

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

**Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen  
Ffordd Coetmor  
Bethesda  
Gwynedd  
LL57 3NN**

**School Number: 6614002**

**Date of Inspection: 16/10/06**

**by**

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**Date of Publication: 18/12/06**

**Under Estyn contract number: 1200106**

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

The inspection of Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen took place between 16/10/06 and 20/10/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Neil Trevor Jones undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

"There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection."

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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<b>Context</b>	

## The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen is a naturally bilingual comprehensive community school for pupils and students aged 11-18. It is maintained by Gwynedd Local Education Authority. A total of 437 pupils currently attend the school, including 58 students in the sixth form (Y12 and Y13). The school admits between 70 and 90 new pupils annually. The number of teachers, including the headteacher is 29.7 (full-time equivalent). There are 26 full-time and six part-time teachers.
2. The school serves the small town of Bethesda, one of the main centres of the slate industry in Gwynedd, and the surrounding rural area. According to the school's evidence, all pupils come from an economically disadvantaged area. According to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000, the two most populated wards in the school's catchment area are amongst the 15% most deprived wards in Gwynedd, with one of the two wards amongst the 3% most deprived in Wales in terms of income deprivation. In both wards also, the unemployment rate is double the national figure. Seventeen per cent [17%] of the pupils are registered as entitled to free school meals, which is 5% higher than the county's average figure of 12%, and 1% higher than the average figure for Wales (16%).
3. Eight pupils (about 2% of Y7-11 pupils) have a statement of special educational needs, which is slightly lower than the national average. In addition, 68 pupils (about 18% of Y7-11 pupils) are on school action or school action plus stages of the Special Educational Needs [SEN] Code of Practice. Three pupils have National Curriculum disapplications. One pupil is in Local Authority care.
4. All pupils belong to the white ethnic group. Seventy eight per cent [78%] of pupils come from homes in which Welsh is the main language and 22% from homes in which English is the main language. Almost all pupils (99%) speak Welsh to first language standard. All subjects in key stage 3 are taught mainly through the medium of Welsh, with units taught through English. The school implements a bilingual policy and both languages are used for teaching and learning across the curriculum.
5. The school was last inspected in March, 2001. All members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) have been appointed in the last three years. The new head was appointed to the school in January, 2004, one deputy head in September 2005 and the other in September 2006.

## The school's priorities and targets

The school's main priorities, as noted in its current School Development Plan for 2006 – 07 are to:

- raise subject standards and lessen the difference between the results of boys and girls;
- develop the use of 'assessment for learning' techniques;
- implement the new end of KS3 assessment arrangements;
- review the school's post-16 provision – in collaboration with other providers. Consider the implications of ELWa's Geographic Pathfinder report;
- make effective use of school finance, in view of the proposed cutbacks;
- strengthen the SMT's monitoring role in relation to linked departments;
- improve the condition of the accommodation – especially in relation to the fire bell - and finish replacing the windows.

The School Development Plan also sets out the school's targets for tests and examinations.

<b>Key Stage 3</b>	<b>Target 2007</b>	<b>Target 2008</b>	<b>Target 2009</b>
Welsh: % level 5+	72	70	75
English: % level 5+	65	62	68
Mathematics: % level 5+	70	68	70
Science: % level 5+	64	62	68
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	55	52	55
CSI - Boys	48	47	51
CSI - Girls	62	57	59

<b>Key Stage 4</b>	<b>Target 2007</b>	<b>Target 2008</b>	<b>Target 2009</b>
Achieving at least 5 A* - C	56	50	60
Achieving at least A* - G	93	92	94
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	44	40	44
CSI - Boys	40	32	40
CSI - Girls	50	50	50
% leaving without any qualifications	0	0	0
% unauthorised absences			
% attendance	92	92	92

## Summary

### Table of grades awarded

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

6. Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen is a good school. There are many good features but also some shortcomings. The school has responded well to the key issues raised in the last inspection report.

### Standards

7. The grades awarded for standards in the subjects specifically inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	Sixth Form
Welsh(first language)	2	2	2
Mathematics	2	2	3
Information Technology	2	1	2
History	2	1	1
Geography	2	3	2
French	2	3	2

8. In the lessons observed in the above subjects, the percentage of lessons gaining the various grades in key stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form are as follows:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>Key Stage 3</b>	6%	83%	11%	0%	0%
<b>Key Stage 4</b>	27%	50%	23%	0%	0%
<b>Sixth Form</b>	24%	52%	24%	0%	0%
<b>Whole School</b>	17%	65%	18%	0%	0%

9. These percentages are high and considerably higher than the Welsh Assembly Government's target for schools by 2007, namely that standards in 65% of lessons should be Grade 2 or above, and that standards in 98% of lessons should be Grade 3 or above.

10. Pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons observed have improved considerably since the last inspection. However, overall, the improvement in standards is not reflected in the end of key stage 3 assessment results and in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results at the end of key stage 4.

### **The quality of external test and examination results**

11. Despite the overall progress in key stage 3 test results since the last inspection, pupils' results in 2004 and 2005 place the school in the lowest quartile, in comparison with similar schools across Wales in terms of free school meals.
12. In 2005, over 78% of pupils gained level 5 or better in Welsh, which is a higher percentage than the county and Wales. The percentage of pupils gaining level 5 or better in English, mathematics, science and the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) was lower than the county and Wales.
13. Pupils' results in 2006 are about 2% lower than the previous year.
14. In key stage 3, girls attain higher standards than boys and significantly so in English and Welsh.
15. In 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government's analyses show that the school performs above similar schools with respect to value-added data during key stage 3, placing the school in the highest quartile of similar schools for the CSI and Welsh, higher than the median for English and science, but with mathematics below the median.
16. In key stage 4, results are inconsistent.
17. In 2005, when compared to similar schools, the CSI was above the median, and the three other indicators below the median. Also in 2005, the percentage of pupils gaining five A\*-C GCSE grades, and the average points score, was similar to the results of the county and above those for Wales.
18. The Welsh Assembly Government's analyses for 2005 show that the school performs above similar schools with respect to value-added data between key stages 2 and 4 and key stages 3 and 4, placing the school in the highest quartile of similar schools for the CSI, the percentage gaining five A\*-C and the average points score.
19. In 2006, the percentage gaining 5 GCSE grades A\*-C is 46%, in comparison with 60% in the county and 53% throughout Wales. The percentage gaining the CSI is 27%, compared to 47% in the county and 39% nationally.

20. The CSI is low due to the low percentage of pupils gaining GCSE A\*-C grades in science. Only 27% of pupils in the year gained A\*-C grades in science, compared to 56% in the county and 48% throughout Wales.
21. Results in the Advanced Level examinations are close to the county and national norms. In 2005, 70% of students gained at least two A-C grades, in comparison with 72% in the county and 68% throughout Wales. The average points score of every student was 23, which is higher than the county (22) and Wales (20).
22. In 2006, the results weren't as good as in the previous year, with 59% of students gaining at least two A-C grades, in comparison with 68% in the county and Wales. The average points score of every student was 18, compared to 21 in the county and 20 throughout Wales.

**Standards in the key skills, wider key skills and other personal skills.**

23. Standards in the key skills are good.
24. Pupils' and students' communication, numeracy, information technology and bilingualism skills are good.
25. Pupils' and students' standards in the wider personal skills are good.
26. The good features include pupils and students who:
  - show interest in their work and contribute to activities with enthusiasm;
  - are well-behaved, courteous and respectful of each other and of staff and visitors;
  - display a caring attitude towards others, in the school, the local community and beyond. Pupils' and students' progress in their personal and social development is an outstanding aspect of their development.
27. Pupils and students make good progress in their learning.
28. Pupils with SEN are challenged appropriately and achieve good standards, the challenge for more able pupils tends to be limited.
29. This limits their achievement and subsequently their attainment.
30. Shortcomings in the independent learning skills of a significant minority of pupils lead to an overdependence on teachers.
31. The school's attendance levels over three full terms prior to the inspection was 90.7%, slightly lower than the Welsh Assembly Government's target of 92% for secondary schools.

## The quality of education and training

32. The teachers' expertise and the quality of teaching is good.

33. The quality of teaching in the six subjects inspected was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
24%	62%	14%	0%	0%

34. The quality of teaching in all lessons observed was judged as follows:

All subjects:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
22%	60%	15%	3%	0%

35. The quality of teaching is one of the school's main strengths and considerable progress has been made in the teaching since the last inspection.

36. In the best lessons observed, the following outstanding features were seen:

- teachers with thorough and up-to-date subject knowledge and information;
- well-planned lessons for the intended development of a number of key skills;
- high expectations in terms of standards of work which motivate and challenge pupils to think and build on their understanding;
- perceptive questioning as a tool to measure students' understanding and depth of knowledge.

37. Where the teaching was good, the following features were seen:

- lesson objectives shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson and reinforced at the end to ensure that pupils understand what they have learnt;
- a variety of activities with specific deadlines, ensuring a good pace to lessons so that pupils make purposeful use of their time;
- appropriate use of group and pair work which encourages the pupils to discuss their ideas and share their findings;
- purposeful use of relevant resources.

38. Although there are no important shortcomings in the lessons observed in the sixth form, in key stages 3 and 4 some of the following shortcomings were seen in the grade 3 and 4 lessons observed:

- failure to set suitable deadlines for tasks therefore slowing down the pace of the lesson;
- uniformity of activities and teaching methods leading to some pupils not concentrating and focusing on their work;
- teachers asking closed questions, thereby limiting discussion and the thinking process.

