use of their time. In particular, they work very well independently, showing initiative in order to improve their own learning. This enables them to develop the skills needed for lifelong learning.
119. Students have a clear understanding of the importance of equality of opportunity and they show respect for diversity within society. This helps prepare them to participate effectively in the workplace and the wider community.
120. Students' attendance and punctuality are generally good.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

121. This grade matches the grade in the school's self-evaluation.

#### KS3 and KS4

122. The following table shows the overall grades for the quality of teaching and assessment in the lessons observed in the six subjects inspected at KS3 and KS4.

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
22%	53%	24%	1%	0%
These grades are based on the observation of 72 lessons				

123. The following table shows the grades for the quality of teaching and assessment in lessons observed across the curriculum.

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
25%	53%	20%	3%	0%
These grades are based on the observation of 106 lessons				

124. Although the size and nature of this sample are different from those of the last inspection, these grades show that teaching has improved. Six years ago, 65% of lessons were graded one and two. The percentage of lessons graded one and two (78%) is above the figure of 69% in all inspections in Wales 2005-2006, and there are fewer lessons graded four or five than nationally. The number of lessons graded one for teaching has doubled.
125. Overall teaching is better in KS3 than it is in KS4. In those lessons where there is consistently good teaching, teachers plan stimulating and challenging activities that maintain the interest of all pupils regardless of their ability. Most teachers provide challenging learning objectives at the start of lessons and use excellent starter activities to engage pupils immediately in their learning. In the best lessons where there is high quality teaching and learning most teachers:
- make learning interesting and fully engage pupils;
  - use short sharp and challenging tasks that are delivered at a suitable pace;
  - encourage pupils to think critically about what they are learning;
  - know their pupils well and adapt the work successfully to meet their individual needs; and
  - ask excellent probing questions that enable pupils to discuss in detail what they have learned.
126. A particularly good feature in many lessons is the way in which teachers set homework that extends successfully what pupils have learnt in class.
127. Most teachers make good use of up-to-date subject knowledge and expertise to plan a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences that capture pupils' interest. Overall planning is good. Schemes of work in most subject departments are detailed and enable teachers to plan effectively.
128. Most teachers establish very good working relationships with their pupils that create a positive learning environment in most lessons. Pupils appreciate the support that teachers provide and the extent to which they actively help them improve their learning. Most teachers expect and set high standards for pupils in terms of their effort, attitude to learning and achievement. Overall, teachers deal very effectively with the low level disruption of a few pupils. As a result it has very little effect on pupils' ability to learn.
129. Most teachers use group work effectively to promote pupils' learning. In these lessons pupils work together productively, share their views on different topics and enjoy learning. In a very few lessons, teachers have too little interaction with pupils, rely on a few to answer questions and consequently have difficulty capturing the attention of all pupils in whole-class discussions.
130. In the best lessons teachers make very good use of appropriate resources to stimulate and challenge pupils. These include very good worksheets and the excellent use of IT to enhance pupils' ability to think critically about their work. In



a very small minority of lessons, limited access to equipment and resources impacts negatively on pupils' learning.

131. Most departments have thought about and established very successful strategies to improve the performance of boys and girls. Often, pupils are organised into groups of different abilities and mixed gender. Pupils consider that they have equal opportunity to access all aspects of school life.
132. Many teachers make use of incidental Welsh in their teaching. There are numerous examples of the Welsh language and the culture of Wales being promoted actively in a wide range of topics across subjects.
133. In the few lessons where there are shortcomings, teachers fail to capture pupils' attention and engage them actively in their learning. Teachers do not adapt materials well enough to challenge all pupils in the class. Too much time is spent consolidating work that pupils already know. In these lessons, pupils have difficulty remaining on task and are unable to concentrate or listen for the whole lesson.
134. In a few lessons, pupils are unable to think for themselves because teachers talk at length and provide too much direction. Overall, in these lessons the work lacks challenge and there is not enough time for pupils to practise and refine their work.
135. The school has introduced numerous successful strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. These have had an impact on standards in a number of subjects. Despite this, overall there is not enough opportunity for teachers to regularly observe each other teaching or work together to share good practice.
136. Procedures for assessing pupils' achievements are good. Teachers assess and monitor pupils' progress regularly and thoroughly in most subjects. Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress is particularly good in those subjects where it is used consistently as an integral part of lessons to promote learning. In these lessons teachers give pupils both oral and written feedback that enables them to move quickly on to the next stage in their learning.
137. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly. Teachers often provide very useful comments on pupils' work. Pupils use this written feedback effectively to help them consolidate their learning, identify errors in their work and make improvements. Where assessment is particularly good, levels or grades are used consistently to set clear targets for improvement. Subject leaders moderate rigorously the level of pupils' work to achieve consistency across teachers within the department.
138. Although rare, there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking within and between subject departments. On occasions marking is superficial, errors in pupils' work are not picked up and comments tend to focus on presentation and effort rather than how the standard of work could be improved. In these departments, pupils' work is not monitored or moderated well enough and gaps in pupils' work are not followed up by teachers.

139. The database for recording pupils' achievements is easily accessible to all staff and information is used well to set challenging targets for improvement. Teachers have adapted carefully levels and grades to enable pupils to understand what they are expected to achieve. Pupils are engaged fully in the process. They discuss their progress enthusiastically and set challenging targets for improvement.
140. Self- assessment and peer-assessment are used effectively in many subjects to enable pupils to reflect critically and accurately on their own and others' work.
141. Statutory requirements in relation to assessing and reporting on NC subjects at KS3 and the regulations of examining boards for subjects at KS4 are met.
142. Reports to parents are good. Interim reports, produced three times a year provide a useful overview of pupils' achievements. Annual reports are more detailed and include subject specific comments that identify strengths and areas for development. In a minority of examples, levels and grades have not been revised well enough by subject departments to ensure that target grades are sufficiently challenging.

### Sixth form

143. The following table shows the overall grades for the quality of teaching and assessment in the six subjects inspected.

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
12%	65%	24%	0%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 17 lessons				

144. The following table shows the overall grades for the quality of teaching and assessment in lessons observed across the curriculum.

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
27%	55%	18%	0%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 22 lessons				

145. Across the curriculum, teaching has good features and no important shortcomings in 82% of lessons. There are outstanding features in just over one in every four lessons observed.
146. Lessons are very well structured and planned effectively. Teachers provide a wide range of suitably challenging and interesting learning experiences. They encourage students to undertake their own research. They use a variety of learning activities to engage learners. Teachers question students skilfully and encourage them to reflect deeply and make extended thoughtful responses
147. Students appreciate the very positive relationships that they have with their teachers. They enjoy being taught in a relaxed yet productive atmosphere that fosters learning. They enjoy being treated as young adults. Teachers are very enthusiastic about their subjects and use this well to stimulate students to succeed. Teachers provide very good support to students both in lessons and after-school revision clubs.

