

**Inspection under Section 10 of the
Schools Inspections Act 1996**

**Ysgol Ardudwy
Ffordd y Traeth
Harlech
LL46 2UH**

School Number: 6614034

Date of Inspection: 20/03/06

by

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16281**

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- * secondary schools;
- * special schools;
- * pupil referral units;
- * independent schools;
- * further education;
- * adult and community-based learning;
- * youth support services;
- * LEAs;
- * teacher education and training;
- * work-based learning;
- * careers companies; and
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- * makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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

The inspection of Ysgol Ardudwy took place between 20/03/06 and 24/03/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Margaret Frances Rhys Robertson undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

“There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All 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

Contents	Page
Context	5
Summary	7
Recommendations	13
Standards	14
Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?	14
The quality of education and training	18
Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	18
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?	25
Leadership and management	29
Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	29
Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	31
Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	33
Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning	35
Welsh first language	35
Science	37
History	38
Geography	40
Religious education (including religious studies)	42
Electronics	43
School's response to the inspection	44
Appendices	45
1 Basic information about the school	45
2 School data and indicators	46
3 National Curriculum assessments results	47
4 Evidence base of the inspection	49
5 Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	50

Context

The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol Ardudwy is a naturally bilingual community comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-16. It is maintained by Gwynedd Local Education Authority. Currently it has 380 pupils on roll. The number of teachers including the headteacher is 29. The school was last inspected in March 2000. Since that time there have been no major changes in the nature of the school.
2. The school serves the small coastal communities of Penrhyndeudraeth, Harlech and Barmouth and the surrounding rural areas. It is an area of mixed economy of mainly agriculture and tourism. The agricultural industry has declined in recent years and most major employment in the area has now ceased. Twelve point eight percent (12.8%) of the pupils are registered as eligible to receive free school meals, which is very slightly higher than the county percentage of 12.2%
3. Twenty nine pupils, including a number from outside the catchment area, (about 8% of all pupils) have a statement of special educational needs [SEN] which is just over double the percentage for Wales. In addition, 68 pupils (about 18% of Y7-Y11) are on one of the action stages of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. This is similar to the national average for Wales. There are no pupils with National Curriculum [NC] disapplications. There is one pupil in Local Authority care.
4. Linguistically the catchment is mixed. Sixty seven percent (67%) of pupils come from homes where English is the main language but about 70% of pupils can speak Welsh to first language standard. The school implements a bilingual policy and both languages are used for teaching and learning across the curriculum.

The school's priorities and targets

5. The school's main priorities noted in its current School Development Plan [SDP] for 2005-06 are to:
 - raise standards at KS4;
 - establish an alternative curriculum at KS4 to meet the needs of a small group of pupils requiring a more vocational approach to learning;
 - review the school assessment policy;
 - further develop the school's literacy and numeracy strategies;
 - continue to develop pupils' information technology [IT] skills across the curriculum;

- continue to develop pastoral and curricular links between the primary and secondary schools;
- further develop the school and departmental self evaluation process;
- monitor strategy for improving attendance;
- implement the strategy for reducing teacher workload;
- implement guidelines for responsibility allowances;
- further develop the role of middle managers;
- implement the programme for supporting newly qualified teachers [NQT];
- upgrade sports' facilities;
- develop a homework club and a children's evening club.

6. The SDP (2005-06) also sets out the school's test and examination targets. These are :

Key Stage 3 tests

Mathematics	62% of pupils to achieve Level 5+
English	64% of pupils to achieve Level 5+
Welsh	86% of pupils to achieve Level 5+
Science	66% of pupils to achieve Level 5+
Core Subject Indicator [CSI]	51% of pupils to achieve Level 5+

Key Stage 4 examinations

5+ A*-C at GCSE	65%
5+ A*-G at GCSE	100%
Core Subject Indicator [CSI]	56%

Summary

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Subject	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
Welsh (first language)	2	2
Science	3	3
History	3	4
Geography	3	3
Religious education	2	2 *
Electronics	-	2

* including the GCSE religious education examination course

7. Overall, in these subjects, standards of achievement in the lessons are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
2%	42%	49%	7%	0%

8. These figures are lower than the current Welsh Assembly Government target for the whole of Wales, namely that a total of 50% of lessons should be Grade 2 or higher. They are significantly lower than the target for 2007, namely that a total of 65% of lessons should be Grade 2 or higher.

9. The following table shows pupils' standards in the key skills.

Key skill	Key stage 3	Key stage 4
Speaking and listening	2	2
Reading	2	2
Writing	2	2
Application of number	3	3
Information and communication technology	3	3
Wider key skills		
Working with others	2	2
Problem solving	3	3
Improving own learning	3	3

10. Pupils have good communication skills in both Welsh and English. They use number skills effectively in mathematics but do not consolidate and apply these skills sufficiently across the curriculum. There are both strengths and shortcomings in pupils' ability to use information and communication technology. Pupils work well with each other and are able to solve simple problems. Their capacity to work independently is underdeveloped.
11. Pupils' bilingual competence is good with outstanding features. Although only one third of pupils come from homes where Welsh is the predominant language, 70% are able to speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard. This is an outstanding feature. They are familiar with specialist terms in both languages and this is of much benefit in classes where the teaching and learning is bilingual.
12. In key stage 3, pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests over the past three years have improved and are now similar to national figures and a little higher than figures for Gwynedd. In 2005, compared to similar schools across Wales in terms of levels of free school meals, the percentage of pupils who gained level 5 or better overall, in the core subjects, placed the school below the median. In 2004, the school was amongst the lowest 25% compared to similar schools in Wales.
13. In key stage 4, the percentage of pupils who gain 5 or more A* to C grades shows some variation over the past three years. In 2003 results were good. In 2005, although there was some improvement from the previous year with 50% of pupils gaining 5 A*-C grades, this is lower than the figure for Wales and significantly lower than that for Gwynedd. When compared to similar schools across Wales belonging to the same free school meals group, these results fall into the lower quartile. In 2005, 97% of pupils achieved grades A*-G in at least five GCSE subjects reflecting the pattern over a period of three years. This is a very good achievement, with the figure higher than the figures for Gwynedd and Wales.

14. Pupils with special needs and those receiving additional support make good progress but the most able do not always reach their full potential due to lack of challenge in some tasks.
15. Most pupils are aware of the level at which they are working. They are however often unclear of how to improve their own learning because targets are not specific enough for them to know what is expected of them and the approaches needed to succeed.
16. The vast majority of pupils behave well and are courteous and respectful to others.
17. The overall percentage of attendance over the last three terms is 92.3%. This is higher than the Welsh average (90.6%). A significant number of families take holidays during term time and this impacts on the level of attendance.

The quality of education and training

18. The grades for the quality of teaching in the six subjects the team inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
10%	50%	36%	4%	0%

19. Due to staff absence, grades were awarded for only two lessons in history.
20. The grades for the quality of teaching in all lessons observed are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
12%	52%	33%	3%	0%

21. There is an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The figures exceed the current target determined by the Welsh Assembly Government for the whole of Wales, namely that a total of 50% of lessons should be Grade 2 or higher. They are very close to the target of 65% set for 2007.
22. In about two-thirds of lessons, good planning ensures a balance and range of activities to meet the needs of all pupils. In the best lessons there is effective use of questioning to challenge pupils and extend their knowledge and understanding. They also receive constructive oral feedback linked to the objectives of the lesson. There are some lessons however which lack pace and challenge and pupils lose interest in their work. In general these lessons offer little variety in the tasks and are over-dependant on worksheets.
23. There is inconsistency in the quality of marking. In general work is tick marked regularly but in over half of departments comments made by the teacher do not give sufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. There is little regular pupil self assessment and peer assessment and pupils are generally unaware of the criteria for assessment.