39. Pupils with SEN are taught well and are included fully in classroom activities. Learning support assistants provide effective support for individuals and groups of pupils.
40. Pupils' linguistic needs are well-met by the school.
41. The school satisfies the statutory requirements for assessing the National Curriculum at key stage 3, as well as the regulations of the examination boards at key stage 4 and in the sixth form.
42. The school's arrangements for assessment and its use for planning and improving learning are good.
43. The school complies with the assessment requirements for pupils and students with additional educational needs.
44. The school has a comprehensive assessment policy which provides very good guidance for implementing the assessment system and for ensuring a balance and a clear link between formative and summative assessment. The policy also provides good guidance for departments on how to develop departmental assessment policies which reflect the requirements of individual subjects. Good practices are identified and promoted through the 'Assessment for Learning' working party.

### **Pupils' and students' learning experiences**

45. The curriculum at Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen:
  - complies with the requirements of the 1996 and 2005 Education Acts;
  - meets all the statutory requirements including responding to the needs of pupils and students with SEN;
  - meets the common requirements of National Curriculum programmes of study;
  - complies with the examination specification requirements at key stage 4 and in the sixth form.
46. The following aspects of the curriculum are a particular strength as the school provides a wide variety of activities which are available to all pupils without exception:
  - a strong and co-ordinated personal and social education programme;
  - a wide variety of curricular, cultural, sporting and leisure activities during lunchtimes or after school;
  - numerous and wide ranging visits in the area itself, in Wales, the UK, Europe and, in addition, one trip for a small number of sixth form students to Patagonia.
47. Other aspects of the curricular organisation are also good.

48. They include:
- a broad and balanced curriculum in key stages 3 and 4 which meets the needs and interests of pupils and enables them to gain suitable qualifications or accreditations;
  - a flexible curriculum in key stage 4 which responds to the aspirations of pupils;
  - opportunity in the sixth form to gain Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level qualifications across a good range of traditional subjects;
  - increased opportunities in the sixth form to study subjects such as physical education, psychology, sociology, electronics and drama in co-operation with other schools, and the local university and further education college;
  - planned opportunities for off-site education for a limited number of pupils not coping well with more traditional education;
  - strong links with the five feeder primary schools to ensure pastoral and curricular continuity in some subjects;
  - arrangements to ensure full and equal access to all pupils including pupils with special or additional educational needs.
49. The school also promotes the pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Good use is made of a combination of morning registration periods, good quality collective worship and pastoral lessons as well as some personal and social lessons. These lessons contribute significantly to pupils' and students' spiritual and moral development. Through these lessons, the school also develops important aspects of the curriculum which are priorities for the Welsh Assembly Government. This good provision underpins and is a natural part of the life and ethos of the school.
50. The school achieved the Careers Wales Quality Award in 2005 which reflects the outstanding quality of the work-related education and the careers aspects of the school curriculum.
51. Although the school's curricular provision is good, there are some shortcomings:
- the small numbers studying French at key stage 4;
  - few students studying some subjects in the sixth form;
  - limited opportunities to study vocational subjects in the sixth form.

### **The care, guidance and support for pupils and students**

52. The care, guidance and support pupils and students receive are good with outstanding features. The outstanding features of the school's provision are:
- a happy and caring school community;
  - very effective planning and management of care arrangements by the heads of school and senior management team;
  - a special provision for Y9 pupils when choosing subjects for Y10;

- completely impartial advice for Y11 pupils on post-16 courses, considering only the learners' welfare;
- particularly good pastoral and curricular links and partnerships with the feeder primary schools;
- high quality support and personal guidance for pupils from school staff through the effective use of external agencies;
- a high quality careers programme;
- outstanding provision for pupils with SEN;
- the particularly effective and practical provision of a Youth Worker, employed partly by the school, for pupils whose behaviour and attitude is likely to impede their progress and that of others, and who are at risk of being excluded.

53. The quality of provision for equal opportunities is good.

### **Leadership and management**

54. The school's strategic leadership and management are good with no important shortcomings.

55. The good features include:

- effective guidance and enthusiastic commitment of the head to the work of the school to realise its aim of "*Cydfyw, cydweithio a chyd-dynnu*" ["Living, working and getting along with each other."];
- a senior management team who, although relatively new to their posts, have begun to be clearly focused on standards, teaching and learning;
- managers and heads of school who have a very good knowledge of pupils and contribute to the school's caring ethos;
- the school's very good response to national and local priorities which are reflected clearly in its work and strategies;
- the appropriate arrangements established to meet the training needs of teachers, ancillary staff and classroom assistants;
- governors who are well-informed about the work and performance of the school, which enables them to take an active part in discussions about the school's strategic development. They are also very aware of the needs of the local community.

56. **The shortcomings include:**

- outcomes and targets in the school development plan which have not been quantified sufficiently;
- lack of clear guidance and direction by a small minority of heads of department.

### **The quality of self-evaluation**

57. The manner in which leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards shows good features and no important shortcomings.
58. The school's self-evaluation report correctly identifies the school's strengths and shortcomings, although the inspection team awarded a lower grade for one of the seven key questions.
59. **The good features include the following:**
- the detailed analyses of external test and examination results;
  - an annual whole school focus on the self-evaluation of standards in specific areas and the resulting report;
  - an effective school development plan which outlines, clearly and concisely, whole school priorities;
  - the school's effective response to a number of the key issues raised in the last inspection.
60. **The shortcomings include:**
- the lack of a whole school structured plan to monitor pupils' standards which is based on first-hand evidence of their work.

### **Staffing, resources and buildings**

61. The school manages its resources effectively and ensures appropriate levels of staffing and resources for teaching the curriculum.
62. **The good features include:**
- classroom assistants who undertake their work very effectively in helping pupils with different needs in the classroom;
  - suitable staff who meet the curricular requirements of the school;
  - effective support for staff teaching outside their main curricular area, in order to ensure that pupils' achievement in the subject doesn't suffer;
  - administrative and ancillary staff who fulfil their duties effectively, thereby ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of the school;
  - careful monitoring of the school budget by the head and administrative officer, with appropriate termly financial reports prepared for the governors.
63. **The shortcomings include:**
- the priorities identified in the development plans are not always sufficiently linked to the school budget.
  - given the pupils' and students' standards of achievement, the good quality of teaching, the excellent support and guidance for pupils and the good progress the school has made since the last inspection, the school provides good value for money.

## Recommendations

The school needs to:

- R1. sustain the good and very good standards achieved and raise standards in those subjects where there are shortcomings;\*
- R2. disseminate good and very good teaching practices across the school and ensure that priorities such as 'assessment for learning' are addressed in every subject;\*
- R3. use a variety of activities and strategies to develop the pupils' capacity to work independently and to improve their own learning and performance;\*
- R4. continue to promote the 14-19 curricular provision and vocational learning pathways with partners;\*
- R5. improve the percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in GCSE science, and boys' standards of attainment in language, English in particular;\*
- R6. ensure that departmental self-evaluation processes are focused, thorough, based on first-hand evidence and result in development plans that are monitored against clear and quantitative targets, when appropriate\*.

\* The school development plan for 2006-07 includes actions to deal with these recommendations.

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

## Standards

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

**Grade: 3** Good features outweigh shortcomings

64. This grade is lower than the grade 2 awarded by the school for this key question in its self-evaluation report. This is because of the low percentage of pupils gaining grade C or better in the GCSE Science examination.

65. Therefore, the inspection team has awarded grade 3 to key question 1.

### Standards in key stage 3 and key stage 4

66. The following grades were awarded for standards in the six subjects inspected:

Subject	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
Welsh (first language)	2	2
Mathematics	2	2
Information Technology	2	1
History	2	1
Geography	2	3
Modern Languages (French)	2	3

67. In the six subjects inspected, there were outstanding features in history and information technology and no important shortcomings in any subject.

68. In the lessons observed in the above subjects, the percentages achieving the various grades in key stage 3 and key stage 4 are as follows:

Standards	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>KS 3</b>	6%	83%	11%	0%	0%
<b>KS 4</b>	27%	50%	23%	0%	0%

69. These percentages are high and considerably higher than the Welsh Assembly Government's target for schools by 2007, namely that standards in 65% of lessons should be Grade 2 or higher, and that standards in 98% of lessons should be Grade 3 or higher.

70. Pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons observed have improved considerably since the last inspection. However, overall, the improvement in standards is not reflected in the end of key stage 3 assessment results and in the GCSE results at the end of key stage 4.

## Quality of external test and examination results

### Key Stage 3

71. Despite the overall progress in key stage 3 test results since the last inspection, pupils' results in 2004 and 2005 place the school in the lowest quartile in all the key indicators, in comparison with similar schools across Wales in terms of free school meals.
72. In 2005, over 78% of pupils gained level 5 or better in Welsh, which is a higher percentage than the county and Wales. The percentage of pupils gaining level 5 or better in English, mathematics, science and the CSI was lower than the county and Wales.
73. Pupils' results in 2006 are about 2% lower than the previous year.
74. In key stage 3, girls attain higher standards than boys and significantly so in English and Welsh.
75. In 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government's analyses show that the school performs above similar schools with respect to value-added data during key stage 3, placing the school in the highest quartile of similar schools for the CSI and Welsh, above the median for English and science, but with mathematics below the median.

### Key Stage 4

76. In key stage 4, results are inconsistent. In 2004, compared to similar schools in terms of free school meals, the school's results are in the lowest quartile in terms of the percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A\*-C, the CSI and the average points score. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A\*-G placed the school in the highest quartile.
77. In 2005, when compared to similar schools, the CSI was above the median, and the three other indicators below the median. Also in 2005, the percentage of pupils gaining five A\*-C GCSE grades, and the average points score, was similar to the results of the county and above those for Wales.
78. The Welsh Assembly Government's analyses for 2005 show that the school performs above similar schools with respect to value-added data, between key stages 2 and 4, and key stages 3 and 4, placing the school in the highest quartile of similar schools for the CSI, the percentage gaining five A\*-C and the average points score.
79. In 2006, the percentage gaining five GCSE grades A\*-C is 46%, in comparison with 60% in the county and 53% throughout Wales. The percentage gaining the CSI is 27%, compared to 47% in the county and 39% nationally.