148. Most teachers plan challenging and stimulating activities for students. Students work confidently in class and enjoy the vibrant pace in the best lessons. Very good introductions to lessons successfully review work previously covered and outline clearly what students will learn. Teachers use questioning very effectively to challenge students' understanding of the subject.
149. Most teachers provide excellent extension activities for the most able students to research aspects of their work and share this with others in the class. Homework is used very effectively to extend students' learning.
150. In a few lessons, students rely too heavily on teachers. When this occurs, teachers dominate too much and the pace of lessons is too leisurely. Teachers spend too much time explaining and leading discussions and students become passive. In these lessons, students have difficulty researching aspects of their work independently. Less confident students are not actively engaged.
151. Overall, most students understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Marking is nearly always of a very high quality and written feedback to students is diagnostic and detailed. It gives students specific guidance about how they can achieve a better grade. Teachers provide excellent feedback in lessons that enables students to ask questions to clarify their understanding and make swift progress. Students are able to talk extensively about what they are achieving and how it could be improved.
152. Students analyse their progress accurately. They reflect critically on what they are achieving and set realistic and challenging targets for improvement. They have a very good understanding of the self-assessment process and use this knowledge very effectively to review their performance regularly. Teachers monitor students' progress very thoroughly. They provide very good support that enables students to revise and sharpen their targets for improvement.
153. In a few subjects assessment of students' work is sometimes superficial and does not provide enough information to enable students to move on to the next stage in their learning.
154. All requirements of examination boards are met. Most teachers ensure that students are prepared extremely thoroughly for their examinations.
155. The system of reporting students' progress to parents or carers is being revised. In a few departments, subject specific targets on students' reports are not always precise enough.

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

<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>
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156. This grade matches the grade in the school's self- evaluation.
157. The extent to which the school is committed to meeting learners' individual needs and interests is outstanding. The curriculum is broad, balanced, flexible

and coherent and gives pupils and students opportunities to achieve accreditation.

158. A notable feature is the school's aim to continuously renew and improve its learning experiences for pupils and students at all stages. Pupils' views expressed through the PLG are listened to and acted upon when appropriate.
159. The school seeks to provide learning experiences that are very well suited to the needs of the individual. There are outstanding features in aspects of the curriculum, the range of qualifications that can be gained and the school's partnerships with other providers.
160. Outstanding features of the curriculum include:
- pupils at KS3 studying three modern foreign languages;
  - the various courses offered at KS4 in partnership with the LEA14-19 Learning Pathways group;
  - the development of Welsh and the vocational Welsh course offered to Y10 pupils – a pilot scheme with WAG;
  - revision courses for Y11 pupils in the Easter holidays; and
  - the 'Learning to Learn' course at KS3.
161. Outstanding features of the range of qualifications which pupils and students can gain include:
- the wide range of accredited vocational courses offered, both on and off site, in collaboration with other schools, colleges and private providers;
  - National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) provision at post-16 which has been acknowledged as an outstanding example of good practice;
  - sixth form students studying Open University modules to gain accreditation; and
  - a course in applied art at KS4 with progression into the sixth form which removes the need for students to do a foundation year at university.
162. Outstanding features of partnerships with other providers include:
- links with 'Icon' Training to develop vocational courses;
  - the range of youth access initiatives including the Prince's Trust Award for pupils on the complementary curriculum;
  - the 'Better Reading' partnerships with lower school pupils; and
  - a number of curricular links with primary schools.
163. The sixth form curriculum caters very effectively for all students. There is a breadth of Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and A2 courses as well as suitable vocational courses to suit all aptitudes and interests. The diverse range of courses prepares students very effectively for higher and further education, training and employment.
164. The school has very effective provision for developing pupils' key skills. Key skills are well planned in schemes of work. The school holds the Basic Skills quality mark. 'Learning to Learn' activities are clearly embedded in the learning culture of the school.

165. The school's extra-curricular programme is outstanding. It plays an invaluable role in widening pupils' learning experiences. Pupils:
- are involved in a number of very popular drama productions and musical events;
  - represent the school in many sporting teams with many pupils progressing to area, county and international levels; and
  - support a number of clubs and subject-based and whole-school activities including the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.
166. A particularly impressive feature is the school's extensive international links which have achieved international recognition for the school. 'Comenius' projects play an important part in promoting international links. Numerous educational visits and courses, at home and abroad are very well supported by pupils and students.
167. The school's programme to promote pupils' and students' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has outstanding features. Pupils participate well in morning assemblies and, in registration periods, reflect on the thought of the week. Ministers of local churches and other guests visit school on a regular basis to take assemblies and participate in the Christian Union. Morning assemblies taken by senior members of staff are of high quality. The school complies with statutory requirements at all key stages, including the provision of a daily act of collective worship and religious education in the sixth form.
168. The PSE programme is comprehensive, carefully planned and highly successful. School values are promoted very effectively. The school is very successful in raising a great deal of money for various charities.
169. The school has developed strong and effective links with parents and the local community. The home-school agreement signed by parents and pupils and the Caldicot School website consolidate these links and ensure that parents are kept fully informed of school activities. The school has developed productive links with a number of establishments and agencies in the community. Links with institutions that provide Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET) are strong.
170. A number of highly successful transition links have been developed with primary schools. These links have been recognised as an example of excellent practice. The bridging unit, cross moderation, assessment links and activities for the gifted, more able and talented (GIFMAT) are very impressive initiatives.
171. Learning experiences meet fully statutory requirements and the regulations for external examination courses.
172. There are several good features in the extent to which learning experiences respond to the needs of employers and the wider community.
173. WRE features very prominently in the curriculum. The school has very good links with local employers who visit the school on a regular basis to support enterprise activities. Through various initiatives pupils are very well prepared for lifelong learning and for employment opportunities. Links with Careers Wales

are strong and productive. Pupils in Y10 participate well in carefully planned and monitored work placements.

174. The school has a comprehensive bilingual policy and is committed to promoting pupils' bilingual skills. Welsh is taught effectively as a second language and the school is currently piloting a vocational GCSE course in Y10. Teachers in the Welsh department play a leading role in supporting colleagues to develop aspects of bilingualism throughout the school. There is a growing use of incidental Welsh within the school day. Aspects of *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* feature prominently in schemes of work.
175. The school tackles very successfully social disadvantage and stereotyping. A marked feature is the inclusive nature of the school. A successful homework club is arranged after school on one night a week to help pupils. The complementary curriculum supports pupils at risk of disaffection very effectively.
176. Aspects of sustainable development and global citizenship are promoted well within subjects. The Learning Centre garden has a wide range of organic produce which is used in the Land Studies course. Pupils understand well the significance of recycling. Healthy eating initiatives are both popular and very successful. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award.
177. The school has extensive links with local employers and is very aware of the needs of the local economy. It responds well to the needs of employers by promoting key skills, in particular literacy, numeracy and IT across the curriculum.
178. The school compiles a varied programme to develop pupils' and students' entrepreneurial skills. They participate enthusiastically and successfully in a number of competitions and activities. Highly innovative initiatives within business studies and involvement with the Dynamo project increase pupils' awareness of enterprise and develop their all-round skills in this area very successfully.
179. The school's curriculum reflects the WAG priorities. Through its wide range of courses the school develops learners' skills for lifelong learning successfully.

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

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

180. This grade is one grade above the grade the school awarded itself in its own self evaluation. This is because inspectors judged there to be outstanding features in the school's provision.
181. The school has a very innovative pastoral structure for effective support, care and guidance of pupils and students. The team work of the key stage managers, progress leaders and form tutors promotes positive relationships within a mutually supportive school community. Learning mentors provide a substantial contribution to support and guidance. All members of the team have a very good knowledge of their pupils and students. The Multi-Agency Group

and regular involvement with outside agencies strengthens this support. This is an outstanding feature.

