

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Ysgol Dewi Sant
St Davids
Pembrokeshire
SA62 6QH**

School Number: 6684034

Date of Inspection: 26 March 2007

by

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Ysgol Dewi Sant 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 students. 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 Dewi Sant took place between 26/03/07 and 29/03/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Brian William Medhurst 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 students, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its students' 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 nursery schools, special schools, student 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 students in a primary school who reach the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of students who reach the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Ysgol Dewi Sant is an 11 – 18 mixed comprehensive school, situated in the city of St Davids and maintained by Pembrokeshire unitary authority. There are 451 students on roll, of whom 78 are in the sixth form. These figures are greater than those recorded at the time of the previous inspection, when they were 390 and 64 respectively.
- 2 Students come from a range of economic backgrounds. Thirteen percent of the students are registered as being entitled to free school meals – a figure matching the unitary authority average and just below the national mean. Two students are looked after by the unitary authority.
- 3 The school serves the historic city of St Davids and an extensive rural area. As at the time of the previous inspection, around 96% of the students have English as their first language at home, and 3% use Welsh as their mother tongue. Overall, though, about 14% of students speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard.
- 4 Welsh is taught and examined as a first and as a second language. No subjects are taught wholly through the medium of Welsh. Welsh is spoken in the community and in the school, but English is the main medium of education.
- 5 The school's intake represents the full range of ability, but because of the small number of students in each year group, there is noticeable variation year on year. There are 17 students (nearly 4%) with statements of special educational needs. There are an additional 84 students (around 19%) on the school's special needs register who also receive additional learning support.
- 6 The school was inspected previously in February 2001. Since then, there have been changes in the school's leadership. The senior leadership group now consists of the headteacher, one deputy head and three assistant heads. The headteacher and the deputy head were in post at the time of the previous inspection. The three assistants, appointed following the inspection, were already part of the senior management team at that time.

The school's priorities and targets

- 7 The school states that it seeks, "To strive for sustained improvement in a well-disciplined, caring school, which encourages and expects every student to achieve his or her full potential."
- 8 In its development plan, the school highlights its aims, which are underwritten by detailed objectives, targets and success criteria. These aims are:
 - to maintain/improve teaching, learning and standards of achievement at key stage 3, key stage 4 and in the sixth form;
 - to further improve basic and key skills;
 - to further improve the process of school self evaluation;

- to improve the school environment; and
- to further rationalise the curriculum in order to achieve a balanced budget.

Summary

- 9 Ysgol Dewi Sant is a very good school that provides many outstanding opportunities for learners to achieve their full potential. It offers its students this first-class education despite the long-standing shortcomings in areas of its accommodation.

Table of grades awarded

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?	1

- 10 The grades in the above table agree with those awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report for key questions 1 to 6. For key question 7, the team awarded a grade one higher than that suggested by the school.

Standards

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	Key stage 3	Key stage 4	Sixth form
English	1	2	1
Welsh second language	1	1	2
Science	1	2	2
Information technology	3	3	n/a
History	2	2	1
Physical education	2	1	1

- 11 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the standards that students achieved, at different stages, in the six subjects inspected in depth:

65 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	22	69	9	0	0
Key stage 4	23	62	15	0	0
Combined KS3/KS4	23	65	12	0	0
Sixth form	44	44	12	0	0
Whole school	28	60	12	0	0
<i>National figures for secondary schools 2005/2006</i>	11	54	29	6	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

Key stages 3 and 4

- 12 These figures for students' achievement are outstandingly well above national targets. They also represent an improvement in standards since the previous inspection.
- 13 We compared students' performance in national tests, through teacher assessment and in external examinations with those of students throughout Wales and of students in similar schools¹. In every respect, students' performance is above the average performance of students in the comparison groups. There are many good and outstanding features. Amongst these are:
- in key stage 3:
 - in 2004, 2005 and 2006 in English, mathematics and science, the proportion of students gaining level 5 or better was well above both Welsh and Pembrokeshire averages;
 - in 2004, 2005 and 2006, the school's results in English and science were better than those achieved in three-quarters of similar schools; and
 - in 2004 and 2006, the school's results in mathematics were better than those achieved in three-quarters of similar schools, and in 2005, better than half of these schools.
 - and in key stage 4:
 - over the past three years, the proportion of students achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C and 5 or more grades A* to G was well above both national and local averages; and
 - over the past three years, the proportion of students achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C was above the proportion doing so in three-quarters of similar schools.

¹ 'Similar schools' refers to other schools in Wales that have a similar proportion of students entitled to free school meals. The Welsh Assembly Government places Ysgol Dewi Sant in the group having between 10% and 15% of students with entitlement to free school meals.

- 14 Girls generally perform better than boys, but overall, the difference between girls' and boys' GCSE performances is less marked than is the case nationally. The greatest difference occurs in English.
- 15 Students who have special educational needs do especially well in the school and so too, do higher attaining students.
- 16 Students communicate very well in English and their bilingual competence is outstanding. Most students also have good number skills, which they use well in many other subjects. Students acquire good computing skills in communicating information, but their skills of handling and modelling information are less well developed.
- 17 With very few exceptions, students make outstanding progress in the development of the wider key skills such as problem solving, innovation, creativity and working with others.
- 18 Students display outstandingly positive attitudes towards learning. The vast majority of them are well motivated and sustain their concentration throughout the school day.
- 19 Students' good behaviour in class and around the school is an outstanding feature in Ysgol Dewi Sant.
- 20 School attendance consistently exceeds both national and unitary authority averages, and those achieved in similar schools by a significant margin.

The sixth form

- 21 The school's performance at A level is good with outstanding features.
- 22 Over the past three years, success at A level expressed as the proportion of students achieving 2 or more grades A to C has been well above local and national averages.
- 23 In respect of students achieving 2 or more grades A to E, the school achieved an outstanding 100% success rate in each of the past three years.
- 24 The quality of the results is reflected in the average points score per student, which reached an exceptional level of 27 in 2006, as compared with the local and national average of 20.
- 25 A most noteworthy achievement is the 2006 A level success in history, when in a group of 15 students, 14 achieved a grade A and one, a grade B. Additionally, two students received awards for the best examination marks achieved by a boy and a girl.
- 26 Students always listen respectfully, and when speaking, they are often articulate and their use of subject specific vocabulary is exemplary. Their reading skills are good with outstanding features and their writing is also very good and well organised.
- 27 Students' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings and they make good use of information and communication technology to support their studies.

- 28 With very few exceptions, students are able to work independently and take the necessary measures to advance their own progress. When required to do so, they collaborate very effectively with each other.

The quality of education and training

- 29 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons observed during the inspection:

88 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	35	53	12	0	0
Key stage 4	24	61	15	0	0
Combined KS3/KS4	30	57	13	0	0
Sixth form	38	57	5	0	0
Whole school	32	57	11	0	0
<i>National figures for secondary schools 2005/2006</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>0</i>

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

Key stages 3 and 4

- 30 The figures in the table reflect the high quality of teaching prevalent in the school. They also mark an improvement on the figures achieved at the time of the previous inspection. The proportion of lessons awarded grade 1 or grade 2 is far greater than the national average for 2005/2006, with almost one-third of teaching seen being awarded a grade 1.
- 31 Students commented very positively about the high quality of teaching and care they receive across and beyond the curriculum.
- 32 Teachers have high expectations and provide many opportunities for their students to realise their full potential. Excellent relationships between teachers and students allow learning to occur in relaxed yet challenging environments.
- 33 Procedures for the assessment, recording and reporting of students' achievements have good features and no important shortcomings. Students' understanding of the assessment system is outstanding.
- 34 The curriculum meets students' learning needs and reflects the aims set out for students of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996, and also offers opportunities for students to obtain appropriate qualifications. It provides equality of opportunity and access for all students.
- 35 There is an outstanding range of extracurricular activities that broadens students' experiences and promotes their personal and social development.

- 36 Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with outstanding features.
- 37 Students' learning experiences are considerably enriched by the school's partnership with parents, community and other education providers.
- 38 There are many outstanding features in the care, guidance and support that learners receive.
- 39 The quality of the provision for students with additional learning needs has a number of outstanding features, including the exemplary links with primary partner schools and the exceptional academic and pastoral support provided for students in the school's additional learning support centre.
- 40 The school is good at ensuring that students with disabilities are full and equal members of the school. They are able to gain access to all parts of the school.

The sixth form

- 41 The quality of teaching is at its best in the sixth form, with almost two-fifths of that seen being awarded grade 1. Its positive effect on learning can be seen in the high standards that students have achieved and are achieving.
- 42 Students commented very positively about the high quality of teaching, guidance and support they receive in the sixth form.
- 43 Teachers regularly involve students in extended and very challenging research tasks to help them to become more independent learners and prepare them well for learning beyond school.
- 44 Students' progress is monitored effectively. Teachers also ensure that students know and understand the requirements of the examination boards and the criteria for success.
- 45 Students benefit from a good curriculum. It offers an extensive range of courses at AS and A level, which caters well for all students' needs and attracts a large number of students back to the sixth form.
- 46 The partnership with Careers Wales is effective and students are catered for well within a good careers education and guidance programme.
- 47 To show their commitment to the school, many Y12 students act as prefects at lunchtime, support younger students with their reading and organise a number of events to support charities and other good causes.

Leadership and management

- 48 The school is led and managed very effectively and efficiently. There is a shared vision of how the school is to achieve its mission statement and willingness by all to work hard to realise this.

