

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

**Ysgol Gyfun Emlyn
Newcastle Emlyn
SA38 9LN**

School Number: 6694060

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by

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- * secondary schools;
- * special schools;
- * pupil referral units;
- * independent schools;
- * further education;
- * adult and community-based learning;
- * youth support services;
- * LEAs;
- * teacher education and training;
- * work-based learning;
- * careers companies; and
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Ysgol Gyfun Emlyn 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 Gyfun Emlyn took place between 02/05/06 and 05/05/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Miss Glynis Owen undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

“There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **Standard** inspection.”

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

A	Advanced
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEPs	Individual Educational Plans
IFS	Institute of Financial Studies
KS	Key Stage
LSAs	Learning Support Assistants
NC	National Curriculum
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PPA	Planning, Preparation and Assessment
PSE	Personal and Social Education
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SMT	Senior Management Team
UA	Unitary Authority
UK	United Kingdom
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WRE	Work-related Education
Y (1-13)	Year (1-13)

Context

The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol Gyfun Emlyn is a designated English-medium comprehensive school in Newcastle Emlyn, maintained by Carmarthenshire County Council. There are 752 pupils on roll, compared to just over 650 at the time of the last inspection in July 1999. Of these, nearly 120 are in the sixth form, an increase of about twenty since that time.
2. The school is a community school and has pupils from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds. Eighteen point five per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, slightly above the national average of 15.7%.
3. Pupils also represent the full range of ability. Results in tests at the end of KS2, prior to entry, are above the national average. Twenty-two pupils have statements of SEN, and the school houses a dyslexia unit, funded by the UA. A further 144 pupils have been identified as needing some support. In total, this is a slightly higher percentage than nationally.
4. Nearly 12% of pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard, and many have undertaken some of their work in primary school in Welsh. Four subjects are taught through the medium of Welsh for one form group in each year at KS3. The school shares its catchment with a designated Welsh-medium school in Llandysul.
5. Each year, about 35 pupils arrive during the school year, from other parts of Wales, the United Kingdom and abroad, and a smaller number move out of the area. There are few pupils from minority ethnic heritages. A small but growing number of pupils do not speak English or Welsh as their first language.
6. In the sixth form, new courses are being developed in collaboration with other providers, particularly vocational courses, with Coleg Ceredigion. There are also many partnerships with community-based organisations.
7. The headteacher and one deputy headteacher have remained in post since the last inspection. A deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers have been appointed since that time.

The school's priorities and targets

8. The school has a comprehensive set of aims to promote pupils' academic, personal and social development within the school and wider community.
9. Its development plan focuses on four main areas: teaching and learning; staff and pupil issues; premises and campus issues; and community and business links.
10. It sets numerical targets for examinations and for attendance, that:
 - at KS3, over 70% of pupils should reach at least level 5 in each of the core subjects in the NC tests ;
 - in the GCSE examinations, 65% of pupils should achieve at least five grades A*-C and 99% at least five grades A*-G; and
 - the annual attendance rate for 2005-6 should reach 94% and increase by 1% in each of the following two years.

Summary

Ysgol Gyfun Emlyn is a good school.

11. Its particular strengths are:

- the atmosphere of mutual respect between teachers and pupils;
- pupils' mature and responsible attitudes;
- the good standards of achievement, teaching and learning; and
- the wide range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, particularly in the sixth form.

Table of grades awarded

Key Question	Inspection Grade
1. How well do learners achieve?	2
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?	3
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?	3
7. How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

12. These grades are:

- the same as those in the school's self-evaluation report in key questions 1, 6 and 7;
- one grade higher in key questions 2, 4 and 5 because the school had been cautious; and
- one grade lower in key question 3, because there is not a daily act of collective worship on the two days when pupils do not have assembly, and this does not comply with statutory requirements.

Standards of achievement

13. Results in the NC tests at the end of KS3:

- have improved since the last inspection, as nationally;
- were well above the national average in 2004, and just below in 2003 and 2005; and
- have been above average, and sometimes well above, compared to results of schools with a similar intake.

14. In the GCSE examinations, results have also been **good**, as:

- on average, 60% of pupils gain at least five grades A*-C, above the figure nationally;

- about 90% gain at least five grades A*-G, also above the national average and an improvement on results six years ago;
- these figures compare favourably with those of schools with a similar intake, and sometimes place the school in the top 25% of schools; and
- few pupils leave school without qualifications.

15. Sixth form results reflect the range of ability in an open-access sixth form, which is relatively small. Results have been:

- above the national average at grades A-E; and
- usually just below the national average at grades A-C, though lower in 2005.

16. At all key stages, however, boys' results have been lower than girls' and the gap has been wider than the gap nationally in some years.

17. In the six subjects inspected, the following grades were awarded:

Subject	KS3	KS4	Sixth form
English	3	2	2
Welsh Second Language	2	2	2
Science	2	2	2
Art	3	2	1
Physical Education	2	2	2
Business Studies	-	2	2

18. Overall, this is a **good** level of achievement and consistency.

19. In the 73 lessons observed in these subjects, the following grades were awarded:

Key Stage	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3 & KS4	4%	57%	39%	0%	0%
Sixth form	16%	63%	21%	0%	0%
Total	7%	59%	34%	0%	0%

20. These figures:

- exceed the WAG target for 2007, for 98% of lessons to be graded 3 and above;
- almost meet the target for 67% of lessons to be graded 1 or 2;
- exceed the figures for all inspections in Wales last year;
- do not include, among the six subjects inspected, those with the strongest performance at GCSE – French, design and technology, and music; and
- are an improvement on the grades awarded in the last inspection, though the size and nature of the sample are different.

21. **Good** features in the standards achieved and progress made by pupils and students are the:

- outstanding work in art and photography in the sixth form;
- extent to which the most able are challenged and their success in examinations;

- progress of pupils with SEN across the curriculum, and in the Inclusion Centre and Dyslexia Unit;
- progress of a significant number of pupils and students who join the school during the year, including some whose first language is neither English nor Welsh; and
- progress generally in classes because of the motivation of pupils and good quality of teaching.

22. Pupils' and students' key skills are generally **good**. In particular:

- listening skills are very good;
- standards of speaking, reading, numeracy, ICT, and bilingualism are good; and
- the written work of the most able pupils is good.

23. Pupils' personal, social and learning skills are **very good**. This is because they:

- show mature and responsible attitudes towards others and towards their work;
- behave very well in class and around the school;
- attend regularly, resulting in an annual attendance rate of nearly 92%, for pupils of compulsory school age;
- are punctual to lessons;
- are involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities which develop their talents and empathy for others; and
- take up opportunities to continue their education post-16 and into Higher Education, in institutions across the UK.

24. **Shortcomings** in the standards achieved are the:

- achievement of boys, particularly in English and in subjects in which literacy skills predominate;
- presentation and technical accuracy of the writing of pupils of average to lower ability, especially at KS3; and
- progress of pupils of average to lower ability in a small minority of classes, especially at KS3.

The quality of education and training

25. The **outstanding** features of provision are the:

- relationships between teachers and pupils;
- breadth, balance and flexibility of the curriculum, including good provision for work-related education and an enhanced vocationally-based curriculum for one group at KS4;
- wealth of opportunities, often in partnership with other providers of education and community-based activities, particularly in the sixth form and also at KS4;
- care and support given to pupils;

- provision for those with SEN, in the Inclusion Centre, the Dyslexia Unit and small withdrawal groups; and
- transition arrangements, to provide continuity between KS2 and KS3.