80. The CSI is low due to the low percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in science. Only 27% of pupils in the year gained A\*-C grades in science, compared to 56% in the county and 48% throughout Wales.
81. Boys' performance in 2006 in some key indicators is better than the girls, with 49% of boys gaining five subjects with grades A\*-C in comparison with 43% of girls. Boys' performance in English is considerably lower than the girls, with only 31% of boys gaining grades A\*-C in comparison with 60% of girls.
82. The school sets challenging yet realistic quantitative targets at the end of both key stages. Pupils' progress during this key stage is monitored against their individual targets in every subject, a practice which promotes progress.

### **Standards in the key skills**

83. Standards in the key skills are good. The good features include:
  - good listening skills. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to the contributions of their peers and as a result, provide intelligent responses;
  - good speaking skills. The vast majority of pupils contribute orally with confidence, and express opinions, describe, reason and come to conclusions;
  - good reading standards. Pupils read aloud well and meaningfully and respond intelligently to reading materials, both non-fiction and literary;
  - good writing skills. Pupils write extendedly and are aware of different forms;
  - good numeracy skills. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge across the curriculum and standards of drawing and interpreting graphs, and the quality of mental work are good.
  - good information technology and communication skills. The standards of presenting information are good in both key stages. Pupils who study information technology as a subject in key stage 4 (about half of pupils) extend and apply all their skills to a very high standard;
  - good bilingual skills. The vast majority of pupils are fluent in both languages; they investigate a topic in one language and write about it in the other. In many subjects, the pupils deepen their knowledge of a concept by learning and using subject terms in both languages.
84. There are some shortcomings in the key skills.
  - Pupils' modelling and data handling skills in key stage 3 in information and communication technology have not been developed sufficiently.
  - The writing of a small minority of pupils includes spelling and mutation errors in Welsh. In English, incorrect grammar and expression is more common in the writing of pupils who are less confident in this language.

### **Pupils' progress in learning**

85. Pupils make good progress in their learning. In many lessons, they work to the best of their ability and complete unfamiliar tasks with effort and concentration.
86. Pupils with SEN are challenged appropriately and achieve good standards. However the challenge for more able pupils is more limited. This limits their achievement and subsequently their attainment.
87. Pupils have a good awareness of their levels of achievement in their subjects and know their strengths and weaknesses.
88. Shortcomings in the independent learning skills of a significant minority of pupils lead to an overdependence on teachers.

### **Standards in personal, social and learning skills**

89. Pupils' standards in the wider personal skills are good. A good number of pupils:
  - show interest in their work and contribute to activities with enthusiasm;
  - are well-behaved, courteous and respectful of each other, of staff and visitors. They cooperate very well in pairs and groups during lessons;
  - display a caring attitude towards others, in the school, the local community and beyond. Pupils' and students' progress in their personal and social development is an outstanding aspect of their development;
  - solve problems when challenged in lessons;
  - respect the opinions, creeds and the beliefs of people which differ from their own. Encouraged by the School Council, they raise a substantial amount of money for good causes and support a child's education in Vietnam;
  - develop a good understanding of their community and of the world of work. The pupils understand the nature of the local economy and close links with several local businesses enhance this aspect.
90. The shortcomings include:
  - pupils' lack of response to written comments on their work and their inability to plan and organise their own work;
  - a small minority of pupils whose aspirations and expectations of themselves are too low.
91. The school's attendance levels over three full terms prior to the inspection were 90.7%. This is slightly lower than the Welsh Assembly Government's target of 92% for secondary schools. There are no significant differences between the attendance of different groups and school years.

## Standards in sixth form

**Grade 2:** good features and no important shortcomings

92. The following table shows the grades awarded for standards in the subjects specifically inspected:

Subject	Sixth form
Welsh(first language)	2
Mathematics	3
Information Technology	2
History	1
Geography	2
Modern Languages – French	2

93. In the lessons observed in the above subjects, the percentages achieving the various grades in sixth form are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
24%	52%	24%	0%	0%

94. Standards of achievement in lessons in the sixth form are good, with 76% of all lessons graded as 1 or 2; no important shortcomings were seen in any area.

## Quality of external examination results

95. The A Level examination results are close to the county and national norms. In 2004, 67% of students gained at least two grades A-C, in comparison with 70% in the county and 68% nationally. Ninety five percent [95%] of students gained at least two grades A-E, in comparison with 96% in the county and 95% throughout Wales. The average points score of every student was 20, compared to 21 in the county and 20 throughout Wales.

96. In 2005, 70% of students gained at least two A-C grades, in comparison with 72% in the county and 68% throughout Wales. The average points score of every student was 23, which is higher than the county (22) and Wales (20).

97. In 2006, the results weren't as good as in the previous year, with 59% of students gaining at least two A-C grades, in comparison with 68% in the county and Wales. The average points score of every student was 18, compared to 21 in the county and 20 throughout Wales.

## Standards in the key skills and wider key skills in the sixth form.

98. Students' standards in the key skills and wider key skills are good and with no important shortcomings.

99. The students:

- listen very well and respond intelligently to their peers' contributions and teachers' comments;
- talk extendedly and, at times, ask perceptive questions;
- are confident in handling numbers and apply their number skills well in the study of their subjects;
- retain and apply the good information and communication technology skills they acquired in key stage 4;
- collaborate very well with each other. Their ability to work with others is an outstanding feature of lessons across all subjects;
- solve problems well.

### **Students' progress in learning**

100. The progress students make in their learning is good. The good features include students who:

- display responsible attitudes towards their work;
- are aware of their strengths and shortcomings and what they need to do to improve;
- take responsibility for their own progress, and are consequently in a good position to move on to the next stage of learning.

### **Standards in personal, social and learning skills**

101. Students' standards in the personal, social and learning skills are good. The good features include students who:

- display positive attitudes towards learning, concentrate well and persevere with their work;
- are very aware of their levels of achievement in their subjects;
- behave responsibly and are becoming confident and mature young adults;
- collaborate well and help each other;
- make an important contribution towards promoting a caring community within the school;
- respect other opinions and creeds and the beliefs of people who are different to them.

102. The shortcomings include:

- a small minority of students who do not accept sufficient responsibility for their own learning, and who haven't developed the skills necessary to become independent learners.

103. Levels of attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection were lower than those for the whole of the school. Students arrive promptly for their lessons.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

104. This grade corresponds to the school's self-evaluation.

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

105. The tables below indicate the quality of teaching throughout the school. The first table shows the allocation of grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the six subjects specifically inspected, and the second table (all subjects) shows the percentages of every grade for all lessons seen during the inspection:

Subjects specifically inspected in the six subjects:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
24%	62%	14%	0%	0%

All subjects:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
22%	60%	15%	3%	0%

106. The quality of teaching is one of the main strengths of the school and considerable progress has been made in the quality of the teaching since the last inspection.

107. There is little difference between the standards of teaching in the six subjects specifically inspected and the standards of teaching throughout the school. The table for all subjects shows that the school compares well with the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in the annual report for 2004 to 2005. On a national scale, the quality of the teaching is good (grade 2 or higher) in 79% of lessons, with 18% of lessons having outstanding features (grade 1).

108. In 15% of lessons, good features outweigh shortcomings and in another 3% there are good features in the teaching but there are shortcomings in important areas.

### Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

109. The table below shows the quality of teaching in key stage 3 and key stage 4 in all lessons observed:

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
Key Stage 3	12%	67%	17%	4%	0%
Key Stage 4	24%	56%	18%	3%	0%

**110. The outstanding features of the teaching include:**

- teachers who have thorough and up-to-date subject knowledge and information;
- lessons that are planned thoroughly for the intended development of a number of key skills;
- very high expectations in terms of standards of work which motivate and challenge pupils to think and build on their understanding;
- teaching approaches that reflect current ideas on learning and thinking skills including the use of interactive tasks;
- success criteria shared with the pupils;
- opportunities for pupils to evaluate the strengths and shortcomings in their own work and that of their peers.

111. Teachers' subject expertise is very good and their enthusiasm motivates pupils to enjoy their lessons and be actively involved in them. A good number are familiar with recent developments in their field with some departments sharing these current ideas in order to ensure consistency of standards and progression in lessons. Non-specialists are very well-supported by departments.

**112. The good features of the teaching include:**

- lesson objectives shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson and reinforced at the end to ensure that the pupils understand what they have learnt;
- a variety of activities with specific deadlines ensuring a good pace to lessons so that pupils make purposeful use of their time;
- appropriate use of group and pair work which encourages the pupils to discuss their ideas and share their findings;
- purposeful use of relevant resources, including information technology, data projectors and interactive white boards, in order to enrich the pupils' experiences and to include them in problem solving activities;
- work which corresponds to pupils' levels of attainment;
- the effective use of extended questions which encourage pupils to think deeply;
- successful classroom organisation to raise boys' motivation by ensuring an alternate boy / girl seating plan;
- firm and constructive classroom management;
- homework tasks provided that are a natural progression from and reinforce what has been learnt in the lesson.

113. A good and positive relationship exists between pupils and their teachers and the classroom environment is both supportive and friendly. The teachers know their pupils well and are willing to provide support and praise for all pupils regardless of their gender, race or disability. This develops healthy attitudes to learning and promotes pupils' motivation to persevere in the classroom.

**114. The shortcomings seen in some lessons include:**

- failure to set suitable deadlines for tasks therefore slowing down the pace of the lesson;
- uniformity of activities and teaching methods leading to some pupils being unable to concentrate and focus on their work;
- work that is not sufficiently matched to pupils' ability and previous attainment and as a result, teachers' expectations are too low;
- teachers asking closed questions, thereby limiting discussion and thinking;
- a lack of challenge in the tasks set for talented and higher ability pupils in order to extend and deepen their work and develop their independent learning skills;
- teachers not spending enough time reinforcing pupils' learning.