24. Reports for parents are of good quality. They are personal and often provide useful information of a pupil's strengths and weaknesses.

Learning experiences

25. The curriculum meets the needs of all the pupils and reflects the aims set out for all pupils of statutory school age in the 1996 Education Act. The key stage 3 curriculum is enriched by offering drama as an additional subject. In key stage 4, each pupil is offered a wide range of opportunities to obtain a range of GCSE, entrance level and vocational qualifications. A few year 10 pupils follow an appropriate alternative curriculum which includes a day off-site and an extended period of work experience and lessons to develop core competencies. This pilot scheme offers pupils good opportunities to develop confidence and self discipline.
26. The quality of provision and planning for key skills has good features with some shortcomings. A number of key stage 3 pupils receive useful additional support in literacy and the work of the literacy group has had a positive impact in improving pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum. Arrangements for developing numeracy and information and communication technology skills have not yet had a similar impact although there has been some improvement in these areas since the last inspection. There are no formal arrangements to promote pupil standards in some of the wider key skills. The school promotes the development of pupils' bilingual skills very well through the arrangements it makes for structuring the linguistic medium of subject teaching across the school.
27. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are well attended. These opportunities together with the successful annual 'Activities Week' and trips abroad enrich pupils' experiences and widen their horizons. They allow good links to develop with the local community and also help to increase their understanding of other cultures.
28. The acts of communal worship meet statutory requirements. In the best examples of communal worship in class, pupils reflect upon and discuss moral concepts. The school places much emphasis on self respect and respect towards others.
29. The school's curriculum reflects world of work requirements very well. The numerous links are coordinated and promoted effectively. Many year 10 and 11 pupils spend periods in the workplace. Every pupil in year 10 has a period of work experience which is arranged successfully in conjunction with Careers Wales.
30. The school plans pupil care in a well thought out and thorough manner. It works closely with all relevant external agencies to ensure the best standard of care for a wide range of needs. The teachers, administrative staff, the senior management team, the teacher for inclusion and the county welfare officer all co-operate very effectively to monitor the pattern of absences.

31. Parents appreciate the information they receive about the school and any concerns individual parents may have are dealt with promptly. There are outstanding curricular and pastoral links with primary schools in the area ensuring that transition from one phase to another runs smoothly.
32. Several aspects of the provision the school provides for pupils with special educational needs are outstanding. Individual educational plans are detailed and comprehensive. They are shared with pupils, parents and school staff to ensure consistency in the knowledge, strategies and identification of future progress. All year 11 pupils on the special educational needs register last year achieved at least three GCSE accreditations illustrating the success of the school's provision.
33. The school has appropriate arrangements for meeting the needs of pupils from a variety of backgrounds. The local education authority's language policy is well implemented; there is equal curricular access for both boys and girls; pupils with physical disabilities are well integrated into school life as are the very few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. There are effective policies and procedures to deal with oppressive behaviour including bullying.

Leadership and management

34. The headteacher shows much commitment to improving the quality of provision and standards of achievement. He leads and manages the school effectively and is very well supported by his two deputies. This senior management team work tirelessly to ensure that support is provided where necessary and progress is being made, including in the subjects which have been adversely affected by long-term staff absences
35. In response to a self evaluation programme of middle management, heads of department are set clear targets which are regularly reviewed. This process indicates that there is an improvement in this area since the last inspection and inexperienced heads of department are becoming better established in their role.
36. The governing body has ensured that the school meets all statutory requirements. Governors participate fully in the school's self-evaluation process and actively participate in discussions about the school's strategic development. Formal links have been established between governors and individual subject departments. Overall, the governors make an outstanding contribution to the school's leadership.
37. The school's self evaluation report analyses its strengths and areas which need further attention correctly and thoroughly. It is based on the managers' good knowledge of the school.

38. The findings of the inspection team correspond very closely to the findings of the school's self evaluation report but the inspection team has awarded a higher grade to three of the key questions. The school has experienced a period of instability as regards staffing and, as a result, it was difficult for the school to make a realistic judgement on some aspects of self evaluation.
39. The school uses information from the self evaluation as part of the process of drawing up the school development plan. This notes specific targets, responsibilities, costs and a timetable for implementation. It also notes criteria for evaluating strategies for improvement. However, it does not pay sufficient attention to aspects linked to learning and teaching.
40. The school has enough well qualified, experienced teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum in almost all areas. In areas where non-specialists teach, every effort is made to ensure appropriate support is provided. There are good resources for teaching all National Curriculum subjects. Pupils are taught in good accommodation with sufficient classrooms of appropriate size. Facilities for both indoor and outdoor sports are good and well used.
41. The day to day management of the budget is good and the school has careful and thorough procedures to earmark and monitor expenditure. Approximately 7% of the budget is held in reserve this financial year which is higher than that the Welsh Assembly Government recommends (5%). This is justified however because of the need to address the increased staffing costs caused by long term absences.
42. Overall, considering pupil standards and their results in external tests and examinations, the quality of the teaching, the breadth of the curriculum offered and the quality of pupil support and guidance, the school offers value for money.
43. The school has responded well to the key issues noted in the previous inspection. However, the school is still dealing with some issues such as assessment and shortcomings in standards in a few subjects.

Recommendations

- R1 maintain the good standards and raise standards of achievement in science, geography and history in KS3 and KS4; *
- R2 improve the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more passes at grades A*-C in GCSE external examinations; *
- R3 continue to develop pupils' skills in the application of number and information and communication technology across the curriculum; *
- R4 use a variety of activities to develop pupils' capacity to work independently and their ability to improve their own learning and performance, and
- R5 develop assessment as a tool for improving teaching and learning including the use of self and peer assessment. *

* This issue has been identified in the 2005-06 school development plan and the school's self evaluation document.

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

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

Success in reaching agreed learning goals

45. The overall standards achieved in the six subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	KS3	KS4
Welsh (first language)	2	2
Science	3	3
Religious education	2	2*
History	3	4
Geography	3	3
Electronics	-	2

*including the GCSE Religious Studies examination course

46. Overall, in these subjects, the grades awarded by the inspectors are as follows:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key Stage 3	3%	41%	56%	0%	0%
Key Stage 4	0%	43%	39%	17%	0%
Whole school	2%	42%	49%	7%	0%

47. These figures are lower than the current Welsh Assembly Government's target for the whole of Wales, namely that a total of 50% of lessons should be Grade 2 or higher. They are significantly lower than the target for 2007, namely that a total of 65% of lessons should be Grade 2 or higher.

48. The following table shows pupils' standards in the key skills. Pupils achieve similar standards in the language skills in Welsh and English.