26. Teaching is **good**. The following grades were awarded for the 73 lessons observed in the six subjects and the 31 lessons observed in other subjects, in all key stages:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6 subjects	10%	63%	26%	1%	0%
Other subjects	13%	61%	23%	3%	0%
Total	10%	63%	25%	2%	0%

27. Whilst this is a smaller sample than that of the last inspection, the figures show an improvement in the quality of teaching. Installing computers in every classroom, including some interactive whiteboards, has been a significant factor in widening the range of teaching strategies used.

28. There are many other **good** features in the quality of education and training, including the:

- implementation of the WAG priorities through activities to promote bilingualism, enterprise, sustainable development, inclusion and awareness of cultural diversity;
- receipt of awards for Basic Skills and Healthy Living, and students' success in several national competitions;
- well-planned course in PSE;
- good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including three assemblies of good quality per week;
- good access to specialist services to support pupils pastorally and promote good behaviour and attendance, initiatives which are effective in practice;
- extra sessions to improve literacy skills, where appropriate; and
- integration of all pupils, whatever their social, ethnic or linguistic background.

29. The **shortcomings** in the quality of provision are:

- a small measure of inconsistency in the quality of teaching, some non-specialist teaching and some staff absence;
- inconsistency in the quality of marking within and between departments, in the use of data to track and improve performance, in the setting of targets, particularly at KS3 and in the quality of reports;
- limited time for statutory religious education at KS4; and
- the lack of a daily act of collective worship on days when pupils are not in assembly.

Leadership and management

30. The **outstanding** achievement of the headteacher and other senior managers is the creation of a school community which:

- has a strong culture of learning and achievement;

- is orderly, caring and inclusive; and
- looks outward, to broaden pupils' experiences.

31. There are also many **good** features in leadership and management at all levels:

- governors are fully involved in strategic planning and in monitoring performance, gaining first-hand experience by visiting lessons;
- senior managers are linked to middle managers and review each subject area in turn;
- they know the school well, and are pro-active in planning for improvements and in making the best use of resources;
- progress has been made since the last inspection, and in the key issues in that report, though there are still issues relating to assessment;
- systems have been set up for more formal self-evaluation, involving all staff;
- the school council is becoming increasingly involved in contributing to decision-making;
- middle managers mostly lead their teams effectively, with growing emphasis on rigorous review of practice to eliminate shortcomings;
- development planning is closely linked to the allocation of resources;
- financial planning and management are careful and the school is generously resourced overall;
- aspects of the accommodation are very good, particularly the new design and technology facilities, many good-sized classrooms with attractive displays and the use of the adjacent Leisure Centre;
- teaching staff have good up-to-date knowledge, are reflective of practice and are deployed effectively; and
- the continuous development of staff, of newly qualified teachers, of initial teacher training students and of support staff is good and well documented.

32. The above systems are supplemented by much informal communication, possible in a relatively small school. However, if the school is to develop its good practice further, some aspects of the current systems need greater formality because the **shortcomings** are:

- there is insufficient rigour in identifying some shortcomings and planning to eliminate them;
- the processes used to gain information do not link together effectively to make a cohesive system of self-evaluation, nor link closely enough into development planning; and
- there is not sufficient correlation between whole-school priorities and their implementation in each area of practice.

33. In some aspects of teaching and learning, there is not formal planning across the curriculum and, whilst practice is good in many areas, it is **inconsistent** in quality, overall. This applies particularly to literacy, especially writing, ICT, assessment and provision for pupils with SEN in mainstream classes.

34. There are several **shortcomings** in the adequacy and quality of the accommodation, as:

- some rooms are small for the size of classes;
- there is virtually no spare capacity;
- sixth-form accommodation is small for the numbers involved;
- accommodation in science, music, physical education and in the demountables has specific shortcomings; and
- a few health and safety issues were reported to the school.

35. Nevertheless, the school makes good use of its available resources, and gives good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to build on current success, the school should focus on the following targets within its comprehensive SDP:

- R1. Continue to improve standards in subjects and in key skills, especially writing, and narrow the gap in performance between boys and girls.
- R2. Improve the quality and consistency of assessment across the curriculum, and, in particular, the:
- quality of marking and feed-back;
 - use of data to track pupils' progress;
 - setting of targets for improvement; and
 - format and quality of reports to parents.
- R3. Plan and monitor cross-curricular practice in:
- developing pupils' literacy skills;
 - the use of ICT; and
 - the provision made for pupils with SEN.
- R4. Further develop the systems for self-evaluation and planning.
- R5. Work with the UA to address the shortcomings in the accommodation, and resolve the health and safety issues.
- R6. Meet statutory requirements for the daily act of collective worship.

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

KS3 and KS4

37. Results in the NC tests at the end of KS3 have improved steadily since the last inspection, as nationally, and have been close to the national average in most years, except in 2004, when they were well above. Compared to schools with a similar intake, results have been above average and sometimes placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools.
38. In the NC tests, the strongest results have been in science. Results of the small number of pupils entered for Welsh first language have been well below the national average, though comparable to their results in other subjects. Results in English have shown a gender gap, with boys' results significantly lower than girls' and, in two of the last four years, below the results of boys nationally.
39. Results at GCSE, at grades A*-C, have remained similar to those at the time of the last inspection, with fluctuations between year groups in the intervening time. They have always been above the national average and either above or well above those of similar schools. The proportion gaining at least five grades A*-G has improved, with up to 95% of pupils reaching this level, well above the figure nationally.
40. Performance has been strongest in French, design and technology and music. The proportion of pupils gaining at least a grade C, in three core subjects combined, has also been good. As at KS3, boys have done less well than girls, and the gap between them has been wider than that nationally, overall and in literacy-based subjects.
41. Numerical targets, set for results at KS3 and KS4 in 2005, were slightly ambitious and were not all met.
42. In the six subjects inspected, there were good features and no important shortcomings in all six at KS4, and in science, Welsh second language and physical education at KS3. The shortcomings in English and art at KS3 are detailed in the subject reports. Overall, this is a good level of achievement and consistency.
43. The grades awarded for standards achieved in lessons inspected in those six subjects are as follows:
- | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 4% | 57% | 39% | 0% | 0% |
44. These grades are an improvement on those of the last inspection, though the sample is different in size and nature. They are above the figures for all inspections in Wales last year, when 60% of lessons were graded 1 or 2, and six per cent were graded 4 or 5.

45. Particularly **good** features in the standards achieved and progress made by pupils are the:

- extent to which the most able are challenged across the curriculum and their success in examinations;
- progress made by pupils with SEN across the curriculum, in the Inclusion Centre, the Dyslexia Unit and in the many withdrawal groups to boost basic skills;
- progress made by those who join the school during the school year, from other parts of the UK and from Eastern Europe, sometimes without English or Welsh as a first language; and
- progress in lessons generally, through good use of time, the motivation of pupils and the good quality of teaching.