- 49 The headteacher and his deputy are extremely successful leaders and managers. Together with the other members of the leadership group, they provide very good strategic direction for the school.
- 50 Leaders and managers of the school, at all levels, have been outstandingly successful in providing a clear direction for the school. Heads of faculty and heads of school lead and manage their staff very well within their subject specific and/or pastoral areas of provision.
- 51 The school has very good comprehensive and effective procedures for evaluating and improving its provision. Target setting is used effectively to maintain high standards or to raise standards further.
- 52 The school takes appropriate regard of national priorities for improvement and includes them in its development plans.
- 53 The governors understand their school and the community it serves very well. They play a central role in its management.
- 54 The staffing of the school has good features and no important shortcomings. There are sufficient members of staff for the school to run efficiently.
- 55 The quality and quantity of learning resources are good overall, but there are a few shortcomings.
- 56 The accommodation has good features that outweigh shortcomings, but is barely sufficient for the numbers of students currently on roll. The major shortcoming in accommodation is to be found in the poor indoor facilities for physical education.
- 57 Notwithstanding the problems associated with the accommodation, the school achieves some outstanding standards in many aspects of provision. Consequently, the school's management of resources to achieve value for money is outstanding.

Progress since the previous inspection

- 58 Overall, the school has made very good progress in dealing with the key issues of the previous inspection. In respect of the progress made in standards of achievement, especially at A level, the school has done outstandingly well. Key skills have improved considerably, especially in terms of students' literacy and bilingualism, but there is still room for improvement in aspects of information and communication technology. Long-term planning is now well established at school and departmental level. Statutory requirements for religious education and acts of collective worship are now satisfied.
- 59 However, there is still a need to work with the unitary authority to improve the accommodation, especially in respect of the indoor facilities for physical education. Hence, this remains a cause for concern.

Recommendations

- R1 Continue to seek ways of raising standards in all subjects and key skills, with particular emphasis on pupils' skills in those aspects of information and communication technology that are currently underdeveloped.
- R2 Working together with the unitary authority, seek ways of improving the school's accommodation overall and especially for physical education.

The above recommendations have been recognised by the school as areas for development.

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

- 60 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self-evaluation report.

Key stages 3 and 4

- 61 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the standards that students achieved in key stages 3 and 4 in the six subjects inspected in depth:

49 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	22	69	9	0	0
<i>KS3 national '05/'06</i>	11	52	31	6	0
Key stage 4	23	62	15	0	0
<i>KS4 national '05/'06</i>	9	51	33	7	0
Combined KS3/KS4	23	65	12	0	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

- 62 National targets for standards in schools are that, by this year, lessons should be graded 3 or better in at least 98% of cases and grade 2 or better in at least 65%. Overall, in the six subjects we inspected, students' standards of achievement exceeded these targets by an outstanding margin.
- 63 Also, as the table indicates, the school achieved very much better than schools did nationally during the academic year 2005/2006.

Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 64 We evaluated students' performance in public examinations at the end of key stage 4, and in tests and by teacher assessment at the end of key stage 3 by comparing their attainment with:
- the attainment of all students in Wales;
 - the attainment of students in Pembrokeshire; and
 - the attainment of students in similar schools throughout Wales.
- 65 It must be noted that in 2006 there were optional national tests at the end of key stage 3. Not all schools used them. Students' attainments were measured by teachers' assessments.
- 66 In selecting similar schools in Wales, we used the group of schools where between 10% and 15% of students are entitled to free school meals (called the FSM group).

- 67 We considered students' attainment in 2006 and previous years.
- 68 We found that in key stage 3, over the past 3 years, results were outstanding in so far as:
- in English, mathematics and science the proportion of students gaining level 5 or better was well above both the Welsh average and the Pembrokeshire figure;
 - the proportion of students achieving the core subject indicator² was well above national and local averages;
 - boys and girls performed equally well in all the core subjects;
 - the proportion of students achieving level 5 or better in Welsh (second language) was well above local and national averages; and
 - in all other subjects of the curriculum, teachers' assessments of students' attainment were well above those achieved nationally and locally.
- 69 When students' key stage 3 performances in achieving level 5 or better over the past three years were compared with those achieved in other schools in the FSM group, we found that:
- in English and science, students in Ysgol Dewi Sant did better than students in three-quarters of the other schools in the group in each year;
 - in mathematics, students did better than those in three-quarters of the other schools in 2004 and 2006, and better than half of them in 2005;
 - in the core subject indicator the school did better than three-quarters of similar schools; and
 - in most other subjects of the curriculum, the school fared better than three-quarters of other schools.
- 70 When the school's key stage 3 success is compared with that achieved in either English speaking schools or all schools in Wales over the past three years, performance places the school in the top 25% of schools in most instances.
- 71 In key stage 4, over the past three years, as in key stage 3, students did extraordinarily well in the GCSE examinations. For example:
- the proportions of students achieving 5 or more grades A* to C, 5 or more grades A* to G and the core subject indicator were better than national and local figures;
 - students' average GCSE points score was well above the local figure and the national average; and
 - success at achieving 1 or more grades A* to G was better than that achieved in Pembrokeshire or Wales as a whole.
- 72 In comparison with other schools in the FSM group, the school achieved very well over the past three years. For example, in terms of:

² The core subject indicator in key stage 3 is the percentage of students who gain level 5 or better in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in key stage 4 is the percentage of students who gain at least grade C in each of these three subjects in GCSE examinations.

- the proportion of students achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C and average GCSE points scored, Ysgol Dewi Sant performed better than three-quarters of other schools;
 - the proportion of students achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A* to G, the school performed better than three-quarters of the others in 2004, and better than half of them in 2005 and 2006; and
 - the core subject indicator, better than three-quarters of the others in 2005 and 2006, and better than half of them in 2004.
- 73 As in key stage 3, when the school's key stage 4 success is compared with that achieved in either English speaking schools or all schools in Wales, performance places the school in the top 25% of schools in many instances.
- 74 Overall, the difference between girls' and boys' GCSE performances is less than the national variation. In 2006, there was no significant difference in the performance of boys compared with that of girls in the core subject indicator.
- 75 Actual 2006 GCSE figures and comparisons with Pembrokeshire and all-Wales data can be found in Appendix 3 at the end of this report.
- 76 Analysis of a range of data indicates that in 2006 students achieved an average of half a grade higher in their GCSE subjects than students of a similar ability in other schools. It also confirms that there have been ongoing improvements in outcomes over the last 3 years. Students' attainment is now very good with outstanding features.
- 77 Almost all of the school's performance targets at GCSE have been exceeded for the last 3 years.
- 78 A rigorous process of target setting also exists for every individual subject in key stage 4. These were met or exceeded in 12 of the 17 subjects in both the grades A* to C and A* to G categories.
- 79 The school is rightly proud of such success in these external examinations, but it is not complacent, as indicated in its mission statement.
- 80 Because of the very good provision made for them, students in need of additional support generally achieve very well across the curriculum.
- 81 The school is a fully inclusive establishment and it provides open access to all aspects of learning, regardless of learners' backgrounds, disabilities and/or prior attainment.
- 82 The school has qualified for the Basic Skills Quality Mark since 1998. The co-ordinator has developed a clear awareness of these skills in all areas across the curriculum. Students needing to improve their basic skills are identified and they receive extra support. The rate of improved achievement with these students has been most noticeable.
- 83 Students listen with great respect and attention to their teachers and to one another. They willingly respond to questions in class and contribute well to class discussions

often giving outstandingly articulate and extended responses. Students collaborate very well in pairs and small groups. There are examples of outstanding collaboration across the whole ability range in many subjects. Students use Standard English when required, demonstrating that they can adapt their language when circumstances require them to do so. They have a good understanding of subject vocabulary across the curriculum.

- 84 Students are fluent and accurate readers and higher achieving students read unfamiliar material with expression. Students with reading difficulties are given good support and they make very good progress. Most students read a wide range of challenging texts with good understanding. All students read for pleasure. Students have competent skills of research, including the skimming and scanning of texts and screen for information.
- 85 Students' writing skills are good. They can write in a range of forms and for a variety of purposes and audiences. Most extend their writing and their organisation is good. In many subjects, students plan, draft and proof read their work to improve. Many use computers effectively to help the drafting process. Skills in spelling, punctuation, grammar and presentation are generally good.
- 86 The numerical skills of students overall in both key stage 3 and key stage 4 have good features and no important shortcomings. In both key stages there is evidence of good and very good standards, especially with higher attainers. Students with special educational needs are identified and receive good support and extra tuition. A small minority of students lack confidence in their numerical abilities.
- 87 The standard of students' bilingual competence is outstanding. As a result of close working with the partner primary schools, advanced learners follow a first language course on entry into Y7. All second language students follow a full GCSE course at key stage 4. Results are outstanding. Due to this success, the number that study Welsh in the sixth form has increased dramatically.
- 88 In key stage 3, students acquire good skills in communicating information and they apply them well in nearly all subjects. Students' handling and modelling of information skills is less well developed and applied. In the subjects inspected, applications of information and communication technology are good with no important shortcomings in English, science, history and physical education. In Welsh, good features outweigh shortcomings. There is good access to computers at all times of the day. Information and communication technology is used well to enhance the standards achieved by students with special educational needs.
- 89 With very few exceptions, students make outstanding progress in the development of their wider key skills.
- 90 Problem solving is integral to the work in many subjects across the curriculum. Consequently, students' analytical and decision-making skills are very well developed.
- 91 Students are often innovative and creative in the way they generate and present their ideas and outcomes. Particularly good examples are evident in the work of art, design and technology, history and Welsh.

- 92 The ability to work with others is outstanding. In all subject areas students co-operate effectively in pairs and groups. Here they demonstrate considerable respect, consideration and support for each other.
- 93 Overall, students take substantial interest and pride in their work and actively seek to improve their own learning and performance.