182. The school has developed outstanding links with parents. The school ensures their active involvement at all stages of pupils' and students' learning. Parents are regularly consulted on school initiatives. Their responses are evaluated and often acted upon. They play an important part in the academic mentoring days and are fully aware of academic progress and targets for improvement. The great majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel welcomed in school and are very supportive of school activities.
183. The school provides good quality and comprehensive guidance for pupils and students before they move on to the next stage in their education. Established transitional programmes at the end of key stages ensure they are made aware of all options. Parents are invited to meet new progress leaders and form tutors at the end of Y9 in order to obtain a clear understanding of expectations in KS4. Options booklets and the prospectus are clear and comprehensive.
184. Effective partnerships with primary schools have enabled pupils to settle in quickly and smoothly in their new learning environment. Pupils' positive comments reflect the good pastoral and curriculum links that exist. There are many opportunities for primary school pupils to familiarise themselves with their new secondary school. Curricular links in physical education and modern foreign languages are particularly well established and identified Y6 GIFMAT pupils are encouraged to take part in challenging mathematics activities in the comprehensive school. The sixth form 'Buddy' system and an early Y7 parents' evening in September facilitate the supportive nature of the induction process.
185. High quality support and guidance for pupils and students is an outstanding feature. A wide range of supportive strategies is very effective in guiding and helping pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Learning coaches, youth counsellor, pupil welfare assistant, youth access and the student assistance programme all contribute to meet the needs of every age group. This support is reinforced by a well planned and effectively co-ordinated PSE programme. Visiting speakers contribute to the success of the programme.
186. The school has effective year councils, with pupil members elected by their peers. An outstanding feature of "pupil voice" is the contribution and commitment of the PLG. Members are very proactive and the school takes careful consideration of their opinions on aspects of school life. The PLG has been involved in decisions about catering, staff appointments and improvements to school accommodation.
187. There are good arrangements for monitoring pupils' and students' attendance, punctuality and behaviour. There are, however, some inconsistencies in a few teachers' behaviour management. The monitoring of pupils' progress is an outstanding feature. Pupils have a clear understanding of realistic target setting and areas for improvement. Very good and effective guidance is provided by form tutors during PSE sessions devoted to this aspect of their work.
188. Pupils and students make informed choices on the next stage of their learning as well as plan for the world of work. They are supported well by effective CEG.

Appropriate modules are delivered effectively in PSE sessions, form periods and career theme days. The programme is well planned. There are good relationships with Careers Wales and local employers.

189. The school's arrangements to encourage pupils to be healthy are outstanding. The promotion of healthy life styles in the school encompasses physical activity and fitness as well as healthy eating. The promotion of healthy diets in the school canteen, removal of vending machines, the provision of water fountains, appropriate PSE modules and encouragement to take part in a range of extra-curricular physical activities strengthens the profile of healthy living. Effective visual displays reinforce this consistent and coherent approach. The school has been successful in gaining the Healthy Schools Award.
190. Procedures for child protection are very effective. Whole school in-service education and training (INSET) has further increased staff members' awareness of child protection issues. Child protection booklets for each member of staff strengthen this awareness. Procedures for Looked after Children (LAC) are thorough and Personal Education Programmes (PEP) are detailed and carefully monitored and reviewed. There are well documented and effective procedures, including risk assessments, for ensuring pupils' and students' health and safety.
191. The quality of provision for pupils with ALN and SEN is a significant strength of the school and has outstanding features. Excellent links with the primary schools and very effective use of a range of assessment procedures allow for early identification of needs. The SENCO and teaching assistants visit the primary schools regularly so that pupils recognise familiar faces. The progress made by pupils with ALN is monitored regularly and thoroughly and action taken to address any concerns identified.
192. The Learning Centre is an outstanding feature of the school's provision to meet the needs of pupils with a range of moderate to severe learning difficulties. The Learning Centre is an LEA facility to support these pupils in small classes. An LEA Dyslexia Centre is also sited within the Learning Centre. Pupils follow a carefully structured multi-sensory programme, delivered effectively by a qualified teacher. Pupils make good steady progress following this intervention.
193. The Learning Centre supports a growing number of pupils on the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Both the SENCO and teaching assistants have worked hard to raise an awareness of ASD in the school. An ASD Interest Group has been set up in school for parents and staff from neighbouring schools.
194. All pupils in the Learning Centre follow a broad and balanced curriculum which includes a modern foreign language and Welsh. Tasks and activities are appropriate to the needs of pupils and are very often challenging. Lessons are taught effectively by SEN specialists or subject specialists. Good relationships between pupils and teachers in the Learning Centre are a significant strength and have a positive influence on the learning process.
195. Pupils at KS4 follow a range of Entry Level courses which include academic, practical and vocationally based programmes. Pupils achieve well and receive accredited qualifications. Pupils are further encouraged to take part in a variety



of life skills activities including sporting events, drama and outdoor residential pursuits. These activities contribute to the self-esteem and self-confidence of the pupils. A small minority of pupils in the Learning Centre are entered for GCSE examinations.

196. A committed team of experienced teaching assistants (TA) provides valuable and sensitive support both in the Learning Centre and in mainstream classes. They have a good working liaison with subject teachers. Links with subject departments are good. These links are strengthened by SEN being itemised on the agenda of departmental meetings and SEN staff attending these meetings. TAs also supervise very effective literacy clinics for pupils in mainstream with literacy difficulties. They are also involved in lunchtime activities and setting up social skills groups for pupils with low self-esteem and lacking in confidence as well as pupils with communication difficulties.
197. The detailed and comprehensive SEN Register Information and Strategies booklet is distributed to all members of staff. It ensures effective communication between staff concerning the needs and teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils. Individual Education Plans (IEP) have clear and measurable targets and are shared with pupils and parents. They are reviewed regularly by subject teachers and the feedback is collated very effectively by the SENCO who makes any necessary adjustments.
198. Good provision is made for a small minority of pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress and the learning of their peers. Youth Access and Prince's Trust programmes, as part of the complementary curriculum are a valuable strategy in providing appropriate accredited support for these pupils.
199. The SENCO provides very good leadership and guidance. She is well supported by an enthusiastic and energetic team which includes a second in department, department staff including TAs, senior managers and the designated SEN governor. The majority of pupils and students with ALN are well motivated and make good, steady progress.
200. Equality of opportunity has a high profile in the school. The policy is detailed and all pupils are supported and treated equally. The values of inclusion and diversity are evident in the school. The school successfully creates a climate of care and support for all, promoting good behaviour.
201. Cultural diversity and racial harmony figure prominently in the religious education and PSE programmes and are highlighted in both form and year assemblies. The racial policy is both detailed and comprehensive.
202. The school's systems for reporting, dealing with and monitoring the limited incidents of bullying and harassment are outstanding. The school prioritises anti-bullying. Both parents and pupils are confident that incidents are dealt with sensitively and swiftly. Anti-bullying modules in PSE and regular themes in assemblies reinforce the ethos of co-operation and mutual trust. Strategies such as sixth form peer mentoring, 'bully box' and 'bully wall' as well as an anti-bullying week strengthen this aspect.

203. The school has an Accessibility Plan and a comprehensive Disability Equality Scheme detailing reasonable adjustments to be made in the next two years. Much of the school accommodation is not easily accessible to the disabled and access is restricted to the ground floor in most buildings.
204. Diversity is recognised in the school though a wide range of international links that enrich pupils' and students' experiences. Other cultures and religions figure prominently in the religious education schemes of work. Visits to places of worship and visits from guest speakers of minority religions are, however, less well developed. There is good support for both local and national charities.

