Inspection under Section 28 of the Education Act 2005

A Report on the Quality of Education in

Monmouth Comprehensive School
Old Dixton Road
Monmouth
Monmouthshire
NP25 3YT

School Number: 6794060

Date of Inspection: 22/02/10

by

Peter Guy Carter
16926

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Introduction

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

The inspection of Monmouth Comprehensive School took place between 22/02/10 and 26/02/10. An independent team of inspectors, led by Peter Guy Carter undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nearly all</th>
<th>with very few exceptions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most</td>
<td>90% or more</td>
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<tr>
<td>Many</td>
<td>70% or more</td>
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<tr>
<td>A majority</td>
<td>over 60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Half/around half</td>
<td>close to 50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A minority</td>
<td>below 40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Few</td>
<td>below 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very few</td>
<td>less than 10%</td>
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The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

Grade 1  good with outstanding features
Grade 2  good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3  good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4  some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5  many important shortcomings
There are three types of inspection.

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

For short inspections, there are no subject reports.

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

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

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

This school received a standard inspection.
Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Y 1</th>
<th>Y 2</th>
<th>Y 3</th>
<th>Y 4</th>
<th>Y 5</th>
<th>Y 6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>10-11</td>
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Secondary phase:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Y 7</th>
<th>Y 8</th>
<th>Y 9</th>
<th>Y 10</th>
<th>Y 11</th>
<th>Y 12</th>
<th>Y 13</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages</td>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>17-18</td>
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The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key stage 1</th>
<th>Year 1 and Year 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key stage 2</td>
<td>Year 3 to Year 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key stage 3</td>
<td>Year 7 to Year 9</td>
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<td>Key stage 4</td>
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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Monmouth Comprehensive School is an 11-18 mixed, community school maintained by the local authority (LA), Monmouthshire County Council. There are 1643 learners on roll; 1284 pupils in years (Y) 7 to 11 and 359 students in the sixth form. At the time of the last inspection in 2004 there were 1679 on roll with 329 in the sixth form. Pupils and students come from the town of Monmouth and the surrounding rural area in Monmouthshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. The school is situated close to the Welsh-English border.

2. The ability range and social background of pupils and students are very broad and comprehensive in nature. They come from the full range of social and economic circumstances. Around 9% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is well below the national average. Nearly all pupils and students speak English as their first language. None come from Welsh-speaking homes. Very few come from ethnic minority backgrounds.

3. Learners represent the full ability range. There are significant proportions of able learners and those with special educational needs (SEN). There are 59 pupils with statements of SEN and a further 196 on the SEN register. A few pupils, taught as a discrete group, have complex and profound learning needs.

4. The headteacher and the chair of the governing body (GB) were both in post at the time of the last inspection. The roles of the other five members of the Senior Leadership (SLT) have been reviewed and developed since then. Individual members have specific responsibilities for:
   - personalised learning;
   - quality assurance and assessment;
   - teaching and learning;
   - additional educational needs; and
   - positive learning relationships and community.

The school’s priorities and targets

5. The school’s mission statement, ‘Learning to Lead our Lives’ is also the title of the personal and social education (PSE) programme. This reflects a holistic approach to education. The standards of achievement attained by all are the school’s focus, within a context of ensuring that all young people are engaged, supported and with a secure sense of their own self-worth.

6. The current School Improvement Plan (SIP), 2008 – 2011, identifies seven goals within three main areas:
   - Progress and Standards
     - pupils and students achieve or exceed expected levels of attainment;
     - pupils and students are equipped with the skills they need for the future (learning skills, literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology [ICT]);
• Personal attributes
  • pupils and students show respect for themselves and others;
  • pupils and students are emotionally and physically healthy with a
    strong sense of self-worth;
  • pupils and students are responsible and caring and ready to make a
    positive contribution to their communities:
• Qualities as learners
  • pupils and students are intellectually curious lifelong learners; and
  • pupils and students have learning skills that allow them to be adaptive
    and both autonomous and collaborative.

