

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

A report on the quality of education in

**Dwr-y-Felin Comprehensive School
Dwr-y-Felin Road
Neath
SA10 7RE**

School number: 6714067

Date of inspection: 15 March 2010

by

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Introduction

Dwr-y-Felin 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 Dwr-y-Felin Comprehensive School took place between 15/03/10 and 18/03/10. An independent team of inspectors, led by Edward Aneurin Peter Harris undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Dwr-y-Felin Comprehensive School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school located in Neath Port Talbot Unitary Authority (UA). There are 1172 pupils on roll compared to 1330 at the time of the last inspection in 2004.
- 2 The school is currently based upon two sites. Years (Y) 9, 10 and 11 are accommodated in the former Neath Boys' Grammar School. The lower school site is about two miles away and accommodates Y7 and Y8.
- 3 Pupils mainly come from Neath and the surrounding area. About half come from residential areas which are neither particularly prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. The other half is divided between prosperous and disadvantaged areas. Thirteen per cent take up free school meals.
- 4 Almost all pupils come from English-speaking homes. The school has a comprehensive intake but there is a slightly higher number of more able pupils.
- 5 Almost 15% of pupils are registered as having special educational needs (SEN). Just less than 1% of pupils carry statements of SEN.
- 6 The senior leadership team (SLT) comprises the headteacher, a deputy headteacher, six assistant headteachers and the bursar. All members of the SLT, apart from the deputy headteacher and three assistant headteachers, were appointed to their present posts before the last inspection.

The school's priorities and targets

- 7 The school seeks to provide a caring and stimulating environment to enable all learners reach their full potential. This aim is underpinned by core values of good manners, respect and responsibility.
- 8 The several priorities of the school development plan (SDP) cover a period of three years and relate to the development of the school as:
 - a learning school;
 - a self-evaluating school;
 - a caring community; and
 - a stimulating learning environment.
- 9 The school's self-evaluation report (SER) is based on the seven key questions of the Common Inspection Framework.
- 10 Numerical targets are set, that in 2011:
 - 76% of pupils should reach at least level 5 in all three subjects combined in national curriculum (NC) assessments at the end of key stage (KS) 3;
 - 98% of pupils should achieve at least the level 1 threshold (five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education [GCSE] passes at grades A-G, or their equivalent); and
 - 75% at least the level 2 threshold (five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C, or their equivalent) in external examinations.

Summary

- 11 Dwr-y-Felin Comprehensive School is a very good school which has many outstanding features. There are outstanding features in the standards pupils achieve, the quality of education it provides and in its leadership and management. It has made very good progress and effected significant improvements since the last inspection.

Table of grades awarded

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

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	1
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	1
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	1
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	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

- 13 These grades match those offered by the school in its SER. While inspectors judged the school to provide very good value for money in terms of the standards of achievement, they judged there to be shortcomings in the level of accommodation.

Standards achieved

- 14 Standards in the school are good with outstanding features.
- 15 The team inspected the standards that pupils achieve in six subjects. The following table shows the grades awarded at KS3 and KS4.

Subject	KS3	KS4
English	1	1
Welsh second language	1	1
Design Technology	2	1
Music	2	1
Physical education	3	3
Religious education (including religious studies)	2	2

- 16 In comparison with the time that the school was last inspected, these figures represent an overall improvement in standards.
- 17 The following table shows the percentages of grades awarded at each stage in the six subjects inspected.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	22%	53%	25%	0%	0%
KS4	32%	56%	10%	2%	0%
Whole school	27%	55%	17%	1%	0%

These grades are based on observations of 70 lessons

- 18 The proportion of lessons judged to be grade 2 or better is significantly greater than the averages for Wales as reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) in his report for 2008-2009.
- 19 Attainment in tests, statutory assessments and examinations is very good in most cases. Pupils' results are very good in relation to their ability and prior achievement.
- 20 At KS3 and at KS4, results in many key indicators of performance have been very good and compare very well with similar schools. This is an outstanding achievement.
- 21 On the whole, at both KS3 and KS4, there is no great difference between the relative performance of boys and girls. At both key stages, pupils with SEN achieve very high standards relative to their ability.
- 22 Overall, learners' key skills have good features and no important shortcomings. They speak, listen, read and write very well. Their numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) skills are consistently good. Their bilingual skills continue to improve and good features outweigh shortcomings.
- 23 Standards are very good in the wider key skills. The ways in which they work together and their personal and social skills have outstanding features. The school is a very orderly community. Pupils respect their teachers, one another, and the beliefs held by others. Their behaviour is excellent, their attendance and punctuality are good, and they make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of education and training

- 24 Teaching at the school is good with outstanding features.
- 25 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 70 lessons observed in the six subjects and 35 lessons in other subjects.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	22%	60%	16%	2%	0%
KS4	34%	58%	4%	4%	0%
Whole school	28%	59%	10%	3%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 105 lessons					

- 26 These figures exceed significantly the average for Wales for teaching of high quality, as reported by HMCI in his latest report.
- 27 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these grades show that the proportion of teaching judged to be highly effective has increased further since the levels reported at that time.
- 28 Inspectors observed excellent working relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers were seen to have very good subject knowledge which they used exceptionally well in the vast majority of cases to inspire pupils to do their best and which engaged them actively in their learning. In these cases, teachers planned their lessons thoroughly and made sure that tasks and activities were matched well to the needs of individual pupils.
- 29 In the very small minority of lessons where inspectors judged there to be important shortcomings, these were related mainly to the slow pace of the lesson.

- 30 There is a beneficial consistency of marking across subjects. Teachers mark work regularly and most provide worthwhile written feedback to pupils and indicate clear targets for them. As a result, pupils have a clear awareness of how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve.
- 31 Assessment is used well to promote learning. Marks and test results are monitored extensively. Pupils assess their own performance and that of their peers effectively.
- 32 The school meets statutory requirements for the assessment of learners' work.
- 33 The curriculum caters for the needs of all pupils in a highly effective way. Options at KS4 provide an exceptional range of negotiated Learning Pathways for all learners. Vocational and academic courses are fully accredited and allow for progression to further study. There is a successful emphasis on the development of key skills.
- 34 While the promotion of pupils' bilingual skills is very good through Welsh second language lessons, the ways in which the school provides opportunities for pupils to use their skills across the curriculum is more limited. The school promotes well pupils' wider knowledge of the culture of Wales.
- 35 The school offers an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport. Effective emphasis is placed on the promotion of pupils' personal, moral and social development. Good progress is made in promoting their spiritual and cultural development.
- 36 Pastoral and curricular links with partner primary schools and Neath College are outstanding.
- 37 Programmes of study in personal and social education (PSE) which include careers education and guidance (CEG) are well developed.
- 38 The school tackles social disadvantage and stereotyping in a beneficial way. Pupils are encouraged to take an active interest in education for sustainable development and global citizenship. There is a thorough emphasis on enabling pupils develop skills for lifelong learning.
- 39 The school makes extensive provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils. Planned intervention and support strategies ensure that every pupil is valued and treated equally.
- 40 Links with parents are strong and beneficial. The school council responds well to the many opportunities it is given to develop initiative.
- 41 Transition programmes are well established. Induction into Y7 is exemplary and enables new pupils to settle in smoothly. The emotional and social needs of pupils are met effectively with support of a high standard. The effective guidance is well reinforced by the PSE programme.
- 42 Well-developed procedures to monitor attendance, punctuality, performance and behaviour have made a successful contribution to improved standards in these areas.
- 43 There is an outstanding level of support to include fully pupils with SEN. Learning support assistants (LSA) provide good levels of support and individual education plans (IEP) relate well to pupils' needs.