46. Pupils' key skills are **good**, overall, as observed in the 54 lessons in the six subjects and 28 lessons in other subjects, at KS3 and KS4. The good features in key skills are:

- pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to other pupils and are prepared to ask questions to probe their understanding;
- they are articulate and will readily respond to questions. The most able, and a significant number of pupils of average ability will extend their answers confidently;
- pupils read fluently, skimming and scanning texts for information and for individual research. Those with reading difficulties make good progress through withdrawal sessions;
- the writing of the most able is fluent and technically accurate and in a variety of formats for different purposes;
- pupils use number competently and can apply numbers in a range of subjects across the curriculum;
- ICT skills have developed since the last inspection and are now good, with more extensive use made of these skills in most subjects across the curriculum;
- pupils collaborate well, work creatively and solve problems in a variety of subjects;
- bilingual skills develop through use of incidental Welsh in the school as a whole, as well as in Welsh second language lessons, leading to full-course GCSE for all, and in the four subjects taught through the medium of Welsh at KS3; and
- the school received the Basic Skills Award in 2003.

47. The **shortcomings** in the development of pupils' key skills are that:

- the writing of pupils of average to lower ability is not as good as their oral work. Poor presentation and technical inaccuracies mar their written work. This is more evident in boys' written work, than in girls'.

- pupils are not always aware of how well they are doing, nor how to improve their performance because the quality of assessment and target-setting varies between and within subjects; and
- in a small minority of classes, pupils of average to lower ability do not concentrate fully and thus do not make maximum progress.

48. A significant factor in the good standards achieved overall is the contribution which pupils make, through their **very good** personal, social and learning skills. They bring these to the learning process, and these skills are enhanced by the school's ethos, culture of achievement and sense of community. Pupils:

- settle quickly to work and behave very well, in class and around the school;
- show respect for their teachers, visitors, other pupils and the environment;
- attend regularly, reaching an overall annual rate of attendance of nearly 92%, the WAG target;
- are able to work independently and eagerly take up the many opportunities, through extra-curricular activities, to develop their talents;
- show mature and responsible attitudes to local and global issues, empathising with others and appreciating the inclusive and diverse nature of the school; and
- make informed choices about learning and employment opportunities post-16.

Sixth Form

49. The sixth form is open-access and results reflect the range of ability. It is also relatively small, so comparisons with national figures are not wholly reliable. The great majority complete their courses and, of those taking two-year A level courses, most go on to Higher Education, in institutions throughout the UK.

50. On average, 95% of students gain at least two grades A-E at A2 level, which is a similar picture to that of the last inspection, and above the national average. All students gained at least two passes in 2003. The proportion gaining at least two grades A-C showed steady improvement, with fluctuations, until 2004, when over 60% reached this level. It fell back in 2005, and the gender gap was again apparent, with girls doing better. In most years, the proportion gaining at least two grades A-C is just below the national average.

51. In the six subjects inspected, there were good features and no important shortcomings in five subjects, and outstanding features in art and photography. This is a good level of achievement.

52. The grades awarded for the lessons in these subjects were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
16%	63%	21%	0%	0%

53. These are high figures, but are based on a very small sample of 18 lessons and thus comparisons with national figures are not reliable.

54. Students have **good** key skills and make effective use of them in subjects across the curriculum. They develop their ICT skills further in the ECDL course, and their numeracy skills in the IFS level 2 finance course. Particularly good features are that they:

- listen intelligently to absorb information and ask pertinent questions;
- discuss, debate, justify opinions and make deductions confidently and fluently in lessons and extra-curricular activities;
- read for research purposes and for extracting information, taking responsibility for their own learning;
- write cogently and accurately;
- transfer number skills to related subjects across the curriculum;
- use ICT to raise the standards of their work; and
- work collaboratively and purposefully to improve their performance.

55. Their personal, social and learning skills are **very good**. They are mature young adults who relate easily to their teachers, visitors and each other. They are not only proud of their school, but ready to contribute to it, for the greater good. In particular, they:

- attend regularly and are punctual to lessons;
- show awareness of a range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, for example those raised at ethics days at a university nearby;
- take a leading role in school and community-based activities;
- show respect for diversity within the school, local and international scene; and
- have ambition to pursue their education at Higher Education institutions throughout the UK, including the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

56. The sixth form is a cohesive unit, with students and staff working together, in very good relationships, to promote the learning, achievement and opportunities for all abilities and interests.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

57. The school judged its teaching and assessment to be a grade 3. The team disagrees because the shortcomings are not judged to be important shortcomings. There is an outstanding feature, and predominantly good features, particularly in the teaching.

KS3 and KS4

58. In the 54 lessons in the six subjects inspected, the grades awarded for teaching at KS3 and KS4 were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
5%	63%	30%	2%	0%

59. Overall grades for the quality of teaching in the 82 lessons observed in KS3 and KS4 were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	62%	28%	2%	0%

60. Teaching has good features with no significant shortcomings in 70% of all lessons observed. Teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection.

61. The **outstanding** feature of the teaching is the very good relationship between teachers and pupils that promotes:

- high standards of behaviour from pupils in lessons;
- mutual respect for others; and
- a pleasant atmosphere for learning.

62. In most lessons teaching has the following **good** features:

- high expectations of pupils' work;
- clear explanations;
- good subject knowledge by the teacher; and
- suitable intervention to assist pupils in their work.

63. Teaching also promotes equality of opportunity and all pupils are treated appropriately irrespective of their abilities and backgrounds.

64. In the large majority of lessons, where there are no important shortcomings, teaching:

- makes use of a range of resources including interactive whiteboards to stimulate pupils' involvement;
- is inclusive in the use of questioning which involves all pupils; and
- has a brisk pace, where a variety of activities are carefully timed.

65. There are some **shortcomings** in teaching in a minority of lessons and, when present, teaching does not:

- make the learning objectives clear to pupils;
- ensure that lessons are sufficiently well structured;
- provide an appropriate level of challenge in the activities given to pupils; and
- ensure that work is suitably matched to the pupils' abilities.

66. Teaching provides some good opportunities to enhance pupils' skills in the Welsh language and their awareness of the culture of Wales.

67. All statutory requirements for assessment and reporting on NC subjects are met and teaching fulfils the regulations of examining boards.

68. Tracking of pupils' progress has begun. The school has several types of benchmark data available on every pupil and its assessment system involves grading pupils on their attainment on a grade A-E at KS3 and A-G at KS4. However, this system is not yet fully comprehensive, nor does it link sufficiently to target-setting.

69. Target-setting is not yet embedded in all year groups. It is better at KS4 than at KS3, but is not yet having maximum impact in motivating pupils.
70. There is a new draft assessment policy which has yet to be implemented. Currently, whilst there is much good practice in assessment, there is variable practice within and between departments. Pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing in relation to different subjects.
71. There is **good** practice in some subjects where:
- marking is carried out regularly and systematically;
 - teachers mark consistently and accurately;
 - homework is used effectively to consolidate and extend learning;
 - teachers provide clear written comments to identify strengths and weaknesses;
 - pupils are involved in assessing their own work and that of other pupils; and
 - pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve.
72. In some departments, the assessment of pupils falls short of the above and the **shortcomings** are that:
- marking lacks rigour and consistency;
 - comments on pupils' work lack detail; and
 - targets for improvement are unclear.
73. Annual reports to parents and guardians provide information on their child's academic and personal development. There are also mid-year reports. Targets for improvement in subjects are underdeveloped and do not indicate clearly enough what a pupil needs to do to improve. The school has planned for the introduction of a new format of reports.