Key skill	Key stage 3	Key stage 4
Speaking and listening	2	2
Reading	2	2
Writing	2	2
Application of number	3	3
Information and communication technology	3	3

49. Pupils have good communication skills in both Welsh and English. The vast majority speak clearly when responding to questioning and during group and class discussions. Most listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Pupils can write well at length if given opportunities to do so. They make good use of technical vocabulary in both their written and oral work. Many pupils read with confidence and can use texts to search for information.
50. There are both strengths and shortcomings in pupils' ability to use number skills. They do so effectively in mathematics but they have limited opportunities to consolidate and apply these skills in other subjects across the curriculum.
51. Pupils use information and communication technology well to convey information, such as in the presentation of coursework and the production of posters. Their skills are extended in a few subjects such as design and technology and art but there are a limited number of examples of pupils handling data, processing information and modelling.
52. Pupils' bilingual competence is good with outstanding features. Although only one third of pupils come from homes where Welsh is the predominant language, 70% are able to speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard. They are familiar with specialist terms in both languages and this is of much benefit in classes where the teaching and learning is bilingual. Many pupils are able to read texts in one language and discuss them or write about them in the other.
53. In key stage 3, pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests over the past three years have improved and are now similar to national figures and a little higher than figures for Gwynedd. In 2005, compared to similar schools across Wales in terms of levels of free school meals, the percentage of pupils who gained level 5 or better overall, in the core subjects, placed the school below the median. In 2004, the school was amongst the lowest 25% compared to similar schools in Wales.
54. Results in Welsh and English have improved significantly over the past three years and in 2005 were considerably higher than the national figures and those for Gwynedd. In both Welsh and English they placed the school in the highest quartile for similar schools in Wales. Improvements have also been made in mathematics and science. In mathematics results in 2005 compared favourably to national and LEA figures and placed the school above the median for similar schools in Wales. In science however, although progress has been made, the results in 2005 were in the lowest quartile for similar schools in Wales. On the basis of all data comparisons taken together, science is not performing as well as the other core subjects.

55. In key stage 4, the percentage of pupils who gain five or more A* to C grades at GCSE shows some variation over the past three years. In 2003 results were good. In 2005, although there was some improvement from the previous year with 50% of pupils gaining five A*-C grades. This is lower than the figure for Wales and significantly lower than that for Gwynedd. The overall percentage gaining 5 or more passes at GCSE at grades A*-C was in the lowest quartile in both years.
56. Compared to similar schools across Wales, the average GCSE points' score of pupils¹ in 2005 was in the upper half of schools, as it was in 2004.
57. In 2005, 97% of pupils achieved grades A*-G in at least five GCSE subjects reflecting the pattern over a period of three years. This is a very good achievement, with the figure higher than the figures for Gwynedd and Wales.

Progress in learning

58. Pupils of average and below average abilities, including those with special needs and those receiving additional support make good progress. The most able do not always reach their full potential due to insufficient challenge in the tasks and this is a significant shortcoming.
59. Pupils work well with each other showing good co-operation when carrying out tasks. They can solve simple problems but they are not regularly challenged in this way. Their capacity to work independently is limited.
60. In general pupils show a good awareness of the level at which they are working in individual subjects. They are not always certain, however, of how to improve their own learning as they are unclear of what is expected of them and the approaches needed to succeed.

Development of personal, social and learning skills

61. Pupils develop good personal, social and learning skills. The vast majority are well motivated and work productively. They show interest in the work and most display good powers of concentration.
62. The behaviour of the vast majority of the pupils is good. They respond to adults' instructions appropriately and are polite and welcoming to visitors. However, a small number of pupils misbehave.
63. The percentage for attendance over the last three terms was 92.3%. This is higher than the national percentage (90.6%). A significant number of families take holidays during term time and this impacts on the level of attendance.

¹ which is based on the individual pupils' examination results in all of their subjects in KS4 examinations

64. Pupils are punctual to school.
65. Through their work in some subjects pupils are developing a good awareness of different cultures, beliefs and lifestyles. They show respect, care and concern for others and this is demonstrated in the work they do for charities and in the activities that they carry out to improve the local community. They also perform well in local events.
66. Pupils are developing a good awareness of the world of work. They prepare well for effective participation in the work place through their personal and social education lessons, business studies, studies involving the alternative curriculum, careers' advice and work experience.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

67. In its self-evaluation report, the school judged this key question as Grade 2. The findings of the inspection team match many of the school's evaluations. However, the team judged that there were also a number of shortcomings.

The quality of education and training

68. The grades for the quality of teaching in the six subjects the team inspected are as follows:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	14%	48%	38%	0%	0%
Key stage 4	5%	52%	33%	10%	0%
Whole school	10%	50%	36%	4%	0%

69. Due to staff absence, grades were awarded for only two lessons in history.

70. The grades for the quality of teaching in all lessons observed are as follows:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	14%	55%	31%	0%	0%
Key stage 4	10%	48%	35%	6%	0%
Whole school	12%	52%	33%	3%	0%

71. There is an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The percentage of lessons awarded the equivalent of a grade 2 or above has improved significantly from 49% to 64%. The figures exceed the current target determined by the Welsh Assembly Government for the whole of Wales, namely that a total of 50% of lessons should be Grade 2 or higher. They are very close to the target of 65% set for 2007. Lessons awarded grade 1 have increased from 0% at the previous inspection to 12%. These were observed in a minority of subjects. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching both within and across subjects.

72. Two characteristic features of teaching in the school are:

- the natural provision of equality of opportunity for all pupils and
- the careful application of the school's language policy which supports, develops and improves pupils' bilingualism. Good quality bilingual resources coupled with skilful teaching enables pupils to become totally bilingual.

These are strengths.

73. In lessons where the teaching was judged to be good with outstanding features teachers:
- engage pupils throughout the lesson, creating a classroom ethos for learning;
 - provide a wide range of well-planned activities delivered at a suitable pace within set time limits;
 - ensure that all pupils participate fully by providing work to meet the needs of pupils of all ability, including those with SEN and those who are more able;
 - explain clearly the learning objectives at the start of the lesson, continually referring pupils to these during, and at the end of, the lesson;
 - use appropriate and effective questioning that involve all pupils to challenge and extend their knowledge and understanding and
 - assess pupils' work thoroughly and provide detailed feedback on how it can be improved.
74. In 64% of the lessons the teaching was judged to be at least good with no important shortcomings. In these lessons teachers:
- plan and prepare well providing lessons with a good balance and range of learning activities to meet the needs of all pupils;
 - forge good relationships with pupils and provide encouragement and praise;
 - have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement;
 - explain clearly the learning objectives at the start of the lesson which they reinforce during the plenary sessions;
 - have good subject knowledge and an awareness of the requirements of the examination syllabi and
 - provide planned homework tasks designed to support pupils' learning.
75. In a third of the lessons observed, good features outweigh shortcomings. These lessons share many of the good features listed above but also have some of the following shortcomings:
- inappropriate pace and challenge resulting in pupils losing interest in their work;
 - lack of variety of activities;
 - overuse of worksheets restricting opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners;
 - learning objectives not shared with pupils;
 - inadequate questioning with missed opportunities to extend pupils' understanding and
 - overlong teacher presentations.
76. In the very small number of lessons observed which had some good features, but shortcomings in important areas the work was undemanding and lacked sufficient variety to maintain motivation. The pace of the lesson was slow and pupils made limited progress.