Students' progress in learning

- 94 Analysis of data supplied by the Welsh Assembly Government reveals that when the school's key stage 3 results in 2005 and 2006 were matched to the students' prior attainment at the end of key stage 2, there was significant value added for English, mathematics, science and the core subject indicator. In other words, students at Ysgol Dewi Sant had made outstanding progress between key stage 2 and key stage 3.
- 95 Analyses also reveal that when GCSE results in 2005 and 2006 were matched to the students' prior attainment at key stages 2 and 3, they revealed significant value added in the 5 GCSE grades A* to C category, the average GCSE points score and the core subject indicator. As above, students had made outstanding progress between key stages 2 and 3 and key stage 4.
- 96 The school has very good links with the primary schools within its family of schools, and these ensure that continuity in learning across the phases is good and allows students to make progress from the time they enter the school.
- 97 Students with special educational needs generally make very good progress. They benefit well from integration into mainstream classes with appropriate support and other appropriate arrangements made for them.
- 98 In all subjects, students work productively, often enjoying their work and appreciating the progress they make.
- 99 Most high attaining students do well, as can be seen in the high proportion of students achieving grades A* and A in the GCSE examinations.
- 100 Students have a good idea of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. On the whole, they respond very well to teachers' comments and advice, and make at least good progress.

The development of students' personal, social and learning skills

- 101 Students display outstandingly positive attitudes towards learning. The vast majority of them are well motivated and sustain their concentration throughout the school day. Students are able to work independently and they also work very effectively together.
- 102 Students' good behaviour in class and around the school is an outstanding feature in Ysgol Dewi Sant. Except for the rare occasions when one or two students lose focus in lessons, all abide by the exemplary and well-understood code of conduct. Friendliness, courtesy and consideration for others are very noticeable features of the ways of working at the school.

- 103 Students in key stage 3 have good attendance records. There is a slight increase in absenteeism in key stage 4, but overall school attendance consistently exceeds both national and unitary authority averages, and those achieved in similar schools by a significant margin. For the last school year, and so far in this one, attendance rates meet or exceed the 2007 Welsh Assembly Government target of 92%. Absence is mostly for medical reasons, but holidays taken in term-time make a noticeable contribution at certain times of the year.
- 104 Students are very punctual to school and to lessons throughout the day.
- 105 Students display a caring attitude towards other people in the local community and beyond. They respect the views and beliefs of others and people who differ from themselves. Overall, students' level of social, cultural and moral awareness is outstanding.
- 106 The school provides a wide range of interactions and learning opportunities for students to develop as fully rounded individuals. They gain a good and well-balanced understanding of the world of work and the communities of which they become part, and are well prepared to contribute positively to these.

The sixth form

- 107 The following table shows the grades awarded for the standards that sixth form students achieved in the six subjects inspected in depth:

16 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Sixth form	44	44	12	0	0
<i>National '05/'06</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 108 As the table indicates, in the six subjects inspected in depth, students achieve very well in the sixth form, often outstandingly so.
- 109 Such achievement is reflected in the quality of the school's A level results. Over the past three years, the proportion of students achieving 2 or more A levels at grades A to C has been well above both local and national averages. For example, in 2006 the school achieved a figure of 84%, the unitary authority, 69% and Wales, 68%.
- 110 Likewise, in terms of success at 2 or more grades A to E, the school did very well in achieving a 100% success rate over the past three years, for students who entered 2 or more A levels. The corresponding local and national figure was around 94%.
- 111 The high quality of results achieved is reflected in the average points score per student, for those entered for 2 or more A levels. Over the past three years, the local and national score has been predominantly 20. The school's score was 23 in 2004, 24 in 2005 and an outstanding 27 in 2006.

- 112 The most outstanding feature of success at A level was provided by the results achieved in history in 2006. Fourteen of the 15 candidates achieved a grade A and the other candidate a Grade B. Two candidates won the Wynford Davies History Prize, awarded by the Welsh Joint Education Committee, for the highest marks achieved by a male and female candidate in the A level history examinations.
- 113 In 2006, boys outperformed girls in terms of the higher A level grades and the average points scored, whereas nationally the converse was the case.
- 114 Students always listen respectfully to their teachers and peers. They put forward points of view and logical arguments extremely confidently. Most students' responses are extended and articulate. Their use and understanding of subject specific vocabulary are exemplary. In most subjects, standards of discussion are very good. Collaboration is an outstanding feature of students' work across the curriculum.
- 115 Reading skills are good with outstanding features. Students respond with exceptional understanding to a range of challenging texts across the curriculum. Their skills of critical analysis are extremely well developed.
- 116 Almost without exception, students' writing is well organised and expressed. The development of ideas and arguments is often outstanding. All adapt language, style and format appropriately.
- 117 Students' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. They are able to utilise and apply these skills in a number of situations in various subject areas across the curriculum.
- 118 Students make good use of information and communication technology to support their studies. Students have good access to computers and are autonomous in using a wide range of appropriate applications in their work. In the subjects inspected, outstanding use is found in English. In science, history and physical education there are good features with no important shortcomings, and in Welsh good features outweigh shortcomings.
- 119 Students collaborate very effectively with each other. They work positively, engaging well in meaningful debate and problem-solving activities. In many subjects, students demonstrate reflective thinking, innovation and creativity in their reasoning and judgements.
- 120 With very few exceptions, students are able to work independently and take the necessary measures to advance their own progress.

Students' progress in learning

- 121 The Welsh Examinations Database provides detailed analyses of students' performances in a range of examinations. Such information shows that, when the school's A level results in 2006 are matched to the same students' achievements at GCSE, they reveal considerable 'value-added' in most subjects studied. In other words, A level students at Ysgol Dewi Sant make good and often outstanding progress between GCSE and A level in these subjects.

- 122 As indicated in comments made in the detailed subject reports that follow later in this report, many students are now achieving good or outstanding standards. Students are committed to their work and make good or better progress.
- 123 Teachers work hard to help students become accomplished independent learners who are prepared well for learning beyond school. Students successfully perform a wide range of challenging tasks, working independently or with others, as appropriate. They undertake many investigative and research projects with great success.
- 124 Year on year, around 63% of Y11 students remain in Ysgol Dewi Sant for their sixth form careers and a few students join from other schools. Between 83% and 96% of Y12 students continue into Y13 to complete their studies and most of these proceed to higher or further education after leaving school.

The development of students' personal, social and learning skills

- 125 Students' attitudes to learning are very good. Their ability to work effectively with others is outstanding and can be seen across the curriculum. Students help each other effectively and respect the views of others. The outstanding relationship between students and their teachers underpins the high quality teaching and learning that occurs in the school. It also reinforces the outstanding feeling of community that exists in the school.
- 126 Students behave very well and have positive attitudes to the school and their work. They are mature and play an exceedingly useful role in the daily life of the school. Many Y12 students act as prefects at lunchtime and they also support younger students with their reading. They also organise a number of events to support charities and other good causes.
- 127 Attendance in the sixth form is slightly lower than in key stages 3 and 4. Punctuality to lessons and other meetings is very good.
- 128 Students' understanding and appreciation of equal opportunities issues and their respect for diversity in society are outstanding features in their development as individuals.
- 129 There are many good opportunities for students to learn about the community and workplace, and to be prepared effectively for life after school.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 130 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self-evaluation report.

Key stages 3 and 4

- 131 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in lessons observed in key stages 3 and 4 during the inspection:

67 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	35	53	12	0	0
Key stage 4	24	61	15	0	0
Combined KS3/KS4	30	57	13	0	0
<i>National figures for Y7 to Y13 (2005/2006)</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>0</i>

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

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

- 132 As the table shows, the proportion of lessons awarded grade 1 or grade 2 (87%) is greater than the national average (69%) recorded for 2005/2006, with an outstanding 30% at grade 1. The figures also mark an improvement on those achieved at the time of the previous inspection for these key stages.
- 133 Very good and often outstanding teaching is a predominant feature of the school. When interviewed, students in all year groups commented very positively and unanimously about the high quality of teaching and support they receive.
- 134 Examination results and lesson observations confirm that all teachers have high expectations and use a variety of teaching methods to continually challenge and motivate all students to achieve excellence. The enthusiasm and dedication of the school's teaching staff is a major strength of the school and is a most significant reason for the school's excellent examination and other results at both key stages.
- 135 All teachers within the various subject areas are either specialists in those subjects or have received regular in-service education and training or school based mentoring to provide them with appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. This has helped to ensure that the quality of teaching is of a very high standard.
- 136 Detailed schemes of work show that teachers plan effectively for all students, including those with special educational needs and that appropriate opportunities are also provided for the development of key skills.

- 137 Relationships between staff and students are excellent. Teachers know their students well and it is clear that students respect their teachers and appreciate the effort that they make to help them to achieve their potential. This is evidenced by the very low number of exclusions and the very large number of students who participate in the extracurricular activities provided by their teachers.
- 138 Learning support assistants are used effectively to support students with special needs in mainstream classes. Some students go to the 'Red Room' or to the librarian for specific help with basic skills. Examination and test results confirm that students with special needs make good progress, especially in terms of their basic skills.
- 139 Several teachers have experience of working as GCSE or A Level examiners and one has unitary authority advisory service experience. Such activities have had a positive effect on standards achieved in their relevant subjects.
- 140 Teachers provide a wide range of opportunities for students to work independently and in groups to develop problem-solving and creative skills.
- 141 Where teaching has outstanding features it is because teachers:
- have high expectations of all their students that are realised in stimulating and challenging tasks;
 - provide thorough and detailed feedback to students to help them make decisions about what to do next to make progress;
 - encourage students to review and evaluate their acquisition and development of key skills;
 - use a range of questioning techniques that probe students' knowledge and understanding, and involve all learners; and
 - have the excellent relationships with their students mentioned above.
- 142 There are also many good features associated with teaching in the school. For example, teachers:
- involve students in demonstrating aspects of lessons and in assessing each other's work, thus improving their knowledge and understanding of the subjects concerned;
 - use to very good effect a range of modern technological devices, such as interactive whiteboards, to improve lessons;
 - make effective use of the time available to them in lessons;
 - let students know what they are expected to learn during a lesson and over time, so that they can gauge their own progress and take more responsibility for their own learning;
 - give freely of their own time to offer extra support and guidance for their students; and
 - prepare good learning resources, to provide all students, including those with special needs, and high achievers, with access to appropriate learning opportunities.