- 44 The ways in which the school seeks to eliminate bullying and all forms of oppressive behaviour are extensive and enable pupils to feel secure.
- 45 A sound awareness of equality permeates the school and is reinforced by mutual respect.

Leadership and management

- 46 Leadership and management at the school are outstanding.
- 47 The headteacher exercises leadership in a highly effective way. He has a clear vision for the school and its improvement and develops excellent relationships with pupils, staff, parents and governors. He has been successful in establishing a culture of high expectation from all members of the school community.
- 48 He receives excellent support from an able team of senior leaders. Together they set a clear direction for the school and a sense of purpose that promotes and sustains improvement. Senior leaders have very good links with middle managers.
- 49 The governing body makes an outstanding contribution to the strategic direction of the school. It works well through a good range of committees and monitors and review performance comprehensively.
- 50 Leaders and managers take very good account of local and national priorities and governors fulfil all their legal responsibilities.
- 51 School self-evaluation is very effective. There is a sense of responsibility shared among members of staff that contributes to systematic and robust procedures to monitor and review provision and performance.
- 52 Outcomes from self-evaluation are used very well to plan for further improvement. Detailed action plans identify priorities clearly. All key issues from the last inspection have been addressed successfully.
- 53 The school is staffed well. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. The provision for learning resources is good on the whole. Teaching and support staff are well deployed, managed and developed.
- 54 The ways in which the school budget is set and monitored are outstanding. In view of the superior levels of pupils' overall achievement inspectors judged that the school achieves very good value for money.
- 55 However there are important shortcomings in the accommodation. While inspectors concurred with the UA's view that the lower school building is unfit for purpose they also judged there to be shortcomings in the upper school accommodation, particularly in the library, some of the toilets, the gymnasium and in the changing rooms.

Recommendations

56 In order to build on current achievement the school should focus on the following priorities.

- R1 Continue the trend of improvement.
- R2. Improve pupils' bilingual skills across the curriculum.
- R3. Continue to work with the UA on improving the accommodation throughout the school.

Aspects of all these recommendations are addressed in the current SDP.

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

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

58 The main outstanding features are the:

- overall standards achieved by pupils in the six subjects inspected;
- results in external examinations when compared with local and national averages, and with those of similar schools;
- improvement in standards since the time the school was last inspected;
- progress of pupils in their learning and personal and social development; and
- achievement of learners with SEN.

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

59 The team inspected the standards that pupils achieve in six subjects. The following table shows the grades awarded.

Subject	KS3	KS4
English	1	1
Welsh second language	1	1
Design technology	2	1
Music	2	1
Physical education	3	3
Religious education (including religious studies)	2	2

60 These figures represent an overall improvement in standards since the time that the school was last inspected. Pupils achieved excellent standards in English and Welsh second language throughout the school and in design technology and music at KS4. While standards in physical education were judged to be satisfactory throughout the school, standards in religious education were judged

to be consistently good. Standards in design technology and in music at KS3 were good.

- 61 The following table shows the grades for the standards that pupils achieved at KS3 and KS4 in the six subjects inspected.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	22%	53%	25%	0%	0%
KS4	32%	56%	10%	2%	0%
KS3 & KS4	27%	55%	17%	1%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 70 lessons					

- 62 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these figures indicate an improvement in standards since that time.
- 63 Inspectors awarded the two top grades for standards in 82% of lessons compared with 71% of lessons when the school was inspected in 2004. The proportion of lessons with standards well above expectations was greater at KS4.
- 64 At KS3 in 2009, the percentages of pupils who achieved NC level five or above in the core subjects, English, mathematics and science, were higher than local and national averages. The percentage who achieved the core subject indicator (CSI), level five or above in all three subjects, also compared favourably with local and national averages.
- 65 In most key indicators of performance at KS3, between 2007 and 2009, attainment was above the local and Welsh averages. There is an underlying trend of improvement during this period and performance has been good in all three subjects.
- 66 In comparison to schools of a similar intake, attainment was above average. The percentage of pupils who achieved the KS3 CSI placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools.
- 67 In 2009, at KS4, 72% of pupils gained five or more A*-C grades or their vocational equivalent, 60% with passes at this level in both English and mathematics. The percentage of pupils who achieved the KS4 CSI was above average for schools of a similar intake. These figures represent outstanding levels of attainment.

Their progress in learning

- 68 At both key stages, there is little evidence of any significant difference between the standards attained by boys and girls. Results suggest that pupils perform well in relation to expectations based on their abilities and backgrounds.
- 69 At both key stages, pupils with SEN achieve very high standards relative to their ability.
- 70 Standards have good features and no important shortcomings in all key skills. Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of listening skills and they speak well at both key stages. They have good reading and writing skills. They demonstrate good levels of numeracy and use ICT competently in subjects across the curriculum.
- 71 Pupils' bilingual competence has good features that outweigh shortcomings. While pupils show an appropriate level of understanding when listening to

teachers' occasional use of incidental Welsh they fail to demonstrate the very good level of skills that they acquire in Welsh second language lessons.

- 72 Pupils of all abilities make very good progress in their learning and their attainment by the end of KS4 shows good progression throughout their time in school. The vast majority know how well they are doing and how they could improve the standards they achieve.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

- 73 There are many outstanding features in pupils' personal and social skills. They collaborate very effectively in paired and small-group work. They show high levels of respect for the views and beliefs of others. They respect their teachers, are polite to visitors and get on well with one another.
- 74 Pupils progress well in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. On the whole their behaviour is exemplary and they demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning.
- 75 Attendance is consistently good and at 92% is in line with UA averages and those of similar schools. Punctuality is also good.
- 76 Careers guidance and work-related education of a good quality prepare pupils very well for the world of work.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 77 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
- 78 The main outstanding features are:
- the general extent of teachers' subject knowledge;
 - the high levels of stimulation and challenge in teaching;
 - very good working relationships between pupils and teachers;
 - the care taken in meeting individual learning needs; and
 - the assessment of pupils' work.
- 79 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 70 lessons inspectors observed in the six subjects and 35 lessons in other subjects.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	22%	60%	16%	2%	0%
KS4	34%	58%	4%	4%	0%
Whole school	28%	59%	10%	3%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 105 lessons					

- 80 These overall grades are outstanding. The proportion of lessons judged to be good and very good is substantially higher than the national picture. Moreover, the school comfortably exceeds the 'Vision into Action' target for 2010 that the quality of teaching should be grade 2 or better in 80% of lessons.

81 There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. This is reflected in the three-year rising trend in external examination results.

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

82 Teachers display high levels of subject knowledge, which enable them to explain and justify learning activities, identify key questions and generally plan lessons that are stimulating, challenging and relevant.

83 Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils, regardless of the level of ability. They challenge pupils to justify their reasoning through very good use of questions and tasks.

84 Teachers benefit from membership of one of several school improvement teams which enable the best practice to be identified and shared.

85 Working relationships are excellent. Teachers support and encourage pupils of all abilities individually and collectively and pupils respond with respect and a readiness to learn.

86 The targeting of individual support for pupils with SEN is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) are extremely well informed of pupils' IEPs.

87 Other strong features within teaching include:

- consistently detailed lesson planning;
- the pace of lessons; and
- the ways in which pupils are helped to take responsibility for their own learning.

88 There is a deliberate promotion of equality of opportunity in the curriculum offered, the selection and deployment of learning resources in departments and the dramatic reduction over six years in the number of pupils leaving school with no qualifications.

89 In the very few lessons where shortcomings were identified, there was an excess of teacher talk, loss of pace or challenge in learning, and a failure to balance the needs of boys and girls.