**115. Pupils with additional educational needs are well taught. The strengths of the teaching are as follows:**

- pupils have a sense of belonging fully to the class;
- learning support assistants provide effective support for groups;
- appropriate differentiation of work using different structures;
- Individual Education Plans [IEP] targets for pupils with SEN are considered and included when planning lessons;
- additional support to help pupils to better understand specific aspects of their work in the homework club;

**116. Pupils' linguistic needs are well met by teachers. Bilingualism is developed by providing frequent opportunities for all pupils to use both Welsh and English. The good features of the bilingual teaching include:**

- bilingual units in some subjects that enable pupils to work easily in both languages;
- subject specific terms are presented and used in both languages;
- opportunities to develop the skill of moving from one language to the other;
- effective provision to support the needs of Welsh 'learners' in order to integrate them as soon as possible.

**Sixth Form**

117. The table below shows the quality of teaching in the six subjects inspected in the sixth form. The second table (all subjects) shows the percentages for all lessons seen in the sixth form during the inspection.

**Six subjects:**

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
43%	48%	9%	0%	0%

**All subjects:**

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
40%	52%	8%	0%	0%

118. The quality of teaching in the sixth form has clear strengths and there is little difference between the quality of teaching in the six subjects and the teaching across the sixth form.
119. Many of the good and outstanding features are similar to those seen in lessons in key stages 3 and 4. The additional features of the good and outstanding teaching are:
- perceptive questioning as a tool to measure students' understanding and depth of knowledge;
  - consistently high expectations when working through contemporary, challenging and interesting contexts and activities;
  - outstanding working relationships that foster learning and motivate students to engage in research and effectively develops them into independent learners;
  - students encouraged to ask their own questions and develop an inquisitive mind;
  - students are fully aware of assessment objectives as a tool to measure their own progress;
  - emphasis on activities that allow students to develop new concepts when solving problems and promote the development of their key skills;
  - support and thorough guidance from teachers in preparing students to structure their answers in external examinations.
120. **The shortcomings seen in some lessons include:**
- over emphasis on acquiring information at the expense of developing new skills and the understanding of subject concepts;
  - missed opportunities to learn independently;
  - questioning techniques that are too restricted and missed opportunities to encourage students to elaborate on their comments and support them with evidence.
121. Teachers provide good opportunities to develop bilingualism in the sixth form and prepare students for a bilingual world of work and further and higher education. This is an important element in a number of educational visits and work experience periods.

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

122. The school satisfies the statutory requirements for assessing the National Curriculum at key stage 3, and the regulations of the examination boards at key stage 4 and in the sixth form.

123. The school complies with the assessment requirements of pupils and students with additional educational needs.
124. The school has a comprehensive assessment policy which provides very good guidance for implementing the assessment system, and ensures a balance and clear link between formative and summative assessment. The policy also provides good guidance for departments on how to develop departmental assessment policies which reflect the requirements of individual subjects. Good practices are identified and promoted through the 'Assessment for Learning' workforce.
125. **The good features of assessment and reporting include:**
- thorough assessment procedures in the vast majority of departments based on the school policy;
  - the accuracy and consistency of assessments is generally good;
  - teachers in key stage 3 have a good awareness of the potential of every pupil as a result of the information and assessments which come from the leader primary schools;
  - a reliable assessment system, based on effort, attainment, behaviour and target grades, with pupils and students understanding the significance of the levels and grades awarded;
  - the effective analysis of assessment data by the assessment co-ordinator resulting in an accurate overview of progress, with results displayed on the school's network for departments, heads of year and form tutors;
  - discussions between pupils and students, jointly with their form tutors, to set meaningful targets to promote future progress and attainment;
  - underachievement is identified and targeted so that the pupils and students identified are mentored by form tutors, heads of year and the senior management team;
  - the regular setting of specific assessments in some departments to assess progress, with the assessments, in the best examples, used to monitor progress and to influence the teaching, marking and assessment;
  - good, and sometimes very good examples of constructive marking of pupils' and students' work, with the best marking including detailed and analytical feedback which promotes the development of individuals and leads to the improvement of the work;
  - good use made of assessment for learning to promote higher standards in some departments where teachers share success criteria with pupils and students, and encourage them to assess their own work and that of their peers;
  - detailed information about the strengths and shortcomings of students where teachers, in the best examples, plan activities carefully in order to help them improve the weaker aspects of their work;
  - pupils and students are acknowledged and praised for their progress; the commendation system has a positive impact on their commitment.

126. Parents receive a full report on their children's progress every year and one interim report is prepared for each pupil in key stage 3 and Y10. They include grades for attainment, effort and behaviour, as well as target grades. The quality of the comments is good and evaluative in a large number of subjects and provides guidance on how to improve the work. Pupils and students contribute to their final reports by commenting on their work and targets. There is an opportunity for parents also to respond, which is good practice.
127. The school has other effective arrangements for informing parents of their children's progress, namely through contact books and annual parent evenings. The school informs parents at an early stage if there are any significant signs of underachievement and invites them to award meetings. The school reports to the feeder primary schools on the progress and success of their former pupils.
128. **The shortcomings in assessment and reporting include:**
- inconsistency in the quality and the assessment methods of a small minority of departments where the marking of work does not explicitly show pupils and students how to improve their standards. Subsequently, continuity suffers as feedback does not affect the next stages of the learning;
  - assessment for learning isn't implemented consistently in every subject in order to raise the standards of achievement of pupils and students;
  - procedures for tracking the progress of pupils and students are not consistently applied within the departments in order to identify those who are working slightly below their potential but without underachieving in a very obvious manner.

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

**Grade 2:** good features and no important shortcomings

129. The findings of the inspection team correspond to the grade the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report.

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

130. The curriculum at Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen:

- complies with the requirements of the 1996 and 2005 Education Acts;
- meets all the statutory requirements including responding to the needs of pupil and students with SEN;
- meets the common requirements of National Curriculum programmes of study;
- complies with the examination specification requirements at key stage 4 and in the sixth form.

131. The following aspects of the curriculum are a particular strength as the school plans a large variety of activities that are available to all pupils without exception:

- a strong and co-ordinated personal and social education programme;
- a wide variety of curricular, cultural, sporting and leisure activities during lunchtimes or after school;
- numerous and wide ranging visits in the area itself, in Wales, the UK, Europe and, in addition, one trip for a small number of sixth form students to Patagonia.

132. **Other aspects of the curricular organisation are also good.**

133. They include:

- a broad and balanced curriculum in key stages 3 and 4 which meets the needs and interests of pupils and enables them to gain suitable qualifications or accreditations;
- classes that are not too large and, as a rule, don't have a gender imbalance;
- a flexible curriculum in key stage 4 which responds to the pupils' aspirations;
- in the sixth form, the opportunity to gain Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level qualifications across a good range of traditional subjects;
- a large number of additional opportunities, in co-operation with local colleges and schools, to study vocational subjects at an appropriate level in key stage 4;
- in the sixth form, increasing opportunities to study subjects such as physical education, psychology, sociology, electronics and drama in co-operation with other schools, the local university and further education college;

- planned opportunities for off-site education for a limited number of pupils not coping well with more traditional education;
- strong links with the five feeder primary schools to ensure pastoral and curricular continuity in some subjects, including the French department's link with these schools over the past years to teach the subject to Y6;
- co-operation with the University of Wales Bangor in several ways and on several levels;
- co-operation with parents through the Parent Teacher Association, through handbooks, letters, contact books, parent evenings, phone calls and individual interviews;
- co-operation with the Local Education Authority, statutory bodies and others for the benefit of pupils;
- impartial advice for pupils to pursue vocational aspirations and ensure continuity to their Y11 courses in the local further education college;
- an appropriate allocation of time given to all subjects, including statutory religious education throughout the school;
- assemblies in the hall twice a week for everyone in turn and assemblies and opportunities for meditation and prayer in the classrooms on the other mornings;
- arrangements to ensure full and equal access for all pupils including pupils with special or additional educational needs, to all aspects of the work of the school.

134. **Basic and key skills**

135. The school has three designated co-ordinators for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The curriculum develops pupils' basic and key skills by integrating them across the subjects and through some specific timetabled subjects throughout the year or in rotation. The school has gained the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark.