## **Leadership and management**

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

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

205. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
206. The grade awarded for key question five is one grade higher than that awarded for key question one. This is because the impact of leadership and management strategies on raising standards of achievement, although increasingly evident at KS3 and in the sixth form, is not fully realised at KS4.
207. The headteacher provides strong, dynamic direction which is transforming the school. She is supported very effectively by the SLT. Their leadership is outstanding and is moving the school forward. Their values are clearly understood by all members of the school community and underpin the aims of the innovative Corporate Development Plan. They have high expectations and aim to enable all learners to fulfil their academic and personal potential.
208. The leadership and management structure has been reorganised since the last inspection. The SLT includes two recently appointed deputy headteachers. Senior leaders have strong links with the SMG which includes six cluster leaders, responsible for overseeing the work of subject departments. Leaders and managers have introduced initiatives to improve performance. These have started to raise standards, especially at KS3 and in the sixth form.
209. Leaders and managers have worked with other staff members to produce a comprehensive range of school policies. These policies promote equality of opportunity for pupils and members of staff. The school's aims and values underpin the policies and are reflected in much of the work of the school.
210. Good account is taken of national priorities by leaders and managers. They have successfully addressed national targets for standards of achievement and attendance. Other priorities, for example education for sustainable development and global citizenship, are well established aspects of the school's work. The school has been particularly successful in developing learners' bilingual

competence. Good collaborative partnerships have been developed with other schools and colleges.

211. Senior leaders and the SMG make good use of analyses of performance data to set challenging and realistic targets for teams and individual staff members. In most cases, good progress is made in achieving targets although in some cases significant improvements have been relatively recent. In a few cases, resistance to change has limited the success in meeting targets.
212. Good, systematic procedures have been introduced to enable leaders and managers to review performance in the areas they are responsible for. Cluster leaders play a crucial role in this. Good procedures are used to monitor the work of individuals and teams and enable them to evaluate improvements. These have started to influence performance but their success is not evident in attainment data in all areas.
213. Procedures for identifying staff development needs are very thorough. Annual performance management reviews highlight areas and opportunities for development. These arrangements make important contributions to enhancing teachers' professional expertise and improving standards and quality. An outstanding feature of this provision is the innovative Middle Leadership training course which around one-third of teachers have undertaken.
214. The leadership and management of the sixth form are very effective and closely linked to the smooth management of the whole school. Management is equally strongly focused on monitoring and review of performance in the sixth form to enable students to achieve high standards.
215. Governors have a very good understanding of their roles and are very well informed about their school and its place in the community. They give strong support to the headteacher and senior leaders and managers. Governors are closely involved in strategic planning and helping to set the school's direction. Their commitment to the success of the school and their work in supporting it are outstanding.
216. The members of the GB have a sound knowledge of how well the school is performing and of the factors which influence its work. They monitor the quality of provision in a number of ways. They study reports, analyse data, meet with individuals and visit the school. They use their knowledge very effectively by taking effective and appropriate decisions. These have contributed to the school's recent successes.
217. The GB fulfils all its legal duties and statutory responsibilities. It is a good critical friend of the school. It holds the school to account for the standards and quality it achieves but also provides staunch support to help it to succeed.

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

<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>
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218. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
219. The inspection team agree with the judgements in the school's self-evaluation report in key questions one, two, four, five, six and seven. For key question four, however, the inspection team judged there to be outstanding features and awarded a grade higher than the school.
220. Leaders and managers are very well informed about the areas for which they are responsible. They have a clear understanding of their roles and work very effectively together to fulfil them. Overall, the procedures for self-evaluation are outstanding in the way in which they are applied rigorously and consistently across the school to inform strategies for improvement.
221. Systems of self-evaluation are comprehensive, well established and extremely robust. Meetings of various staff teams are overseen thoroughly by the headteacher. This is particularly effective in monitoring continually the school's performance and seeking contributions from all staff. Procedures are outstanding in promoting a culture of self-evaluation that is transparent and highly informative across all aspects of the school.
222. The school offers a course for teachers in 'Excellence in Middle Leadership' devised by a deputy headteacher. It includes training on units of financial management, self-evaluation, use of data, writing effective development plans and team building. An increasing number of subject leaders and other teachers have followed this course. As a consequence, subject leaders are well informed in analysing data from pupils' performances in external examinations. Overall this has been very successful in increasing the rigour with which subject departments construct their annual self evaluation forms and in identifying trends in pupils' performances.
223. Leaders and managers are very successful in seeking the views of pupils, students, parents and others. Parents make important contributions through various surveys and these are acted upon wherever appropriate. External consultants are also used very well to review the work in all subjects and in other aspects of the school's work. These reviews make very important contributions to the school's awareness of its performance in these areas.
224. The PLG makes an outstanding contribution to self-evaluation. Its members meet regularly with the headteacher to monitor and improve the overall quality of school life. The PLG is highly regarded by all staff, pupils and students. It has also received recognition of its outstanding work from the local MP and WAG. Working closely with the various year councils, the PLG provides an excellent vehicle that enables all pupils and students to express their views openly to senior managers and also to the GB.
225. Priorities for improvement are well documented in the departmental improvement plans for subjects and also in the SIP. These are identified over a three-year cycle and are continually monitored and reviewed very effectively by senior managers. There is a close link between the priorities indicated in subjects and those across the school.

226. Another striking feature is the Corporate Development Plan. This is highly innovative and illustrates the long term vision of the headteacher and GB in identifying priorities for the school in the next ten years.
227. Cluster leaders play a critical role in overseeing the work of the subject departments for which they are responsible. They ensure that departments use self-evaluation constructively to plan for improvement. The ongoing contribution that cluster leaders play in both self-evaluation and planning for improvement in subjects is outstanding.
228. Departmental improvement plans are detailed and nearly all are of excellent quality. Most departments identify clear priorities for development that relate well to learning and indicate success criteria by which they can be measured and reviewed. They also show resource costs, wherever appropriate. Senior managers, working closely with the GB, ensure that resources are allocated effectively to support priorities for development.
229. There have been measurable improvements in pupils' and students' attainments in external examinations in many subjects. There have also been significant improvements in the quality of learning and teaching in nearly all subjects. A few subjects, however, do not plan for improvement rigorously enough and this impacts adversely on pupils' standards of achievement in them, particularly at KS4.
230. Progress since the last inspection has been outstanding. This is particularly evident in the significant improvement in leadership and management that has enabled the school to move forward in all aspects. Systems of self-evaluation and planning for improvement now form an integral part of the school and are effective in improving learning and teaching.
231. There were eight key issues for action in the last inspection report. The school has addressed six of them fully, namely:
- improve pupils' attendance and recording procedures;
  - put in place mechanisms whereby pupils are given routinely marked targets to improve their performance;
  - monitor marking and homework to ensure consistency across the whole school and share examples of good practice;
  - improve the time allocated to religious education in KS4, Y12 and Y13 and deliver NC requirements in design and technology in KS3;
  - continue to monitor and improve the use of registration time; and
  - improve spiritual education, including the provision for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
232. There has also been significant progress made in the other two key issues:
- continue to improve NC test results in KS3 and external examination results at GCSE, AS and A level; and
  - ensure that consistent monitoring and evaluation of the working of departments at all levels of management is sufficiently rigorous to identify and eliminate shortcomings and enhance good practice.

233. It is only in a very few subjects that further progress is needed in these two issues and the school is implementing strategies to address them.