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

90 The school's use of an on-line data system to monitor and improve pupils' progress is outstanding.

91 Standardisation of the marking of the work of pupils across Y6 and Y7 is an outstanding feature of assessment practice. Making use of the same on-line data monitoring facility, teachers of Y7, in collaboration with primary colleagues, first submit marks for selected pieces of work individually. They then meet to agree on them and select examples – including voice and video recordings - for inclusion in on-line portfolios of pupils' work.

92 A further strength of assessment practice is the embedding of Assessment for Learning (AFL) practices across the school. A common feature of the majority of lessons is the way in which the sharing of assessment criteria enables pupils to assess, and suggest methods of improving, their own work and that of others. In

the best practice, pupils are encouraged to reflect critically about their own thinking.

- 93 There has been a significant improvement in the rigour and consistency of marking since the last inspection. In many cases, teachers offer detailed, diagnostic commentary on pupils' work, indicating strengths and weaknesses and advice on how to improve. In a small minority of cases, however, advice falls short of the level of detail that pupils need in order to improve their work.
- 94 The school's procedures meet statutory requirements for the cross-phase standardisation of assessed work between KS2 and KS3, for the assessment of NC subjects at KS3 and for the fulfilment of examination requirements in KS4.
- 95 The quality of arrangements for reporting pupils' progress to parents and carers is good. Reports give detailed information about pupils' achievements and progress in relation to target grades. In most cases, teachers provide effective subject-specific comments and targets for improvement, but occasionally these are subject to the lack of precision noted in the marking of a minority of pupils' work.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 96 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
- 97 The main outstanding features are the:
- ways in which the curriculum meets learners' needs;
 - ways in which learners are able to progress; and
 - breadth of extra-curricular provision.

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

- 98 Overall the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets learners' needs. It is accessible to all and builds systematically on previous knowledge.
- 99 At KS4, the open options system meets pupils' needs in an outstanding way. There is a very wide choice of courses and an outstanding range of carefully planned progression routes. These enable almost all pupils to move successfully on to the next stage in their education or training.
- 100 The school is making very good progress with the introduction of the 14–19 Learning Pathways.
- 101 The school provides an exceptionally wide range of sporting, general and course-specific extra-curricular opportunities. In KS4, these make an outstanding contribution to raising standards.
- 102 Curricular liaison and moderation arrangements with primary schools are particularly effective.
- 103 The planning and co-ordination of key skills across the school are good.
- 104 The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. There is a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. These are appropriate and together with

religious education lessons contribute to the development of pupils' spiritual understanding.

105 There is a well planned and managed guidance programme which includes PSE and follows national guidelines. It makes a substantial contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

106 Partnerships with local primary schools are very good. The school also has a close partnership with Neath College for delivering vocational education at KS4. Partnerships with employers and Initial Teacher Training (ITT) establishments are good.

107 The school meets all the necessary legal and course requirements.

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

108 The school provides effective work-related education. There is a strong partnership with Careers Wales and good links with local employers. Work experience in Y10 is well planned and managed. Pupils are well prepared beforehand and follow-up activities allow them to reflect on what they have learned.

109 Although all pupils at KS4 follow either a full or a short course in Welsh second language there are insufficient opportunities for learners to use their bilingual skills. Bilingual signs and the use of incidental Welsh by teachers show good and improving practice. The requirements of *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* are met.

110 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC) is developing well. The school is making good progress in re-cycling and reducing its energy and resource usage.

111 Contacts with local employers are good and developing further. The business community supports the school with work experience placements and also contributes to work-related education and developing pupils' entrepreneurial skills

112 The school is making good progress in meeting several of the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) national priorities, in particular improving the transition from primary to secondary school and transforming its provision for 14–19 year olds.

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

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

114 The main outstanding features are the:

- ways in which the school organises care arrangements;
- induction programmes;
- personal support and guidance offered;
- the provision for additional learning needs; and
- measures to foster good behaviour.

The quality of care, support and guidance for pupils

- 115 The school provides outstanding care, support and guidance to all learners. The school makes very good use of a wide range of specialist external services.
- 116 Pastoral staff play an outstandingly active role in supporting learners; they ensure that learners' social and academic needs are very carefully assessed and fully met across the school.
- 117 There is a very effective school council. It has been consulted on decisions about staff appointments, school uniform and the school's new building programme.
- 118 Parents and carers are well informed. The information provided to parents at transition and options is outstanding.
- 119 Learners receive personal advice and guidance of high quality to support them as they make appropriate pathway choices at the end of KS3 and KS4.
- 120 The school has well-developed transition arrangements with its partner primary schools which include very effective pastoral and curricular links. The school has very good links with Neath College and learners transfer smoothly onto relevant courses there.
- 121 The support for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties is outstanding. The learning coaches, school counsellor and the pastoral team all contribute effectively to meeting the needs of every age group.
- 122 The recording and monitoring of learners' attendance and punctuality are effective. The monitoring of learners' behaviour and performance is exemplary. The school tracks learners' progress carefully and closely so that underachievement is detected early.
- 123 Careers education and guidance is effective and comprehensive and meets all statutory requirements. There are elements of CEG built into the school's pastoral programme. The school works closely with Careers Wales. Year 11 pupils are interviewed to assist them in their learning pathways and make good use of Careers Wales online.
- 124 The school is currently working on phase 4 of the UA Healthy Schools' Awards Scheme. The importance of healthy exercise is promoted through 5x60 activities and other extra-curricular activities. The school's strategy for encouraging the development of a healthy lifestyle is good.
- 125 Child Protection procedures are firmly in place and all members of staff are appropriately informed and trained on these issues.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

- 126 Provision for learners with SEN is outstanding.
- 127 The school identifies early and accurately learners who need extra support. Subject leaders, heads of year and the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) liaise effectively to co-ordinate provision so that learners with SEN are given every opportunity to achieve.
- 128 All pupils with SEN are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential and take an active part in all aspects of school life as required by the Code of Practice Wales.

- 129 Three LSAs support individuals and groups of learners in mainstream classes. While they provide very effective support they are insufficient in number.
- 130 The SENCO provides clear and accessible information and guidance on all pupils with statements of SEN. Procedures for the annual review of statements are firmly in place.
- 131 Individual educational plans have clear and measurable targets and are shared with learners and parents. They are reviewed regularly by subject teachers and the feedback is collated very rigorously by the SENCO. Learners on the SEN register are well supported in mainstream classes.
- 132 There is extremely effective support for those learners who have emotional problems or challenging behaviour.
- 133 The school as a whole is very supportive towards learners with SEN and provides them with a happy and caring environment which is sensitive to their needs and in which they can learn and progress.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

- 134 School policies and practices support learners appropriately, whatever their educational, social, ethnic or linguistic background. English projects, assemblies and whole-school policies of zero tolerance to racism, bullying or any form of harassment, ensure all learners feel valued and unique.
- 135 The school is committed to providing gender equality. All subject options are available to boys and girls and careers advice and guidance promote gender equality.
- 136 The school promotes good race relations effectively. There is an effective Racial Equality Policy in place.
- 137 There are extremely effective policies, procedures and strategies to deal with any oppressive behaviour. The school prioritises anti-bullying and both learners and parents are of the view that any incidents of oppressive behaviour are dealt with swiftly and sensitively.
- 138 The school has an Accessibility Plan and a comprehensive Disability Equality Scheme which are regularly reviewed.
- 139 Learners are successfully encouraged to show respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within society. Opportunities to be engaged in charity work are extensive.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 140 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
- 141 The main outstanding features are the:
- direction given by the headteacher and his senior team;
 - ways in which the school sets and meets its targets

- promotion of staff development; and
- contribution of the governing body.