143 Although teaching is very good overall, there are occasions when shortcomings occur. This is because sometimes teachers:

- allow students to drift off task;
- do not correct students' spelling and/or grammatical errors;
- conduct lessons at a too a slow pace; and
- do not readily encourage students to use both Welsh and English in everyday situations.

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

144 The assessment, recording and reporting of students' achievements have good features and no important shortcomings. The school's policy and guidelines are comprehensive and relate to assessment for learning. All faculties have implemented this policy in key stages 3 and 4.

145 In September of Y7, data from a variety of tests, along with end of key stage 2 teacher assessments, are used to identify students with additional learning needs and to place students in sets in subjects. This data is also used to predict levels and grades and, hence, to identify progress and any underachievement. This information is used effectively by the basic skills co-ordinator.

146 The day-to-day marking of books and tests is good. At key stage 3, all departments use a common format for achievement followed by an effort mark. At key stage 4 an appropriate GCSE grade is followed by an effort mark. In a number of subjects, there are constructive comments to inform students on the strengths and weaknesses of their work and to suggest ways on how to improve. However, the quality of these comments varies across and within faculties. On occasions, these comments are too general and lack purpose. Most teachers use assessment well to help them plan more effective lessons.

147 Students' understanding of the assessment system is outstanding. They are regularly involved in peer assessment and their own self-assessment, and are able to set themselves clear, meaningful targets.

148 Each head of faculty records regular test marks and students' achievements are constantly under review. Subject teachers and heads of faculty acknowledge good work and identify underachievement. At the end of February, a detailed student self-review is conducted in every subject. This review includes listing strengths, weaknesses and targets for improvement. Senior pastoral and academic staff monitor the processes and outcomes effectively. These reviews, acting as an interim report, are followed by parents' evenings. Pastoral leaders and heads of faculty identify underachievers and these students are then monitored closely.

149 In addition to the above, a comprehensive, well-structured annual report is prepared for each student. Each subject area comments on achievement, strengths, weaknesses, how to improve and sets targets for students. However, there are wide variations in the quality of the teachers' comments and the setting of definite, precise targets. These variations are across and within subject areas. Reporting meets statutory requirements.

150 All heads of faculty analyse results of external examinations in detail. In discussions with the deputy headteacher, realistic and challenging targets for improvement are agreed. In addition, heads of faculty moderate work within departments to ensure assessments are fair and accurate. The requirements of examination boards, the National Curriculum and the Special Needs Code of Practice are met.

151 In the six subjects inspected, assessment in Welsh and physical education is outstanding. This good practice has been identified and the school recognises the need for further development across subject areas.

The sixth form

152 The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in the sixth form lessons observed during the inspection:

21 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Post 16	38	57	5	0	0
<i>National figures for Y7 to Y13 (2005/2006)</i>	17	52	26	5	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

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

153 As the table shows, the school's sixth form figures are well above the 2005/2006 national averages for all teaching in secondary schools, with almost two-fifths of the teaching having outstanding features. As with key stages 3 and 4, these proportions are an improvement on the figures recorded at the time of the previous inspection. Very good teaching is an extremely strong feature of the sixth form provision.

154 All of the good and outstanding features of teaching in key stages 3 and 4 are also present in the sixth form. Additionally, many teachers have an outstanding understanding of the requirements of external examinations, which they use to great advantage with their students in preparing them well for the tests facing them.

155 Because of the outstanding success of history at A level, the teaching in this subject must be highlighted as a major strength of the quality of education provided within the sixth form.

156 Outstanding aspects that are more prevalent in the sixth form include:

- very detailed guidance on the significance of examination marking schemes;
- exceptional depth and breadth of subject knowledge;
- very thorough and detailed marking and feedback; and
- optimum use of time available in every lesson.

157 Teachers regularly involve students in extended and very challenging research tasks to help them become more independent learners and prepare them well for learning beyond school.

158 Students commented very positively about the high quality of teaching they receive in the sixth form. They indicated that they valued the in-depth knowledge that teachers seem to have of their strengths and shortcomings and how they work together in a friendly but challenging environment. They commented that, because of the size of the school, "We can't get away with anything!"

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

159 The assessment of students' work and progress is good and is in line with the school's policy.

160 Teachers ensure that students know and understand the requirements of the examination boards and the criteria for success. When work is marked, teachers write informative comments that enable students to identify ways of improving.

161 Students' progress is well monitored; in the first instance by heads of faculty and by an assistant headteacher who is head of the sixth form. Students in need of help receive good support and guidance.

162 Students evaluate the quality of their own achievement well and identify ways to improve their own standards.

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
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163 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self-evaluation report.

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

The curriculum:

- meets students' learning needs and reflects the aims set out for students of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996;
- promotes an appropriate balance and breadth of study and progression of learning;
- ensures outstanding access to the curriculum for all students and equality of opportunity to achieve high standards;
- meets all legal requirements; and
- provides personal, social and health education, work-related education and careers education and guidance in accordance with national guidelines.

164 Good features in the curricular provision include:

- all students in key stage 4 studying a full GCSE course in Welsh;

- almost all students in key stage 4 are entered for at least one GCSE examination; and
- a good range of AS and A level courses which attracts a large number of students back to the sixth form.

165 The school has been successful in gaining the Basic Skills Quality Mark on 3 occasions since 1998. Schemes of work identify good opportunities for students to use the key skills of communication, number and information and communication technology, together with the wider key skills. At present, the school is carrying out an in-depth mapping exercise in all years, with a view to gaining accreditation for the six key skills in the near future.

166 There is an outstanding range of extracurricular activities that broadens students' experiences and promotes their personal and social development. The activities involve a large number of students. There are ample opportunities for students to:

- join a range of clubs during the lunch-hour and after school;
- represent the school in a wide range of sporting activities, with some students gaining county, regional and national honours;
- take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme to Gold level;
- take part in productions, learn to play musical instruments, join choirs and orchestras;
- visit both local and national theatres, museums, historical sites and to take part in many field visits; and
- experience a number of visits abroad for educational exchange purposes and social activities.

167 Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with outstanding features. The outstanding features are that students:

- are respectful and considerate of others;
- are aware of sensitive matters such as prejudice, racism, and the rights of the individual;
- undertake responsibility and co-operate in an outstanding way with others;
- develop self-discipline, responsible behaviour and respect towards the environment of the school;
- support and care for each other as well as for children and people who are less fortunate than themselves; and
- are aware of other cultures and respect diversity and other people's ways of life.

168 The good features are in the students' spiritual development. By means of acts of daily collective worship, the Christian Union and experiences gained in a number of subjects, students are given opportunities to develop:

- a sense of wonder and curiosity about life and the world; and
- an understanding of many beliefs and values.

169 Students' learning experiences are considerably enriched by the school's partnership with parents, community and other education providers. The conventional information exchanges with parents, primary schools, community and colleges that ensure that

students' pastoral and learning needs are met are good, well managed and effective. Within these the following are outstanding features:

- the ready willingness to canvass the views of students and parents on school processes and provision by questionnaire thus influencing planning and management;
- the level of parental support for the school through a thriving Parent Teacher Association and exceptionally high attendance at parents' evenings and other functions;
- the extent of school involvement with the community through music, charitable activities and voluntary support in many initiatives; and
- the breadth and management of transition arrangements from key stage 2 to key stage 3. In addition to excellent pastoral support there is a particularly broad range of curricular bridging links.

170 Although not an outstanding feature, it is noteworthy that a school of the size of Ysgol Dewi Sant maintains good links with several initial teacher-training institutions. Student teachers regularly add significant breadth to the learning experiences offered in the classroom.

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

171 Overall, work-related education is good. The main features are a well-organised work experience for key stage 4 and Y12 students, and a range of useful supporting events and activities across these years. There are a number of good features, which include:

- the programme of speakers, events and problem solving and/or team-building activities in key stage 4 and the sixth form;
- the opportunities offered to Y9, Y11 and Y12 students to explore option choices in relation to career aspirations with a professional adviser; and
- the supportive relationship with local employers.

172 There is a shortcoming in that key stage 3 students have few opportunities to investigate the world of work for themselves or to explore their leadership and enterprise skills.

173 The provision for the development of bilingualism is good. On entry into Y7, advanced learners follow the first language Welsh course from the outset. At key stage 4 all second language students follow the full GCSE course. The number of post-16 students who study Welsh has increased dramatically.

174 The Welsh department arranges many extracurricular activities for students to use their Welsh outside the classroom. These include visits and residential courses, Urdd eisteddfod competitions, sporting activities, and bilingual services and concerts at the Cathedral. The eisteddfod, to which all departments contribute, is an important and valuable event in the school calendar. Welsh is used by some first language students in lessons and this also was observed in some tutorial groups. This good practice is

not prominent around the school so that not all students maximise their potential in becoming fully bilingual.

175 Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig features prominently in most subjects. It is not yet fully embedded in the schemes of work of all subjects.

176 There are a number of good features in promoting the awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. These include:

- an established Eco-club which has been awarded a number of substantial grants to promote its work;
- students involved in community environmental projects in liaison with the Pembrokeshire National Park;
- developing a memorial garden on a designated area within the school; and
- good coverage in a number of subjects.

177 The school maintains a good and current awareness of the needs of employers through:

- a strong and well-established partnership with Careers Wales;
- the governors' understanding of the local community; and
- the mutually beneficial links with enterprises in the community.

178 Entrepreneurial skills are developed well by the school. Problem solving is a well-developed, regular and useful feature of lessons across the curriculum. In key stage 4 and the sixth form there are ample and good opportunities for students to engage in team-building and competitive skills activities, as well as to learn from entrepreneurs in classroom presentations. There are fewer opportunities in key stage 3 to experience these activities.