Sixth Form

74. In the six subjects inspected, the grades awarded for teaching in the sixth form were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
21%	63%	16%	0%	0%

75. Overall grades for the quality of teaching in all lessons observed in the sixth form were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
23%	64%	13%	0%	0%

76. In the sixth form teaching is much better than in KS3 and KS4.
77. As in KS3 and KS4, teachers establish very good working relationships with students that foster their learning. Teachers have thorough subject knowledge and the requirements of examination bodies and they use this effectively to engage students in their lessons.
78. Teaching has many **good** features that nearly always include:
- advanced subject knowledge;

- probing questions;
- giving students much encouragement;
- imaginative use of resources;
- good levels of support for students; and
- clear instructions and directions for examination assessment.

79. However, some of the **shortcomings** in teaching in KS3 and KS4 are also evident in the sixth form. In a small minority of lessons, shortcomings include the:

- lack of opportunities for students to work independently;
- slow pace of lessons; and
- lack of involvement of all students actively in lessons.

80. The assessment of students' work is **good** and teachers usually:

- maintain detailed records of students' achievements;
- mark students' work thoroughly and accurately;
- provide clear and detailed oral and written feed-back to students that identifies areas for improvement; and
- allow students opportunities for self-evaluation of their own progress.

81. Annual and mid-year reports are sent to parents and guardians. Comments from subject teachers are detailed and generally provide good targets for improvement.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

82. The school judged this key question to be grade 2. The team has awarded grade 3 because the school fails to meet its legal requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship on the two days on which pupils do not have assemblies.

83. However, there are also a number of **outstanding** features in its curricular provision to meet the needs and aspirations of its pupils. These are:

- a KS3 and KS4 curricular programme which is broad, flexible and accessible to all pupils;
- provision in KS4 of an Enhanced Curriculum with appropriate vocational elements in line with the WAG '14-19 Learning Pathways' initiative;
- an exceptionally well-designed broad, relevant and balanced curriculum for all sixth-form students from traditional A levels to off-site delivery of conversational Chinese and a range of vocational courses;
- enrichment of the curricular provision by the establishment of an effective partnership with a number of off-site providers such as Coleg Ceredigion, University of Lampeter, Teifi Valley Forum and Skillstart;

- a comprehensive selection of extra-curricular musical, sporting and performing arts activities, which complement the formal curriculum;
- the provision of instrumental tuition, without charge, for 15% of pupils in school;
- participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, which enables a high proportion of pupils to gain a range of invaluable life-skills; and
- an exchange scheme with a Cardiff comprehensive school in art and photography, which allows students to gain an insight into the cultural and social differences exhibited by a rural and urban environment.

84. Pupils' learning experiences are further maximized by a number of **good** features. These include:

- an effective programme of basic and key skills incorporated into subject schemes of work;
- the school's success in gaining the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Healthy Living award;
- the large sums raised for charity, which reflect the pupils' concern for others;
- promotion of pupils' spiritual development through three assemblies of good quality per week and a strong input from religious education;
- the shared set of moral values within the school community;
- promotion of the social development of pupils which is reflected in the outstanding relationships, the way pupils work together and show mutual respect; and
- maintenance of a strong effective link with parents, the local community, partner primary schools and other education providers including business and commerce.

85. The school is successful in its promotion of bilingual skills by:

- facilitating the use of both languages, naturally, in the everyday life of the school;
- encouraging Welsh cultural events such as eisteddfodau, and Urdd activities;
- teaching four subjects through the medium of Welsh at KS3;
- providing a full Welsh second language course for all pupils at KS4;
- providing bilingual signage throughout the school and ensuring that prominence is given to bilingualism in the school's public address system, reception services and in assemblies; and
- ensuring that the '*Cwricwlwm Cymreig*' is well embedded in subject schemes of work.

86. The detailed PSE programme raises the pupils' awareness of the issues of sustainable development and global citizenship by:

- operating a number of re-cycling schemes with local partners;

- sixth-form links with Pembrokeshire Eco-Centre to undertake a water and energy audit at school;
- KS3 involvement in eco-systems management through the school pond project and the 'wild areas' scheme; and
- using themes such as global coffee production, resources and trade, and community and global aid.

87. Despite these many good and outstanding features, the curriculum has a number of **shortcomings**. These are:

- failure to comply with the statutory requirement of the provision of a daily act of collective worship;
- minimal time allocation for the statutory provision of religious education in KS4;
- a number of very large classes in KS3, particularly in music, Welsh second language and art;
- the limited time for practical activities in the 45 minute lesson; and
- lack of linguistic progression from KS3 to KS4 in subjects taught through the medium of Welsh.

88. The school organizes an extensive and effective WRE programme in partnership with Careers Wales West, which follows national guidelines. Aspects of this provision are **outstanding**. These are:

- varied and rich experiences for sixth-formers involving a breadth of work-related activities ranging from meals on wheels to engineering workshops and projects; and
- employer networks developed by the School Industry Panel.

89. Other **good** features of the school's WRE provision include:

- a meaningful work-experience programme for pupils in Y10 and Y12;
- implementation of a very successful biennial careers convention shared with a neighbouring school;
- well-organised initiatives such as 'Tregwaith', Construction Day and the Dynamo Project in KS3;
- mock interviews and specialist speakers on a wide range of relevant topics to enrich the WRE experiences of KS4 pupils; and
- a number of enterprise-based projects, particularly in the sixth form, and also for a range of age-groups in the Celtic Enterprise Challenge.

90. There are **no significant shortcomings** in the school's WRE provision.

91. The school, through its curricular provision, extra-curricular activities and WRE, is successful in preparing pupils effectively for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

92. In its self-evaluation report, the school awarded itself a grade 2 for this question. The team judged that there are several **outstanding** features in the way learners are cared for, guided and supported. These include:

- a well-established, successful, pastoral system which provides a very good level of support for its pupils and successfully promotes a caring community;
- strong relationships between the school, parents and the community;
- very well-developed links between the school and its cluster primary schools, which ensure a smooth and easy transition for pupils; and
- monitoring of punctuality, attendance and behaviour, in conjunction with outside agencies, which results in prompt and appropriate action being taken, and effective use of the school counsellor to provide behaviour modification programmes.

Outstanding feature:

The heads of year provide effective support for all pupils. Pupils feel that they are very approachable and that any matter referred to them is dealt with promptly. They work closely with outside agencies under the guidance of a member of the SMT.

The heads of year also work to support the behavioural management system of the school, dealing promptly with pupils who misbehave. Persistent offenders are seen by the school counsellor, who meets regularly with these pupils providing sessions on, for example, anger management and self-esteem. There is a good working relationship between the school and the behavioural support team of the UA. This team also provides support for some pupils whose behaviour has not improved, despite support within the school.

Pupils feel very happy and well supported within the school and speak very highly of the heads of year. The caring ethos and responsible attitudes of pupils attest to their effectiveness.

93. There are also many **good** features of the school's provision. These include:

- in Y9 and Y11, the good support and appropriate guidance to help pupils choose the courses that are most suitable for them;
- productive links with employers for work-experience placements;
- the school council, that works very effectively and gives learners the opportunity to express their opinions about different aspects of school life;
- the well-planned PSE programme which follows the national framework;
- child protection procedures that ensure swift reporting of any such issues to the appropriate senior member of staff;
- close partnership with other agencies to ensure pupils' welfare;

- structured careers education that is supported by input from Careers Wales; and
- health and safety issues and risk assessments undertaken conscientiously.