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

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

234. This grade matches the grade awarded by the school in its own evaluation.
235. The school has made a considerable effort to address the accommodation issues identified at the last inspection. Problems with damp and the poor condition of much of the fabric of the buildings have largely been resolved. The increased provision of litterbins and the banning of eating outside have greatly reduced the problem of litter.
236. The fence completely surrounding the school has improved security and reduced the cost of vandalism. It also created a separate identity for the school that was hard to establish when the site was used as a public thoroughfare.
237. The school buildings themselves, apart from the recently built science block, continue to show their age and more needs to be done to bring them up to modern standards. The technology block, in particular, is inappropriate to teach the curriculum effectively. Also, the nature of the buildings, with many classrooms above ground floor, makes it difficult to allow pupils with mobility difficulties full access to all teaching areas.
238. In contrast, the facilities for physical education, including the outdoor pitches and the community-shared leisure centre, are of a very high standard.
239. The resources for learning have improved since the last inspection and, as a whole, are sufficient in number, quality and relevance, although there are shortages of textbooks and technological equipment in a few subjects. The new library is a worthwhile addition to the school.
240. The school has made good progress in addressing requirements for workforce remodelling. Following strategic planning, members of support staff have been deployed in a number of key areas. As a consequence, members of teaching staff are enabled to focus on learning and raising standards of achievement.
241. Suitable arrangements are in place for teachers to plan and prepare lessons and assess learners' achievements. The great majority of teachers make effective use of these opportunities.
242. The staffing problems in several subjects which were highlighted at the last inspection have been resolved and subject specialists now teach nearly all lessons. Non-teaching members of support staff provide a high level of support throughout the school and the TAs are particularly effective both in the Learning Centre and in mainstream classes.
243. In order to meet the need to lower its expenditure, the school has rationalised teaching costs gradually over the last few years. However, this has been done

as part of an overall strategy that has meant there has been no adverse effect on pupils' education. The school has also made the most of its limited budget to renovate the buildings and update technological equipment.

244. The system for ensuring the continued professional development of staff is a strong feature of the school. The Excellence in Middle Leadership course is an excellent example of how the school identifies a need and then seeks to address it in the most cost-effective way.
245. All aspects of budgetary systems are managed very effectively by the finance manager who works with the headteacher and GB to ensure the school's resources are used to best effect. This ensures funds are directed to the appropriate areas to meet the school's priorities. Major projects, such as a new catering contract, are researched thoroughly to achieve best value. Robust procedures are used to monitor and review expenditure. The school secures additional funding from partnerships and parents and uses it effectively to improve opportunities for pupils and staff.
246. Overall the school provides good value for money as indicated by:
- good standards of achievement in most subjects;
  - very good progress made by pupils with SEN;
  - high standards of teaching in most subjects; and
  - the range of vocational courses offered.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### English

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

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

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

247. Results at KS3 exceed the national average and have done so for the past three years. GCSE results remain just below the national average and below the LEA average while A Level results are in line with national averages.

### KS3

#### Good features

248. Many pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other in pair, group and whole-class work. They respond well to questions demonstrating recall of previous learning and good knowledge and understanding of their work. Some offer extended responses. Able pupils pose questions and justify decisions.

249. Pupils read aloud with confidence and some with appropriate expression. Nearly all pupils read a wide range of literary texts including contemporary and gothic works. Many can demonstrate empathy with characters. The more able pupils demonstrate good inferential and deductive skills.

250. Many pupils write with enthusiasm in a range of forms and for a variety of purposes. A minority of pupils improves writing through careful planning and drafting. As they progress through KS3, many pupils are increasingly able to produce purposeful and sustained writing.
251. Pupils with ALN make sound progress and produce good work in relation to their abilities.

### **Shortcomings**

252. A small minority of pupils does not redraft work effectively. Some writing remains underdeveloped and displays a range of technical errors.
253. The oral contribution of a small minority of pupils is sometimes hesitant and often un-extended.

## **KS4**

### **Good features**

254. Many pupils listen attentively. They are responsive to the views and ideas of others and engage readily in discussions. Some pupils sustain concentration and collaborate well in productive group work on a range of topics including character analysis. More able pupils also ask questions in order to clarify points and develop their ideas.
255. Pupils read a wide range of challenging fiction, poetry and drama. Some pupils can identify accurately key features, themes, characters and how literary effects are created. Most pupils demonstrate a good recall of what they have read.
256. Pupils from all ability groups respond well to the range of writing opportunities presented by GCSE English, English Literature and Entry Level courses. A majority writes in a variety of ways that include creative writing, critical analysis of literature and transactional writing.
257. The majority of pupils with ALN makes good progress in relation to abilities.

### **Shortcomings**

258. The achievement of boys is significantly lower than that of girls.
259. A majority of pupils does not redraft work effectively. Some work remains unfinished and errors of punctuation, spelling and grammar persist.
260. Some pupils of middle and lower abilities are reticent in oral contributions. They lack confidence and their speaking skills are underdeveloped.

## **Sixth form**

### **Good features**



261. Most students are highly motivated. A majority shows high standards in written work.
262. Very positive relationships exist within lessons. Students listen respectfully to the teacher and to each other.
263. A majority of students expresses opinions with confidence, shares ideas and contributes to discussion. A few students offer original, well-considered ideas and hypothesise effectively.
264. Many students demonstrate a clear understanding of characters, plots and themes together with the cultural and historical background of a range of texts including 'King Lear' and the poetry of Seamus Heaney and Dylan Thomas. They do so orally and in critical essays.
265. A majority of students makes good progress in response to effective formative comments written by teachers and produces well-crafted writing much of which employs accurate use of terminology, mature vocabulary and clear expression.

### **Shortcomings**

266. A few students lack confidence in the interpretation of literary and non-literary texts and in verbal presentation of opinions and ideas. Some of their writing includes weak expression and occasionally lacks depth and detail. These students are over-reliant upon the teacher.

<b>Science</b>
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**KS3**            **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**  
**KS4**            **Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**  
**Sixth form**   **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

267. The examination results at GCSE for the period 2005 to 2007 are significantly below Wales and local averages. They compare unfavourably with similar schools. In the view of the inspectors this shortcoming was due to the decision to enter a large proportion of the cohort for separate GCSE courses in biology, chemistry and physics. This decision has now been reversed and module results for Y10 in 2007 show a significant improvement.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

268. Pupils have an understanding of science that is appropriate for their age and ability. Most apply their scientific understanding to explain everyday events, such as why bread rises and the need for balanced forces in machines. A majority use word equations to explain chemical changes. Nearly all use scientific terms correctly both orally and in writing.

269. During science lessons pupils make good progress and extend their knowledge and understanding. Many can explain the details of previous work and make scientific predictions appropriate to their ability. Most pupils know how well they are progressing in relation to NC levels. They know their targets and what they need to do to improve.
270. Pupils plan experiments with due regard to the fair test. They carry out practical work confidently and with a minimum of fuss. They pay due regard to safety procedures. When carrying out experimental work pupils make scientific observations carefully and record them accurately. They present their results well and make effective use of tables and graphs. Around half can recognise the errors that might arise due to problems with equipment.
271. Pupils have good research skills and can obtain information from the internet and appropriate reference books. The more able can formulate hypotheses about what is happening in an experiment and explain their results with ease.
272. Pupils are well motivated during science lessons and engage effectively with their work. All are eager to answer questions. They behave responsibly and show respect to adults and each other. They co-operate very well during group work.
273. Pupils with ALN are very well motivated. They perform particularly well and achieve high standards. Pupils with mild learning difficulties successfully master aspects of the mainstream curriculum.

### **Shortcomings**

274. A few pupils of all abilities have poor presentational skills. They do not make good records of their science work in their notebooks.
275. In a very few cases pupils fail to make adequate progress during lessons, they lack an appropriate understanding of their work and so fail to fulfil their potential.
276. A small minority of pupils is not clear about how well they are progressing or what they need to do to improve.
277. A few pupils do not understand the concept of a fair test and so cannot adopt a systematic approach to planning experiments.

### **KS4**

#### **Good features**

278. Pupils understand and can recall the work they need for the GCSE science examinations. In chemistry, for example, they can deduce chemical formulae and apply flame tests to discover the identity of unknown substances. The more able can balance chemical equations. In biology they have a good grasp of genetics and the role of enzymes. In physics they understand about voltage and current in electrical circuits.