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

77. Good features outweigh shortcomings in the quality of assessment across the school.
78. The school satisfies the statutory requirements for assessing the National Curriculum at key stage 3, and the regulations of the examination boards at key stage 4. The school complies with the assessment requirements of pupils with additional educational needs.
79. Both the management and departments are adept at analysing the data from public examinations, tests and assessments. The analysis often feeds back into the departments' self-evaluation and consequent strategies for improving standards. This is an evident strength, although there is less evidence of day to day marking or of the results of internal school assessments feeding back into teaching.
80. Since the last inspection, the school's assessment policy has been revised and a whole school system has been developed for collating pupils' achievements several times a year. Departments report on pupils' progress using the National Curriculum levels at key stage 3 and GCSE grades at key stage 4. This ensures an element of consistency but there is insufficient validation of individual departments' assessments and the consistency of assessments within departments. Very few departments have obvious means of ensuring accuracy, such as a well annotated, recent assessment portfolio of pupils' work.
81. There is inconsistency in the quality of marking. In over half of departments teachers' marking does not explicitly show pupils how to improve their work and there is little follow up to corrections made.
82. Pupils develop some understanding of the assessment process mainly from their reports and feedback from assessments made. In approximately three quarters of subjects there is little regular pupil self assessment and peer assessment. Pupils are often not aware of the criteria for assessment and of what they need to do to improve their work.
83. Parents and carers receive a full report and two interim reports every year. The full reports are handwritten and personal. Subject comments in the annual reports are very readable and often give a good indication of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. In addition, pupils receive recommendations or targets on how to improve their work. Subject comments and targets vary in detail. Pupils do not contribute to their own reports but do discuss them with their pastoral tutor. In this way there is a clear link between the school's pastoral and academic support systems.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

84. This grade corresponds to the grade in the school's self-evaluation report.

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

85. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the 1996 Education Act. The curriculum for key stage 3 meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and Religious Education.
86. The curriculum is broad and balanced across the two key stages and it ensures continuity and progression between years and across key stages.
87. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, are offered access to all areas of the curriculum.
88. The key stage 3 curriculum is enriched by offering drama as an additional subject.
89. At key stage 4, the school offers pupils an extensive selection of opportunities to ensure that they can gain a range of GCSE, entrance level and vocational qualifications. A few year 10 pupils follow an appropriate alternative curriculum which includes time off-site each week, extended work experience and qualifications in the core competencies. This pilot scheme provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their confidence and self-discipline.
90. Pupils' bilingual competence is promoted very well through the arrangements the school makes for the teaching medium throughout the school. All Welsh speaking pupils and pupils who have learnt Welsh to a high standard study all subjects through the medium of Welsh at key stage 3. Those pupils who are not as fluent in Welsh study expressive subjects mainly through the medium of Welsh. At key stage 4, the linguistic progression is maintained.
91. The school has obtained the Basic Skills' Agency Quality Mark for the second time.
92. Additional lessons are arranged for key stage 3 pupils who have difficulties with literacy. This arrangement is successful.
93. The departments' schemes of work note opportunities to develop the basic and key skills. The school has literacy and numeracy working parties. However, the full impact of these plans is yet to be reflected in the pupils' standards of achievement in numeracy and information and communication technology. There are no formal arrangements to promote pupils' standards in some of the wider key skills.

94. Form tutors present a programme of personal and social education in fifteen minute periods three times a week and there is cross-curricular provision. Bearing in mind that registration and an act of communal worship are held during the morning sessions, there is little time for form tutors to develop pupils' personal and social values in depth.
95. During the summer term, the normal timetable is suspended and the school holds an 'Activities Week'. Various events are organised which include guest speakers, visits and charity work. These contribute well towards broadening pupils' horizons and curricular experiences.
96. Teachers set homework regularly. The quality of tasks set, however, is uneven. Pupils make good use of their diaries to record tasks. The diaries also allow for communication between teachers and parents.
97. During the lunch break and after school, there are a range of activities such as the chess club, sports' clubs, musical activities, a drama club, an art club, a homework club and a year 11 mentoring scheme. These enrich pupils' experiences.
98. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully promoted through the daily life and curriculum of the school.
99. Communal worship conforms to statutory requirements. In the best examples of services, pupils meditate and discuss moral concepts. The school lays great emphasis on self-respect and respecting others.
100. Lessons, extra-curricular activities and foreign visits give pupils opportunities to become acquainted with other cultures. Pupils' social development is good. The School Council is developing as an effective forum for informing management of pupils' views. Pupils contribute generously to charities and derive much pleasure from participating in the fund-raising activities.
101. The content and presentation of the school prospectus and the Year 9 options booklet are good. They provide parents and pupils with useful information.
102. The school's links with the community are very good. The 'Activities Week' reinforces pupils' relationships with their locality. During work experience week in year 10 placements are provided for pupils in the community. Local speakers, including two nurses and a police representative, contribute towards the personal and social education programme.
103. A successful relationship has been developed with Coleg Meirion Dwyfor. College representatives meet year 11 pupils during their final year in school and the prospective students visit college sites.

104. The school co-operates very well with its feeder primary schools. Teachers from both sectors meet together to discuss curricular matters. The head teacher and the key stage 3 co-ordinator visit the primary schools. Pupils in years 5 and 6 visit the secondary school and take part in curricular and social activities. These arrangements promote effective transition.
105. The school has formed a successful teacher training partnership with Bangor University College.
106. The school curriculum reflects the requirements of the world of work very well. There are numerous links that are co-ordinated and promoted effectively by a conscientious teacher. Requirements have been mapped to fully meet the requirements of the relevant national framework.
107. During the 'Activities Week' each year group takes part in projects which develop skills such as problem solving and working as a team. This is an example of very good practice.
108. Over half the pupils in years 10 and 11 have opted for the business studies course where they study the characteristics of business and employment as part of their GCSE course. Visiting speakers discuss the advantages and disadvantages of running a business with year 11 pupils. However there are few opportunities within the school for pupils to run their own small businesses.
109. Many year 10 and 11 pupils spend time in the workplace and those have been carefully inspected from the health and safety perspective. Each pupil in year 10 has a period of work experience arranged in conjunction with Careers Wales. Pupils who have opted to study catering spend time at local hotels and restaurants.
110. The school has a close link with the area's industries, particularly the tourist industry. However, the school has not formally sought the views of employers on the school's curricular provision and how well it meets their needs.
111. The *Curriculum Cymreig* (Welsh Curriculum) is evident in many subjects and is reflected in cultural activities such as competing successfully in *Urdd* (Welsh League of Youth) eisteddfodau.
112. The school is well aware of the economically deprived nature of its catchment area. Pupils who do not have access to computers at home can use school equipment in the resource centre after school hours. Each pupil is offered opportunities to go on educational visits and the school offers assistance towards the cost in cases of hardship. In running its own canteen, the school has succeeded in providing nourishing meals at a very reasonable price.
113. There are very good opportunities for developing pupils' awareness of sustainable development. This aspect features highly in subjects such as religious education, science and geography.

114. Good sustainable development principles are evident in the school's daily life, such as saving energy and recycling paper. The school has gained a silver award in the 'Green School' scheme. The theme for the 'Activities Week' is the environment.
115. The school encourages and enables the local community to use its land and buildings. The town's health centre is located in the school grounds. The fitness centre is very well used by the community.
116. All the school's pupils elect school captains each year. By arranging for pupils to design posters, to prepare and deliver speeches, to hold election meetings and to vote for their chosen representative, the school develops pupils' awareness of citizenship very effectively.