179 Overall, the school has planned a curriculum that meets the needs of its students and reflects most of the Welsh Assembly Government priorities. The curriculum provides a broad range of experiences and lays a sound foundation for lifelong learning.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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180 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self-evaluation report.

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

181 The school plans and manages the care arrangements very effectively. There is an outstanding relationship between teachers and learners. This fosters a happy and caring ethos where every individual is valued.

182 When interviewed, students of all ages commented very positively about the high quality of support and guidance they receive at the school.

183 The outstanding features identified in the quality of care, support and guidance provided for learners include:

- very effective care arrangements that are well managed;
- outstanding supportive quality to the relationships between teachers and learners;
- an effective system to ensure a comprehensive picture of students' performance across the curriculum, that quickly identifies students who are underachieving;
- a programme that ensures that all students who are new to the school settle in quickly; and
- meaningful pastoral and curriculum links with the primary partner schools.

184 The good features in the quality of care, support and guidance include:

- heads of school and form tutors, who fulfil their duties effectively as they monitor the well-being and the behaviour of the learners in their care;
- good extra support provided by subject leaders and senior managers for the students identified as underachieving;
- effective co-operation with a wide range of external agencies;
- the School Council, which actively contributes in a positive manner to the life of the school;
- positive relationships with parents;
- information that is shared with parents through the good use made of the Students' Planner;
- useful information in the parents' handbook;
- the detailed and effective monitoring of students' attendance and punctuality;
- the school pastoral work which is enhanced and supported by the personal, social and health education programme;
- teachers and the Careers Officer who offer good and relevant guidance to students when they make career choices as they transfer to Y10 and post 16 education;
- good links with local employers;
- the School Nurse, who is a valuable source of assistance and advice on matters relating to health;
- students' knowledge and understanding of the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise;
- clearly documented procedures for assuring students' well-being, and health and safety; and
- all staff are familiar with the school's procedures to deal with child protection issues.

185 However, there is a shortcoming in that a few health and safety issues were reported to the headteacher during the week of inspection.

The quality of the provision for additional learning needs

186 The quality of the provision for students with additional learning needs has a number of outstanding features, which include:

- extensive and effective deployment of learning support assistants;

- effective measures that ensure that the behaviour of students with behavioural difficulties does not affect the progress of other learners;
- outstanding links with primary partner schools that ensure the identification of students who will need extra support when they transfer; and
- outstanding academic and pastoral support provided for students in the school's additional learning support centre.

187 As a result of such support, many students who are on the register of special educational needs achieve outstanding success in their GCSE, AS and A level examinations.

188 There are also a number of good features, which include:

- effective implementation of the Special Needs Code of Practice;
- good information provided about students' needs for mainstream teachers, so that they can plan work that is suitable for these learners;
- good use of various agencies to provide specialist expertise;
- good individual educational and behavioural plans with specific targets to tell students how they can improve;
- staff working in close co-operation with parents;
- appropriate support for a small number of students with specific learning difficulties from the unitary authority's specialists;
- a variety of effective strategies to improve students' numeracy and literacy; and
- the Buddy Reading Scheme, that is successful in improving and developing students' reading.

189 There is a shortcoming in that the learning support room is small for the number of students who use it.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

190 The quality of the provision for equal opportunities has a large number of outstanding features including:

- the promotion of students' appreciation of racial and social equality issues through personal, social and health education, religious education and extracurricular activities;
- a learning ethos where students can expect to be free from harassment and discrimination;
- all students are given sensitive and effective support if problems arise in school;
- students from minority ethnic groups are accepted without any difficulty and integrated naturally into school life;
- students and parents are confident that the school would respond without delay to any case of unfairness or discrimination; and
- the school recognises diversity of students' backgrounds and provides a flexible curriculum for them.

191 The good features in the provision for equal opportunities include:

- students' individual successes being regularly praised;

- the school's actions in monitoring and comparing the examination results of boys and girls;
- all subject options are available to all students;
- challenging stereotyping when advising students in their options and in sporting activities;
- providing good support for the students in the care of the unitary authority and having a good working relationship with the relevant agencies;
- good success in promoting good behaviour, by setting individual targets for students;
- making early contact with the home if a student does not meet the school's high expectations;
- disabled students are able to gain access to all parts of the school;
- students are very confident that the school would deal with any incident of bullying quickly and effectively; and
- students are very appreciative of the support given by teachers and non-teaching staff.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

192 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self-evaluation report.

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

193 Analysis of students' performance data within key question 1 helps confirm the awarding of a grade 1 for this key question.

194 The headteacher and deputy headteacher are extremely successful leaders and managers. The philosophy of their chosen, collegiate style of leadership is fully justified in the improvements that have occurred over time at the school. The implementation of their chosen methods of management, including the accountability of teachers, through monitoring, evaluating and target setting processes, has been outstandingly successful in both maintaining and improving the quality of teaching and learning across all sections of the school.

195 Members of the leadership group provide very good strategic direction for the school. Each member's expertise and strengths are used to best advantage in pursuit of the school's aims.

196 The school has a very positive, friendly and caring ethos that stems from the commitment of the governors and staff to its mission statement, "To strive for sustained improvement in a well-disciplined, caring school, which encourages and expects every student to achieve his or her full potential". Because of the high quality of leadership and the commitment of so many to help the students of the school to realise their potential, this aim is now being achieved.

197 Leaders and managers of the school, at all levels, have been outstandingly successful in providing a clear direction for the school. Indeed, there is not only a shared belief that the school can maintain its success at every level, but also a shared determination to continue to improve standards of achievement even further, despite the obvious constraints of shortcomings in accommodation.

198 The school is successful in its policy of promoting equality for all and this is seen in:

- the availability of a broad and appropriate curriculum for all students of all abilities;
- the outstanding systems for support and guidance that give all students the best opportunities to succeed; and
- the special arrangements made for students with a range of special educational needs.

- 199 Target setting is used effectively in the school. Targets are challenging, yet realistic, requiring sustained effort on the part of those for whom they are set, if they are to be met. Leaders, managers, teachers and students are involved in the target setting process. Targets are discussed and reviewed regularly and, if necessary, amended. End of key stage targets are set based on prior attainment and information from subject areas, agreed by all interested parties, and communicated to all staff, groups and individuals. Extensive use is made of a wide range of reliable data to inform the target setting process and the school has been successful in regularly meeting and exceeding its targets in most areas of provision.
- 200 The school takes appropriate regard of national priorities for improvement and includes them in its development plans. Many of these priorities are already having a beneficial effect within and beyond the school. For example, links with partner primary schools are very good, ensuring easy and effective transition for students.
- 201 The school's systems for promoting the continuing professional development of all staff and for improving the quality of teaching and learning are good with outstanding features. These include:
- the effective mentoring of newly qualified teachers;
 - the annual review of staff training needs by heads of faculty;
 - the mentoring of all staff via performance management interviews; and
 - the extremely rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning at every key stage.
- 202 The sixth form of the school has enjoyed considerable success since the previous inspection. Student numbers have risen significantly and student attainment was outstanding in 2006 with 100% of students achieving Grades A-E in their chosen A levels, 84% gaining grades A to C and the average points score was a remarkable 27 for those students studying two or more A levels. The courses students pursue in the sixth form are usually well matched to their interests and abilities. There are very high expectations of all sixth form students at the school, and teamwork and a commitment to succeed predominate sixth form life.
- 203 Sixth form students generally provide valuable support for many younger students, through the Buddy Scheme, and they often present good role models for these youngsters. Most Y12 students also act as prefects and assist the school's leadership team with supervision duties at lunchtimes.
- 204 There are several notable features of the organisation and management of the sixth form. These include:
- effective recruitment and advice programmes;
 - a very supportive and structured induction programme for new students;
 - an effective system of monitoring students' progress and attendance;
 - short term action plans/targets for improvement if required;
 - a very good range of extracurricular activities;
 - many opportunities for students to take responsibility;
 - a shared aim to prepare students for lifelong learning beyond school; and

- good links with universities and colleges that helps students to choose correct routes beyond school.

205 All heads of faculty and heads of school lead and manage their staff very well within their subject specific and/or pastoral areas of provision. Indeed, teamwork and a commitment to achieving the highest possible standards of teaching and learning is an outstanding feature of all these teams. In particular, all heads of faculty work closely with the deputy headteacher to rigorously monitor students' attainment at every stage and to develop appropriate subject action plans to maintain or to raise standards of achievement even further. This has resulted in some outstanding progress being made in certain subject areas, whilst many others have consistently achieved outstanding levels of success at every stage.

How well governors meet their responsibilities

206 The governors understand their school and the community it serves very well. They play a central role in its management. An appropriate range of committees focuses on particular school issues and keeps the whole governing body well informed. Link governors with particular responsibilities for certain aspects of school provide further useful information to discussions. Governors are thus enabled to make a valuable contribution to strategic management that is soundly based and properly focused.

207 Governors are kept up-to-date and well informed by regular, comprehensive reports from the headteacher. Issues are discussed in depth. Very good minutes provide sufficient detail to enable new committee members to contribute confidently to meetings. The high quality of information ensures that decisions are both appropriate and effective.

208 The governors fulfil all their statutory duties. They keep parents well informed of what the school offers and achieves through a comprehensive prospectus and detailed annual reports.

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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209 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self-evaluation report.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

210 We awarded a grade 1 because the school has maintained or improved high standards of achievement and teaching over a sustained period of time. Such success is testament to extremely effective measures for evaluating and improving quality and standards.