279. Pupils are attentive during lessons. Almost all are well motivated, behave responsibly and become highly engaged with their work. They are sufficiently confident to ask questions in order to test and extend their understanding. Most pupils are aware of their target grades and meet their teachers' expectations. Pupils follow instructions well and understand what is required of them. Most make good progress and acquire new scientific skills and understanding.
280. Many pupils have developed the research skills necessary to extract information from various sources. They can use scientific terms accurately both orally and in writing.
281. Pupils handle scientific equipment carefully and correctly. Almost all have good practical skills and carry out experimental work safely. They work well together in groups. Most pupils write good accounts of their experimental work. They can convey scientific ideas well using text, diagrams, charts and graphs. About half can make scientific predictions.
282. Most pupils are developing an understanding of some of the ethical dilemmas that arise from scientific developments such as the ability to determine the sex of a foetus. Most are aware of the beneficial and harmful effects of radioactivity.

### **Shortcomings**

283. A very few pupils do not give their full attention to their lessons. They do not concentrate enough and so fail to benefit from the work provided. Very often they have difficulty in recalling their previous work. Some are unsure of the meaning of scientific terms and cannot use or spell them correctly.
284. A few pupils are unsure of how well they are progressing and do not recognise their strengths and weaknesses. Neither are they aware of their current level of performance and what they need to do to improve.
285. The practical skills of a minority of pupils are underdeveloped. These pupils do not record their observations in sufficient detail and they lack the skills necessary to manipulate more complex apparatus.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

286. Students possess a good understanding of their A level work in science and are confident in their use of complex scientific terminology. They are articulate, write good notes and ask pertinent questions to further their understanding of science. They are well motivated and can work independently. Furthermore they can use their knowledge to explain new and unfamiliar situations. They engage actively with their work.
287. Students carry out practical work carefully and with due regard to safety. They have good practical skills and handle apparatus well. Students make systematic observations and record them accurately. They make good use of graphs to display and analyse their results. Nearly all understand the causes of

experimental error and how this can affect their results. They co-operate particularly effectively when planning and carrying out group practical activities.

### Shortcomings

288. Sometimes students do not always respond to questions or interpret their results at a sufficiently high level. A very few do not fully understand details of their A level courses and are unsure of how well they are progressing.
289. A few students do not make measurements with a sufficient degree of accuracy.

<b>Modern foreign languages</b>
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<b>KS3</b>	<b>Grade 2:</b>	<b>Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
<b>KS4</b>	<b>Grade 2:</b>	<b>Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
<b>Sixth form</b>	<b>Grade 1:</b>	<b>Good with outstanding features</b>

290. Examination results in German at GCSE in 2005 and 2006 exceeded the national and local averages for passes at A\*-C considerably. In French, the results at GCSE in the last four years have been equal to, or slightly lower than the national and local averages. However, in relation to pupils abilities, the results have been good overall.

### KS3

#### Good features

291. Pupils of all abilities make good progress across KS3 in the languages studied. Their recall of new vocabulary and structures is good and they quickly assimilate new language into their own oral and written responses. By Y9 many pupils recognise the use of different language registers in simple expressions and differentiate between tenses.
292. Pupils of low ability and those with SEN make particularly good progress in oral work. They produce short dialogues in French, using their own information. When speaking from memory they demonstrate good pronunciation.
293. Most pupils understand the French, Spanish and German used for ordinary classroom business and respond confidently. They demonstrate good comprehension of listening and reading texts. By Y9 they can scan longer texts for information and listen for gist.
294. Nearly all pupils demonstrate clear progression in written work, from being able to copy correctly at the start of Y7, to writing letters to their pen friends in Y9. They write accurately on familiar topics in paragraphs.
295. Pupils complete very good creative and project work relative to their ability. They use IT effectively to support their learning. Some pupils in Y9 can

manipulate past, present and future tenses to express their ideas and plans. They use connectives appropriately to extend their responses.

296. Pupils across the ability range use the NC level criteria to assess their own work and that of others. They understand how to improve their performance and access the higher levels.

### **Shortcomings**

297. A few less able pupils lack confidence when writing and speaking independently in French, German or Spanish. Their writing is inaccurate and limited in scope. Their oral responses are anglicised and they require constant support. A small minority of more able pupils, particularly in Y9, does not fully extend their answers.
298. A very few pupils are not focused during whole class discussion or during the presentation of new vocabulary. They use English inappropriately in group and survey work and this constrains their progress in lessons.

### **KS4**

#### **Good features**

299. Pupils make good progress from KS3 to KS4. They build on their prior knowledge and understanding, progressing from simple to more complex language with ease. Nearly all pupils demonstrate an increased awareness of language structure, for example they can manipulate the past, present, future and conditional tenses, and agree adjectives appropriately.
300. By Y11 most pupils are able to write connected paragraphs on the full range of GCSE topics. They extend their written work effectively using connectives. They express their views clearly and provide suitable reasons.
301. Most pupils demonstrate good recall of previously learned language. They have a wide vocabulary and are able to identify key points in listening and reading texts, and in the target language spoken extensively by their teacher. They recognise language they have learned in one context and transfer it to another.
302. In speaking, nearly all pupils demonstrate good pronunciation when reading aloud and when responding from memory. They add to their responses considerably when prompted, and in the best examples they correct their own responses appropriately. A very few pupils make spontaneous use of target language for incidentals.
303. Pupils of all abilities make effective use of dictionaries and reference materials in order to understand more complex texts and extend their written work.

### **Shortcomings**

304. A few less able pupils do not use grammatical structures accurately, for example when dealing with present and past tenses. They do not develop their

written work beyond a short simple sentence. They do not readily identify key points in listening exercises and rely heavily on support from teachers.

305. A small minority of pupils makes pronunciation errors. They do not respond fully in speech, and respond in single words or short statements.

## **Sixth form**

### **Outstanding features**

306. Speaking, particularly in Y13, is a major strength. In the best examples students are articulate and can freely express their opinions and thoughts on topical issues, justifying their viewpoints with appropriate examples accurately. Pronunciation and intonation are consistently very good.
307. By Y13 students can write at length on a range of contemporary themes in accurate French. They demonstrate excellent knowledge of idiomatic French; they can operate in the full range of tenses, including the subjunctive; and discuss statistical information confidently.

### **Good features**

308. From KS4 to the sixth form students make good progress both in terms of their range of language and prior grammatical knowledge, and in their confidence to use French consistently as a true means of communication. They speak with increased spontaneity and some cope with unpredictable language in context.
309. Students display a good understanding of reading texts in a variety of registers and formats. They scan authentic texts of varying length and complexity, correctly identifying key information. They quickly integrate newly acquired language in their own work.
310. Students across the ability range are able to reflect effectively on their own learning and that of others. They take responsibility for their own learning and undertake personal research effectively. They make appropriate use of authentic materials, internet sources, dictionaries and reference materials to enhance their comprehension and discussion of A level topics.
311. When listening to authentic recordings students identify the required information. They are adept at manipulating the language encountered and exploit it effectively for their own purpose.

### **.Shortcomings**

312. A very few students in Y12 do not take sufficient care with pronunciation, intonation and accuracy, despite the support and clear direction of their teacher.

**KS3**            **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**  
**KS4**            **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.**  
**Sixth form**   **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.**

313. GCSE examination results in this subject in the last three years have been similar to or just below local and national averages. The three-year moving average, however, shows a clear upward trend.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

314. Boys and girls sing well in Y7 and Y8. Pupils progress from singing in unison to call-and-response melodies and onto simple three-part tunes. All pupils perform accurately when using body and class percussion instruments. Nearly all improve their keyboard instrument skills as they move through KS3.