136. **The good features of the above provision are:**

- that Y7 pupils are given one lesson per week to refine their information and communication technology skills;
- the arrangements for teachers, assistants and sixth form students to support some readers in key stage 3 and Y10 in order to develop their basic skills;
- in Y7, in relation to 'Number Workout', teachers and students again work with pupils who are experiencing some difficulties in mathematics;
- two lessons per week assigned in the sixth form this year in order to motivate and support students to gain level 2 or 3 qualifications, as appropriate, in the key skills of literacy (with a disposition towards strengthening English), numeracy and information and communication technology;
- the wider skills are developed through personal and social education lessons and across the curriculum in courses and in extra-curricular activities;

- in the case of the small group attempting to gain a bronze accreditation in the Asdan course, focusing on developing pupils' skills in working with others, improving their own learning and their problem solving skills;
  - opportunities to gain accreditation through the Duke of Edinburgh award.
137. Pupils' and students' personal development is also promoted very well by the school. Good use is made of a combination of morning registration periods, collective worship sessions of a good quality and pastoral lessons, as well as some personal and social lessons. These lessons contribute significantly to pupils' and students' spiritual and moral development. Through these lessons, the school also develops important aspects of the curriculum, which are priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 138. This good provision underpins and is a natural part of the life and ethos of the school and includes:**
- global citizenship when relevant speakers, at local and national government level, are invited to talk with pupils or visits to government centres such as the Welsh Assembly Senedd;
  - opportunities for participation in School Council elections, emulating the UK's democratic process;
  - sustainability and environmental work in the local community and the school itself; the school gained the silver level as part of the Gwynedd Green Schools and the School Council is enthusiastic in its efforts to recycle;
  - health education including sex education;
  - further support and opportunities for pupils and students through formal curricular arrangements and personal contributions of dedicated teachers to:
    - i) broaden pupils' and students' cultural horizons in many areas;
    - ii) belong to several teams and conduct outdoor activities;
    - iii) develop an awareness and understanding of other cultures;
    - iv) display a mature responsibility for the welfare of others less fortunate than themselves and gain enthusiastic support for numerous good causes;
    - v) work with fair trade campaigns;
    - vi) show respect towards each other, staff and the environment.
139. The curriculum aims to ensure equal access and opportunity for all so that all pupils can achieve their full potential. The school makes every effort to ensure that no pupil's education suffers due to deprivation. The school also challenges stereotyping and all courses are open to all pupils.
140. Welsh is the main language of the school. However, the curriculum ensures that the school promotes pupils' bilingualism by offering some units of work in several subjects through the medium of English, providing opportunities for pupils to move from one language to another and presenting terms in both languages. In a number of subjects across the curriculum, aspects of the *Curriculum Cymreig* (Welsh Curriculum) are presented. In co-operation with the local community, the school raises pupils' awareness of their roots, makes them take pride in their area and its rich history and tradition and successfully fosters their consciousness of being Welsh.

**141. Although the school's curricular provision is good, there are some shortcomings, namely:**

- the small numbers of pupils studying French in key stage 4;
- the manner in which some subjects are clustered in the timetable;
- the small number of pupils studying some subjects in the sixth form;
- limited opportunities to study vocational subjects in the sixth form.

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

142. The school achieved the Careers Wales Quality Award in 2005 which reflects the outstanding quality of the work-related education and careers aspects of the school curriculum.

**143. The outstanding features are as follows:**

- a strong emphasis on work related aspects in every subject;
- the outstanding contacts with the main employers in the area and numerous other employers;
- very close collaboration with Careers Wales in order to take advantage of all available support, including inviting a wide variety of local entrepreneurs to talk to pupils and ignite their interest.

**144. The good features include:**

- work experience periods in keeping, as far as possible, with the aspirations of every pupil in Y10 and every student in Y12, helping them to make appropriate career decisions;
- developing pupils' understanding of labour market issues and the skills employers look for;
- effective arrangements for supervising work experience with several members of staff involved in the process, under the guidance of the work experience co-ordinator;
- National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses provided for less academic pupils;
- a clear commitment to promote enterprise education, using schemes such as the *Dynamo* project to design and structure the work.

**145. The school intends to develop its vocational options, but there are currently shortcomings:**

- the school does not offer GCSE and Advanced Level vocational qualifications;
- the school has not formally asked employers about the relevance of the school's curriculum from their perspective.

146. Nevertheless, the school is remarkably successful in equipping pupils with transferable skills which they can use in a variety of jobs throughout their lives.

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

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

147. The findings of the inspection team correspond to the school's self-evaluation.

148. **The outstanding features of the quality of care, support and guidance for pupils, and the provision for additional learning needs include:**

- a happy and caring school community. As the school is relatively small, teachers have an outstanding knowledge of the pupils;
- very effective planning and management of care arrangements by the heads of year and the SMT;
- the special provision for Y9 pupils when choosing subjects for Y10. The option is an open one with sensitive counselling being offered in order to ensure that every pupil follows a broad and balanced curriculum;
- the completely impartial advice offered to Y11 pupils on post-16 courses, considering only the learners' welfare;
- particularly good pastoral and curricular links and partnerships with the feeder primary schools;
- a very effective induction programme which ensures that pupils who come to the school from feeder primary schools settle in quickly and become a natural part of the school community. This is also true of the pupils who arrive at the school during the term;
- the high quality personal support and guidance provided for the pupils by the school staff through effective use of external agencies;
- the high quality careers programme. The school gained the Guidance and Careers Quality Award and was praised in particular by the external assessor for the quality and range of its careers programme, and the "lively and effective" guidance which pupils receive;
- the outstanding provision for pupils with SEN. These pupils are included in all school activities. The guidance and support provided by the SEN co-ordinator and the assistants ensures that all their needs are met. The school arranges a number of lunchtime and morning clubs to extend the opportunities for pupils;
- the excellent guidance provided by the SEN co-ordinator to a team of dedicated assistants who are given opportunities for their own professional development;
- all members of staff have a detailed knowledge of the pupils in their care with SEN. They access the information through the SEN site on the school network, a termly bulletin and morning announcements;
- the remarkably effective and practical provision of a Youth Worker, employed partly by the school, for pupils whose attitude is likely to affect their own progress and the progress of others, and who are at risk of being excluded.

### **Outstanding practice**

For seven years, the school, in co-operation with the Youth Service, has employed a Youth Worker for year 7 to 11 pupils. He is well-respected and trusted by pupils. He advises them skilfully and ensures that situations of conflict can be avoided. Through a number of strategies, the worker deals very effectively with individual pupils and small groups of pupils whose behaviour and attitudes are likely to impede their progress and the progress of others.

The worker is also responsible for five youth clubs in the school's catchment area which gives him the opportunity to get to know many pupils in different situations outside school hours, and benefit from his deeper knowledge of them.

The worker collaborates closely with the careers co-ordinator and with teachers working with the Asdan course to ensure balanced experiences for some pupils in key stage 4. The school has made very good use of the 'worker' to support community projects in order to ensure that pupils respect the school and their area, and feel part of their local community. Through the work of these pupils, and other pupils' contributions, the school has won the green schools silver award and is now working towards the gold award.

By employing the Youth Worker, the school plans purposefully to ensure the inclusion of these pupils, opportunities for their social development and to facilitate their continued education in the school.

#### **149. There are also many good features. These include:**

- good collaboration between the school and the parents / carers, giving them the opportunity to express their opinions in parent evenings and through questionnaires;
- parents feel that the school is welcoming and approachable when any problems arise. The school's contact book also reinforces the link between the school and the parents;
- good use of the computerised recording system for tracking and analysing the attendance of individual pupils and groups of pupils. Classroom teachers, heads of year and senior managers contribute to this process;
- the effective support from the school's administrative staff;
- the school's sensitive response to the personal circumstances which often cause attendance, behaviour and attitude problems;
- close collaboration with the county education welfare officer who calls in regularly to discuss individual cases;
- the robust arrangements for recording the attendance of Y12 and Y13 students;
- very good use of the service of Careers Wales.

150. The school follows the Careers Education and Guidance Framework which is closely co-ordinated with the Work Related Education Programme as both areas are jointly planned. The new co-ordinator seeks to further strengthen some aspects, especially in relation to the sixth form.

151. A new careers room and library have been established where the Careers Wales officer can conduct one-to-one interviews in privacy during her weekly visits.

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

152. The quality of the provision for equal opportunities is good.

153. **The good features include:**

- relevant policies pertaining to health and safety matters;
- the strong emphasis on nurturing pupils' awareness of the importance of personal health. This is done by conducting no-smoking campaigns, a HIV-Aids day, discussing the dangers of drugs and alcohol, a mental and emotional health conference, and sex education workshops;
- the weekly visits by the school nurse are a valuable contribution to health promotion, enabling pupils to discuss any concerns privately with an adult who is a health specialist but also a willing listener;
- promoting an appropriate diet. There is a milk and healthy food bar in the canteen;
- the appropriate risk assessments of possible dangers. In close co-operation with the fire service, regular fire drills are conducted;
- a good number of teachers and ancillary staff are fully qualified first aiders;
- the effective arrangements to ensure the welfare of pupils and to protect them from dangers. In accordance with the statutory requirement, a senior member of staff has been designated to take responsibility for this aspect and she updates her information in relevant training sessions. Child protection issues are fully discussed at the beginning of each school year in order to ensure that new and established staff are conscious of the signs and of the procedures to follow in cases of concern;
- equal opportunity is actively implemented in every activity;
- the emphasis on respect and tolerance in collective worship sessions;
- appropriate arrangements for recording any incident of a racial nature;
- robust procedures to prevent bullying, including a box to inform, anonymously, of any oppressive behaviour. The school's anti-bullying policy was produced jointly with the feeder primary schools in order to ease transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3.

154. The school building is challenging for those with a physical disability due to its many levels. The school has overcome these challenges sensibly by installing lifts and chair lifts.

155. Pupils in the school raise money regularly for good causes and the school sponsors the education of a child in Vietnam. These activities raise the pupils' awareness of living conditions beyond their immediate environment.