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

Grade 1: good with outstanding features

117. The inspection team awarded this question a higher grade than the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report as it considered there to be a number of outstanding features in the school's provision.
118. The school plans pupil care in a very well thought out and thorough manner. It works in close conjunction with all the relevant external agencies to provide the best standard of care for a wide range of needs.
119. The school's partnership with parents is good. Twice a year parents receive a newsletter. They also regularly receive relevant individual information as well as information about the life and work of the school. There is an 'open door' policy and parents feel welcome in school. Their views are given good consideration and any concerns individual parents have are dealt with promptly.
120. The Friends of the School raise substantial sums of money to provide additional facilities, such as lockers for pupils. In its role as a forum for parents, this committee also communicates with other parents, providing them with additional information. Individual committee members are very good at providing a local point of contact for parents in outlying areas. Members and other parents also lend a hand during sports or cultural events.
121. The school makes good arrangements to provide pupils in Year 9 and their parents with clear information about the good range of options available in Year 10. A useful options handbook is produced, the careers' advisor attends the Year 9 parents' evening and individual parents who have concerns can make an appointment to further discuss their child's options.
122. Visits to the local tertiary education college provide Year 11 pupils with all the information they need to make informed choices.
123. There are outstanding curricular and pastoral links with primary schools in the area. Pupils in years 5 and 6 are offered opportunities to spend a day at Ysgol Ardudwy. The outstanding feature of the transition arrangements is the friendly competitive element between the primary schools participating in the two fold competition. Pupils settle in their new school very quickly and are happy.
124. Pupils are well acquainted with the school rules. They claim that there is little if any bullying and if there were it would be dealt with without delay. They also testify that there are many members of staff whom they could approach and whom they trust if they had problems of a personal nature.
125. The School Council is an effective body for voicing the opinions of the pupils. The school has responded to the Council's requests on a variety of issues and pupils are very pleased with their new toilets and the healthy food offered in the canteen.

126. Pupils who need help in the basic skills are identified early. They are given a very high standard of extra support in small groups during school hours and after school. Transport home is provided for those who stay after normal school hours. This also facilitates pupils' involvement in other varied, extra curricular activities. These arrangements are an outstanding feature.
127. The personal and social education programme provides good quality support to pupils. Health and sex education are provided by the science department and by the nurses who visit once a week. The police and other speakers also have an input and subjects such as English develop pupils' awareness of global issues. The Welsh department makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' knowledge of Wales and, along with other departments, facilitates pupils' cultural development.
128. Pupils' moral development is a natural part of the life and work of the school and the School Council is heavily involved in fund raising activities for charities of its choice.
129. Opportunities to develop fitness are offered through a number of good sports' activities for boys and girls. The girls, in particular, appreciate chances they are given to play football, rugby and cricket.
130. The personal and social education provision is well enhanced by the 'Activities' Week'.
131. Pastoral arrangements have good features with no significant shortcomings. The key stage 3 and 4 co-ordinators work in close conjunction with form tutors and the senior management team on a formal and informal basis. The management team responds effectively and promptly to ensure the early resolution of problems before they escalate. The co-ordinators also have an effective curricular role in monitoring formal assessments and reports. They respond to individual concerns and conduct interviews with pupils once a term after school.
132. This year, the school has extended the arrangements to support pupils who underachieve. Currently, year 10 pupils who are likely to underachieve are targeted and given extra support at an early stage. This is an outstanding feature of the school's provision.
133. The teachers, administrative staff, the senior management team, the teacher for inclusion and the county educational welfare officer co-operate very effectively to monitor patterns of absence. As a result of their efforts, the school has achieved its aim of raising attendance levels to 92% last term.
134. Through its reward system, the school is effective in encouraging good behaviour and recognising effort, as well as high standards. The school/home diary is a valuable point of contact to ensure parents' support.

135. The quality of the careers' provision is very good. The statutory careers' education framework is appropriately implemented under the guidance of the school's careers co-ordinator. There is close co-operation with Careers Wales. A representative visits the school on a weekly basis to advise pupils in years 9, 10 and 11. The pupils increasingly use the Careers Wales' on-line resources. With the assistance of the resource centre officer, two careers interviews are arranged for every pupil in year 10 and year 11. There are also opportunities for pupils in key stage 3 to receive one to one advice.
136. The school implements detailed policies and procedures to promote each pupil's health, safety and wellbeing. The site manager co-ordinates the work under the guidance of a member of the senior management team.
137. The school carries out thorough risk assessment procedures of the school site and for external visits. Electrical and fire fighting equipment are inspected regularly. Three members of staff hold current first aid qualifications.
138. A new, safe point has been allocated for pupils to embark and disembark from the buses at the beginning and end of the school day. There is careful supervision, including a crossing supervisor, for pupils walking to the station for their train.
139. Appropriate attention is paid to health and safety requirements during physical education lessons and in workshops and laboratories, during work experience and on the alternative curriculum course.
140. A member of the senior management team and the chairman of the governors are responsible for supervising the school's child protection arrangements. All members of staff are reminded of the procedures and the county protocol for child protection at the beginning of each academic year. The staff handbook also provides information. The school works with appropriate external agencies as necessary. The standard of the arrangements is good with outstanding features.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

141. Several aspects of the provision the school provides for pupils with special educational needs are outstanding. Foremost among these are :
 - the outstanding guidance and support for staff and pupils provided by the management team;
 - the very effective co-operation with the primary schools and the use of standardised tests which ensure early identification of pupils requiring additional support on entry to the school;
 - all year 11 pupils on the register of special educational needs last year achieved at least three GCSE accreditations and
 - individual educational plans are detailed and comprehensive and include relevant targets and strategies. They are shared with pupils, parents and school staff to ensure consistent knowledge, strategies and identification of future progress.

142. There are also many other good features of the school's provision for additional learning needs. These include:
- annual reviews that are thorough, with good involvement of parents and carers, pupils and, where relevant, outside agencies;
 - the school's comprehensive register of pupils' SEN which is reviewed regularly and effectively;
 - a good variety of suitable strategies that are used successfully to improve pupils' literacy skills;
 - the effective use made of learning support assistants across a good range of tasks to give all pupils access to learning opportunities;
 - the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs in the small groups in the core subjects in key stage 3;
 - the good progress made by the pupils diagnosed with specific learning difficulties;
 - the good support for pupils who have problems controlling their behaviour. Expectations are made clear to both pupils and parents and for the most part the school is successful in supporting these pupils in the school environment and
 - the close liaison between staff, parents and outside agencies to ensure a focused approach to pupils' learning.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

143. In accordance with the local education authority's bilingual policy, the school has appropriate arrangements for meeting the needs of pupils from different linguistic backgrounds. The school takes advantage of the county's language centre for latecomers to Gwynedd secondary schools.
144. There is equal curricular access to both boys and girls and pupils consider issues relating to gender equality in their tutorial periods.
145. The school has appropriate policies and procedures to deal with oppressive behaviour including bullying. Parents and pupils indicate that they are satisfied that the very small number of incidences of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively.
146. Pupils with physical disabilities are well integrated into school life and have access to a range of practical subjects. There is one area of the school however which is inaccessible to wheel-chair users.
147. The very few pupils who have different ethnic backgrounds are successfully integrated into the school community. The school has a suitable policy for promoting racial equality and pupils' understanding of social diversity is developed through the school's personal and social education programme and in subjects such as religious education, history, English and Welsh.
148. The school has ensured suitable provision for pupils in the care of the local authority.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: good features with no important shortcomings

149. This grade is higher than the Grade 3 the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report. The higher grade awarded reflects the significant support provided to departments that have been influenced by long-term staff absences and where progress is now being made. This managerial support is yet to be reflected in the examination results.

How well do leaders and managers provide a clear direction and promote high standards?