- 211 The school's self-evaluation report and subject evaluation reports are accurate and honest evaluations of the good and outstanding features of the school. They also highlight areas for future development, indicating that the school is not complacent about its success.
- 212 Members of the school staff and governing body have an extremely comprehensive and secure knowledge of the establishment's strengths and limitations.
- 213 The deputy headteacher regularly and promptly undertakes very detailed and rigorous analyses of all test and examination results.
- 214 This work takes into account an extensive range of appropriate indicators, free school meal benchmarks, historical trends and reviews of students' performance against school and subject targets. The process is outstandingly thorough and systematic and has had a positive impact on evaluation procedures and planning for improvement.
- 215 The school makes appropriate and cautious use of a wealth of other data, such as value added measures, which take account of prior attainment information. Parents and carers, governors and students are consulted at regular intervals as appropriate. Less formal consultations also form part of the school's evaluation procedures. Because of the exceptional relationships that exist in the school, students are willing to communicate their thoughts about the school's strengths and shortcomings openly and honestly. In return, they are given due consideration in the decision-making processes.
- 216 The deputy headteacher and relevant heads of faculty regularly undertake rigorous and challenging subject reviews. These help inform the main review process.
- 217 Clear and suitably challenging targets are set for individuals and subject departments following the annual review sessions. Heads of faculty monitor progress towards these targets at regular intervals.
- 218 The headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly monitor students' planners to ensure that students and teachers use them appropriately.
- 219 The principles of self evaluation are well known and implemented by all staff, and rigorous and comprehensive subject self evaluations have been completed.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

- 220 The school's self-evaluation processes are very effective and have helped to maintain or improve the high levels of student attainment that exist at every level. Leaders and managers set very clear and appropriate priorities to bring about improvement.
- 221 The key areas for strategic development for 2006/07 are, appropriately, to:
- continue improving self evaluation;
 - improve the school environment (e.g. litter, garden, recycling);
 - sustain academic achievements at all levels;

- further improve students' basic and key skills; and
- rationalise the curriculum in order to achieve even better value for money and a balanced budget.

222 The developments planned for the school, indicate that the school is not complacent about its current success, but that it seeks to achieve even higher standards.

223 The outcomes of review procedures and the associated analyses of data, confirm that year on year, actions taken to bring about improvements have resulted in clearly measurable gains.

224 Overall the school has made very good progress in addressing most of the key issues for action highlighted in the previous inspection report. For example:

- with regard to standards of achievement at the school:
 - at A level, the proportion of students achieving 2 or more grades A to C has increased from 45% to 84%; 2 or more grades A to E has increased from 95% to 100%; and the average points score per candidate from 17 to 27;
 - at GCSE, the proportion achieving 5 or more grades A* to C has increased from 66% to 68%; the proportion achieving the core subject indicator has increased from 49% to 50%; and
 - at key stage 3, the proportion achieving the core subject indicator has increased from 70% to 78%;
- with regard to key skills in key stages 3 and 4, there is now a whole-school key skills coordinator who is part of the leadership team. He has undertaken an audit of the key skills provision and the school is set to implement plans to obtain accreditation for these across all stages;
- long-term development planning at school and departmental level has been hampered by the school's budgetary problems but these are now being addressed;
- the school has worked with the unitary authority to improve the accommodation for science, music and physical education. However, with regard to the latter, there remains a clear need for the unitary authority to provide an adequate indoor sports facility for the school; and
- the school is now meeting statutory requirements for the provision of religious education in key stage 4 and the sixth form, and for a daily act of collective worship.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
--

225 The grade awarded by the inspection team does not agree with the grade 2 awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report. This judgement was made because of the outstanding value for money the school achieves together with other exemplary features.

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

226 The staffing of the school overall has good features and no important shortcomings. The number of staff is more than sufficient for the school to run efficiently. The staff profile indicates that about 40% of the teachers have ten years' experience or less, including one newly qualified teacher. The main good features can be summarised as:

- all teaching staff are appropriately qualified and trained to meet all aspects, subjects and wider needs of the curriculum;
- the administrative staff ensure that the office, reception, reprographics areas and the library run efficiently;
- the caretaker and his assistant are responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the site and contribute effectively to the daily routines of the school;
- technician support is good in information technology, science, and design and technology;
- ten learning support assistants provide good help and encouragement to the number of students with learning and behavioural problems; they work effectively with all subject teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs; and
- the cover assistant, who supervises classes for absent staff. When this is not required, he is deployed efficiently as additional support for students in lessons.

227 In order to cater for the requirements of the curriculum, the school employs a comparatively high number of part-time teachers, and many teachers have to teach more than one subject. Such is the high quality of their work that this has had a positive effect on the quality of provision.

228 The quality and quantity of learning resources for key stages 3 and 4 are sufficient with good features and no important shortcomings. The good features include:

- a sufficiently wide range of text books and equipment in most subjects;
- a wide and creative range of subject materials developed and produced by the school's staff;
- the provision of information and communication technology equipment for the teaching of discrete information technology lessons and for use by all subject areas of the curriculum;
- the bank of computers in design and technology, that is used for control and for computer aided design and manufacture;
- an increasing number of interactive white boards and digital projectors that are used to enhance classroom teaching;
- the very good use of resources out of school to enrich the curriculum, including visits to museums, art galleries and theatres, and trips abroad; and
- a wide range of visiting speakers to enhance students' learning experiences.

229 The library has an adequate stock of books but no computer facilities and is small for the number of students on roll. Nevertheless, it is used well by key stage 3 and key stage 4 students, mainly at lunch and break times, and encourages reading, independent learning and research.

- 230 A shortcoming in resources is the absence of a laser cutter in design and technology, which limits the experiences available to students.
- 231 For the sixth form, in the six subjects inspected, there is a good range and supply of textbooks and equipment. During lesson times, when there are no classes, students use the computers in their study room and in the computer rooms, for independent learning and research.
- 232 The accommodation has good features that outweigh shortcomings, but is barely sufficient for the numbers of students currently on roll. At present, it just meets the pastoral and academic needs of the curriculum and has the following good features:
- most rooms are fit for purpose and are large enough to cater well for all class sizes;
 - classrooms and corridors contain many colourful and attractive displays of students' work and provide stimulating and effective learning environments;
 - refurbished students' toilets and changing rooms;
 - good outdoor facilities for physical education; and
 - school grounds and buildings are kept clean and mostly litter free.
- 233 In general, the school presents a tired, over-used look with parts of the exterior being in desperate need of repair, maintenance and decoration.
- 234 The major shortcomings in accommodation are to be found in the poor indoor facilities for physical education. The school hall has to serve variously as a gymnasium, a sports hall, a drama studio and a fitness room. Despite these difficulties, due to the unstinting commitment of teachers, the school achieves some outstanding successes.
- 235 Other shortcomings in accommodation include:
- a small number of rooms that cannot cater properly for the timetabled large classes; and
 - the limited facilities in science and music.
- 236 Accommodation for the sixth form is sufficient for both the academic and pastoral needs of the curriculum. Although students have to use the canteen as a common room, this causes no real problems. Their small study room with a bank of six computers is used well by students for independent learning, Internet research and to improve the presentation of their work.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money?

- 237 Overall, the school's management of resources to achieve value for money is outstanding.
- 238 The deployment and management of all staff are very good. Included in the good features are:
- the deployment of staff, which makes good and effective use of their time, expertise and experience; and
 - the effective work of the cover assistant and the learning support assistants.

- 239 An outstanding feature is the professional development of all staff, teaching and non-teaching. Training is linked to priorities highlighted in performance management activities, the school development plan and the needs of departments and individuals. It is very well coordinated and courses attended by staff are carefully evaluated and used to the benefit of the school.
- 240 The programmes and support for newly qualified teachers, for the extended professional development of recently qualified teachers, and for initial teacher training students are thorough, comprehensive and exemplary.
- 241 The school has implemented its strategy for the workload agreement and has made appropriate provision in the timetable for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment.
- 242 The headteacher, after consulting all interested bodies, has implemented the school's structure for the new teaching and learning responsibilities.
- 243 The headteacher, deputy headteacher, finance officer and the governing body's sub-committee for finance effectively manage the available budget.
- 244 The following good features are evident:
- the finance sub-committee meets regularly and receives detailed up-to-date reports from the headteacher;
 - financial decisions are well focused on curricular needs and the educational priorities identified in the school development plan;
 - the school pursues all grants and sponsorship that are available; and
 - the recommendations of the last auditors' report are being addressed.
- 245 The finance officer is responsible for the competent day-to-day running of the school's finances. School spending is closely and carefully monitored.
- 246 The school reviews and uses its resources and finances very effectively and competently. It provides outstanding value for money because of the:
- improved, high level of students' standards of achievement;
 - very good quality of its teaching;
 - first rate provision of care and support for students;
 - wide ranging, planned development of staff, both teaching and non-teaching; and
 - very effective quality of its management.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

Key stage 3: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
Key stage 4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
Post 16: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

Key stage 3

- 247 Over recent years, in end of key stage assessments, students have performed consistently well, achieving better results than those realised in more than three-quarters of similar schools.
- 248 Students engage in a wide range of writing and understand the language requirements of different audiences, purposes and forms. Writing is effectively structured and there is use of appropriate vocabulary and expressions.
- 249 There is outstanding collaboration in pairs and small groups for a range of purposes. In these groups, students analyse texts, solve problems, plan responses and talk against known criteria. Students make very good and appropriate use of technical terms.
- 250 The quality of many students' prepared presentations to the class is outstanding. Students research very well and communicate confidently to the audience with use of appropriate tone and vocabulary.

Post 16

- 251 Students speak outstandingly well in pair and group work. They are very confident and articulate.
- 252 They use information and communication technology exceedingly competently to research contextual background to literature and to share findings effectively with their peers.
- 253 When studying a play, students make outstanding suggestions on sequence, character and other factors, justifying their viewpoints exceptionally well.
- 254 In their written work, students undertake excellent syntheses of information, use appropriate quotes to justify viewpoints and use literary devices like metaphor to good effect.
- 255 Students demonstrate outstanding independence in their approaches to learning. They often successfully adopt the role of teacher as they present researched information to their peers.