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

- 142 The headteacher exercises leadership in a highly effective way. He has a clear vision for the school and its improvement and develops excellent relationships with pupils, staff, parents and governors. His strategic management has succeeded in promoting school improvement. He has been successful in establishing a culture of high expectation from all members of the school community.
- 143 He receives excellent support from an able team of senior leaders. Together they set a clear direction for the school and a sense of purpose that promotes and sustains improvement. Senior leaders have very good links with middle managers.
- 144 Leaders and managers take very good account of local and national priorities. They work well in partnership with other local providers of education and training. The school's involvement in Learning Pathways 14-19 has been outstanding.
- 145 There are very good arrangements set in place, which are used effectively to set targets for individual staff members and teams. Central to this process is the September review of the performance of subject departments. Targets set and reviewed at this time have been challenging and realistic and have had a significant impact on improving performance and raising standards.
- 146 The planning of professional development needs is complemented by a wide range of professional development opportunities of both teams of staff.

How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

- 147 Governors contribute in an exceptional way to the strategic development of the school. Members of the governing body have a very good range of expertise and relevant experience.
- 148 Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and work very effectively with the SLT. They work well through a good range of committees and monitor and review performance comprehensively.
- 149 Governors work through an appropriate range of committees. They know the school well and act as effective critical friends. Governors fulfil all their legal responsibilities.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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- 150 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
- 151 The main outstanding features are:
- an embedded culture of self-evaluation at every level;

- detailed data analysis by all leaders and managers;
- perceptive evaluations which are firmly rooted in first-hand evidence; and
- the positive impact of sharply-focused planning on raising standards.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

- 152 Self-evaluation has become firmly embedded into the work of the school. Leaders and managers at all levels foster an ethos of continuous improvement within their areas of work.
- 153 The self-evaluation process is rigorous. It includes systematic annual pastoral and academic self-reviews which are carefully monitored by the link deputies, plus a biennial programme of more detailed and objective reviews undertaken by the SMT.
- 154 There is much first-hand observation of the work of teachers and pupils in their classes. All those involved have received training in monitoring and heads of department are now taking a greater role in the biennial reviews. An increasing amount of peer observation is undertaken within and across departments.
- 155 The school's annual self-evaluation report is thorough, detailed and evaluative. It provides a clear analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development in relation to all key questions of the inspection framework.
- 156 The findings of the inspection team match exactly those of the school itself in each of the seven key questions. The report refers to a broad range of evidence including very detailed analysis of assessment and examination data.
- 157 Governors as well as staff have received training in data analysis so that they may more robustly challenge and influence planning. The school effectively canvasses the views of all stakeholders. The school council has a strong voice and in recent times has exerted a major influence on uniform and design of the new buildings.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

- 158 Purposeful use is made of information generated from the self-evaluation process to establish clear priorities for improvement. School and departmental development plans are successfully linked to each other and to their respective self-evaluation reports.
- 159 A common framework is used for all departmental development plans. Their priorities are in general clearly identified, carefully costed and have measurable success criteria.
- 160 The priorities and goals that managers identify annually for the school as a whole appropriately relate to improvements in standards and quality. Mid and end-of-year reviews evaluate the extent to which priorities are met. These ensure a continuous cycle of improvement planning.
- 161 Although funding per pupil is lower than in many schools, resources are appropriately allocated to the identified priorities. Actions taken have resulted in measurable improvements in many areas, not least in the great extent to which pupils' standards have risen.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

163 The grade awarded is one grade lower than those awarded for KQ1 and KQ5 due to the shortcomings in some parts of the school's accommodation.

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

164 The teaching staff is well qualified and highly committed and nearly all teach their specialist subject. There is a good balance between experienced teachers and those relatively new to the profession.

165 The school employs a range of support staff that work very effectively in helping the teaching staff to meet the needs of pupils. The LSAs are well managed and trained by the SENCO and provide effective support for pupils. The learning coach is effective in supporting pupils who have social, behavioural and emotional needs.

166 There has been a marked increase in the provision of computers and ICT suites since the last inspection. All classrooms are equipped with a computer that has internet access. This investment and upgrading of some dedicated subject-area facilities have led to an improvement in levels of competency in ICT across the school. Many classrooms are fitted with digital computers and a minority of classrooms is equipped with interactive whiteboards.

167 The lower and upper school libraries are limited. The upper school library in particular lacks sufficient resources and a suitable environment to aid the learning of pupils. The area given over to books in the lower school library is small.

168 There is an appropriate formula-funding method for allocating resources to departments. These resources are well used to support teaching and learning programmes. However the global sum allocated to departments is lower than expected for a school of this size. Departments are able to bid for further funds in their development plans.

169 Since the last inspection the upper school site has benefited from a new building that houses a canteen and eight classrooms. The school is in the middle of a three-year programme of refurbishment and rewiring. Advanced plans are in place to build a major new teaching block on the upper school site to replace the lower school building.

170 The current site and accommodation exhibit a number of shortcomings. The lower school site is in a poor state. Although staff make good use of the teaching facilities it is well beyond efficient and economic use. The site has been identified as unfit for purpose by the UA and it is planned for closure by Summer 2012.

171 The upper school building is old and a range of works is planned to upgrade services such as rewiring, lighting and more energy-efficient heating.

- 172 On both sites, there are a number of demountable classrooms that are in a poor state of repair. They will be in use while a rolling programme of rewiring and classroom upgrading takes place.
- 173 On both sites library and toilet facilities are inadequate. Physical education facilities are limited due to the leasing arrangement from the UA. This incurs a regular cost and the facilities are not always available for the needs of the school. The girls' changing rooms are poor and the gymnasium floor is in need of repair.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money

- 174 The school's management and control of the budget are outstanding and reflect the school's priority for raising standards. The committed financial management team consistently seeks best value in all aspects of its duties. The school was featured in the good practice guide to procurement by WAG.
- 175 There are rigorous procedures in place to monitor and review budgetary matters. These procedures were considered effective and efficient by a recent external audit with only a few minor recommendations. Governors with an appropriate financial background help facilitate the monitoring and reviewing process.
- 176 The continuing professional development of all staff is a strong element of the school and is at the heart of school development planning. Allocation of funding is in accordance with identified priorities. Good use is made of in-house expertise when planning and delivering the school's programme of professional training.
- 177 The induction programme for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and teachers new to the school is well structured. Constructive feedback enables the programme to be updated annually. Newly qualified teachers and teachers in their first years of teaching benefit from very effective support. Initial teacher training links with universities and WAG's graduate teacher programme are well organised and effective.
- 178 Teachers are allocated 10% of the timetabled teaching time for planning, preparation and assessment. The high percentage of lessons deemed to be good or good with outstanding features indicates the effective use of this time.
- 179 Workforce remodelling has been successfully implemented. Criminal records bureau checks are carried out.
- 180 The school gives very good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

Key Stage 3: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

181 Pupils attain exceptionally well in GCSE examinations. The percentage of pupils achieving A*-A grades is significantly higher than the percentage of pupils achieving similar grades nationally.

KS3

Outstanding features

182 Verified end-of-key-stage assessment results show that the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 and above is significantly higher than the percentage of pupils achieving similar levels nationally.

183 Many pupils show a high level of skill in locating relevant information and summarising it in the form of tables or diagrams.

184 Most pupils participate in group presentations of very high quality to the whole class; these may take the form of factual presentations or role play related to text.

185 Many pupils show excellent factual knowledge of the text they are studying.

Good features

186 Most pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to one another. They respond very well to questions with most pupils eager to answer.

187 Most speak clearly and with confidence. When answering questions many give extended answers; when participating in class discussions most are willing to accept each other's point of view whilst being able to support their own point of view with facts or reasoned argument.