315. Composing skills are good throughout the key stage. In Y7 composing techniques build on pupils' experiences at KS2. Pupils plan and refine their short, four-part, percussion compositions well. In Y8 they are confident when improvising a melody over a 12-bar blues chord sequence. The most able pupils in Y8 use the blues scale convincingly and produce work that is musically interesting. In Y9 pupils' compositions based on Mozart variations meet or exceed the expectations for their abilities. Nearly all pupils with ALN achieve good standards.

316. Standards in listening and appraising are good in each year group. All pupils can self-evaluate their own work appropriately. Nearly all pupils evaluate the work of other class members accurately using the correct vocabulary for the elements of music. They can assess their own work using NC levels. They set realistic targets to maintain progress and to improve standards.

#### **Shortcomings**

317. A few pupils in Y7 do not plan structure and form when composing music using the 'Sonic Foundry' software package.

318. In a very few instances KS3 pupils, mostly boys, disengage with their work. This usually happens when they are faced with more challenging tasks spread over longer time spans of the lesson.

### **KS4**

#### **Good features**

319. In Y10 nearly all pupils perform their own compositions confidently with very good expression and sensitivity. They explore a wide range of sounds, textures and harmonies when reworking the Pachelbel Canon. Their results are original, innovative and above expectations at this stage of the course.

320. Nearly all Y10 pupils demonstrate a good understanding the historical context of Pachelbel. They discuss the associated history and musical features of the period.

321. All pupils in Y10 and Y11 can assess their own work accurately. They use the examination board's own mark schemes to make their judgements. The quality of the Y11 coursework seen meets expectations.

### **Shortcomings**

322. Loud instrumental rehearsing by a very few Y10 pupils in practical lessons hinders other pupils' planning and reworking. A minority of Y10 pupils failed to submit coursework on time. A small minority did not meet the second deadline set.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

323. Students in Y12 have a good knowledge of 20th century music theatre. They understand how styles have developed, for example from 'Porgy and Bess' through to 'West Side Story'. They have a clear understanding of how the "leitmotif" (a short tune associated with a specific character or idea) works. They discuss in detail how music and drama counterbalance each other in shows.

324. When Y13 students sing unaccompanied four-part chorales the standard is very good. Their standards of instrumental performance are equally very good. Aural skills in Y13 are always good. Occasionally they are very good, for example when recalling from memory themes by Bartok.

325. Y13 students know the rules and idioms used when harmonizing chorales in the style of J S Bach. They plan their responses carefully to achieve the correct answers. The most able produce eloquent harmonic solutions to even the most difficult exercises.

326. Students' compositions are good. There is clear evidence of improvement as students progress through the course. Their reworking is detailed and sophisticated as are their creative and technical skills. The end results are examples of maturity and artistic merit.

### **Shortcomings**

327. Y13 students' knowledge of the harmony rules applying to secondary seventh chords is insecure.

<b>Physical education</b>
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<b>KS3</b>	<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
<b>KS4</b>	<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
<b>Sixth form</b>	<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>



328. External examination results are good and have been steadily improving over the past few years

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

329. Pupils engage enthusiastically in a good quality, broad and balanced physical education curriculum. They participate in well-defined tasks, which help them to work to their capacity and achieve their potential. Pupils work with intensity, interest and enjoyment in all activities, and make sustained improvement.
330. Pupils perform to a good standard in games activities, and especially in soccer, basketball, hockey and rugby. Pupils react positively to the high expectations of their teachers and display a good understanding of the skills and tactics needed for success. There is good acquisition of the individual techniques required to be skilful performers, such as dribbling, shooting, passing, tackling and kicking. Pupils work collaboratively and proficiently to refine technical skills. Pupils react well to competitive situations and show good awareness of attacking and defensive principles.
331. In dance, pupils display good movement skills, including moving with tension, flow and precision. Pupils are able to move confidently when following set patterns and are also capable of creating their own work in both small and large groups. Pupils show a good standard in their ability to work in time with music.
332. Across the areas of activity, the majority of pupils are able to plan their work well, perform simple and complex skills with confidence, and evaluate their own work and the work of others accurately.
333. Pupils have a good understanding of physical fitness. They participate enthusiastically in challenging fitness exercises, monitor the physiological changes to their bodies and discuss the effect of activities on their fitness.
334. Pupils are able to assess their own performance critically and set realistic and challenging targets for improvement. Pupils display good abilities in contributing to warm-ups and in summarizing with the teacher, the main aspects of the work covered, at the end of the lesson.
335. The school provides a wide range of extra curricular activities. Standards are very good for both individual performers and school teams. A number of pupils and teams reach the highest standards at both County and International level. The school is justifiably proud of these achievements.

#### **Shortcomings**

336. The standards achieved by a few pupils are constrained by their physical fitness. The physical education department has recognized this and has implemented a number of improvement strategies.

337. The development of fine motor skills is underdeveloped in a few pupils. There is good cooperation between the physical education department and the SEN department in the school to improve these levels.

## **KS4**

### **Good features**

338. Pupils show very good understanding of many of the concepts of health-related and skill-related fitness, in some examination classes. Pupils engage enthusiastically in debate regarding the alternative views in a number of controversial issues, and come to reasoned conclusions.
339. Pupils demonstrate good standards in planning, performing and evaluating their own work and that of others. This is particularly evident in netball, badminton and GCSE examination work. The practical work of certain pupils is very good.
340. Pupils' participation in physical activities that develop strength, endurance and flexibility is good. Individuals are able to plan, undertake and evaluate fitness programmes, and lead warm-ups and cool-downs. Pupils display a very good understanding of how the components of physical fitness are developed and how these relate to an active and healthy lifestyle.
341. Pupils demonstrate a good ability to assess their own performance critically, and to then set themselves realistic and challenging targets. Pupils following GCSE examination courses demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding of the subject content, for example, in the anatomy and physiology component. Pupils can label accurately the bones and muscles of the body and fully understand the necessity to obtain and maintain a healthy cardio-vascular system. The concepts of healthy eating, obesity control and the importance of exercise in maintaining a healthy body are well understood.
342. In netball, volleyball and badminton, pupils display good standards in the application of techniques, the implementation of tactics and the ability to discuss strategies for improvement. In netball, pupils use space well, have good ball control, pass and shoot accurately and are effective in both defence and attack. In badminton, pupils display a good range of shots, including serving, the clear, drop shot and smash. In volleyball, pupils are able to perform the skills of the dig, set and serve with a good degree of competency.
343. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Standards are very good for both individual performers and school teams. A number of pupils and teams reach the highest of standards at both County and International level. The school is justifiably proud of these achievements.

### **Shortcomings**

344. The standards achieved by a small number of pupils are constrained by their physical fitness. The physical education department has recognized this and has implemented a number of improvement strategies.

345. The development of fine motor skills is underdeveloped in a minority of pupils. There is good cooperation between the physical education department and the SEN department of the school to improve these levels.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

346. Most female and male students, in individual and team activities, produce practical work of a very high standard.
347. Students demonstrate very good content knowledge of the examination syllabus and are able to provide detailed responses to challenging questions posed by the teacher. This is particularly evident in the anatomy and physiology, fitness and training, and information processing of motor skills sections of their examination courses.
348. Students undertaking a swimming and lifesaving option in their examination courses display very good standards of both understanding, and practical performance.
349. Students are confident and accurate analysts when reviewing their own performances and the performances of others.