94. The **shortcomings** in this provision are:

- the staffing arrangements for the PSE programme and the variation in the esteem in which it is held, by pupils; and
- a few health and safety issues, reported to the school.

95. The provision for pupils and students with additional learning needs has some **outstanding** features. Foremost among these are:

- effective use of the Inclusion Centre to provide appropriate programmes of study for pupils with additional learning needs;
- an inclusion policy which ensures that all pupils with SEN have access to all areas of the curriculum;
- good support for pupils with specific learning difficulties; and
- whole-school strategies that are successful in supporting pupils with challenging behaviour.

96. There are also many other **good** features of the school provision for pupils and students with additional learning needs. These include:

- good transition arrangements and effective use of data to enable needs to be identified at an early stage;
- thorough annual reviews with good involvement of pupils, students, parents / carers and outside agencies where relevant;
- good use of LSAs to support pupils' learning in mainstream and to develop pupils' literacy skills;
- the Dyslexia Unit, funded by the UA, which provides effective support for pupils;
- visits made to the local primary schools by the member of staff of the Dyslexia Unit to provide support for their pupils;
- a good variety of effective strategies that are used to improve pupils' literacy skills such as the 'accelerated reading' programme;
- use of the enhanced, vocationally-based curriculum at KS4, which meets the needs of pupils appropriately; and
- the good provision for pupils with disabilities, who are fully integrated into the school.

97. The **shortcomings** in provision are:

- some over-identification of pupils on school action and school action plus, which puts a strain on resources;
- some variation in the effectiveness by which LSAs are deployed in mainstream classes, and the use made of support, by subject teachers;

- some lack of cohesion in the links between the Dyslexia Unit and subjects across the curriculum, and lack of formal planning for curriculum coverage whilst pupils are withdrawn; and
- lack of formal planning for the needs of pupils with SEN across the curriculum.

98. The **outstanding** features in the quality of provision for equal opportunities are:

- effective procedures for dealing with bullying that are well understood and very well implemented so that pupils are confident that any problems such as bullying are dealt with quickly;
- the effective 'Buddy' system, that provides support for pupils when required;
- the equality of access to the curriculum; and
- the overall breadth of the curriculum, extra-curricular opportunities and elements of work-related education which promote learning experiences that reflect national priorities and lay the foundation for lifelong learning;

99. The **good** features include:

- the development of pupils so that they achieve their full potential as equally valued human beings;
- the care for, support of and integration of the few pupils attending the school from other countries;
- the close links to Social Services to provide effective support for pupils who are looked after by the UA;
- the effective implementation of the equal opportunities policy in that both boys and girls have access to all areas of the curriculum and school activities and the class-seating strategies, which are improving boys' learning;
- the accessibility plan and the access which disabled pupils have to most parts of the buildings; and
- the clear racial equality policy that is rigorously enforced, by which racial equality and diversity are promoted through assemblies and certain areas of the curriculum.

100. The **shortcomings** are:

- the current gender gap in performance, with girls doing much better; and
- lack of access to the school library, on the first floor of the main building, for pupils in wheelchairs.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

101. This grade is one grade higher than in the school's self-evaluation report. The inspection team felt that the shortcomings were not having a significant impact on the standards achieved, which are good, nor on the ethos of the school, which is strong and supportive.

102. The **outstanding** feature achieved by the headteacher and other senior managers is the outcome in terms of the atmosphere of the school as a whole. Whilst the management systems are not sufficiently robust in all aspects and all areas of the school, there is much good practice, and informal communication, possible because of the size of the school, contributes to this. The successful outcomes are:
- a strong culture of learning and achievement;
 - an orderly, caring and inclusive ethos; and
 - an outward-looking and pro-active approach to broaden the opportunities for pupils.
103. There is a clear focus on standards, teaching and learning. The **good** features which are effective in practice are:
- continuing professional development of all staff, of good quality;
 - links between senior and middle managers, to oversee the work of departments;
 - discussions on examination performance between the headteacher and middle managers;
 - reviews of each department in turn by senior managers;
 - monitoring of practice within each subject area by heads of department; and
 - good levels of resourcing, with heavy investment in ICT facilities in recent years.
104. Senior managers are also effective because they:
- know staff and pupils very well;
 - seek out the views of staff, pupils, parents and employers through working parties, the school council, the School Industry panel and surveys; and
 - are a regular presence around the school, reinforcing expectations and promoting a sense of community.
105. The quality of middle management is good overall. There is a high level of consistency in the very good quality of pastoral management. The management of the sixth form is also very good. In the management of departments, there is good team spirit and communication. The extent to which formal systems are effective is much more variable. When departmental management is **good**, this is because:
- self-evaluation arrangements are comprehensive and inter-linked, identify shortcomings and plan to eliminate them;
 - data are used effectively to analyse performance and pupils' progress; and
 - expectations are high, to build on what is good, in order to make it outstanding.

106. There are **shortcomings** in:

- the overall quality of whole-school and departmental self-evaluation and development planning;
- the extent to which best practice is identified and shared across the school as a whole; and
- the extent to which numerical targets are based on data from the tracking of pupils' progress, and met.

107. The priorities of WAG and of Carmarthenshire UA have been incorporated into the school's development planning and **good** progress has been made in:

- promoting bilingualism;
- personal, social and work-related education;
- social inclusion;
- continuity between the key stages;
- racial awareness and global citizenship;
- sustainable development;
- basic skills;
- community development through links between the many and varied local providers; and
- preparation for lifelong learning.

108. Nevertheless, there is some variation in the quality of some of these themes, because they are not formally planned across the curriculum. Nor are they audited and plans up-dated. The absence of formal planning is most evident in inconsistencies in practice and therefore **shortcomings** in:

- literacy, especially writing;
- ICT;
- assessment; and
- provision for pupils with SEN in mainstream classes.

109. Governors are fully involved in strategic planning and in monitoring and evaluating performance. Particularly **good** features are:

- the expertise and experience of governors;
- their commitment to the school and wider community;
- their knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development;
- support for the work of departments by attending lessons and gaining understanding of the work of each department;
- analysis of examination results, attendance figures and other related data; and
- asking questions about the school's performance.

110. Statutory requirements are met, apart from the daily act of collective worship.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.

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

112. There are a number of **good** features of how leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards. These include:

- good knowledge of the school, by the headteacher and SMT, through a developing process of self-evaluation;
- involvement of the governors in gaining first-hand evidence by visiting lessons;
- links between members of SMT and heads of department, which support the work of departments; and
- formal monitoring of departments, by SMT, in a two-year cycle.

113. This monitoring process features:

- rigorous lesson observation based on the common inspection framework;
- analysis of examination performance;
- analysis of attendance data;
- examination of pupils' work;
- the collection of the views of parents, pupils and outside providers; and
- peer assessment, by the head of another subject being a member of the review team.

114. Departments are now in the second cycle of a yearly process of self-evaluation. This is also based on the common inspection framework, and, in some departments, is rigorous and comprehensive.