## Leadership and management

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

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

156. The grade awarded by the inspection team corresponds to that awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report.
157. This key question was judged to be grade 2, and not grade 3 as question 1, due to the good quality of management and leadership in the school, as illustrated by the good and very good grades awarded for standards of achievement in the six subjects inspected.
158. **The good features of management and leadership include:**
- the effective guidance and enthusiastic commitment of the head to all the school's work in order to realise its aim of "*Cydfyw, cydweithio a chyd-dynnu*" ["Living, working and getting along with each other."]. The head's open door policy and his willingness to listen to, and take account of everybody's opinions, has gained the co-operation of staff, pupils and parents;
  - a SMT who, although relatively new to their posts, have begun to focus clearly on standards, teaching and learning. There is clear evidence that their work is beginning to impact on the school community and on standards in the classroom. They work closely as a team and the strengths of the individual members complement each other;
  - the presence of the SMT around the school reinforces expectations and promotes a strong sense of community;
  - the school managers' and heads' very good knowledge of the pupils, which contributes to the school's caring ethos;
  - the school development plan, a transparent document which identifies appropriate priorities for the school. The objectives, action to be taken, responsibilities and necessary expenditure are identified;
  - school policies and procedures which effectively promote equality on all levels, ensure that pupils are given fair play and include the appropriate risk assessments;
  - the school's very good response to national and local priorities which are reflected clearly in its work and strategies – including Learning Pathways 14-19, social inclusion, sustainable development, global citizenship and bilingualism;
  - performance management procedures that are in keeping with the school development plan and departmental development plans, and directly linked with training and continuous professional development of the teachers;
  - the appropriate arrangements established to meet the training needs of teachers, ancillary staff and classroom assistants. A member of the SMT is currently following the course to gain the National Professional Qualification for Headship;

- appropriate partnerships with other providers to offer a suitable curriculum for young people aged 14-19, in accordance with the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities;
- suitable induction programmes for newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school. The school provides appropriate guidance and support for prospective teachers who are in the school as part of their Post Graduate Certificate in Education course;
- governors who are well-informed about the work and performance of the school, which enables them to take an active part in discussions about the school's strategic development. They are also very aware of the needs of the local community;
- governors who critically monitor the work of the school through their work on various committees of the governing body. They are very well-informed about pupils' and students' external test and examination results;
- governors who ensure that the school meets the legal and course requirements.

159. The large majority of heads of department undertake their duties effectively.

160. The features of good departmental management include:

- (i) high expectations;
- (ii) clear guidance and direction for the work of the department, which is well-focused and reinforced by the quality of the schemes of work and teaching strategies;
- (iii) effective use of data to analyse pupils' performance and set appropriate targets;
- (iv) a strong self-evaluation climate has been established, with the findings of the monitoring process used to plan strategically for improvement;
- (v) teachers teaching outside their main curricular area are well-supported.

161. **The shortcomings include:**

- outcomes and targets in the school development plan that have not been sufficiently quantified to realise some significant objectives;
- the inconsistent use of performance data by some departments as a tool to raise standards;
- insufficient guidance and clear direction from some heads of department. A small number of departmental development plans lack detail, clarity of purpose and outcomes and there isn't a consistent focus on effective teaching and learning;
- the governors' link with individual departments has not been developed sufficiently in order to have a positive impact on raising standards.

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

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

162. This grade corresponds to the school's self-evaluation grade.
163. The findings of the inspection team correspond to those of the school in six of the seven key questions, but the inspection team has awarded a lower grade for one of the questions, namely question 1.

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

164. A self-evaluation system and processes have been established which have been implemented across the school for several years. The procedure is developing well with good features including:
- thorough analyses of external test and examination results which provide detailed information regarding standards of achievement across every key stage;
  - detailed analyses of pupils' attainment, effort, behaviour and attendance data following internal reports, and the identification of pupils who are underachieving as a result of this;
  - the SMT's good knowledge of the school and its departments;
  - a thorough and comprehensive self-evaluation report which is based on the seven key questions of the Common Inspection Framework. The report identifies, in a clear and concise manner, the strengths and areas for development, as well as an achievement grade;
  - an annual whole school focus on self-evaluation and standards in specific areas and the subsequent report. During the past three years, attention has been paid to teaching and learning methods, questioning to promote learning and feedback on pupils' work;
  - the deliberate seeking out of the opinions of those interested in the school, including pupils, staff, governors parents and employers;
  - a clear structure for departmental self-evaluations, focusing on standards of achievement, the effectiveness of the teaching, training and assessment for learning.
165. **The shortcomings include:**
- the absence of a whole school structured plan to monitor pupils' standards which is based on first-hand evidence of their work;
  - the SMT's link with departments has not, as yet, been sufficiently refined in order to have an effective impact on standards.

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

### **166. The good features include:**

- an effective school development plan which outlines, in a clear and concise manner, the main priorities of the whole school. These are based on a combination of county and national priorities as well as the matters raised in the self-evaluation document. The document also summarises the main priorities of departments which reflect the priorities of the whole school;
- the priorities noted in the school development plan, which have been costed in detail. In the past, budgetary savings from the previous year have been used to meet this cost;
- the positive impact of a number of actions taken on standards of teaching and learning. Restructuring the arrangements for teaching foundation subjects in key stage 3 in mixed ability groups, coupled with a new alternate boy / girl seating plan in every classroom, has had a positive impact on the pupils' motivation, especially the boys. Adopting 'assessment for learning' principles has also had a positive impact on standards in the classroom;
- the school's positive response and successful implementation in addressing a number of the key issues raised in the last inspection. Specifically:-
  - (i) although results have been inconsistent over the years since the last inspection, standards have improved in a number of subjects;
  - (ii) the quality of self-evaluation at departmental level has improved;
  - (iii) appropriate places have been ensured for sixth form students to work during non-contact periods;
  - (iv) the school works with other schools to offer post-16 courses in drama, physical education, electronics and sociology, and with a further education college to offer psychology;
  - (v) the school has taken appropriate action to improve the arrangements for additional lessons for pupils with SEN and the vocational provision in key stage 4, thereby ensuring that these arrangements do not affect pupils' progress in other subjects.

### **167. There are some shortcomings, including:**

- departmental development plans that vary in standard. Overall, they set appropriate priorities for improvement but the targets set aren't always sufficiently challenging and aren't quantified to ensure that the outcomes are measurable. The strategies for realising the improvements aren't always evident.

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

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

168. The grade the school awarded itself for this key question in its self-evaluation report corresponds to the grade awarded by the inspection team.

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

169. **The good features include:**

- classroom assistants who undertake their work very efficiently in assisting pupils with various needs in the classroom. The assistants contribute significantly to the progress of pupils in their care;
- the key role of the Youth Worker in various aspects of the life of the school;
- appropriate staff to meet the curricular needs of the school. The qualifications of the vast majority of the teachers correspond to the areas taught by them. There is a good balance between experienced teachers and comparatively new members to the profession;
- the school's teacher-pupil ratio, which compares favourably to the national average;
- appropriate support for teachers teaching outside their main curricular area, in order to ensure that pupils' achievement in the subject does not suffer;
- all members of staff, excluding teachers new to the school, have taken advantage of bursaries from the General Teaching Council for Wales to realise their professional development needs;
- appropriate arrangements to provide protected time for teachers for planning, preparation and assessment;
- administrative and ancillary support staff who undertake their duties effectively, allowing for the smooth day-to-day running of the school;
- providing enough space for the number of pupils and students on the school roll and for the curriculum taught. Overall, the grounds and buildings are kept clean and tidy, and are well-maintained;
- sufficient resources for teaching all curriculum subjects. There are very good resources for teaching physical education. The school has invested considerably in computer equipment since the last inspection.

170. A few Health and Safety matters were brought to the attention of the headteacher.

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

171. The school manages its resources effectively and ensures appropriate levels of staffing and resources for teaching the curriculum.

**172. The good features include:**

- careful monitoring of the school budget by the head and administrative officer, with appropriate financial reports provided for the governors every term;
- strategic financial planning, by the head and administrative officer. They analyse the cost of delivering the sixth form curriculum in detail in order to ensure that the provision is cost effective;
- effective use of teaching and support staff, making the best use of their time, qualifications and experience, to deliver the current curriculum. The school makes good use of partnerships with other institutions in order to extend the curricular provision efficiently;
- the fact that approximately 6% of the budget was held in reserve at the end of the 2005-06 financial year. This is in accordance with what the Audit Commission recommends;
- the Governing Body's appropriate response to the Local Authority's recent audit report (December 2005) and their approval of the action plan in response to the recommendations made;
- very effective arrangements to ascertain the professional development needs of all members of staff. Teachers teaching outside their main area of expertise are well-supported;
- the school's thorough annual evaluation of its curricular and staffing needs, taking into consideration the school's population projections and forecast budget.

**173. The shortcomings include:**

- the priorities identified in the development plans are sometimes not sufficiently linked to the school budget. Although priorities are costed, there are no thorough processes to link the priorities with the budget.

174. Given the pupils' and students' standards of achievement, the quality of teaching and guidance for pupils and the good progress the school has made since the last inspection, the school provides good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Welsh first language

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

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

**Sixth Form – Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

### Key stage 3 and Key stage 4

#### Good features

175. In both key stages, pupils' attitude towards their work is positive and they are willing to persevere.
176. Pupils' listening skills are very good in key stage 3 and key stage 4. They concentrate successfully and listen carefully to the teachers' presentations and to their peers, and respond with enthusiasm.
177. The vast majority of pupils in both key stages provide good and confident oral responses, with the most able offering extended responses in an appropriate language and register.
178. Increasingly through the key stages, pupils work enthusiastically in pairs and groups to perform, present and exchange information and to express opinion. They take advantage of opportunities to develop their learning skills through the use of modern technology and visual images.
179. By key stage 4, they show confidence and maturity across the ability range and the most able in Y10 successfully discuss challenging texts innovatively, using an element of persuasion and displaying a firm grasp of syntax and idiom.
180. Reading standards are good in both key stages. The vast majority of pupils show an increasing ability to read aloud fluently and to respond effectively to literary, non-fiction and media reading texts, both orally and in writing.
181. In key stage 3, many enjoy reading for pleasure and discuss plot, events and characters meaningfully in a text that matches their ability. Pupils' appreciation skills are developing well.
182. Pupils collect information from various sources and present it in an orderly manner. They show a good understanding of the needs of an audience.
183. By key stage 4, pupils show a lively personal response in their critical work which is firmly based on a good understanding of the texts studied. Some pupils demonstrate maturity and develop their analytical thinking when interpreting poems and visual literature.