188 Many read aloud clearly and with good expression; they are accurate and fluent and demonstrate a very good understanding of what they read.

189 Most pupils write in a variety of forms for a range of audiences. Standards of spelling and punctuation are good relative to ability. As pupils progress through the key stage their writing develops appropriate structure.

190 Most pupils are developing the skills to reflect on their work, develop it and plan for improvement.

191 Most pupils work well in pairs or small groups and this collaboration extends pupils communication skills. Most pupils use these opportunities well to discuss, plan and present their ideas.

192 Pupils with SEN make good progress as they move through the key stage.

Shortcomings

193 There are no significant shortcomings.

KS4

Outstanding features

- 194 Many show exceptionally perceptive interpretations of quotations and use them effectively in their analysis of character.
- 195 Many pupils have an in-depth understanding of the complex relationships between characters in a text.

Good features

- 196 Almost all pupils listen attentively and respond well to questions. They are clear and articulate speakers. They work very well in small groups and are able to justify their opinions with cogent arguments. They show a very good factual knowledge of the texts studied.
- 197 They read a wide range of texts, both literary and non-literary. They have a good understanding of the techniques used by different authors to engage readers with their works, especially in the opening paragraphs.
- 198 When studying literary texts, most have a sound understanding of character and plot and demonstrate this through perceptive writing and presentations of high quality to the class.
- 199 Many are developing very good inferential skills and infer meaning from text to predict outcomes.
- 200 Many develop good empathetic skills especially when studying poetry. This is evident in their writing in response to 'Dulce et Decorum Est' by Wilfred Owen, for example.
- 201 There are very good examples of pupils' sustained writing. Most pupils write well for a variety of purpose and a range of audiences. Most pupils reflect on their writing and use planning and redrafting to good effect.

Shortcomings

- 202 There are no significant shortcomings.

Welsh second language

Key Stage 3: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 203 The GCSE Welsh second language full course and short course results for grades A*-C were well above the UA and Wales averages for 2008-2009.

KS3

Outstanding features

- 204 Learners make excellent progress in lessons.
- 205 Learners work very well as individuals, in pairs and in small groups.
- 206 They demonstrate excellent levels of understanding of how to improve their work.
- 207 Learners at both key stages make very effective use of ICT to produce a variety of Welsh texts.

208 Learners with SEN consistently concentrate well on their tasks and make good progress in line with their abilities. They are enthusiastic learners and command a good range of vocabulary.

Good features

209 Most have good recall of previous learning. They make good use of the target language and are confident in seeking guidance whenever they feel unsure about any spelling or facts.

210 Throughout KS3 learners listen attentively and the vast majority work very well on their set tasks. Learners in Y7 know the names of all school subjects in Welsh and most can discuss their favourite and least favourite subjects and offer clear well-reasoned opinions.

211 The majority can read passages clearly with good pronunciation and intonation. The more able respond confidently to more challenging questions.

212 Many in Y7 can write paragraphs independently using correct sentence patterns.

213 They use computers effectively to obtain information from websites and to prepare good accounts on the lives of famous people.

214 Year 8 learners prepare questionnaires on foods and have good awareness of healthy eating. They can write extended dialogues on their favourite dishes and what they are not so keen on. They produce written tasks which extend their working vocabulary substantially for example, shopping for clothes, sleeping-out parties and socialising

215 Learners also write very good commentaries for an in-house fashion show; using prompts they deliver their prepared commentaries effectively and professionally using a microphone to describe clothes modelled by fellow learners. They have good knowledge of appropriate vocabulary and sentence patterns and use the past tense of the verb correctly.

216 Learners use digital video to record the performances and the majority of learners can critically assess which commentary teams were the most effective in providing relevant and interesting facts relating to the clothes worn by the models.

217 Year 9 learners extend their vocabulary and language structure through writing film reviews for example, 'The Lion King'. They word-process letters of applications for jobs which prepares them for the requirements of the contemporary world of work.

Shortcomings

218 A few learners mispronounce common nouns when reading aloud to the class and a minority of learners are at times uncertain of the correct language structures in their written tasks while a very few learners read inaudibly.

KS4

Outstanding features

219 Learners make excellent progress.

220 Learners give oral presentations of a very high standard.

221 The majority reads very well and with good expression. They demonstrate very good understanding of their set texts.

Good features

222 They write on a wide range of topics using verb tenses correctly. Many use a very good variety of sentence patterns.

223 They communicate ideas effectively in pairs and small groups using a wide range of vocabulary. They solve problems effectively and efficiently and work together in exemplary fashion.

224 Many can translate instantly from or into the target language. They are good at self evaluation and at evaluating the work of their peers.

225 They make very good use of ICT in searching for knowledge and in making presentations of good quality.

Shortcomings

226 A few learners make limited progress.

227 A few learners mispronounce nouns when reading out their work to the class.

Design technology

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

Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

228 The total percentage of pupils who gained grades A*-C in design and technology in the last three years has been broadly in-line with the average percentages for the county and much higher than those for Wales. These results reflect outstanding progress and achievement for pupils.

KS3

Good features

229 Nearly all pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the design process and principles. Most pupils show good skills in disassembling a product, evaluating its features and suggesting improvements. They make good use of accurate technical terminology when describing what they are doing

230 Most pupils produce innovative and imaginative design ideas in their "Pugly" project in textiles. They use ICT well to research "Puglies" and to generate their own design ideas. A majority of pupils uses a computer-aided sewing machine to produce some innovative designs in their greeting card project.

231 In resistant materials almost all pupils design and make imaginative bedroom door nameplates. They use computer-aided manufacturing techniques well to embellish their products.

232 In the "pizza" project in Y8, most pupils evaluate food products very well using physical, sensory and nutritive terms very effectively in their descriptions.

233 Pupils with SEN produce good design work and achieve to their potential.

Shortcomings

234 For a very few pupils, weak freehand graphical communication skills detract from the quality of the presentation of their design work.

KS4

Outstanding features

- 235 Across all design subjects, almost all pupils carry out outstanding investigative work and use a variety of sources to gather information relevant to their design task.
- 236 In all design areas, almost all pupils plan their work well and most use very good graphical communication skills to present their work. In resistant materials, a very few design ideas are outstandingly innovative and are very well crafted including the use of computer-controlled machinery. In food technology, a few design outcomes reflect outstanding levels of flair and imagination in cake decoration and they present their work using outstanding graphical and presentation skills. In graphics products, most pupils produce outstandingly innovative and imaginative logos seen in their business cards and leaflets holder project.
- 237 The majority of pupils shows outstanding product analysis skills as for example in the review of "old mobile phones". They present their findings on aspects such as shape, size, colour, material, fitness for purpose very clearly and can suggest very good design improvements.

Good features

- 238 Almost all pupils can use ICT very effectively to present their work including some very good computer assisted design (CAD) work using two and three-dimensional design. In the best design folios, most pupils produce very good freehand design drawings and annotate their work well.
- 239 Photographic evidence and work observed in lessons in all material areas show that nearly all pupils have very good practical skills and can use a range of tools, utensils and equipment very well. In food technology, there are numerous examples of excellent product outcomes.
- 240 Pupils with SEN have a good understanding of the design process and apply the principles well in their designs. They mostly produce good product outcomes.

Shortcomings

- 241 Freehand graphical communication skills are the weakest element of a very few pupils' work. A small minority fails to use technical terminology.
- 242 Very few pupils consider the use of smart materials and the inclusion of electronic components in their design ideas.

Music

Key Stage 3: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcoming

Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 243 Examination results at GCSE in the last two years have been well above those of the LEA and national averages for passes at grades A*-C. These results represent an outstanding achievement for these pupils.