Summary

7 Monmouth Comprehensive School is a very good school with outstanding
  features in the standards it achieves, the quality of education it provides and in
  the effectiveness of its leadership and management. A particular strength is the
  innovative approach it adopts in all areas but especially in devising stimulating
  and effective learning experiences. Inspectors’ judgements match the school’s
  self-evaluation grades in all seven key questions.

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

8 The grades awarded for standards at each key stage (KS) in the six subjects
inspected are set out in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Key Stage 3</th>
<th>Key Stage 4</th>
<th>Sixth form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welsh second language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and design</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business studies</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standards

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

9 Most pupils succeed in attaining their agreed learning goals. At KS3, results in
National Curriculum (NC) assessments are mostly above average attainment in
similar schools and, in many subjects, in the top quarter. At KS4, results in external examinations compare favourably to local and national averages in most cases. There is little significant difference between standards attained by boys and girls. Almost all pupils, including those with SEN, achieve standards which are good in relation to their ability.

10 At both stages, most pupils achieve good standards in key skills. They have very good communication skills and speak particularly well expressing personal views confidently. Their bilingual competence is developing well. They apply their numeracy skills proficiently in appropriate contexts. Most pupils have good ICT skills and use them well in appropriate subjects and situations. Almost all pupils collaborate very well in learning and social activities.

11 In all subjects, pupils make good progress in learning. They acquire new knowledge and skills and increase their understanding. Almost all pupils understand how well they are progressing in different subjects. They know their strengths and how they could improve. They make good progress as they move through and across the key stages and are prepared well to move on to the next stage of learning.

12 In three-quarters of lessons observed in the six subjects inspected, pupils achieve standards which have good features and no important shortcomings. In around a fifth of these, standards also have outstanding features. Significant shortcomings occurred in a quarter of lessons observed but in most of these the good features outweighed them. These figures exceed the corresponding figures in the most recent Annual Report of the Chief Inspector.

13 Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They show interest in their work and sustain good levels of concentration. Almost all pupils make good progress in their spiritual development and very good progress in their moral, social and cultural development. The great majority of pupils behave very well and there is rarely any disruption to learning in lessons. The school is an orderly community where pupils are welcoming and polite to visitors. Attendance is good. Most pupils arrive punctually to lessons and any lateness is generally due to the distance they have to travel between classrooms.

14 Almost all pupils have very good personal, social and learning skills. They make very good progress in developing their ability to work independently and this prepares them well for lifelong learning. They develop self-confidence and understand the importance of honesty and fairness. This underpins relationships within the school community. Pupils value equality of opportunity and respect the diversity in society. This is very good preparation for participation in the workplace and the wider community.

The quality of education and training

15 Teaching and assessment are good or better in almost three-quarters of lessons. There are outstanding features in just under a quarter of lessons. Nearly all teachers know pupils very well. They establish excellent working relationships with them and give very generously of their time to support them
in both their personal and academic development. This plays a significant part in nurturing an excellent culture of learning across the school.

16 Planning, both long and short-term, is detailed with a very high degree of consistency across subjects. In most lessons teachers ensure that pupils are involved actively in their learning and use a very good variety of activities to sustain their interest. They encourage pupils to work both independently and with others and, in the best lessons, use questions very effectively to probe their understanding. In a few lessons there is insufficient pace and challenge to meet the needs of all pupils and questioning does not encourage pupils to give more extended responses to explain their reasoning.

17 There are highly structured and robust procedures for collecting and collating information on pupils’ progress in all years. Very efficient use is made of ICT to present and analyse data in a wide range of formats. This enables pupils’ progress to be monitored rigorously. There are good intervention procedures to assist those who are underachieving. In most instances marking is undertaken thoroughly and, on a few occasions, is of exceptional quality. Teachers usually provide detailed and constructive feedback to pupils to assist their learning.

18 Excellent procedures are used to monitor and review pupils’ progress with constructive use of ongoing assessment in many subjects. These enable pupils to reflect constructively on their performance and to work in conjunction with their teachers to set targets for improvement. As a consequence of this nearly all pupils have a very good awareness of how well they are doing and how they can improve. Reporting arrangements are good.