150. There is a strong commitment to the school's 'Core Principles' which results in a common sense of purpose amongst teaching and non-teaching staff. All work effectively to make the school a place where pupils are keen to learn and where equality of opportunity is promoted. A fully bilingual society has been created in an environment in which 67 % pupils are from English speaking homes.
151. The head teacher shows much commitment to improving the quality of provision and standards of achievement. He leads and manages the school effectively and is very well supported by his two deputies. This senior management team work tirelessly to ensure that support is provided where necessary and progress is being made, including in subjects which have been adversely affected by long-term staff absences. Staff appreciate this support.
152. The two key stage co-ordinators carry out their work effectively and their role is clearly understood by both staff and pupils. Heads of department are set clear targets in response to a self evaluation programme carried out under the direction of one of the deputies. A recent review of these targets provides evidence to show that progress is being made and inexperienced heads of department are becoming better established in their role.
153. The school development plan and school policies take into account the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities as well as those of the local education authority. These are evident in the school's successful personal and social education programme, the progress and continuing development of pupils' key skills, the effective curricular and pastoral transition from key stage 2 to 3 and the development of the alternative curriculum in key stage 4.
154. The school has a very detailed process for setting targets based on individual pupil and benchmarked data. The targets are reviewed regularly in order to track progress but the use made of the information varies across departments.

155. There are suitable procedures for managing teachers' performance and recognising the development and training needs of staff in line with national requirements. Internal training of staff by subject advisers and mentors from other schools has been successful in raising standards in some subjects. Good use has also been made of Teaching Council bursaries, visits to other schools and training provided by examining boards and the local education authority. One member of the senior management team is currently working towards the National Professional Qualification for Head teachers.

How well governors and other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

156. Governors are very supportive of the school and work very closely with the staff in performing their duties. Governors possess the necessary knowledge to enable them, in consultation with staff, to participate actively in discussions about the school's strategic development. The close links between the governors and the school and their knowledge of local communities has given them a very clear understanding of the school's needs and priorities.
157. Governors are very well informed about the school's external test and examination results. Their understanding of the detailed statistics they receive allows them to understand and compare how well the school performs in comparison with other similar schools. Standards are discussed at governors' meetings and departments have link governors who directly support and monitor their department annually. The governing body is regularly informed of the school's financial position and the financial sub-committee actively discusses both the priorities and the detail of the school's budget.
158. The governors have ensured that the school meets all statutory requirements and they participated fully in the school's self-evaluation process. The governors make an outstanding contribution to the school's leadership.

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

Grade 2 : good features and no important shortcomings

159. In its self-evaluation report, the school awarded this key question a Grade 3. The findings of the inspection team do not concur with those of the school because of the several strengths identified.

How effective is the school's process for monitoring and evaluating its performance?

160. The school's self-evaluation report provides a correct and thorough analysis of its strengths and areas which need further attention. It is based on the managers' good knowledge of the school.

161. The findings of the inspection team correspond very closely to those noted in the school's self-evaluation report but there are differences in the grades awarded for three of the seven key questions. There has been much instability in the school's staffing and, as a result, it has been difficult for the school to come to an unbiased judgement on some aspects of its work.

162. The school has established a good self-evaluation system. It is comprehensive, systematic and based on direct evidence of pupils' work, classroom observations and analysing the data of external test, examination and assessment results. Analysing this data is a strength at school and departmental level.

163. The management team has carried out a number of whole school evaluations in areas where there has been concern and, as a result, improvements have been seen. Nevertheless, the school has not recently evaluated the quality of the learning and teaching at whole school level and this is a shortcoming.

164. Each department, apart from those where management has been affected by ill health, has carried out a self-evaluation using a standard format based on ESTYN's seven key questions. The quality of these departmental self-evaluations is variable but, on the whole, they provide a clear picture of what needs to be improved. In addition, a large number of departments have analysed the results of the 2005 tests and examinations in detail and have devised strategies to raise standards. A member of the senior management team verifies these strategies and the departmental self-evaluation system in a very effective way.

165. The school based training on self-evaluation and data analysing processes has improved staff awareness of the self-evaluation process.

166. By means of the School Council and the school's 'open door' policy, pupils' views are considered well. In addition, all members of staff are given opportunities to express their views about the school through their contribution to whole school and departmental self-evaluations. The school consults fully with parents in evaluating some aspects of its work but there is no formal system for discovering the views of other interested parties.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

167. There is a direct link between the findings of the school's self-evaluation and the 2006-07 development plan which is currently being compiled. This is a strength.
168. The school uses information arising from its self-evaluation as part of the process of drawing up the school development plan. The plan outlines specific targets, responsibilities, costs and a timetable for implementation and notes criteria for evaluating improvement strategies. However, it does not pay sufficient attention to aspects linked to learning and teaching. The school sets challenging targets, based on the data of pupils' achievements, but insufficient attention is paid to extending the most able pupils so that they can achieve their full potential.
169. The school's arrangements for Performance Management and continuous professional development are good. They are well linked to departmental and whole school development plans.
170. The school ensures that there are sufficient resources to support its main priorities and objectives. There is a close link between the school development plan and the budget.
171. The school is able to demonstrate that a number of steps taken to improve the provision have given rise to a good number of improvements. Occasionally, the improvement in standards are quantified. For example, there has been an improvement in results in the statutory key stage 3 tests and assessments in English and Welsh in 2005.
172. The school has responded well to key issues noted in the last inspection. The quality of self-evaluation, for example, has improved significantly. However, some matters, such as assessment and shortcomings in standards in a few subjects, are matters which the school is dealing with on a continuing basis.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

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

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

174. The school has enough well qualified, experienced teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum in almost all areas. The pupil teacher ratio is 13:1 which is higher than the national average.
175. Teachers have good knowledge and expertise in their subjects. In the areas where non-specialists teach a subject, every effort is made to ensure appropriate support. However a number of teachers have been on long-term absence. This is an important shortcoming and affects standards in some subjects.
176. The school has enough appropriately skilled non-teaching staff to enable the day-to-day life of the school to function effectively. All the support staff including those who assist pupils with special educational needs and behavioural difficulties are well trained. They are well integrated into the life of the school and provide valuable support to pupils. The caretaker, who is responsible for the health and safety of the site, contributes effectively in providing a clean and safe environment for pupils to learn in.
177. There is a well planned programme of continuing professional development, which is well managed and effectively matched to the school self-evaluation, performance management and the school development plan and department plans.
178. The teachers' workload agreement has been fully implemented and the school offers good support for newly qualified teachers and short-term supply teachers.
179. There are good resources for delivering all National Curriculum subjects. There are sufficient good quality textbooks and reference books in all subjects.
180. The school has invested appropriately in new computer equipment. The current resources include over twenty interactive white boards.
181. Pupils are taught in good quality accommodation. There are enough appropriately sized classrooms. The shortcomings in laboratories and workshops identified during the last inspection have been rectified. Now they are in good condition.