KS3

Good features

- 244 Pupils use extended musical vocabulary when appraising class performances and show a good understanding of the musical elements. Learners can comment on structure when listening to music in a variety of styles.

245 Compositions show a good level of development of original ideas (for example, Recycling Raps) and many are in an extended musical form.

246 The majority of pupils perform with a strong sense of rhythm (as in the Samba and Arriba performances) on a variety of instruments while many use correct fingering when playing the keyboard.

247 Pupils with SEN make good progress.

Shortcomings

248 A minority of pupils do not use correct fingering on keyboards while less able pupils struggle to play more than a few notes in time when maintaining an independent line.

249 Less able pupils do not develop responses when appraising music in Y9.

KS4

Outstanding features

250 Many compositions are of an outstanding standard and reveal a very extensive development of ideas. These large-scale compositions employ advanced harmonic progressions, complex rhythms and show an extremely thorough understanding of instrumentation and texture.

251 When appraising music, pupils use very advanced terminology to describe recorded extracts and compositions. The majority has an excellent understanding of characteristics of the areas of study.

Good features

252 Numerous individuals can perform complex music, as an individual and as part of an ensemble, to a very high standard and with a clear understanding of the relevant idiom.

Shortcomings

253 There are no significant shortcomings.

Physical Education

Key Stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key Stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

254 Examination results at GCSE are above local and national averages and represent achievement in line with ability.

KS3

Good features

255 In Y7 dance, most girls demonstrate impressive body control, timing and rhythm in their work based around rock and roll. They develop their group routines very effectively within the genre and the most able include creative movements which reflect their personalities.

256 In team games, both boys and girls can send and receive the ball accurately. In practices, many demonstrate good timing and an appropriate knowledge of rules.

257 In gymnastics, some Y9 girls practise and refine their work independently of the teacher; the more able show a wide range of skills which they perform with good body tension and control.

258 Most pupils have an appropriate knowledge of the general effects of exercise on their bodies. In their fitness work there are some good examples of pupils sustaining the pace and intensity of activity.

259 Pupils with SEN make good progress.

Shortcomings

260 Many pupils fail to transfer the skills learned in practices into game situations effectively, often making incorrect decisions when in possession of the ball.

261 Sequence work in gymnastics lacks fluency in linking movements together.

262 In fitness, many pupils do not recognise the links between the relay activities and the work on speed and agility.

263 The planning and evaluating skills of a minority of pupils are poor.

KS4

Good features

264 Within the core programme pupils follow instructions accurately and most demonstrate some knowledge of the purpose and methodology of warm-up activities. A minority of very able pupils shows skilful ball handling and is able to devise basic playing strategies.

265 Pupils show good knowledge in their use of weights and an awareness of health and safety issues related to their activity.

266 Work on movement analysis shows good observational skills and understanding of the principles of bio-mechanics. Written work is thorough and well presented using ICT.

267 Pupils demonstrate considerable knowledge in using ICT. Their work shows a range of applications which enhance their work.

Shortcomings

268 A significant minority of pupils fails to take any initiative and underachieves.

269 Many pupils have very limited knowledge of a range of sports and activities.

270 Non-participants take little or no part in lessons missing opportunities to develop broader skills such as officiating or coaching.

Religious education including religious studies

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

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

271 Over the last few years the standard of attainment at GCSE has improved significantly with an increase in the percentage of learners gaining A*-C grades.

KS3

Good features

272 Learners in Y7 make good progress in understanding the multi-cultural aspects of religious education and details of the founders of the key religions represented in Britain. They are beginning to acquire a conceptual framework which helps in understanding religions.

- 273 They have good and sometimes very good ability to recall many of the miracles and can correctly set them in the context of Jesus' ministry. Many can relate instances of modern day miracles and what they perceive to be miracles in their own personal lives.
- 274 They develop their thinking skills well and collaborate very effectively in pairs and in small groups in discussions. Their skill in self-assessing their progress and in assessing the work of their peers is developing well.
- 275 Pupils in Y8 explore the rituals beliefs and life experiences of adherents. They are aware of ways in which people's lifestyles are affected by their beliefs. They are developing a good understanding of the role of sacred texts in all religions especially in Christianity and Islam.
- 276 They show a good knowledge and understanding of the pilgrimage of Hajj, and its significance as one of the Five Pillars of Islam.
- 277 Most show a high level of empathy in their 'feedback' diary of an imaginary visit to Mecca on pilgrimage.
- 278 Learners' use of religious vocabulary is very good as is the spelling of the majority and most show familiarity with technical terms such as the Kab'ah, Waqfa and Ihram.
- 279 Their knowledge of significant geographical locations such as Saudi Arabia, Muzdalifah, Mina and Arafat is secure.
- 280 Year 9 learners have a good knowledge and understanding of contemporary religious and moral issues such as the Holocaust and anti-Semitism.
- 281 Pupils with SEN make good progress.

Shortcomings

- 282 A small minority of learners fails to consolidate earlier learning and are sometimes reluctant to engage in meaningful group and class discussions.

KS4

Good features

- 283 The majority of learners concentrates very well on their study of religion, life issues and human experiences.
- 284 Almost all learners can recall previous learning well and most can express themselves effectively when justifying their personal opinions.
- 285 Learners of all abilities including those with SEN make extensive use of ICT in their studying and prepare good (and sometimes very good) quality projects on a variety of topics.
- 286 Most learners are acquiring a good range of skills to independently explore religion and human experiences and to express their own responses to questions raised.
- 287 Pupils in Y10 and Y11 in their study of the 1960s (Decade of Change) and the work of Martin Luther King recall many details of his life and assassination as well as the contents of his key speeches. Most learners appreciate the centrality of Christian teaching in his stance.

288 Lower ability learners appreciate the extra support provided and make good progress.

289 Written work is of good quality with some learners producing projects of a very high standard.

Shortcomings

290 A few learners do not express their views clearly and a small minority is reluctant to explore a topic in depth and sometimes chooses to show some negative attitudes.

291 A small minority of learners found the timed assessments very challenging.

School's response to the inspection

The headteacher, staff, pupils and governing body of Dwr-y-Felin welcome this outstanding report and are delighted that the inspection team agreed with the school's self evaluation report in which we described the school as a very good school with many outstanding features. The inspection process was a positive experience and we appreciated the personal and professional challenge associated with that process.

We are pleased that the inspection team recognised the progress that colleagues have made and their commitment to delivering high quality teaching and learning experiences for all pupils. The significant progress that has been made since the last good inspection has been identified and we are particularly proud of the comments confirming the very high standard of teaching, the positive relationships that exist between the pupils and the staff and the level of care provided for all pupils.

The report indicates that the proportion of lessons judged to be good or very good is substantially higher than the national picture. This improvement in teaching has contributed significantly to the ongoing improvement in examination results which are also significantly higher than those achieved by similar schools in Wales.

The recognition of the work of colleagues in providing a range of extra curricular activities, particularly in sport, is coupled with our emphasis on promoting pupils' personal, moral and social skills. The effectiveness of our policies, procedures and strategies for dealing with oppressive behaviour such as bullying has been identified. Pupils feel safe and secure in school with the right amount of support and challenge for them to reach their full potential.

In describing the leadership and management of the school as outstanding, the inspection team recognised the significant contribution made by all colleagues who have a management role and also the commitment and expertise of the governing body.

The fact that we have so many outstanding features including standards achieved, quality of education, leadership and management, external examination results, key skills, personal and social development guidance and support, partnerships and curriculum provision has resulted in great pride within the school community.