115. There are however, some **shortcomings** in the way that the school reviews its progress:

- whilst the self-evaluation report prepared for the inspection identifies areas of strength and areas in need of improvement, the grades do not match the balance of strengths and shortcomings in the text;
- the grades awarded for the key questions by inspectors differed from those of the school in four questions – three were higher and one was lower;
- the quality and effectiveness of departmental self-evaluation vary greatly between departments. In some departments, it does not rely on rigorous collection of first-hand data nor does it make balanced judgements about the department's performance;
- the various systems for self-evaluation across the school are not inter-linked into one, comprehensive system;

- the outcomes of the self-evaluation exercise do not link effectively to development planning; and
 - formal monitoring of the performance of the pastoral teams is underdeveloped.
116. The school has a development plan that has a number of **good** features:
- it clearly allocates resources to the various priorities;
 - each activity is allocated a realistic timescale; and
 - school priorities correspond to the priorities of the UA and WAG;
117. However there are **shortcomings**:
- departmental plans do not feed into the whole-school plan systematically;
 - not all departmental plans are up-to-date; and
 - some departmental plans do not indicate how identified shortcomings will be eliminated.
118. The school has made **good** progress in the following areas since the last inspection:
- standards of achievement have improved in the six subjects inspected;
 - oral skills have improved and are now good;
 - attendance levels have improved, and a 'first-day contact' scheme operates efficiently; and
 - there has been considerable investment in ICT facilities.
119. There has however, been **insufficient progress** in the following areas:
- the school does not set appropriately challenging targets for improvement for all pupils; and
 - the assessment of pupils' work has shortcomings.
120. These remain key issues.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

121. There are many **good** features in the school's provision of staffing, learning resources and accommodation.
122. The number of staff is sufficient for the school to run effectively and efficiently. In particular:
- staff are appropriately qualified and there is little non-specialist teaching;
 - there is a good mix of experienced teachers and newer entrants to the profession; and
 - there is a generous number of support staff such as LSAs, administrative staff and technicians, who support teaching and learning.

123. As numbers have grown, accommodation is just adequate for the number of pupils on roll. The school, however, has been innovative in its use of space to support pupils' learning and has made substantial improvements since the last inspection. These include:

- new accommodation for the technology workshops;
- the establishment of the Inclusion Centre; and
- the use made of the on-site leisure centre and swimming pool during the school day.

124. However, there are some **shortcomings** in the accommodation:

- corridors are narrow and become congested despite the implementation of a one-way system;
- changing rooms in the physical education department are of a poor condition and not conducive to a positive learning environment;
- accommodation in music and science is inadequate and inhibits practical work;
- accommodation for the sixth form is inadequate for the numbers involved;
- the use of ICT in subjects taught in the three temporary classrooms is restricted due to the dampness and poor condition of these structures; and
- a few health and safety issues were reported to the school.

125. The school is well resourced and the good level of resourcing makes a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning. **Good** features are:

- generous and well-conceived allocation of funds to departments for the purchase of books and equipment; and
- considerable investment in ICT resources;

126. There are, however, some **shortcomings** in the provision of resources:

- due to pressure on the ICT resources, pupils are not always able to use computers to enhance their learning;
- there are not enough music keyboards for the size of some classes in KS3;
- there are insufficient computer facilities for sixth formers for independent study, in their areas and in the library; and
- the small size of the library means that it is barely adequate to support pupils' and students' reading and research.

127. The management, deployment and development of the teaching staff are generally effective and make a positive contribution to standards. The **good** features are:

- the allocation of teachers to classes overall, based on their expertise and the priority of matching specialisms to examination classes in KS4 and in the sixth form;
- effective procedures to identify and meet staff development needs;

- good support for NQTs and those in the early years of their career; and
 - good use of PPA time.
128. There are, however some **shortcomings**:
- teachers are sometimes required to teach subjects outside of their specialist areas in KS3. Some of these teachers do not have enough support for them to teach as effectively as possible, nor can they attend department meetings in all subjects;
 - there are some very large classes at KS3, particularly in art and music;
 - LSAs are not always deployed effectively, nor fully used by subject teachers; and
 - when teachers have been absent for long periods, their classes have not always had effective continuity of temporary staffing.
129. The school uses its available accommodation effectively. The school grounds and buildings are managed well. A notable feature is pupils' respect for their environment and the very mature attitude displayed as they move in and around the school during the day. This is evidenced by:
- the school grounds and buildings being kept clean and free from litter and graffiti;
 - a planned programme of refurbishment and development for toilets and classrooms; and
 - risk assessments of classrooms and buildings.
130. Resources are also generally well used, though not every department makes the best use of ICT facilities.
131. The school manages its budget carefully and ensures that adequate funds are available to allow the development of its priorities. Its **good** features are:
- the governing body, in consultation with the headteacher, finance officer and senior colleagues, carefully and successfully plans the use of the school's budget;
 - spending priorities are matched to the SDP;
 - the finance committee of the governing body regularly reviews its decisions, monitors spending and delegates appropriate powers to the headteacher;
 - the school retains an appropriate proportion of its budget to meet unexpected expenses; and
 - the most recent audit report was very favourable.
132. Given the standards that its pupils achieve, and the use of its available resources, the school offers good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

Key Stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

Key Stage 3

Good features

133. The standard of many pupils' speaking and listening is good. They

- listen attentively and respectfully;
- interact effectively with the teacher and their peers in a variety of situations;
- respond to questions enthusiastically; and
- demonstrate a good understanding of their work.

134. Throughout the key stage, pupils develop their vocabulary as they become aware that language is used for a range of purposes and audiences, for example, how an author creates tension and how a poet conveys feelings.

135. Many pupils read with good expression and confidence. They encounter a wide range of challenging reading materials including literary, non-literary and media texts.

136. Pupils with reading difficulties make progress through support from various appropriate initiatives and programmes including 'Accelerated Reader'.

137. Some pupils write effectively in a wide range of formats for different audiences and purposes. These include:

- discursive writing on homelessness;
- analysis of advertisements; and
- a variety of letters often written through the medium of literature work on texts such as 'Stone Cold'.

Shortcomings

138. The performance of boys is significantly lower than that of girls as evidenced by the end of key stage test results.

139. Pupils in lower ability groups can express an opinion but are not always able to justify and extend their views or sustain a discussion.

140. Challenging ideas promoted by the pupils during effective discussion do not always translate into their written work.

141. Writing is not as impressive as speaking and listening. This is because the writing process is not always fully developed, basic spelling and punctuation are not of a good standard, basic errors re-occur, and, on occasions, writing is not sufficiently sustained.

Key Stage 4

Good features

142. Most pupils can speak confidently. They can:

- use an appropriately wide vocabulary;
- express opinions;
- collaborate effectively in various situations including small-group work;
- listen attentively; and
- demonstrate maturity and purpose.

143. Some pupils demonstrate an understanding that tone and register have to be adapted to purpose and audience.

144. Pupils read a wide range of suitably challenging texts. They are able to demonstrate a well-developed knowledge and understanding of:

- plots, characters and themes; and
- the social, historical and cultural backgrounds of set texts.

145. Written responses to literature indicate diligence, commitment and good interpretation and appreciation of writers' techniques. The best writing is:

- sustained;
- technically accurate;
- purposeful; and
- has benefited from effective drafting and formative marking.

146. Many pupils write with enthusiasm and fluency in response to a range of tasks. Often ICT is used to assist the writing process and to enhance the presentation of work.

Shortcomings

147. Although remaining above national averages, the performance of boys is lower than that of girls.

148. A small minority of pupils lacks the vocabulary and oral skills to justify or develop responses and opinions.

149. On occasions, the writing of a small minority of pupils is neither sufficiently sustained nor developed. Basic spelling and punctuation errors remain uncorrected and re-occur.