Good features

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

- 256 Students collaborate willingly in group work and express their ideas fluently. They speak confidently in a range of activities and show awareness of how to evaluate their own work and the work of others, particularly in non-fiction at key stage 3.
- 257 They have good listening skills, and listen well to each other and to their teachers.
- 258 All write appropriately for a range of purposes, showing a fitting command of Standard English and many write extended narratives and enhance their work effectively using information and communication technology.
- 259 Students participate competently in drama-based activities to explore characters in texts.
- 260 They read aloud with accuracy and most read fluently. Most read with expression. There is very good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of literary, non-literary and media texts. They interpret pictures, advertisements and body language well. They refer to texts to support ideas and opinions.

Post 16

- 261 Students make good progress and a significant number of them write well-structured critical essays.
- 262 All maintain thorough notes from a variety of sources in well-organised folders.

Shortcomings

Key stage 4

- 263 Boys achieve less well than girls.
- 264 A few students do not maintain pace to achieve significant written work in lessons.

Welsh second language

Key stage 3: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
Key stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
Post 16: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Outstanding features

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

- 265 Standards in speaking are outstanding. Students' prompt recall of previously learned language allows them to use new vocabulary within familiar sentence patterns. During revision exercises at the beginning of lessons students can sustain an extended impromptu conversation.
- 266 Students work outstandingly well in pairs to create dialogue, which they perform confidently in front of their peers. As students are secure in their use of a range of language patterns, by the end of key stage 4 they can adapt language to move the

discussion forward at a brisk pace. They create a good rapport in class discussion due to the spontaneity of their responses. Their willingness to use Welsh naturally outside formal exercises helps them to improve their fluency.

- 267 Listening skills are outstanding. Students are totally comfortable with the high expectations set in lessons and their teachers' exuberant use of the Welsh language. Due to their thorough understanding of the language they respond confidently to all the activities presented to link language skills.
- 268 The value added to students' education over the two key stages is outstanding. All second language students follow the full GCSE course at key stage 4. In 2006, 80% of students gained an A* to C grade with 49% gaining an A* or an A grade.
- 269 Students with special educational needs make outstanding progress over the two key stages. They sit the GCSE examination at key stage 4 and progress to study at AS level post 16.

Good features

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

- 270 Standards in reading are good. Students read a range of materials to obtain information. They read aloud confidently. In key stage 4, students compare articles they read to a good standard.
- 271 Standards in writing are good. From Y7, students write a range of extended documents for different purposes. They show an increasing grasp of grammar, spelling and tenses. By key stage 4 students can write without prior preparation or reference to a worksheet. They express opinions accurately and effectively. They use a range of literary techniques to enhance their work.
- 272 Students use information and communication technology competently to produce work such as essays, reports and brochures.

Post 16

- 273 Students can conduct fluent conversations with visitors, peers and teachers. The highest achievers speak the language continuously in every situation throughout each lesson. They sustain interesting, lively conversations.
- 274 When discussing set texts, students express opinions effectively on plot, themes and characters. They make relevant comparisons with other texts.
- 275 They work very effectively in pairs to discuss rules of grammar and provide examples of their use in different contexts.
- 276 Students structure their written work well. They produce a wide range of extended written documents. They show an awareness of audience and purpose. The highest achievers write expressively and accurately.

Shortcomings

- 277 The literary appreciation work of less confident writers is descriptive rather than analytical.
- 278 There are instances of basic errors in written work.

Science

Key stage 3: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
Key stage 4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
Post 16: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Outstanding features

Key stage 3

- 279 Over the past three years, the percentage of students attaining level 5 and above has been well above the national average in the key stage 3 national assessments.
- 280 Many students across the ability range possess a good understanding of a wide range of topics.
- 281 They have a secure recall of key concepts and can apply them to solve a range of scientific problems.

Good features

Key stage 3

- 282 Many students use scientific terms accurately to explain concepts and in their practical reports.
- 283 Most students are developing their understanding of scientific principles associated with areas such as healthy eating, global warming and conservation of energy, in applications in everyday use.
- 284 Students are developing good practical skills. They work safely, recording and analysing measurements appropriately.
- 285 Nearly all students with special learning needs make good progress.

Key stage 4

- 286 Well over half of the students have a sound understanding of the more complex principles they study.
- 287 They have a good recall of previous work and can apply their knowledge to a range of tasks and applications of science.
- 288 Most students have developed a good understanding of the way in which scientific developments have contributed to the development of industry and sustainable development, and how they have influenced the economy.
- 289 About half of the students complete investigational work to a good standard. They analyse their results in depth, using appropriate graphs and numerical methods, and critically comment on the procedures used and suggest ways to improve the investigation.
- 290 In these cases, students use their scientific knowledge and understanding to guide their planning and carry out appropriate preliminary work.
- 291 Most students make systematic observations and measurements.

292 Students with special educational needs make good progress overall.

Post 16

293 Most students are making good progress.

294 In general, students have a good understanding of previous work and ready recall of many concepts and principles.

295 Most students communicate their knowledge and understanding well and make appropriate use of scientific terminology in descriptions and explanations.

296 In practical work, students generally show good understanding of the work, and carry out procedures safely and systematically.

297 A majority of students can use information and data from secondary sources and practical observations to identify patterns and explain scientific behaviour.

Shortcomings

Key stage 3

298 Students' ability to carry out an investigative approach to practical work is not developed sufficiently well.

Key stage 4

299 A minority of average and lower ability students do not have a secure understanding of a number of scientific concepts. They have difficulty applying them to a range of scientific problems.

300 A significant number of students do not complete coursework assignments to a standard that will allow them access to the higher marks in all skill areas.

Post 16

301 A few students have an insecure recall and understanding of current and previous work.

302 They have some difficulty applying some of the more complex principles in scientific problems.

Information technology

Key stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

Key stage 3

303 Students in Y7 manage computers effectively. They confidently conduct fundamental computer operations such as logging on, calling up and saving their work, and accessing appropriate applications and the Internet.

- 304 Communicating information skills are well developed. Students are able to present their work well. They change and arrange fonts and layouts and combine text and images in appropriate combinations whilst resolving design problems.
- 305 Students use the Internet well for research and often download appropriate text and images to include in their designs and computerised presentations.
- 306 Students are able to set up spreadsheets, understand their purpose, carry out basic modelling using formulae and display their results graphically.

Key stage 4

- 307 Students develop an appropriate range of information technology skills in the Y10 coursework component of the GCSE course. The work of nearly all students displays evidence of good communicating information skills for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- 308 Students in Y11 are making good progress with their project work. Over half of them use real-life contexts as a basis for project work, which aids problem solving and enhances research and evaluation. Students make good use of desktop publishing and presentation software to display and explain their ideas.
- 309 In nearly all projects, research, analysis, evaluation and problem solving skills are well developed. Students make appropriate use of the Internet and other sources of information to support their research.
- 310 Nearly all students have a good understanding of theory.

Shortcomings

Key stage 3

- 311 Students have insufficient understanding of the application of databases, their construction and their interrogation.
- 312 The understanding and use of spreadsheets of nearly all students does not extend to the application of higher order modelling skills such as 'if' formulae.
- 313 Students do not discuss social, economic, ethical and moral issues related to the use of information and communication technology often enough.

Key stage 4

- 314 Middle and lower ability students have only limited knowledge and understanding of spreadsheets and databases to use them fully in their project work.
- 315 Students do not use paper based work well enough for the development of their research, design and planning.

History

Key stage 3: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
Key stage 4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
Post 16: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

Post 16

- 316 The large number of students who opt to study history in Y12 and Y13, have very good levels of knowledge and understanding of the complexities of Hitler's social, religious and racial policy from 1933 to 1945 and the changing fortunes of the Nazi Party. They achieve an outstanding grasp of the circumstances surrounding Hitler's rise to power. Their ability to construct reasoned and balanced oral and written arguments, based on the relevant evidence is also outstanding. They are very successful in identifying and examining a variety of complex factors when addressing challenging historical problems.
- 317 Students achieve outstanding standards in the evaluation and analysis of sources of evidence. They have a very good ability to assess the significance of the attributions of these sources, using their understanding to arrive at sophisticated and convincing conclusions.
- 318 Students in both Y12 and Y13 have outstandingly good skills in developing oral arguments. Fluent and articulate contributions to discussions show a growing maturity and confidence; they are increasingly able to "think on their feet".
- 319 Students show an outstanding ability to synthesise the views of the major professional historians with expertise in the history of Hitler's Germany. They have a secure grasp of the differences between the traditional, Marxist and revisionist interpretations of Hitler's ability to attract support for his policies from different social and economic groups in Germany. They use their analytical and evaluative skills very effectively to explain these differences. Their grasp of historiography is outstanding.
- 320 Y12 and Y13 students have a very good ability to use their knowledge and the evidence from the sources to construct well argued opposing and balanced arguments in their written work. The depth of their analysis in essays and source evaluation is outstanding.
- 321 Students display a very mature approach to the development of their independent learning skills, taking personal responsibility for extending their research activities, reading widely, and taking a pride in ensuring that they reach the highest standards possible in the quality of their learning.

Good features

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

- 322 Students have good levels of knowledge and understanding and they recall their previous learning successfully. They apply these skills to new topics and historical problems confidently.