We agree with the recommendations in the report and are confident that we are well on the way to addressing the major concerns of the accommodation issues. The next three years are a period of great change and opportunity for the school and the community. As a school we would like to place on record our appreciation of the way in which Mr Harris and his team conducted themselves, their dedication, integrity and professionalism coupled with a strong sense of challenge and a rigorous process give this report considerable credibility.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Dwr-y-Felin Comprehensive School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-16
Address of school	Dwr-y-Felin Road Neath
Postcode	SA10 7RE
Telephone number	01639 635161
Headteacher	Mr Nigel Stacey
Date of appointment	1 June 2002
Chair of governors	Mrs Pam Fussell
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter Harris
Dates of inspection	15 th March 2010

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	202	246	245	249	230			1172

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers			73.7

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	15.9:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	22.4
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	70.7%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	93.3	91.5	91.5	91.4	93	-	-	92.1
Term 2	92.8	91	92.4	90.3	91.1	-	-	91.6
Term 3	92.9	90.2	91.4	88.5	86.9	-	-	90

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	15%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	55 temporary 4 permanent

Appendix 3

This report uses data for 2009 for LEA and Wales comparative information

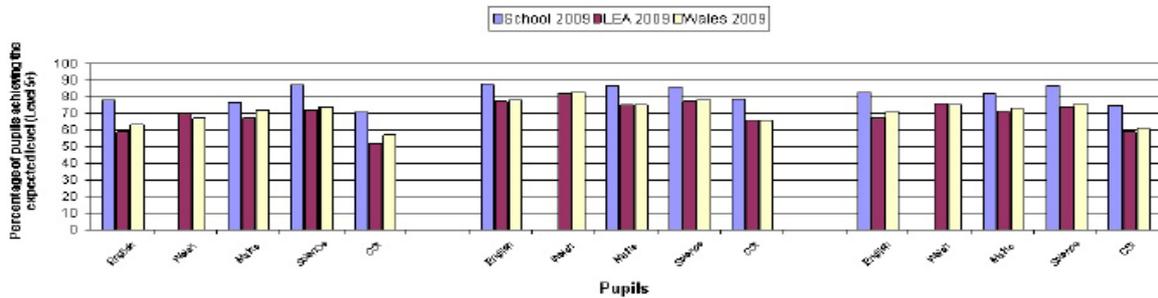
Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive School
Neath Port Talbot

LEA/School no: 671/4067

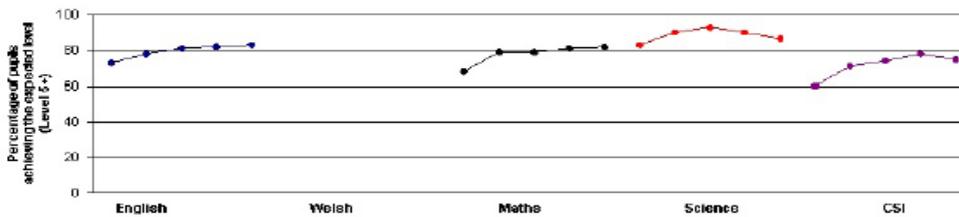
School comparative information: National Curriculum Assessments 2009 with benchmarking Key Stage 3

Percentage of boys, girls, and pupils achieving at least the expected level (Level 5+):

	Boys			Girls			Pupils		
	School 2009	LEA 2009	Wales 2009	School 2009	LEA 2009	Wales 2009	School 2009	LEA 2009	Wales 2009
English	78	59	63	88	77	78	83	67	71
Welsh	.	70	67	.	82	83	.	76	75
Maths	77	67	72	87	75	75	82	71	73
Science	87	72	74	86	77	78	87	74	76
CSI	71	52	57	79	66	66	75	59	61



School Performance over time (2005 - 2009)



Contextual Information

Benchmarked against schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

School's results shown in greyed boxes. Column headings refer to...

Quartile 1	School is in the top 25 per cent.
Quartile 2	School is in the top 50 per cent but not the top 25 per cent.
Quartile 3	School is in the bottom 50 per cent but not the bottom 25 per cent.
Quartile 4	School is in the bottom 25 per cent.

Free School Meal Group

More than or equal to 10 per cent and up to 15 per cent eligible for FSM

	Quartile 4	Lower Quartile Boundary	Quartile 3	Median Boundary	Quartile 2	Upper Quartile Boundary	Quartile 1
English		70		74		79	83
Welsh		67		77		81	
Maths		73		78		81	82
Science		75		80		82	87
CSI		60		66		71	75

Notes:

- Figures for Welsh refer to attainment in Welsh first language only.
- CSI = Core Subject Indicator. To achieve the CSI a pupil must achieve at least the expected level 5 in both Mathematics and Science and either English or Welsh first language.
- If there were no pupils eligible for assessment in a subject for a particular year the graph will discontinue and show a gap for that year.

This report uses data for 2009 for LEA and Wales comparative information

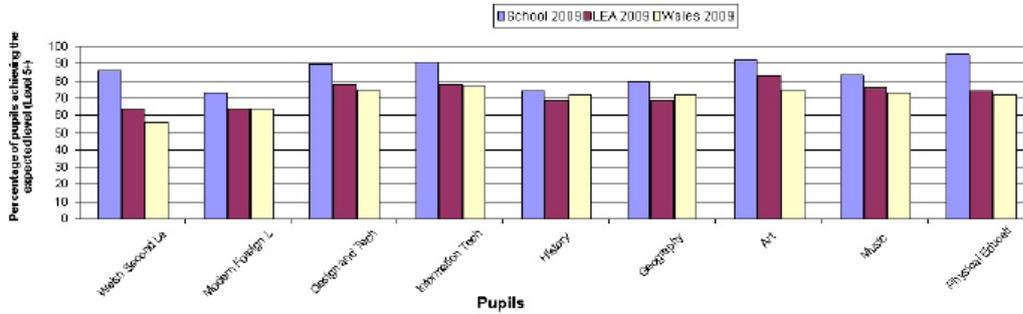
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Neath Port Talbot

LEA/School no: 671/4067

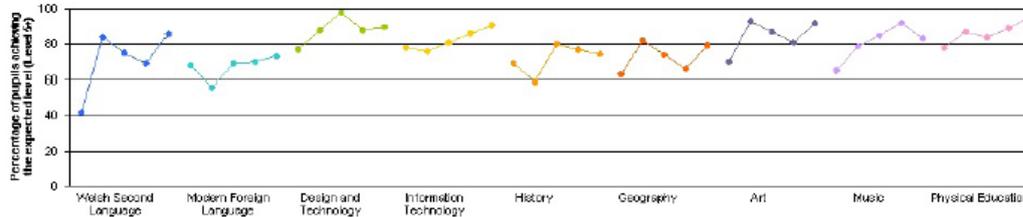
School comparative information: National Curriculum Assessments 2009 with benchmarking
Key Stage 3

Percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 5+)

	Boys			Girls			Pupils		
	School 2009	LEA 2009	Wales 2009	School 2009	LEA 2009	Wales 2009	School 2009	LEA 2009	Wales 2009
Welsh Second Language	82	54	46	89	74	66	86	64	56
Modern Foreign Language	67	55	55	80	74	73	73	64	64
Design and Technology	87	72	68	93	84	83	90	78	75
Information Technology	85	75	72	96	81	83	91	78	77
History	70	62	66	79	76	78	74	69	72
Geography	78	63	67	80	74	77	79	69	72
Art	90	76	66	94	91	85	92	83	75
Music	81	70	66	86	83	81	83	76	73
Physical Education	95	73	72	96	74	72	96	74	72



School Performance over time (2005 - 2009)



Contextual Information

Benchmarked against schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

School's results shown in greyed boxes. Column headings refer to...