19 Arrangements to support the accuracy of teacher assessment at the end of KS2 are well established in core subjects but these have not yet involved foundation subjects. All subjects use thorough moderation procedures to assist the accuracy of NC levels at the end of KS3.

20 The curriculum meets the needs of all learners. It is designed to encourage learners of all abilities to gain appropriate qualifications. A wide range of options, academic and vocational, are offered as part of the 14-19 provision. The school has a very positive approach to curricular innovation. The new Integrated Curriculum in Y7 and Y8 has revitalised teaching strategies and generated a joy for learning. The Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) course underpins the curriculum for all pupils in Y10.

21 An outstanding range of extra-curricular and supportive activities is offered. They extend pupils’ skills and social development well. Planning for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Assemblies and form periods are conducted well and make major contributions to moral and spiritual development. Exceptional relationships within the community extend understanding of what the school is trying to achieve for all learners.

22 The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to all activities. The provision to tackle social disadvantage positively is a strong feature of the school’s inclusive ethos. All pupils are encouraged to gain qualifications in the
courses studied. Pupils' experiences encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. This reflects the priority of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to lay foundations for lifelong learning.

23 Good work-related opportunities for pupils to experience the world of work are provided locally. There are many initiatives to develop pupils' entrepreneurial skills. These help to develop problem-solving and team-building skills. Arrangements for all Y9 pupils to take part in an enterprise event in June provide an exceptional educational experience.

24 The management of the support and pastoral systems has a very high profile and a significant positive impact on pupils' learning. Form tutors and progress leaders have a very good knowledge of pupils in their care. Very close links with support agencies through monthly multi-agency meetings are outstanding.

25 At both KS3 and KS4, pupils are provided with comprehensive details of courses available at the next stage of their education. The planned Y11 pathways schedule is particularly extensive. It includes focused interviews, mentoring by members of the business community and college taster days.

26 There is a highly effective holistic approach to careers guidance. The very successful annual Careers and Higher Education Fair enables pupils to make useful early contacts and find relevant information. Learning coaches provide guidance of high quality, support and vocational mentoring.

27 Innovative transition arrangements with a large number of partner primary schools support continuity and progression in teaching, learning, behaviour management and assessment for learning. The support centre is at the heart of the school's provision for high quality personal support and guidance which is reinforced by very good, sensitive support from the school counsellor, school nurses and pastoral managers. This is supported further by the very well planned and delivered PSE programme.

28 The school has effective procedures for monitoring behaviour and punctuality. Monitoring and tracking of academic progress through regular reviews of each year group are very robust and outstanding practice.

29 The wellbeing of pupils is high on the school's agenda. Procedures for child protection are sensitive and highly effective. The school provides highly effective behavioural support. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and to take part in an extensive range of physical activities, both in and after school.

30 There are very effective and well-established systems to identify pupils with SEN. The Additional Needs Transition Co-ordinator has strengthened links with the 29 partner primary schools by visiting all of them. The quality of provision for pupils with SEN, including those with profound and complex difficulties, has outstanding features. Pupils with SEN make very good progress and all leave school with qualifications including the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).
The school responds very effectively and sensitively to the needs of pupils from all backgrounds. The inclusive nature of the school is based on equality and positive relationships. Strategies to combat bullying are extensive and highly effective.

Extensive international links reinforce the recognition of diversity and the respect for others as well as enhancing the learning of pupils. This is reinforced by modules in religious education and PSE. The charity committee meets monthly and is very active in supporting local and national charities.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She is supported by a dynamic and gifted leadership team. Together they are highly effective in giving clear direction and promoting a common sense of purpose with shared values and goals.

Senior and middle leaders are very effective in monitoring and improving the performance of staff. They set challenging targets for the improvement of teachers and their teams and review their progress.

Procedures for staff appraisal and review leading to professional development are robust. The professional development needs of teachers are identified successfully. Performance management procedures are carried out appropriately, in line with national requirements.

The GB provides exceptional support to the school. It succeeds well in providing a sense of direction and adopting the role of the critical friend. Governors are extremely well informed about the work of the school. Innovative links between individual governors and specific year groups support this very effectively. Regular reports, staff presentations and analysis of data enable governors to evaluate outcomes.