184. Pupils across the ability range undertake a wide range of written tasks in both key stages. Standards vary from satisfactory to good in relation to pupils' abilities with individual examples of very good work across both key stages. Pupils understand the fundamentals of different literary forms and use the linguistic requirements appropriately. The standard of work improves in terms of length, content and expression from year to year as the good practice of purposeful planning contributes to raising standards. The writing of the more able pupils is mature and there is varied and subtle use of language to create effects.
185. In both key stages, the pupils' ability to review the content and sequence of their work and to evaluate their own work and that of their peers against specific criteria, both orally and in writing, contributes to raising standards and refines their learning skills.
186. Across both key stages, a number of pupils are given opportunities to interrelate their use of language skills, through effective use of modern technology, including the interactive white board, which encourages them to think independently. This contributes to raising standards.
187. Pupils with SEN, with good assistance from teachers and learning support assistants, achieve good standards across the skills according to their ability.

### **Shortcomings**

188. In key stage 3, a small minority of average ability pupils have difficulty in holding a co-ordinated group discussion, and extending their responses to express their ideas and building an argument sufficiently.
189. In both key stages, the writing of a substantial minority of pupils, mainly average ability boys, is inconsistent. In these cases, the work is disorganised, less developed and incomplete at times.
190. In both key stages, the writing of a small number of pupils across the ability range is characterised by spelling and mutation errors, and incorrect use of verb endings.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

191. When contributing to class discussions and working in groups, the vast majority of students offer intelligent comments with enthusiasm and confidence and their motivation is sound.

192. In Y13, students deliver good oral presentations and structure their information in an orderly manner and use appropriate examples. They respond thoughtfully when their comments are challenged and the most able reason soundly, showing a firm grasp of language.
193. Students develop their critical talent well through the key stage when discussing various texts. In Y12, they analyse a drama confidently, providing appropriate evidence to support their opinions. By Y13, a number appreciate challenging texts intelligently, discussing with maturity what is implied in texts. They successfully develop the skill of interweaving meaningful quotations into the structure of their discussions thereby enriching their literary argument.
194. A number of students read widely for pleasure and as background reading for the texts being studied. In Y13, the students' ability to make meaningful cross-references between the various themes and literary styles of different authors and poets is developing well.
195. Students have a good awareness of the requirements of various language registers. The creative work of a number of them is skilful, full of imagination and presented in an interesting style. When scripting, they produce good quality work and show understanding of the requirements of the medium in all its aspects. Their essays often display the ability to evaluate contrasting viewpoints before expressing personal opinions.

### **Shortcomings**

196. In Y12, a minority of students' oral and written work is characterised by language errors which impair the fluency and accuracy of their expression.
197. In Y12 and Y13, some students' ability to plan their essays and apply their knowledge in a co-ordinated manner has not developed sufficiently. In these instances, the comments aren't consistently innovative and the work lacks detail and depth.

## Mathematics

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

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

**Sixth form - Grade 3:** good features outweigh shortcomings

### Key stage 3 and Key stage 4

#### Good features

198. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils and their attitude towards the work is very good and enables them to make consistent progress in the subject according to their age and ability.
199. The emphasis placed on developing mental work and pen and paper calculations ensures that the pupils make good progress when faced with number work.
200. The pupils understand place value and are able to round effectively.
201. The vast majority of the pupils use a calculator correctly and appropriately.
202. The pupils understand the concept of negative numbers and the most able are confident when adding and subtracting such numbers.
203. The pupils are confident in collecting, displaying and interpreting statistical data.
204. They understand the concepts of area and volume and most often use appropriate units.
205. The pupils' knowledge of the properties of shapes is good and they solve problems involving angles, as well as naming and measuring them correctly.
206. The vast majority of pupils simplify algebraic expressions, in accordance with their ability, and solve linear equations. The most able competently handle equations involving fractions or decimals also.
207. Pupils with SEN make good progress.
208. In key stage 4, the most able pupils use trigonometric functions and the Pythagoras rule well in solving problems in two and three dimensions.
209. In key stage 4, pupils solve simultaneous equations and cope well with linear graphs with the large majority successfully finding regions defined by inequalities.

- 210. In key stage 4, pupils deal well with rational and irrational numbers and are altogether confident in expressing recurring decimals as fractions.
- 211. Standards in key stage 4 have improved considerably since the last inspection.

### **Shortcomings**

- 212. A small number of average and lower ability pupils have difficulty dealing with negative numbers.
- 213. A small number are inaccurate in labelling chart axes and, at times, misinterpret data when comparing charts.
- 214. Average and lower ability pupils aren't always able to recall facts learnt in previous lessons.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

- 215. Year 13 students have reached a good standard in mechanics.
- 216. They make progress in statistics and pure mathematics and understand the rules related to differentiation.
- 217. Year 12 students are beginning to adapt to the requirements of Advanced Level course and are making progress in mechanics and pure mathematics.

#### **Shortcomings**

- 218. At times, some students have difficulty applying their statistical knowledge to solve problems.
- 219. A lack of competence in algebraic techniques hinders progress and affects the development of some Y12 and Y13 students.

## Information technology

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

**Key Stage 4 – Grade 1:** good with outstanding features

**Sixth Form – Grade 2:** good features and no important shortcomings

### Key stage 3

#### Good features

- 220. Pupils use a variety of software effectively and confidently in a number of contexts.
- 221. Very good standards are achieved in the Communicating Information element. The pupils can create presentations for particular audiences using word processing applications, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, databases and presentation graphics as well as using e-mail and resources from the Internet.

#### Shortcomings

- 222. Pupils' skills in the data handling and modelling elements in Y8 and Y9 have not been developed and refined, due to a lack of opportunities across the curriculum.

### Key stage 4

#### Good and outstanding features

- 223. Pupils show a very good understanding of the basic concepts of the subject. They recognise and explain the specific capabilities of the various software packages very well.
- 224. The standard of course work is outstanding. Pupils of all abilities plan thoroughly, design a solution logically and choose suitable software.

#### Shortcomings

- 225. There are no significant shortcomings.

### Sixth form

#### Good features

- 226. Students demonstrate computer skills of a high standard in their course work. They develop the work skilfully and imaginatively.

- 227. Y12 and Y13 students respond well to the requirements of the subject and show the willingness and the maturity to work effectively.
- 228. Students are well able to choose and adapt suitable techniques to solve problems, and discuss subject concepts with understanding and confidence.
- 229. Students take full advantage of frequent and constructive feedback to produce project work of a high standard.

### **Shortcomings**

- 230. There are no significant shortcomings.

## Modern foreign languages

### French

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

**Key Stage – Grade 3:** good features and no important shortcomings

**Sixth Form – Grade 2:** good features and no important shortcomings

#### Key stage 3

##### Good features

231. In their lessons, almost all pupils listen attentively. They understand the main points of what they hear or read. The pupils make a good effort to understand language that is sometimes challenging.
232. All the pupils respond enthusiastically to oral work. The vast majority of them answer oral questions when they have already practised the answers. The most able pupils are ready to provide more extended answers.
233. Pupils with SEN successfully achieve good standards in the target language.
234. By Y9, pupils begin to handle more complex structures in different tenses, both orally and in writing.

##### Shortcomings

235. The oral work of a small minority of pupils shows first language features.

#### Key Stage 4

##### Good features

236. Almost all the pupils answer oral questions well when they have already had an opportunity to practise the answers. Y10 pupils speak the target language confidently. They provide more extended answers with good accent and pronunciation.
237. Across the key stage, all the pupils listen attentively and understand the main points of the language spoken at a natural pace by the teacher or on tape. Y10 pupils glean further details and discern the meaning when listening to or reading extracts.
238. Most pupils convey their ideas effectively when writing in the target language.

### **Shortcomings**

- 239. A significant majority of Y11 pupils have difficulty recycling words and sentence patterns already presented.
- 240. Y11 pupils do not have a firm grasp of grammar.
- 241. Y11 pupils do not speak the target language confidently and tend to use a limited range of words and sentences.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

- 242. The majority of students speak the target language confidently. They talk extendedly about topical issues, using a wide range of vocabulary and syntaxes.
- 243. The students cope successfully with written extracts in language that is sometimes difficult.
- 244. The students understand a good percentage of the target language spoken at a natural pace.
- 245. The students write in the target language using an increasing range of vocabulary, structures and phrases.

#### **Shortcomings**

- 246. A small number of students continue to make elementary errors when speaking and writing.

## History

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

**Key Stage 4 – Grade 1:** good with outstanding features

**Sixth Form – Grade 1:** good with outstanding features

### Key stage 3

#### Good features

- 247. The pupils have a sound knowledge of the topics studied along with a good understanding of personalities and events.
- 248. They have a sound awareness of chronology and the ability to place events in chronological order. They use suitable terms when discussing time and do so with confidence.
- 249. The pupils' ability to recall information is good and their oral expression is effective. They choose relevant evidence and their skill in dealing with sources is developing.
- 250. The most able pupils discuss challenging questions, and in doing so refer to previous work. The pupils ask questions about the purpose of sources, present facts and express opinion well.
- 251. The pupils understand that the reign of a particular king is interpreted in several ways by historians, authors and cartoonists. They attempt to reason their findings about the various viewpoints.
- 252. Pupils with SEN make good progress when discussing visual evidence. They differentiate between fact and opinion.

#### Shortcomings

- 253. A small number of pupils are reluctant to make oral contributions to lessons.
- 254. A small number of pupils do not concentrate in lessons, and do not follow the teacher's instructions.

### Key stage 4

#### Good and outstanding features

- 255. At the beginning of key stage 4, the pupils successfully build on the wide range of skills they acquired in key stage 3. They respond very maturely and understand what motivated people to act in a particular way.

- 256. The pupils explain their viewpoints very well and see differences between specific regimes. Pupils refer to historical and contemporary ematerial and they ask appropriate questions. They assess their peers' work intelligently. This is an outstanding feature.
- 257. The pupils respond to tasks by presenting information and by discussing in a very mature and intelligent manner. They come to understand the limitations of sources and form valid conclusions.
- 258. The pupils respond and work very diligently. They cross-reference information and discuss at a high level. This is an outstanding feature.