- Quartile 1 School is in the top 25 per cent.
- Quartile 2 School is in the top 50 per cent but not the top 25 per cent.
- Quartile 3 School is in the bottom 50 per cent but not the bottom 25 per cent.
- Quartile 4 School is in the bottom 25 per cent.

Free School Meal Group
More than or equal to 10 per cent and up to 15 per cent eligible for FSM

	Quartile 4	Lower Quartile Boundary	Quartile 3	Median Boundary	Quartile 2	Upper Quartile Boundary	Quartile 1
Welsh Second Language		50		61		71	86
Modern Foreign Language		61		68	73		75
Design and Technology		73		80			85
Information Technology		78		83			86
History		72	74	76			80
Geography		74		79			83
Art		76		83			89
Music		72		78			83
Physical Education		68		76		82	96

Notes:

- 1. If there were no pupils eligible for assessment in a subject for a particular year the graph will discontinue and show a gap for that year.

Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive School

SSSP

Summary of Secondary School Performance (1)

LEA/School No. 671/4067

Pupils aged 15

Number of pupils aged 15 who were on roll in January 2009 : 243

Percentage of pupils aged 15 who :

	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Core Subject Indicator (2)	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2008/09	100	95	72	60	54	381
LEA Area 2008/09	98	89	63	49	48	360
Wales 2008/09	99	88	61	47	46	379
School 07/08/09	98	93	70	..	53	370
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	54	366

Number of boys aged 15 who were on roll in January 2009 : 129

Percentage of boys aged 15 who :

	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Core Subject Indicator (2)	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2008/09	99	93	66	55	53	359
LEA Area 2008/09	96	86	59	46	45	341
Wales 2008/09	98	86	55	43	43	357
School 07/08/09	99	92	65	..	51	351
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	50	342

Number of girls aged 15 who were on roll in January 2009 : 114

Percentage of girls aged 15 who :

	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Core Subject Indicator (2)	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2008/09	100	96	80	66	56	406
LEA Area 2008/09	99	93	67	53	51	381
Wales 2008/09	99	91	66	51	50	401
School 07/08/09	98	95	76	..	55	390
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	58	390

Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive School

SSSP

Summary of Secondary School Performance (1)

LEA/School No. 671/4067

Pupils aged 15

	Percentage of pupils aged 15 who :		Percentage of boys aged 15 who :		Percentage of girls aged 15 who :	
	achieved one or more ELQ (3) only	Left full time education without a qualification (4)	achieved one or more ELQ (3) only	Left full time education without a qualification (4)	achieved one or more ELQ (3) only	Left full time education without a qualification (4)
School 2008/09	1	0.8	2	0.8	0	0.9
LEA Area 2008/09	2	0.6	3	0.6	1	0.5
Wales 2008/09	2	0.9	3	1.0	1	0.8
School 07/08/09	1	..	1	..	0	..
School 06/07/08	0	..	1	..	0	..

Pupils aged 17

	Number of pupils aged 17 who were on roll in January 2009 : 0		Number of boys aged 17 who were on roll in January 2009 : 0		Number of girls aged 17 who were on roll in January 2009 : 0	
	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17
School 2008/09						
LEA Area 2008/09	98	559	95	571	100	550
Wales 2008/09	96	688	95	656	97	715
School 07/08/09	..	..	..	..	..	..
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	..	..

- (1) For details on approved qualifications, point scores and contribution to thresholds, please see the Database for Approved Qualifications in Wales (DAQW) at <http://www.daqw.org.uk/>
(2) For information about which syllabuses are included in each subject area see Notes for Guidance.
(3) Entry Level Qualification.
(4) As defined under the National Performance Indicator EDU/002.
.. Data not available

Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive School
School Type: Comprehensive 11-16
Linguistic Delivery: English medium
671/4067

LEA/School No.

Number of SEN Unit/Special Classes: 0

Number of Pupils on Roll in NCY 11: 243

Percentage of compulsory school age pupils eligible for FSM 2008/09: 13.3

Percentage of compulsory school age pupils eligible for FSM 07/08/09: 13.4

Percentage of compulsory school age pupils on SEN register: 13.9

Percentage of 15 year old pupils on SEN register: 16.0

Level of Welsh Bacallaureate Offered:

		Pilot	Pilot	Pilot
Advanced for Post-16 Pupils	Intermediate for post-16 Pupils	Foundation for post-16 Pupils	Intermediate for pre-16 Pupils	Foundation for pre-16 Pupils

Welsh Bacallaureate Offered:

Report by Edward Aneurin Peter Harris
Dwr-y-Felin Comprehensive School, 15/03/10

**Key Stage 4 free school meal benchmarking data for Dwr-Y-Felin Comprehensive School (6714067)
(summary data)**

Free school meals (FSM) benchmarking group (a)	2007	2008	2009
Up to and including 10% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM			
Over 10% and up to and including 15% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM	14.8%	11.9%	13.4%
Over 15% and up to and including 20% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM			
Over 20% and up to and including 30% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM			
Over 30% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM			

Source: Pupil Level Annual Schools' Census (PLASC)

(a) From 2009, a three-year average of these data is used to determine the free school meal benchmarking group for the school, and so these data are presented as a three-year average from that point (i.e. by taking the data for the current year, and also the two years prior in deriving the figure).

Summary of positions within the relevant FSM benchmarking group for each achievement (a)

Subject	2007	2008	2009
Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and Maths	.	1	1
Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the level 2 threshold	2	1	2
Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the level 1 threshold	3	1	2
Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the Core Subject Indicator	2	2	2
Average wider points score across all subjects	3	2	3
Percentage of 15 year olds achieving a level 2 qualification in English	2	1	1
Percentage of 15 year olds achieving a level 2 qualification in Mathematics	1	1	1
Percentage of 15 year olds achieving a level 2 qualification in Science	2	2	3

Absence data (a):

Percentage of half-day sessions missed due to absence	3	4	~
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Sources: Pupil Examination Performance Information and Pupil Level Annual Schools' Census (PLASC)

(a) A rating of 1 means that school's position is within the highest 25% of schools in the relevant benchmarking group.
 A rating of 2 means that school's position is within the highest 50%, but not the highest 25% of schools in the relevant benchmarking group.
 A rating of 3 means that school's position is within the lowest 50%, but not the lowest 25% of schools in the relevant benchmarking group.
 A rating of 4 means that school's position is within the lowest 25% of schools in the relevant benchmarking group.
 This system applies to both subject performance and absence. A rating of 1 indicates above average performance and also above average absence within the relevant benchmarking group, while a rating of 4 indicates below average levels of each indicator.

The symbol "." means that data are not applicable.

The symbol "~" means that data are not available until late 2009.

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Inspectors spent a total of 45 days in the school and were joined by the school's deputy headteacher as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 105 lessons;
- registrations and assemblies; and
- some extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:

- staff, parents and governors before the inspection;
- senior managers, middle managers, teachers, support assistants and administrative staff;
- groups of pupils representing each year group;
- representatives of the school council; and
- business and other school partners.

The team also considered:

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

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

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Peter Harris Registered Inspector	Context, Summary, Recommendations, Appendices Key Question 1, Key Question 5,
Gwynoro Jones Lay Inspector	Contributing to all key questions
Alan Kelly	Key Question 2
David Hughes	Key Question 3
Dai B Morgan	Key Question 4
Martyn S Williams	Key Question 6
Andrew Matthews	Key Question 7
Paul Donovan	English
Dafydd Treharne	Welsh second language Religious education
Keith Hopkins	Design technology
Emyr Roberts	Music
Debra Makin	Physical education
Catherine Falcus	Peer assessor
Martin Howell	Nominee
Steve Lloyd	Lesson support
Clive Rowlands	Lesson support

Acknowledgement

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

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