The new committee structure has equipped governors better to understand their roles and to engage in making strategic decisions. The GB meets all the legal requirements placed upon it.

There is an outstanding and fully embedded culture of self-evaluation within the school. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating performance across the whole school are outstanding. The process is driven by almost all leaders and managers who are extremely well informed about their areas of responsibility.

The school’s self-evaluation report is extensive, detailed and provides a clear analysis of the school’s strengths and areas for development. All teams produce self-evaluation reports that analyse performance in their area. Most are of a high standard though a few are too descriptive.

Planning for improvement is good. All teams identify extremely well their key areas for development. Links between self-evaluation and planning for improvement at whole-school and subject department levels are clear and
strong. These links are not as strong in the improvement plans of progress teams.

41 Overall, self-evaluation and planning for improvement are outstanding. Nearly all targets focus upon improving standards, learning and teaching. The very effective allocation of resources to support developmental priorities and challenging targets has ensured significant progress. As a result, there has been very good progress in addressing the key issues from the last report.

42 The school has sufficient, very well-qualified, specialist teachers to deliver all aspects of the curriculum. The many staff members who provide pastoral, academic and technical support, give outstanding service. Reception, and other clerical staff supply a very good administrative service for the SLT and for teachers, and ensure that the school day runs smoothly.

43 There is a very good range of learning resources. Most classrooms have computers and an interactive whiteboard or projector. There are high numbers of up-to-date computers throughout the school running a good variety of software. The library is very well run but, following a rationalisation of stock, there are now fewer books than at the last inspection. It is used well.

44 The school makes excellent use of its accommodation. Many excellent improvements have been made since the last inspection to extend the learning environment. The older temporary classrooms, however, do not provide a good setting for education. Internally, standards of decoration, enhanced by attractive displays of art and pupils’ own work, are very good.

45 Facilities for physical education are particularly good. The school is accessible to disabled users although access to reception for wheelchair users is not easy. There are no signs informing them of the way into the school.

46 Although the school, with agreement from the LA, runs a deficit budget there is a strong medium-term plan to rectify this. There are transparent systems for allocating funds to departments and spending decisions are consistent with the SIP. The budget is managed very effectively. The SLT and the GB monitor expenditure very closely and ensure that funds are spent wisely.

47 In spite of shortcomings in aspects of accommodation, the school makes exceptional use of all available resources. This, together with the high standards of attainment, ensures that it gives outstanding value for money.

Sixth form

Standards

48 Most students achieve very good standards. They generally achieve their agreed learning targets and, in many cases exceed them. They achieve very good standards in all key skills. Most students achieve success regardless of their background. Results gained at Advanced (A) level across the range of
grades A to E are above local and national averages in almost all cases. In 2009, many students were successful in gaining higher grades.

49 In the six subjects inspected, standards had good features and no important shortcomings in over 90% of lessons observed. In nearly half of these, standards also had outstanding features. These figures are considerably higher than those reported by the Chief Inspector in his most recent Annual Report based on all secondary schools in Wales inspected in 2008-2009.

50 Students generally make very good progress in learning. They have an increasingly clear understanding of their current performance. They know what they should do in order to attain the grades they need, for example, to access particular university courses.

51 Most students have very good personal, social and learning skills and very positive attitudes to learning. They show interest and enthusiasm in their studies. They work conscientiously and co-operate very effectively with others. They continue to make good progress in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Although attendance records show relatively high absence levels this is often due to their attendance at other, often off-site, learning activities.

52 Almost all students show increased maturity in their inter-personal and social skills. They know the importance of equality of opportunity and respect diversity within society. They are very good role models for younger pupils. Many students use their skills to assist younger pupils as peer mentors. Their abilities and qualities enable them to participate effectively in the wider community.

The quality of education and training

53 Teaching and assessment are good or better in nine out of ten lessons. They have outstanding features in just under a half of lessons. These figures show teaching and assessment to be of exceptionally high quality. In nearly all lessons teachers use their subject knowledge very well to engage students actively and to probe their depth of knowledge and understanding. Lessons are planned in detail and on nearly all occasions teachers ensure that tasks provide sufficient challenge for all students.