182. Other good facilities include the busy canteen run by the school itself and a large hall which is a convenient place to hold whole school activities, examinations and community events. Pupils praise the standard of the toilets which have been substantially improved.
183. The sports hall, gymnasium and numerous playing fields offer good facilities for physical education. The art department takes advantage of the large, well lit room for displaying pupils' creative work. The school resource centre has a pleasant ambience. Here, there is also a private room which is convenient for conducting interviews.
184. There are colourful displays in classrooms and some corridors. They celebrate successes and many promote and motivate learning.
185. The inside of the school building is kept clean and tidy as are the vast yards and green areas outside.
186. During the inspection, no health and safety issues were observed.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money

187. The head teacher is responsible for the school budget at a strategic level and he, together with the administrative officer, manage and monitor the budget very effectively on a daily basis. The school has responded well to the comparatively few recommendations in the July 2005 county auditors' report.
188. The school manages its resources efficiently and, in spite of current difficulties, ensures adequate staffing levels. Sufficient resources are available to teach the curriculum. Good use is also made of the buildings. The school makes effective use of its teaching and support staff, making good use of their time and experience.
189. The priorities in the school development plan are costed in detail and financial resources are allocated to facilitate their implementation.
190. At the end of the 2005-06 financial year, the school foresees that approximately 7% of the budget will be held in reserve. This is higher than the percentage recommended (5%) by the Audit Commission but is justified because of the need to ensure a little more flexibility than usual for increased staffing costs caused by long term illness and to maintain the current curricular provision in the face of a slight reduction in pupil numbers during the next few years.
191. The school has thorough and detailed procedures to ensure that it obtains the best value possible from suppliers and contractors.
192. All in all, when considering the pupil standards and their test and examination results, the quality of the teaching, the breadth of the curriculum offered and the quality of support and guidance the school gives value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Welsh first language

Key stage 3 - Grade 2 : Good features and no important shortcomings

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

Good features

193. In all aspects of Welsh lessons, listening standards throughout the school are very good. When pupils work in pairs or groups or participate in whole class discussions, the majority make good oral contributions and many are confident and eager to participate. In addition, pupils with special educational needs make successful, extended and very relevant oral contributions.
194. With only a few exceptions, pupils of all ages and abilities discuss topical issues very well, express their views intelligently and support those views with valid reasons.
195. Pupils at both key stages and from the whole ability range pay good attention to conveying meaning when they read aloud and a significant majority are fluent and easily audible.
196. At key stage 3, pupils read a variety of books for pleasure and at key stage 4 a number continue with this practice, selecting books which reflect their personal preference. Across both key stages, pupils show good understanding, in line with their ability, when they search for information and compare texts.
197. At key stage 4 the most able pupils discuss literary style well and they can produce very good creative responses to texts which they read. When they discuss media texts, pupils across the ability range develop good understanding of plot, character, themes and modern filming techniques. Pupils of all ages and abilities display a good or very good standard of critical awareness when they study visual images.
198. The majority of pupils write in a good range of forms and use adjectives and similes to enhance their expression. At key stage 4, the best pupils write creative pieces on themes which they feel strongly about. They are also successful in creating effective, well constructed stories or monologues.
199. On the whole, the work of pupils across both key stages and across the ability range is presented to a very high standard. This includes the use of modern technology, mainly at key stage 3.
200. The most able pupils at key stage 4 produce very mature written work to convey opinions on varied contentious topics of their choice. All pupils have a very good grasp of the vocabulary used to convey opinions and they write appropriately.

201. On the whole, the pupil's standards of punctuation, paragraphing and spelling, across both key stages, are good. Many pupils of all ages have mastered Welsh constructions and they use phrases and idiomatic expressions naturally in their written work on a regular basis.

Shortcomings

202. A significant minority of pupils at both key stages regularly have problems with mutations in their oral and written work.
203. A few pupils at key stage 3 have to think hard to find the appropriate Welsh word, or use English words, when they speak formally and in less formal situations.
204. A few pupils, particularly at key stage 3, do not respond at sufficient length either orally or in writing.
205. A few pupils at both key stages are reticent and very passive in lessons and will only start working in a group when the teacher has encouraged them personally.

Science

Key stage 3 - Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4 - Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

- 206. Many pupils achieve good standards. They respond appropriately in question and answer sessions, showing good knowledge and understanding of previous work.
- 207. Many are able to recall scientific facts and concepts.
- 208. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their knowledge and understanding across both key stages.
- 209. When given the opportunity, pupils perform practical work safely and they work well together. They are able to follow instructions and use simple measuring instruments with accuracy.
- 210. At key stage 3 most pupils demonstrate basic investigative skills.
- 211. At key stage 4, the standard and quality of the majority of pupils' coursework is good.
- 212. The majority of pupils are aware of the contribution science makes to society.

Shortcomings

- 213. A small number of pupils at both key stages are not willing to answer orally in question and answer sessions.
- 214. A minority of pupils have difficulty recalling previous scientific knowledge and, as a result, they lose interest during some lessons.
- 215. At key stage 3 more able pupils do not demonstrate higher level investigative skills.
- 216. At key stage 4, around half the pupils have difficulty in evaluating their practical coursework.

History

As a result of the unavoidable absence of staff, comments are based on discussions with pupils and an investigation of the work which they have completed.

Key stage 3 - Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4 - Grade 4: some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

Key stage 3

Good features

- 217. The majority of key stage 3 pupils display good awareness of chronology.
- 218. They are able to recall previous knowledge and show an understanding of this.
- 219. In Years 7, 8 and 9, there is evidence that the majority of pupils are able to use historical sources to analyse events from the past.
- 220. Across key stage 3, the pupils know of events in Welsh history
- 221. By Year 9, pupils communicate, in line with their age and ability, in the appropriate depth and in a variety of ways correctly using historical terminology and concepts.

Key stage 4

- 222. A minority of the pupils at key stage 4 possess the maturity to discuss historical evidence critically and to offer a range of analyses and interpretations in order to come to a balanced view.
- 223. A minority of pupils at key stage 4 possess satisfactory historical knowledge and understanding and are able to recall previous knowledge.

Shortcomings

Key stage 3

- 224. In year 7, a minority of pupils present untidy written work which displays inadequate historical knowledge or understanding.
- 225. The written work of a majority of average or lower ability pupils is limited from the point of view of analysing, interpreting and forming an opinion.
- 226. Pupils of lower ability are over dependent on work that they have copied.
- 227. A minority of pupils do not possess clear understanding of chronology and the placing of events in chronological order.

Key stage 4

- 228. The majority of pupils in Year 11 do not possess the expected knowledge and understanding in line with their age and ability.
- 229. Around half the pupils do not display evidence of being able to recall or organise historical knowledge and opinions.
- 230. A minority of these pupils do not show evidence of awareness of different views or interpretations of the periods which they are studying.
- 231. Around half the pupils are not able to form an opinion about the usefulness and dependability of different sources of evidence.
- 232. Around half the pupils do not present written work of the appropriate depth or use historical concepts in the process.

Geography

Key stage 3 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

233. Pupils at key stage 3 are able to create and interpret maps, diagrams and graphs and the most able pupils can do this well. They are able to use atlases purposefully.
234. At key stage 3, pupils develop their awareness of the geography of Wales through the use of local and Welsh case studies.
235. Pupils at key stage 3 develop an awareness of place on a local, national and international level. By key stage 4, they possess sound knowledge and understanding of location and the characteristics of places on a range of scales.
236. The majority of key stage 3 pupils possess sound understanding of the processes of physical and human geography and by key stage 4, the most able possess sound knowledge of geographical concepts.
237. Pupils at both key stages develop knowledge and understanding of the relationship between people and the environment in line with their age and ability.
238. Pupils across the ability and age range develop knowledge and understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship.
239. The most able pupils at both key stages use geographic terms correctly and build up their terminology over time. These pupils also recall previous geographic knowledge well.
240. At key stage 4, pupils are able to carry out research into geographic concepts and can gather, manage and interpret data.
241. Pupils at key stage 4 produce coursework of good standard and use information technology to organise and analyse data.