150. In lower ability groups, some of the pupils lack focus and concentration.

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

Good features

151. Most students are articulate. They:

- involve themselves enthusiastically in productive dialogue with the teacher and their peers;
- discuss key concepts such as complex aspects of literary style and tone;

- collaborate well in pairs and small groups to analyse texts; and
 - employ effective vocabulary and expression.
152. Students demonstrate, through their verbal and written responses, a good understanding and knowledge of set texts such as 'Death of a Salesman' and 'Richard II'.
153. Some students are able to draw upon an extensive knowledge of other literary works, for example, 'Dr Faustus', 'Macbeth' and 'Hamlet', to illustrate and support their ideas and to challenge assumptions.
154. The best written responses are characterised by:
- good knowledge, understanding and appreciation of texts;
 - good structure;
 - appropriate use of quotation;
 - an ability to synthesise effectively;
 - references to other appropriate literary works; and
 - technical competence.
155. Students possess a good understanding of examination techniques and requirements.

Shortcomings

156. A small minority of students does not display sufficient perception and analysis. This is evident mainly in written responses, but also in verbal replies which tend to be of an essentially superficial nature.

Welsh second language

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

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

Key Stages 3 and 4

Good features

157. All pupils:
- listen and respond well to lessons delivered in the target language;
 - speak and read aloud fluently with appropriate pronunciation and intonation; and
 - use a wide range of language structures and vocabulary commensurate with their ability.
158. Most pupils:
- write well in a range of forms for a variety of purposes, often producing extended pieces of writing;
 - show a sound grasp of grammar and spelling;
 - transfer language learnt in one context to other situations;

- respond well to poetry and literature;
- work well in pairs and small groups when undertaking a range of oral tasks; and
- make appropriate use of dictionaries.

159. Many pupils:

- read extended texts independently; and
- give extended oral responses when discussing issues with unfamiliar adults.

Shortcomings

160. A small minority of pupils:

- lacks confidence in oral work and only responds when questioned directly; and
- does not pay due attention to accuracy in written work.

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

Good features

161. Students usually:

- respond well to lessons delivered in Welsh;
- use literary appreciation terminology with ease;
- quote from texts to support views;
- have extensive vocabulary and a good range of sentence structures;
- write in a range of forms and vary language according to the task and purpose; and
- have excellent pronunciation, intonation and use of the natural spoken language in informal situations.

Shortcomings

162. Sometimes, students:

- lack confidence to respond spontaneously and at length; and
- make careless errors especially with regard to language accuracy.

Science

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

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

Key Stages 3 and 4

Good features

163. The vast majority of pupils in both KS3 and KS4 has a good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics covering all the aspects of science, at levels appropriate to their stage of development.

164. Pupils have a good recall of previous work and can apply their knowledge to a range of tasks and applications across many topics in the NC.
165. Pupils' experimental skills are good. When given the opportunity to carry out experimental work they:
- pay appropriate attention to safety; and
 - are able to read measuring instruments with appropriate precision.
166. The majority of pupils:
- writes good explanations of work in science;
 - presents results from scientific experiments using graphs, bar and pie charts appropriately;
 - understands and interprets these graphs and charts well; and
 - draws appropriate conclusions from observations.
167. Many pupils participate enthusiastically in question and answer sessions and are willing and able to state their views and ideas to the whole class. When this occurs, learning is consolidated.
168. The majority of pupils makes scientific predictions and understands the concept of a fair test. More able pupils complete investigations to a good standard.
169. Throughout both key stages, pupils:
- have a good understanding of the nature of scientific ideas;
 - are aware of the contribution of science to society and everyday life; and
 - understand the impact of science upon industry, the environment, health and the economy.
170. Many pupils with SEN make good progress relative to their ability.

Shortcomings

171. The work and exercise books of a small minority of pupils are untidy, disorganised and incomplete. They do not ensure that missing work is copied or completed and this hinders their progress.
172. Investigative skills are better at KS4 than at KS3.
173. Pupils make insufficient use of independent learning across both key stages.
174. In KS3 and KS4, pupils do not use ICT skills sufficiently to measure, communicate and interpret data.

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

Good features

175. Most students have a good understanding of their work, which they can then apply to solve problems in familiar and unfamiliar situations.
176. Most students in biology, chemistry and physics make good progress in the respective programmes of study.
177. Students show an interest in their work and participate enthusiastically in classroom discussions, to probe their scientific understanding.

Shortcomings

178. A small number of students in the three subject areas are less secure in their knowledge and understanding of previous work, which hinders progress.

Art

Key Stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

Key Stage 3

Good features

179. Pupils show good understanding of visual language including line, tone, texture, colour and pattern. Most pupils apply their knowledge effectively in their practical work.

180. Most pupils:

- make good progress in the development of drawing, painting and printmaking skills;
- use the work of established artists such as Picasso and Lichtenstein to increase their understanding of their own work and the work of others; and
- use their sketch books effectively to record observations and to complete homework.

181. More able pupils and pupils with SEN make very good progress.

Shortcomings

182. Pupils do not:

- draw sufficiently on first-hand evidence to produce their ideas; and
- show sufficient understanding of the art and culture of Wales.

183. Pupils' skills in producing work in three dimensions are underdeveloped.

Key Stage 4

Good features

184. Most pupils:

- make progress and achieve good standards;
- enrich their work through work experience and contact with local artists and galleries;
- use sketch books and work journals imaginatively to explore ideas and to map their learning journey;
- produce skilful artworks in a range of media, in two and three dimensions and on different scales; and
- use their research and contextual studies effectively, including examples from Wales, to develop their understanding of their own work and the work of others.

185. More able pupils and pupils with SEN make very good progress.

Shortcomings

186. A significant number of pupils in the middle ability range:

- do not progress as well as they could;
- have underdeveloped drawing skills; and
- produce superficial written responses to visual texts and research.

Sixth form – Art and Photography: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

187. Work produced by the ablest students in both fine art and photography is outstanding.

188. Photography students create highly original artworks using traditional and contemporary methods.

189. All students experiment confidently with a wide range of materials and processes. Their observations are creative, sensitive and skilfully executed.

Good features

190. All students:

- show maturity and competence in producing original and innovative artworks;
- use research effectively to develop their ideas;
- have detailed journals and sketchbooks; and
- produce effective historical and contemporary studies of the work of other artists, including those living and working in Wales.

191. A significant number of students make personal contact with local artists. Where this happens, students' work is greatly enriched.

Shortcomings

192. There are no shortcomings.

Physical education

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

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

Key Stages 3 and 4

Good features

193. In both key stages, pupils across the ability range:

- make good progress as they move through the key stages and they improve;
- have a good understanding of safety requirements of most activities;
- understand the rules and regulations of most events in athletic activities and apply these in practice; and
- understand the importance of warm-up and recovery.

Key Stage 3

Good features

194. In athletic activities, most pupils make good progress. In throwing events, pupils are able to:

- understand correct throwing technique in discus, shot and javelin;
- remember work previously covered and quickly progress from a static throw to one that involves movement across the throwing area;
- use good quality demonstrations to help them improve their performance; and
- observe and correct each other's throwing action and provide simple feedback to help their partner improve.

195. In running events:

- most pupils in Y7 find hurdling difficult but make good progress, with the most able achieving success over a short distance; and
- the most able boys have a well-refined running action, are able to pace themselves over short distances and run at speed.