54 Teaching is highly successful in promoting students’ confidence to work both independently and with others. Teachers provide very good support and encouragement for students and nearly always establish excellent working relationships with them both within and outside of lessons.

55 Assessment procedures are highly systematic and robust. Marking is nearly always undertaken extremely thoroughly with detailed feedback from teachers that illustrates clearly strengths and aspects for improvement. A particular strength is the extent of students’ involvement in assessing their own performance. This is used exceptionally well in conjunction with their subject and form teachers to compile highly informative progress reports to parents and carers in each year. It also gives them a very clear awareness of their achievements and targets for improvement in subjects.
Students are offered an outstanding range of learning experiences. They are prepared well for higher and further education, training and employment. Provision is extended further through collaborative links with local schools and colleges. Students involve themselves in a wide range of extra-curricular activities which contribute greatly to the development of their personal and social skills. They, in turn, make significant contributions to enhance the learning and welfare of younger pupils.

Care, guidance and support of outstanding quality are provided in the sixth form. The Careers and Higher Education Key Skills initiative (CHEAKS) supports students’ future academic pathways very effectively. Sixth-form peer mentors reinforce pupils’ understanding of anti-bullying procedures and provide mediation support when required. Trained sixth-form students are heavily involved in paired reading schemes during form tutor time. This benefits both pupils and students in terms of reading practice and improving social skills.

**Leadership and management**

The head of the sixth form provides excellent leadership. With a team of form tutors she promotes common aims and values. All students are challenged effectively to achieve their potential. There are robust procedures for monitoring and improving the performance of staff. They are set challenging targets and their progress is reviewed regularly.

Performance management procedures are carried out appropriately. The professional development needs of teachers are successfully identified. These needs are largely met by the expertise within the school and external providers.

There is an outstanding and fully embedded culture of self-evaluation within the sixth form. Arrangements are planned, systematic and robust. Leaders and managers are very well informed. Good planning and very effective allocation of resources have resulted in improved standards, in the provision for students outside of examination courses and in developing better systems to monitor attendance. Monitoring of sixth-form attendance continues to be developed.

The sixth form is staffed very well by subject specialist teachers who have excellent subject knowledge. Many are highly qualified. The very good range of resources available enables all courses and learning pathways to be delivered properly and very effectively. Provision of computers is generally good.

Overall, accommodation for sixth-form students is satisfactory. Some difficult decisions have been taken, which include the loss of the common room, to improve the learning environment for all students. The designated library area with computers for students is used very well. Students also make very good and mature use of the hall area, both to study and to socialise.

The value for money, when all resources are taken into account and balanced against the excellent results achieved by students, is outstanding.
Recommendations

To build on the progress made, the school should implement the following recommendations.

R1  Maintain high standards.*

R2  Improve the recording and monitoring of attendance of sixth-form students.

R3  Develop further the link between self-evaluation and planning for improvement by progress teams.

R4  Continue to improve the quality of accommodation.*

R5  Provide signs to assist the disabled to access the school campus.

Recommendations marked with an asterisk are addressed in the SIP (2008-11).

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

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

64 This grade matches the grade in the school’s self-evaluation report.

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

65 At KS3 in 2009, results in NC teacher assessments in all three core subjects (English, mathematics and science) were significantly higher than local and national averages. Strongest performance occurred in English. The percentage of pupils who achieved NC level five in all three core subjects, the Core Subject Indicator (CSI), is nine points higher than the local average and 19 points above the national average. Over the last four years there is an underlying upward trend in attainment.

66 In comparison with schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, attainment in 2009 was above average in all core subjects and the CSI. Results in English and the CSI were in the top quarter. Performance in the last three years has been above the averages in similar schools in most cases with the best performance in 2009. Except in science, results are in line with, or above, expectations based on pupils’ previous attainment at KS2.

67 At KS4 in 2009, results in external examinations exceeded local and national averages. The percentage of pupils who achieved the Level Two Threshold (a volume of qualifications equivalent to five GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including passes in English and mathematics), was 14 percentage points higher than the local average and 17 percentage points above the national average. Against all key indicators, performance was significantly higher than comparative local and national figures.