- 323 Students show a good ability to identify and explain the causes of change over time and to trace the relevant consequences.
- 324 Students have well developed oral skills and most are keen to contribute to class discussions. They speak fluently and articulately and use a wide range of subject-specific vocabulary accurately and in the correct context.
- 325 Students have a good awareness of chronology. They can extract accurate and relevant information from a wide range of evidence. They are confident in making meaningful links between these sources and their own background knowledge of a topic.
- 326 Students in both key stages make good progress in testing the sources of evidence for reliability, usefulness and bias. They are successful in recognising propaganda and in explaining its operation and significance when they consider historical problems.
- 327 Most students evaluate the sources effectively and use them carefully to produce well-balanced oral and written arguments.
- 328 Most students achieve good standards in selecting, organising and communicating information in their response to the wide range of written tasks and challenges with which they are presented.
- 329 Students' knowledge of the history and culture of Wales is well developed and is enhanced by the very effective use of the unique local environment in which they live.
- 330 Students are successful in applying their knowledge and understanding from other curricular areas, such as literature, to extend their research and independent learning skills. Problem solving skills are well developed, overall.

Key stage 3

- 331 From Y7 onwards, students adopt good investigative approaches. They use the sources of evidence effectively to compare and contrast differing interpretations of historical events and movements. As a result, they are successful in providing convincing reasons for the process of change over time. There are good and effective approaches to historical enquiry.
- 332 By Y9, students are confident in distinguishing the differences between long-term and short-term causes of historical change.

Key stage 4

- 333 Students demonstrate a growing maturity in the depth of their response to challenging historical problems, such as the differences in approach found in the campaign for women's right to the vote in the early 20th century. They are increasingly well focused upon providing satisfying explanations for the differing motivation and attitudes of people in the past by asking more complex questions of the sources of evidence.
- 334 The written work of most students is generally well organised and well presented. Extended writing skills show good progression by the end of KS4.

Shortcomings

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

- 335 A small minority of students in both key stages do not respond in sufficient depth and detail in their written work to ensure that they fully address the question they are set.
- 336 There are variable standards in the quality of the written work of a minority of students. Their presentation, spelling and punctuation are underdeveloped. In a few cases, there is evidence of incomplete written work.

Physical education

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

Key stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Post 16: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

Key stage 4

- 337 Students demonstrate very good standards in planning, performing and evaluating their own work and the work of others. This is particularly evident in self-defence activities, basketball and GCSE examination work. The work of many students is outstanding.
- 338 Students' participation in physical activities that develop strength, endurance and flexibility is very good. Individuals are able to plan, undertake and evaluate fitness programmes and lead warm-ups and cool-downs. Students display a very good understanding in how the components of physical fitness are developed and how these relate to an active and healthy lifestyle.
- 339 Students demonstrate very good standards in analysing and managing risk. They are aware of what constitutes safe and approved practice, and what they need to do for their own safety and the safety of others.
- 340 Students' ability to assess their own performance critically, and then to set themselves challenging targets is very good.
- 341 Students following GCSE courses demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding of subject content, for example, in the anatomy and physiology component. Students fully understand the necessity to obtain and maintain, a healthy cardio-vascular system. The concepts of healthy eating, obesity control and the importance of exercise in maintaining a healthy body are well understood.

Post 16

- 342 Girls produce dance work of a very high standard. Fluid and graceful movement, accuracy of technique and original composition, often involving the use of additional equipment, characterise their work.
- 343 Students demonstrate excellent knowledge of the content of the examination syllabus and are able to provide detailed responses to challenging questions posed by the teacher.

344 Students analyse confidently when reviewing their own performances and the performances of others.

Good features

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

345 Standards are good for both individual performers and school teams in a wide range of extra curricular activities. A number of students and teams reach the highest of standards at both county and international level.

Key stage 3

346 Students work with intensity, interest and enjoyment in all activities, and particularly in health related fitness sessions.

347 Students perform to a good standard in games activities, and especially in netball and rugby. They react positively to the high expectations of their teachers and display a good understanding of the skills and tactics to be successful players.

348 In dance, students display good creative abilities, demonstrating the capacity to work in time with music and to work successfully in small and large groups.

349 Across the areas of activity, most students are able to plan their work well, perform complex skills with confidence, and evaluate their own work and the work of others accurately.

350 Students' understanding of physical fitness is good. Individuals participate enthusiastically in challenging fitness exercises, monitor the physiological changes and discuss the effect of activities on their personal fitness.

351 At the end of lessons, students display good abilities in leading cool-downs and summarising the main aspects of the work covered.

Key stage 4

352 In self-defence activities, students participate with interest and enthusiasm. Techniques for personal safety are demonstrated to a good standard. There is very good collaboration with local police officers, who work successfully with the school's staff.

353 In basketball, students display good standards in the application of techniques, the implementation of tactics and the ability to discuss strategies for improvement. Students use space well, have good ball control, pass and shoot accurately and are effective in both defence and attack.

Shortcomings

Key stage 3

354 Some students' fine motor skills are underdeveloped.

School's response to the inspection

The acting headteacher, staff, pupils and governors of Ysgol Dewi Sant are pleased to receive the Estyn Inspection Report of March 2007. We are delighted that the inspectors awarded the school a grade 1 for all seven key questions, and that the inspection team acknowledged that Ysgol Dewi Sant provides a 'first class education for its students' with 'many outstanding opportunities for learners to achieve their full potential'.

The school is also pleased to see that the inspectors referred to the 'outstanding results achieved by its students at KS3, GCSE and A Level' and recognised that students at the school make outstanding progress between every key stage.

The school places considerable importance on the quality of teaching and learning and therefore, it was gratifying to see that the inspectors noted that, 'very good and often outstanding teaching is a predominant feature of the school'. The teaching staff are thrilled that almost 90% of the teaching observed was judged good or better and that one in every three lessons was awarded a grade 1. This is a significant improvement on the grades awarded in the school's previous inspection report and is significantly above national comparisons.

The governing body is also encouraged by the inspection team's recognition that Ysgol Dewi Sant 'fosters a happy and caring ethos where every individual is valued' and that reference is also made by the inspectors to the 'outstanding provision for students with additional learning needs', the 'effectiveness of our management team' and 'the quality of our school's self evaluation procedures'.

The school now looks forward with increasing confidence to continuing with its strategies for improving standards and eagerly awaits the support of the unitary authority to further improve the school's accommodation.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Dewi Sant
School type	Secondary
Age-range of students	11 - 18
Address of school	St Davids Pembrokeshire
Postcode	SA62 6QH
Telephone number	01437 725000

Headteacher	Mr Walter G Dash
Date of appointment	January 1996
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Cllr J George
Reporting inspector	Mr Brian Medhurst
Dates of inspection	26 th to 29 th March 2007

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Total
Number of students	62	84	66	86	75	39	39	451

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	24	14	30.44

Staffing information	
Student: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	14.8 : 1
Average teaching group size	20.9
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	95.6	94.6	92.9	90.0	89.2	90.5	82.0	90.6
Term 2	93.1	91.0	89.2	90.5	88.2	83.3	74.7	87.1
Term 3	94.9	92.7	91.4	94.0	94.1	90.1	93.0	92.9

Percentage of students entitled to free school meals	13
Number of students excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	11

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2006														
Total number of students in Y9: 84														
Percentage of students at each level														
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	11	34	40	12	0
		National	0.2	0.7	1.2	0.4	0.3	1.5	7.5	20.9	35.2	23.6	8.30	0.1
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	1	4	4	9	27	36	19	0
		National	0.2	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.2	0.7	6.2	17.9	24.5	32.5	15.4	0.4
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	33	52	7	0
		National	0.2	0.7	1.0	0.3	0.1	0.5	6.2	19.2	33.0	27.1	11.5	0.1

- D Students excepted under statutory arrangements from part of the National Curriculum
A Students who have failed to register a level because of absence
F Students who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
W Students who are working towards level 1
EP Exceptional Performance, where students at Key Stage 3 perform above level 8

Percentage of students attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	79	In the school	n/a
In Wales	58	In Wales	n/a

Public Examination Results:

For students aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of students aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006	62
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per student	50

The percentage of 15 year old students who in 2006:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	94	89	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	68	58	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	90	87	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	50	40	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	98	99	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	89	80	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	97	96	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	3	4	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	3	3

For students aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of students aged 17 in January 2006	37
Number of students entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2006	31
Number of students entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2006	4

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of students entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	84	69	68
Percentage of students entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	100	94	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	27	20	20

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Thirteen inspectors (including the school's nominee) spent the equivalent of 42 days at the school.

88 lessons were observed, covering all areas of the curriculum.

Inspectors attended assemblies, tutorial sessions, registrations, and observed a range of extracurricular activities.

Inspectors held many discussions with the headteacher, members of the school's leadership team, heads of faculty, staff with whole-school responsibilities, and members of support staff.

The registered inspector and a colleague inspector met with the governing body prior to the inspection week and they reported the main findings to them following the inspection.

Work across the curriculum, from representative students from each year group, was examined. Students' work was also scrutinised elsewhere and during lesson observations.

Inspectors held formal discussions with groups of students selected from Y7 to Y13. They also talked with many learners informally.

Prior to the inspection, the registered inspector met the staff.

Thirty-two parents of students attended the pre-inspection meeting. Seventy replies to the questionnaire were received and analysed. A few parents also wrote to the registered inspector.

Comprehensive documentation, including the school's self-evaluation report, was scrutinised before, during and after the inspection period in school.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities
Mr Brian W Medhurst Registered Inspector	Key Questions 1, 2, 5, 6
Dr Michael H L Snow Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4, 5
Mr Glyn Davies	Key Question 3; Contribution to Key Question 1; Sixth form co-ordination; Science
Ms Penny Stead	Contribution to Key Question 1; English
Mr Heddwyn Evans	Key Question 4; Contribution to Key Question 3
Mr Selwyn Gale	Contribution to Key Question 1; Information technology
Mrs Margaret Herbert	Contribution to Key Question 1
Mrs Mary Crandon	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3; Welsh
Mr Alan Edwards	Key Question 7; Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2
Mrs Anne Newman	History
Dr Stephen Lloyd	Physical education
Mr David Jones	Support role; Science
Mr Andrew Kennedy	School's nominee

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Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, staff and students of Ysgol Dewi Sant for their courtesy and co-operation during the inspection.