#### **Shortcomings**

350. There are no important shortcomings.

<b>Religious education (including religious studies)</b>
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<b>KS3</b>	<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
<b>KS4</b>	<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
<b>Sixth form</b>	<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>

351. Examination results in religious studies at GCSE in 2005 were well above the national and local averages for the percentage of pupils who achieved A\* to C grades. In 2006, results were close to, but slightly lower than local and national averages. In relation to pupils' abilities, results are good overall.

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

352. Pupils of all abilities have a good knowledge of Christianity. They also know about the diversity of Christian traditions within their own community. They have knowledge and understanding of the way believers give authority to religious texts and traditions. Pupils are aware of the use of symbolism in religion.
353. Pupils have good levels of awareness of the ways in which people's lifestyles are influenced by their religious beliefs. Across the ability range, they acquire a range of skills to express their own responses to religious and moral issues.

354. Pupils of lower ability have a very good knowledge of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.

### **Shortcomings**

355. A small minority of pupils of average and lower ability pupils have insecure recall and understanding of previous work. A few pupils do not complete work that has been missed because of absence and do not correct errors identified in teachers' marking of their work.

## **KS4**

### **Good features**

356. Pupils recognise technical terms in religion and explain their meaning effectively, both orally and in writing. Pupils of lower ability are competent in recalling factual information about religions from previous learning.

357. Pupils show understanding of the Christian perspective on the sanctity of life especially in relation to euthanasia. Many pupils are confident and articulate when evaluating the Christian view on animal rights. Most pupils are aware of the purpose of marriage. They understand the symbolism of the Christian wedding service.

358. Pupils understand that religions raise moral and social questions. In responding to these questions, pupils show respect for beliefs that often differ from their own.

### **Shortcomings**

359. A few pupils do not readily extend their knowledge and understanding of religious issues by participating in discussions. A small minority of pupils does not develop the learning skills needed to explore religious topics independently.

## **Sixth form**

### **Outstanding features**

360. In Y12, students' work on abstract ideas shows considerable depth of understanding. They articulate their views with great confidence and justify them well by using evidence and reasoning.

361. Students select and present relevant factual information about religions and arguments about religious issues in a very well organised manner.

362. Students demonstrate a wide knowledge of the biblical concept of a miracle. They make very good use of the work of key experts together with well informed personal opinions.

### **Good features**

363. Students offer clear opinions about the relative strengths and weaknesses of Natural Law and Situation Ethics.
364. Most students in Y12 analyse and evaluate information about religion which they have collected from a range of different sources.

### **Shortcomings**

365. A small minority of Y12 students are reluctant to offer personal views or use independent thought to evaluate effectively the views of experts.

## School's response to the inspection

366. The headteacher, SMG, PLG and governors are delighted that the inspection team found Caldicot School to be a good school with many outstanding features and that the school has made outstanding progress since the last inspection.
367. The fact that the inspectors have endorsed the grades awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report and indeed raised one grade higher is a positive endorsement of the school's robust self evaluation processes, for which we pride ourselves.
368. The School Improvement Plan is clearly focussed on raising standards through learning and teaching. It is pleasing that 73% of lesson observations graded one or two for standards of achievement at KS3 and KS4 exceeded the national target for 2007 by eight percentage points. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, with 78% of lessons at KS3 and KS4 awarded a grade one or two, which is nine points above the national figure of 69% in all inspections in Wales 2005-6 and that the number of grade one lessons for teaching has doubled. In the sixth form, 82% of lessons had good features and no important shortcomings, with outstanding features in just over one in every four lessons observed.
369. Outstanding features which the inspection has highlighted include:
- high quality support and guidance for pupils and students;
  - the role of our Multi-Agency Group;
  - the Learning Centre through its provision for pupils with ALN and SEN;
  - equality of opportunity for all based in a climate of care and support promoting good behaviour;
  - procedures for self evaluation;
  - pupil voice and the role of the PLG;
  - the school's commitment to meeting learners' needs and interests;
  - dynamic leadership and an innovative Corporate Development Plan; and
  - the commitment of the GB.
370. We are pleased that the inspection has shown that six of the eight issues from the previous inspection have been addressed fully and there has been significant progress made with the other two key areas.
371. The report has made recommendations that we are already embracing in our School Improvement Plan, namely to continue to improve standards further in the core subjects at KS4 and to continue to improve the quality of teaching and assessment to reflect the best practice. Our action plan will focus on the recommendations and we will work with the LEA to address the accommodation issues, especially in technology and the accessibility arrangements for pupils with mobility restrictions.
372. In conclusion, the school wishes to acknowledge the professional, collaborative and committed approach of the inspection team. The inspection report provides us with a robust external audit to support the school's mission to continue to improve the quality of education for its pupils.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Caldicot Comprehensive School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Mill Lane, Caldicot Monmouthshire
Postcode	NP26 5XA
Telephone number	01291 426436

Headteacher	Mrs Susan A E Gwyer-Roberts
Date of appointment	01/09/2002
Chair of governors / Appropriate authority	Mr Peter Nurcombe
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter Carter
Dates of inspection	26 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2007

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	261	227	266	265	264	138	96	1517

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	82	5	85.4

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17.5:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	8.8:1
Average teaching group size	22.25
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	76.1%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	91.9	91.3	89.8	91.6	97.6	91.4	95.4	92.5
Term 2	93.8	93.0	92.4	92.2	92.5	92.7	89.6	92.6
Term 3	92.3	91.4	89.9	91.6	90.3	89.1	82.8	90.8

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	10%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	90 (Temporary) 0 (Permanent)

## Appendix 3

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2006															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 259															
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	2	4	17	38	26	9	0	0
		National	0	1	0	0	0	2	7	22	36	24	8	0	0
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	12	29	22	27	0	0
		National	0	1	0	0	0	1	7	18	25	30	16	1	0
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	23	32	29	5	0	0
		National	0	1	0	0	0	1	6	19	34	28	12	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		by test	
In the school	60	In the school	
In Wales	65	In Wales	



## Public Examination Results:

<b>For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ</b>	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006	261
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	43.27

<b>The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006:</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>UA</b>	<b>Wales</b>
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	80	87	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	48	54	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	79	86	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	35	42	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	100	98	98
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	74	78	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	91	92	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	8	8	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	4	3	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	0	0	0
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	0	0	0

<b>For pupils aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>	
Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2006	77
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2006	67
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2006	11

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	75	71	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	99	94	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	21	21	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	0	0	0
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	0	0	0

UA Unitary Authority

## Appendix 4

### Evidence base of the inspection

Thirteen inspectors spent a total of 49 days in the school and were joined by a deputy head teacher as the school's nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection inspectors visited:

- 128 lessons or part lessons, 89 in the six subjects and 39 in other subjects;
- registrations, assemblies and form tutor periods; and
- some extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:

- staff, parents and governors before the inspection;
- senior leaders and managers, middle managers, teachers support assistants and administrative staff;
- groups of pupils and students representing each year group; and
- representatives of the school council and Pupil Liaison Group.

The inspection team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- 65 responses to the parents' questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- samples of pupils' and students' reports; and
- a range of pupils' and students' work.

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

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Peter Carter (Registered Inspector)	Context, Summary, Recommendations KQ1, KQ5, Appendix
Julia Longville	KQ2
Clive Rowlands	KQ3
Gwyn Griffiths	KQ4
David Williams	KQ6
Edward Tipper (Lay Inspector)	KQ7
Tony Sparks	English
David Hughes	Science
John Hopkins	Science
Dawn Sadler	Modern Foreign Languages
Brendan Barry	Music
Stephen Lloyd	Physical Education
Martyn Williams	Religious Education
Gareth Whitcombe	Nominee

### Acknowledgement

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

### The inspection contractor

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