68 In the majority of KS4 performance indicators, attainment in 2009 was above the averages in similar schools. In most cases, performance in 2009 was better than in the previous two years. This reflects a pattern of improvement in this period. Girls’ attainment is generally significantly higher than comparative figures locally and nationally. Boys’ attainment is also higher but usually by smaller margins. There is no evidence of a significant difference in boys’ and girls’ performance overall.

69 Standards in all six subjects inspected in detail have good features and no important shortcomings. In history at both key stages and Welsh second language at KS4, standards also have outstanding features.

70 The percentages of grades awarded for standards in 48 lessons observed in the six subjects combined are set out in the following table. There is little significant difference between the standards achieved at each key stage. Although the percentage of lessons where grade four was awarded seems relatively high, this figure reflects achievement in only two lessons. These were
unrelated examples and not typical. They do not indicate a pattern of significant underachievement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Stage 3</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Stage 4</strong></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KS3 and KS4</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

71 These figures are higher than those for all secondary schools inspected in Wales in 2008 – 2009 as recorded in the most recent Annual Report of the Chief Inspector. The percentage of KS3 lessons where the two highest grades were awarded is three points higher than the corresponding national figure. At KS4 it is six points higher. The figures from this inspection reflect good standards of achievement overall.

72 These figures also show that significant progress has been made since the last inspection. There is a marked increase in the percentage of lessons in which the top two grades were awarded. This figure has gone up from 68% in 2004 to 75% in this inspection.

73 Pupils demonstrate standards in the key skills of communication, numeracy and ICT which have good features and no important shortcomings. Their speaking and listening skills have outstanding features. Standards in personal and social skills, working collaboratively with others and improving their own learning and performance also have outstanding features.

74 At both key stages, most pupils listen very attentively to each other and their teachers. They sustain very good levels of concentration and understand the meaning of complex instructions and information. They speak clearly and confidently both briefly and, when given opportunities, at length. They explain the nature and purpose of their work showing good levels of comprehension. Almost all pupils participate willingly in discussions by expressing personal views and opinions.

75 The great majority of pupils demonstrate good reading and writing skills. They read purposefully deriving meaning from a good variety of sources. Most pupils write well, generally using correct spelling, grammar and punctuation. They use their skills well to make notes, record observations and communicate their understanding and knowledge. Many pupils, especially those of higher ability, select appropriate writing styles for different purposes. More extended writing is generally organised well into sections and paragraphs.

76 Most pupils apply their numeracy and ICT skills proficiently in subjects where there are suitable opportunities. For example, pupils use their numeracy skills particularly well in geography at both stages. Most pupils measure and calculate accurately and interpret mathematical information presented in graphical formats. Almost all pupils demonstrate competence in using ICT for word-processing, using search engines to research topics, desk-top publishing and to enhance the presentation of their work.
Pupils generally make good progress in developing their bilingual competence. They achieve good standards in Welsh second language and are becoming increasingly familiar with hearing Welsh spoken through teachers’ incidental use of the language for greetings and other basic transactions. They routinely record the date in Welsh and respond in Welsh to registration procedures. Most pupils understand Welsh language signs in classrooms and around the school.

All pupils, including those with SEN, make good progress in learning. The most recent figures indicate that results at the end of KS4, when matched to prior attainment at both KS2 and KS3, are above expectations. Most pupils make good progress within key stages and across the curriculum. Almost all pupils know how well they are doing and how they could improve. They know their strengths and weaknesses and, at KS4, relate them to examination grades.

Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They are interested in their work and progress and have very good levels of motivation. They participate actively in lessons. Almost all pupils work very well with others in collaborative learning situations. They work very well in pairs as well as small and larger groups. Their constructive team-working and co-operation enhance their learning.

Most pupils demonstrate very strong personal and social skills. They show confidence and good levels of self-esteem. They get on very well with each other and members of staff. Their interpersonal skills have outstanding features. They are welcoming and courteous to visitors. These factors contribute to the generation of an orderly and purposeful environment.