### **Shortcomings**

- 259. There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good and outstanding features**

- 260. Y12 and Y13 students produce work of a good quality and some parts are excellent. Y13 students make extended oral contributions during classroom discussions.
- 261. The students link complex and varying factors when planning and discussing, before producing the final draft of essays.
- 262. In extended discussions, the students understand motivation, success and failure. They consider the reliability and authenticity of evidence.
- 263. The students judge and reason and understand that the opinion of individuals about the same piece of evidence can vary. They are able to integrate all elements skilfully, encompassing notes, research, discussion and planning. They share their findings with other students and this leads to further discussion. This is an outstanding feature.
- 264. Students analyse examination questions and produce a structured plan as a basis for their answers. They understand response levels and apply their findings to their final answers. This is an outstanding practice.

### **Shortcomings**

- 265. There are no significant shortcomings.

## Geography

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

**Key stage 4 - Grade 3:** good features outweigh shortcomings

**Sixth form – Grade 2:** good features and no important shortcomings

### Key stage 3

#### Good Features

266. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the location and characteristics of place. The vast majority describe accurately the features and characteristics of the places they study, with particular reference to Wales and Brazil.
267. The vast majority of pupils have a sound understanding of the relationship between people and the environment. Work on earthquakes makes a significant contribution to their knowledge and understanding of the impact of natural phenomena on the activities of mankind. They possess a thorough appreciation of how people respond to such natural disasters.
268. The large majority of pupils have a good grasp of geographical terminology. They use key words with accuracy and confidence in their study of plate tectonics and climate.
269. The pupils with special educational needs complete work of a good standard. They have a good understanding of the causes of the Pakistan earthquake and the effects of the resulting devastation on peoples' lives and property.
270. The large majority of pupils develop good geographical skills. They use maps, graphs, textbooks, information sheets and the interactive white board with confidence. Their use of information and communication technology for research and presentation is particularly good.

#### Shortcomings

271. The exercise books of a small minority of lower ability pupils have incomplete or missing work.

### Key stage 4

#### Good Features

272. The large majority of pupils have a good understanding of the relationship between geography and environmental, social and economic matters. The study of the Snowdonia National Park makes a meaningful contribution to their understanding of the problems and pressures facing tourist regions such as Snowdonia.
273. The mapping and graphical skills of a large majority of the pupils are good. The sketch- mapping and labelling of Llyn Idwal from a photograph demonstrated the pupils' sound grasp of this particular geographical skill.

274. Pupils understand and offer explanations for the causes of global warming. They possess a good knowledge of the effects of such processes. They understand the actions that need to be taken to reduce the impact of global warming on our planet.

### **Shortcomings**

275. A small but significant number of pupils have an insecure understanding of 'sustainability' when applied to environmental issues within the Snowdonia National Park.
276. The standards achieved by a small number of pupils are lowered by their failure to complete tasks in sufficient depth and detail. Responses, both orally and written, demonstrate a lack of detail in terms of both understanding and knowledge.
277. Pupils' use of geographical terminology of increasing complexity is not fully developed especially among the less able pupils.

### **Sixth Form**

#### **Good Features**

278. The vast majority of students demonstrate good knowledge, understanding and skills in the subject.
279. The students display a mature attitude to the subject. This contributes to their achieving a range of geographical skills. Their understanding of complex geographical concepts is good.
280. Their research and information and communication technology skills are good. The students use complex geographical terminology with confidence and accuracy.
281. The students possess a sound understanding and knowledge of plate tectonics and the effects of earthquakes on urban areas such as San Francisco in 1989.
282. Most students perceive the important issues when deciding on the distribution of funding to respond to any future natural disasters such as in San Francisco. They handle and analyse information and statistical data well.
283. Students' files are orderly and contain neatly presented notes, diagrams and past examination paper responses on all aspects of their course.

#### **Shortcomings**

284. In a few instances, the completed work of a small minority of students lacks depth and detail.

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

The staff and Governors of Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen are very proud that the inspectors' report notes that 'Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen is a good school' and a 'happy and caring community.'

The findings of the inspection team correspond very closely to the school's self-evaluation report, and all of the key issues have already been identified in the School Development Plan. The school will produce an Action Plan to respond to these issues.

The school takes pride in the particular praise for the quality of care and support for pupils, the outstanding provision for pupils with special educational needs, the high quality of the school's careers programme and in preparing pupils for the world of work, the good and positive relationship between pupils and their teachers, the strong links with the primary schools in the catchment area, the various extra-curricular opportunities available to pupils, and the fact that the school provides good value for money.

The report also notes that pupils are 'well-behaved and respectful to each other, staff and visitors.' We are very proud of these positive comments regarding our young people's behaviour and courtesy, together with their regular contributions to good causes.

In terms of standards in the lessons seen during the week, the report notes that grade 1 or 2 was awarded to 82% of the lessons observed, which is a 'high percentage' and 'considerably higher than the Welsh Assembly Government's target by 2007.' In noting that the school has responded well to the issues raised during the last inspection in 2001, it is noted that the quality of teaching is one of the main strengths of the school, and that considerable progress has been made. This is special commendation for the teachers' commitment and hard work.

The school is also very proud that the inspection team notes the very important contribution of a number of people to the life of the school, being administrative and support staff, classroom assistants, Youth Worker, the Governing Body, numerous external agencies, and the local community. Their enthusiasm and support contributes considerably to the success of the school.

The school would like to thank the inspection team for their professionalism and for the constructive discussions during the week. This independent report provides a firm basis upon which the school can build on the strengths noted and respond to the recommendations made.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen
School type	Naturally bilingual, comprehensive, community
Age-range of pupils	11-18 years
Address of school	Ffordd Coetmor, Bethesda, Gwynedd
Postcode	LL57 3NN
Telephone number	01248 600082

Head	Mr. Alun Llwyd
Date of appointment	January 2004
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Ieuan Wyn / Gwynedd Education Authority
Reporting inspector	Dr. Neil Trevor Jones
Dates of inspection	16-20 October 2006

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	69	90	74	71	75	28	30	437

### Total number of teachers

	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	26	6	29.7

### Staffing information

Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	14.7 :1
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	18.6
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	81%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	93.8	95.0	92.0	92.0	88.2	90.5	84.3	91.8
Term 2	90.9	92.4	90.5	90.2	87.0	88.4	85.3	89.9
Term 3	91.6	91.9	87.7	90.3	88.1	88.4	94.1	90.2

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	17%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to the inspection	9 temporary 0 permanent 0 ethnic minority pupils

**National Curriculum Assessment Results  
End of Key Stage 3:**

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2006 (national figures 2005)																
Total number of pupils in Y9: 72																
Percentage of pupils at each level																
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP	
English	Teacher Assessment	School							8	36	47	6	3			
		National		1	1		1	2	10	25	34	20	6			
	Test	School														
		National		4	2	2				10	23	33	19	7		
Welsh	Teacher Assessment	School								23	47	24	7			
		National			1			1	7	24	37	23	7			
	Test	School														
		National		2	1	1				5	23	38	24	6		
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School					1		13	22	28	24	13			
		National		1	1			1	7	18	23	32	16	1		
	Test	School														
		National		6	1	1				5	17	19	34	17		
Science	Teacher Assessment	School							7	31	36	19	7			
		National		1	1			1	7	19	32	27	12			
	Test	School														
		National		4		1				5	17	31	28	14		

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

**Public Examination Results:**

<b>For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ</b>			
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006			70
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil			42
<b>Percentage of 15 year old pupils in 2006 and:</b>	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	100	91	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	46	60	53
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	99	90	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	27	47	39
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	100	100	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	83	84	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	100	98	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	0	2	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	2	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	-	-	-
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	-	-	-

<b>For pupils aged 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>			
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2006			
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2005			17
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2005			0
	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	59	68	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	100	96	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	18	21	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	-	-	-
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	-	-	-

UA – Unitary Authority

## Appendix 4

### **Evidence base of the inspection**

Ten inspectors spent a total of 38 inspection days at the school and 111 lessons or part lessons were observed. In addition, inspectors visited a cross-section of registration periods, extra-curricular activities during the lunch hour and after school and collective worship sessions. Interviews were conducted with members of the management team, heads of department, year heads and tutors, as well as members of staff, including ancillary staff, with particular responsibilities.

The work of a cross-section of pupils from years 7 to 11 and students in year 12 and 13 were examined, representing the able, average and lower ability. In addition, more pupils' work was seen when visiting classrooms, workshops and laboratories. Regular discussions about their work were held with pupils and formal interviews were conducted with pupils and students who were selected to represent their respective school years, including members of the School Council.

Every document presented by the school before and during the inspection was analysed. Pre-inspection meetings were held with members of the management team, the staff, the governing body and the parents. Sixteen [16] parents attended the meeting and 50 questionnaires were returned. Two letters and three comments on the questionnaires were received from parents.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities and contributions to the Key Questions
Dr. Neil Trevor Jones Registered Inspector	Summary, recommendations Responsible for key question 1 Contribution to key questions 5 and 7
Anna Roberts	Responsible for key question 3
John Roberts Lay Inspector	Contribution to key questions 1, 3 and 7
Manon Wyn Sion	Responsible for key question 2 Welsh first language
Billy Williams	Responsible for key question 6 Mathematics
Gwilym Williams	Responsible for key question 4
Ellen Roberts	Responsible for key question 5 Contribution to key question 7 French
Dafydd Charles	Information Technology
John Alan Roberts	History
Huw Llewelyn	Geography

The school's nominee was Mrs. Menai Jones, deputy head of the school.  
There was no peer assessor.

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### Acknowledgement

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