Shortcomings

196. Overall a small minority of pupils:

- has less secure long jump and triple jump technique and they have difficulty combining the run-up, take off, flight in the air and landing; and
- is less confident observing, analysing and providing feedback on the quality of their own and others' performance.

Key Stage 4

Good features

197. Pupils in Y10 are able to participate in a range of practical options and most achieve standards that match their level of ability:

- in swimming, most girls are able to co-ordinate back crawl arm and leg action;
- in aerobics, most girls enjoy the challenge of performing quite complex sequences with the support of the instructor;
- overall most boys and more able girls achieve good standards across the range of athletic activities. They throw for distance, work hard to refine jumping technique and run at speed with good technique in a relay; and
- middle and lower ability Y10 boys and most girls improve their running action and achieve standards commensurate with their ability.

198. Most Y10 pupils following the GCSE course are able to apply the practical skills they have learned in a theoretical context in their written work.

199. Most pupils understand the factors affecting skill development and can analyse the impact of, for example, environmental factors on output.

200. Middle and lower ability pupils have more difficulty understanding theoretical concepts of skill but receive good support and succeed.

201. Year 11 pupils benefit from studying a revision module which allows them to refine their examination technique. They are able to:

- observe practical performance and answer increasingly more complex questions about types of training and performance; and
- through discussion, readily learn from one another and extend their knowledge and understanding to a high level.

202. Overall, written work is good.

Shortcomings

203. In swimming, a few have difficulty co-ordinating breathing, arm and leg action.

204. In aerobics, most girls find actions that involve upper body strength difficult.

205. Pupils following the GCSE course make little use of ICT to access relevant research to enhance their understanding.

206. Pupils unable to participate are not actively involved in the lesson.

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

Good features

207. Students follow a sports leader's qualification and work successfully with primary children across a range of invasion game activities. As part of this work, students are expected to apply theory to practice and confidently apply aspects of contemporary studies, including play and political issues, to their observation of practical work.

208. Year 12 students have a good understanding of the respiratory system and the processes that the body goes through during exercise of different intensity. They enjoy developing these skills in a practical context and confidently discuss their work as a whole group.

209. Overall, students' written work is good.

Shortcomings

210. Students have difficulty accessing relevant research to enhance their understanding of the topics being covered in lessons.

Business studies

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

Good features

211. The majority of pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of business organisations.

212. Pupils show good understanding of:

- key business terms such as redundancy, franchising and sole traders; and
- business finance.

213. They are able to complete a profit and loss account.

214. The majority of pupils are able to complete a business organisation chart.

Shortcomings

215. A minority of pupils does not demonstrate a clear understanding of the different types of business ownership.

216. Pupils' written work is not presented within a business context.

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

Good features

217. Students are able to:

- describe how businesses use databases and spreadsheets;
- use political, economic, social and technological (PEST) analysis for researching business organisations; and
- evaluate the reasons why businesses operate successfully.

218. Students demonstrate a sound understanding of business planning.

Shortcomings

219. Some students complete tasks at a superficial level.

220. A minority of students is not able to use PEST analysis effectively.

School's response to the inspection

The school welcomes the inspection report and recognition that Ysgol Gyfun Emlyn is a good school with many outstanding features. This mirrors the views expressed in feedback by staff, pupils, governors and parents. We are particularly pleased that visiting inspectors were very impressed by the school's friendly, orderly, inclusive and caring ethos and its "strong culture of learning and achievement". This has only been achieved by the collective efforts of staff, pupils, governors and parents and all can take much pride in the report.

The school accepts the recommendations of how the school could build on its present success. Most of these recommendations are already highlighted in the School Development Plan and we believe that the inspection process has been useful to us as we continue to evaluate our performance and seek to improve further in the interests of the young people who attend the school.

Finally, as a school community, we would like to express our gratitude particularly to the Registered Inspector, Miss Glynis Owen, for the professional manner in which she undertook her duties and her willingness to engage in dialogue with all interested parties as a way of developing a good understanding of the school and its priorities. The school will now produce an action plan within the next 45 days to address the recommendations and this will be distributed to all parents.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Gyfun Emlyn
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Newcastle Emlyn Carmarthenshire
Postcode	SA38 9LN
Telephone number	01239-710962

Headteacher	Mr I A McCloy
Date of appointment	01/09/97
Chair of governors	Mrs J Williams
Reporting inspector	Miss G M Owen
Dates of inspection	2-5 May 2006

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	123	123	128	123	136	60	59	752

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	43	0	43

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17.62:1
Average teaching group size	23.4
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	75%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	91	89	91	90	92	91	72	89
Term 2	92	90	90	90	39	63	27	77
Term 3	94	91	92	92	88	86	78	90

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	18.5%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	31 Temp. 1 Perm.

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2005														
Total number of pupils in Y9: 129														
Percentage of pupils at each level														
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	18	46	25	5	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	2	8	21	34	24	9	0
	Test	School	1	1	2	1	0	0	6	23	46	16	4	0
		National	0	4	1	0	0	0	8	20	33	23	10	0
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	6	22	33	22	17	0	0
		National	0	1	0	0	0	0	6	20	34	29	10	0
	Test	School	0	11	6	0	0	0	11	39	22	11	0	0
		National	0	2	0	1	0	0	5	19	35	28	10	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	10	20	54	9	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	1	7	19	26	32	14	0
	Test	School	1	5	2	0	0	0	5	12	22	47	6	0
		National	0	5	1	0	0	0	5	17	20	36	15	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	25	33	27	12	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	0	6	20	33	27	12	0
	Test	School	1	3	0	1	0	0	3	11	29	34	18	0
		National	0	4	0	1	0	0	5	17	33	28	13	0

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	62	In the school	55
In Wales	56	In Wales	57

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2005	111
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	46

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2005	School	UA	Wales
Entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	89	89	87
Attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	61	57	52
Attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	89	87	85
Attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	43	43	38
Entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	97	96	97
Attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	88	81	76
Attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	96	94	93
Attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	4	6	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	9	-	-
Attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	0	-	-

For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2005	110
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2005	37
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2005	11

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	49	72	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	95	96	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	16	21	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	0	-	-
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	11	-	-

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Thirteen inspectors spent a total of 41 days in the school and were joined by the school's deputy headteacher as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 104 lessons, 73 in the six subjects inspected and 31 lessons in other subjects;
- registrations and assemblies; and
- some extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:

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

The team also considered:

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

After the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the departments of the subjects inspected, senior managers and governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Miss Glynis Owen	Rgl: Context, Summary, Recommendations, KQ1, KQ5, Appendix
Mr Dylan Gwyer Roberts	Core: KQ2
Mr Huw Llewelyn	Core: KQ3
Ms Anna Williams	Core:KQ4, Lead science
Mr David Hughes	Core: KQ6 & KQ 7.4 – 7.7
Mrs Helen Adams	Lay Inspector: KQ 7.1 – 7.3
Mr Anthony Sparks	English
Ms Bethan Clement	Welsh
Mr Clyde Briggs	Supporting science
Mrs Jennifer Williams	Art
Mrs Julia Longville	Physical Education
Mrs Julia Hopkins	Business Studies
Mrs Esther Thomas	Contributing to KQ4: additional learning needs
Mr Hywel Davies	Nominee

Acknowledgement

The inspectors wish to express their thanks to the governors, head, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation during the inspection and wish them well on their improvement agenda for the school.

Contractor:

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