Almost all pupils make good progress in their spiritual development and very good progress in their moral, social and cultural development. They benefit from good opportunities provided in assemblies, registration periods and many lessons to reflect on moral issues and how they affect different societies and cultures. Pupils’ involvement in fundraising for different charities demonstrates their concern for others who are less fortunate than themselves.

The great majority of pupils behave very well and there is rarely any disruption to learning in lessons. Few pupils have been given temporary exclusions because of unacceptable behaviour in the last three terms. There have been no permanent exclusions.

Attendance is good. At KS3 and KS4, average attendance was almost 92% in the last 12 months. In the last three years rates of attendance have been very close to the average attendance in similar schools. Most pupils arrive punctually to lessons and any lateness is generally due to the distances they have to travel between classrooms.

Pupils are prepared very well for the next stage of their education. Nearly all continue in full-time education. In 2009, over 70% of pupils in Y11 continued their education within the school by moving into the sixth form. Almost 25% continued in full-time education in other schools or colleges of further education.
Sixth form

85 Most students achieve very good standards. They generally achieve their agreed learning targets and, in many cases, exceed them. Results gained at A level across the range of grades A to E are above local and national averages in almost all cases. In 2009, students succeeded in gaining higher grades in a wider range of subjects than in 2008.

86 In 2009, the percentage of students who followed courses equivalent to two A levels and who achieved the Level Three Threshold was in line with the local and national averages. Their average wider points score was higher than the local average and close to, but slightly below, the national average. It is also a little higher than the school average over the last three years. This indicates an underlying trend of improvement.

87 There is no evidence of any significant difference between boys’ and girls’ attainment. The average wider points scores of boys and girls in 2009 were around 50 points above the local averages. Both boys’ and girls’ performance was closer to national figures with girls’ attainment being higher, and boys’ attainment lower than the Welsh averages.

88 The standards that students achieve in Welsh second language, history, geography and art and design have outstanding features. In mathematics and business studies, students achieve standards which have good features and no important shortcomings.

89 The percentages of grades awarded in 24 lessons observed in the six subjects inspected are set out in the table below. The percentage of lessons where the two highest grades were awarded exceeds the corresponding figure in the most recent Annual Report of the Chief Inspector by 22 percentage points. These figures demonstrate outstanding standards of achievement in the sixth form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sixth form</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

90 Almost all students achieve excellent standards in key skills. Their skills are developed further from the standards achieved at KS4. Students use their increased maturity to apply these skills to good effect in a wider range of contexts. They speak more confidently with more advanced vocabulary. They write more fluently and for a greater range of purposes. They articulate personal views on many topics including personal progress and wider issues.

91 In subjects where there are suitable opportunities, students demonstrate appropriate levels of skill in applying their numeracy skills for a range of purposes. Many students are familiar with the use of spreadsheets for dealing with numerical data. They select relevant graphical formats to present mathematical information and interpret the information contained in graphs.

92 Students use their ICT skills widely across the range of subjects. They use word-processing skillfully to redraft their written work and enhance its
presentation. They produce computerised visual presentations which combine images with text effectively. Many students use desktop-publishing software very effectively. All students understand how to use the internet to carry out effective research into the topics they study.

93 Students make good progress in the development of their bilingual competence. They are familiar with hearing the Welsh language spoken around the school. They respond appropriately to greetings and basic transactional phrases. The standards they achieve in their study of Welsh as a second language at KS4 provide a good foundation for developing this proficiency.

94 Students generally make good and often very good progress. They achieve success regardless of their backgrounds. Almost all students understand how well they are doing and how they could make further improvement. They know, for example, what they need to accomplish in order to gain access to specific university courses.

95 Most students have excellent personal, social and learning skills. They demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning showing interest and enthusiasm in their studies. They work conscientiously and co-operate very effectively with each other. Although attendance records show relatively high levels of absence, this is often due to students’ attendance at other learning activities, often at other locations.