Shortcomings

242. A significant number of pupils at key stage 3 produce work which shows a limited understanding of concepts; their ability to analyse and describe is also limited in human and physical geography. A significant minority of key stage 4 pupils have an unsure grasp of geographic processes.

243. A number of key stage 3 pupils are not confident when they produce written work. Many of their responses are short. This also restricts the progress of pupils at key stage 4.
244. A number of pupils across the school have not mastered the technical terms in this subject.
245. A significant minority of key stage 4 pupils are unable to recall previous knowledge.

Religious education (including religious studies)
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Key stage 3 - Grade 2 : Good features and no important shortcomings

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

Good features

246. The vast majority of pupils throughout the school possess good knowledge and understanding of units of work studied and these reflect the requirements of the agreed syllabus.
247. All pupils develop good technical vocabulary which enables them to understand and discuss religions.
248. Key stage 3 pupils show good knowledge of religious beliefs and practices and they make good use of this to understand the most important aspects of religions.
249. Pupils at key stage 3 possess good knowledge and understanding of the life of the Hindu in Wales.
250. Pupils at key stage 3 develop an understanding of how people's religious beliefs and their other beliefs can give rise to prejudice and racism and at key stage 4 they are aware of how people's religious beliefs affect their attitudes and actions towards the environment.
251. Pupils with special educational needs at key stage 3 have a sound grasp of the main features of religious traditions.
252. At key stage 4, pupils respond honestly to moral and social issues and, on the basis of their knowledge, they are able to form opinions and often offer reasons for their responses.
253. In the GCSE course, pupils orally discuss ideas intelligently. They can also express their ideas appropriately in writing. There are some examples of extended writing which is of good standard.

Shortcomings

254. Some key stage 3 pupils have limited understanding of how different religions enrich society.
255. In some lessons, pupils do not respond at appropriate length or offer constructive comments.
256. There is insufficient depth in the written response of a minority of pupils and they do not respond in detail to the questions asked.

Electronics

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

Good features

- 257. The majority of pupils have good knowledge and understanding of key concepts.
- 258. In year 10, the majority of pupils have good understanding of Ohm's law and of the use of potential dividers and logic gates in circuits. They are able to solve problems which are linked to these principles.
- 259. The majority of pupils have good understanding of the features of a range of components and their function in different circuits.
- 260. Pupils use information and communication technology appropriately in developing their projects. They plan and consider possible answers well and can test sub-systems and evaluate whole systems in detail.

Shortcomings

- 261. A minority of pupils do not possess sound knowledge and understanding of key concepts and the characteristics of some components.
- 262. A few pupils have lost interest in their work and this affects their standards.

School's response to the inspection

The school's staff and governors welcome the report that they received as a result of the inspection carried out by Cwmni Cynnal according to ESTYN's inspection framework in March 2006.

The school is proud of the praise given to the quality of care and support for pupils, the provision made for pupils with special educational needs and their attainment, the curricular and pastoral links with primary schools in the catchment area, the development of pupils' bilingualism and the contribution the Governing Body makes to the school.

The report notes that the school has responded well to the key issues in the previous report in 2000 and that the quality of self-evaluation has improved significantly.

Recently, the school has suffered a period of difficulties because of long term staff absences and this has affected performance in a few subjects inspected. By now the school has been able to respond to the majority of these absences and will ensure that standards improve in these subjects,

The school has already identified four out of the five recommendations made in the report in its School Development Plan and self-evaluation document. The school has strategies for coping with these matters and they will be addressed in the Post Inspection Action Plan.

The school would like to thank the inspectors for their professional attitude and their courtesy during the week of the inspection. Opportunities to have constructive discussions were valued. This independent report offers a firm basis upon which the school can build on the strengths noted.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Ardudwy
School type	Secondary
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Address of school	Ffordd y Traeth Harlech
Postcode	LL46 2UH
Telephone number	01766 780331

Head teacher	Mr Tudur Williams
Date of appointment	1 September 1990
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr T. Islwyn Morris
Reporting inspector	Mrs Margaret Frances Rhys Robertson
Dates of inspection	20/03/06 – 24/03/06

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	69	79	80	76	76	-	-	380

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	28	3	28.95

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	13 : 1
Average teaching group size	17.3
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	76%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection						
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Whole School
Spring Term 2005	94	91.6	90.6	90.4	87.8	90.9
Summer Term 2005	94.7	91.9	90.6	90.6	67.2	88.3
Autumn Term 2005	92.8	94.1	90.5	92.3	92.0	92.3

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	12.8%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	3 2 temporary 1 permanent 0 ethnic minority pupils

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2005															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 74															
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	1	4	20	38	26	11	0	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	2	8	21	34	24	9	0	-
	Test	School	0	0	3	-	-	-	4	16	31	35	11	-	-
		National	0	4	1	-	-	-	8	20	33	23	10	-	-
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	0	1	4	35	16	8	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	20	34	29	10	0	-
	Test	School	0	0	0	-	-	-	0	5	36	19	4	-	-
		National	0	2	0	-	-	-	5	19	35	28	10	-	-
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	1	0	8	16	32	32	9	0	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	1	7	19	26	32	14	0	-
	Test	School	0	0	1	-	-	-	1	20	28	35	14	-	-
		National	0	5	1	-	-	-	5	17	20	36	15	-	-
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	15	36	27	18	0	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	0	6	20	33	27	12	0	-
	Test	School	0	0	0	-	-	-	4	23	35	26	12	-	-
		National	0	4	0	-	-	-	5	17	33	28	13	-	-

- 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	65	In the school	61
In Wales	56	In Wales	57

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2005	72
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	46

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2005:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	97	91	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	50	58	52
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	97	90	85
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	38	45	38
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	99	100	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	93	83	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	99	97	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	1	3	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	2	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	-		
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	-		

UA Unitary Authority

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Nine inspectors spent a total of 35 days in the school.

The inspectors visited:

- a total of 57 lessons in the six subjects inspected;
- 23 lessons in other subjects; and
- a sample of tutor and registration sessions, and assemblies.

Members of the inspection team held meetings with:

- the head teacher and other members of the senior management team, and other staff with leadership and management responsibilities;
- the governing body before the inspection; and
- groups of pupils representing each year group and the school council.

Inspectors also considered evidence from:

- samples of pupils' written work in every subject, representing every age and pupils' range of ability;
- school documentation; and
- the 49 questionnaires returned by parents and their comments in the pre-inspection meeting (in which 19 parents were present).

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Margaret Robertson Registered Inspector	Summary, Appendix Key questions 1 and 5 Contribution to science
Gareth W Roberts Team Inspector	Key question 6 Contribution to key question 4
John Roberts Lay Inspector	Contribution to key questions 1, 3, 4 and 7
Keith Davies Team Inspector	Science, Electronics Key question 2
Bethan Whittall Team Inspector	History Contribution to key question 3
Heddwyn Evans Team Inspector	Religious education Contribution to key question 7
Anna Roberts Team Inspector	Welsh Contribution to key question 4
Edwin Williams Team Inspector	Geography
Gwilym Williams Team Inspector	Contribution to science
Tudur Williams	Nominee

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Technology Unit
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Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, staff and pupils of Ysgol Ardudwy for their assistance during the inspection.