96 Almost all students show increased maturity in their interpersonal and social skills. They know the importance of equality of opportunity and respect the diversity within society. They take the lead in many school activities and are very good role models for younger pupils. Many students use their skills to very good effect to assist younger pupils as peer mentors. The ability and skills that students show enable them to participate effectively in the wider community.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

97 This grade matches the grade in the school’s self-evaluation report.

98 Overall, 133 lessons were observed across the school in all subjects and the following table shows the grades awarded for teaching and assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole school</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

99 Overall these figures compare very favourably with those from other secondary schools inspected in Wales in 2008-2009, as reported in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector. The proportion of lessons judged as good or better (79%)
is three percentage points above the comparative national figure. It is very close to the target of 80% set by WAG for 2010. Of particular note is the high proportion of lessons with outstanding features which increases significantly through the key stages.

**Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4**

100 The following table shows the percentages of grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons observed. These are based on observations of 95 lessons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KS3</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS4</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS3 and KS4</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

101 Teaching and assessment are good or better in just under three-quarters of lessons. There is, however, a higher proportion of lessons with outstanding features at KS4 than at KS3.

102 In the six subjects inspected teaching and assessment have outstanding features in history and in geography at KS4. They are good with no important shortcomings in Welsh second language, art and design and in geography at KS3. Good features outweigh shortcomings in mathematics and business studies at KS4.

103 Nearly all teachers know pupils very well and establish excellent working relationships with them. They encourage and support them greatly and many give freely of their time to provide additional support in the extensive range of supplementary learning experiences at the end of the school day. This plays a significant part in nurturing an excellent culture of learning across the school.

104 Short-term and long-term planning are thorough and detailed. There is a very high degree of consistency in this across subjects. In most lessons teachers make proficient use of starter activities and share appropriate learning objectives constructively with pupils. These are usually matched well to pupils’ needs and their prior learning. Often homework is used purposefully to consolidate and extend pupils’ learning.

105 Lessons are nearly always structured well and progress at a good pace. In most lessons, teachers ensure that pupils are involved actively in learning. They encourage pupils to work independently and with others and use a very good variety of activities to promote this and sustain their interest. Where appropriate, learning support assistants (LSA) work productively with teachers to support individual pupils with SEN. Usually lessons are concluded well but on a few occasions insufficient time is given to determine the impact on pupils’ knowledge and understanding of work covered.

106 Nearly all teachers use their subject knowledge very well to explain work to pupils. Many make constructive use of ICT to present information clearly to
pupils and capture their interest. They use questions competently to gauge pupils’ knowledge and on most occasions encourage responses from a good cross-section of the class. In the best instances they use them highly effectively to ensure that pupils give more extended oral responses to explain their reasoning.

107 In a few lessons, tasks and teaching strategies are not matched well enough to the needs of all pupils and teachers do not involve pupils actively enough in their learning. Where this occurs there is lack of pace and insufficient challenge, particularly for those pupils who are more able.

108 There is an increasing emphasis on promoting bilingualism across the school. Although this is not consistent, many teachers encourage pupils to make constructive use of incidental Welsh in lessons and form periods. Bilingual posters also feature in many classrooms and corridors across the school.

109 There are highly structured and robust procedures for collecting and collating information on pupils’ progress in all years. They are extremely systematic and make very efficient use of ICT to present and analyse data in a wide range of formats for monitoring performance. A good range of benchmark data is used appropriately to set targets. Subject departments set very challenging targets for themselves that are often above the anticipated attainment for individual pupils at the end of each key stage.

110 In most instances teachers mark pupils’ work thoroughly and regularly. There is a high degree of consistency in the quality of feedback given by teachers across the curriculum. It usually indicates clearly to pupils the good features in their work and also identifies aspects for improvement that are related to the subject. In a few subjects, and particularly on the Integrated Curriculum course in Y7 and Y8, this is of exceptional quality.

111 Arrangements to support the accuracy of teachers’ assessment at the end of KS2 are well established in core subjects but these have not yet involved foundation subjects. All subjects have thorough moderation procedures to assist the accurate assessment of NC levels at the end of KS3.

112 Excellent procedures are used to monitor and review pupils’ progress through twice-yearly learning reviews and also constructive use of ongoing assessment in many subjects. These enable pupils to reflect constructively on their performance and to work in conjunction with their teachers to set targets for improvement. As a consequence of this, nearly all pupils have a very good awareness of how well they are doing and how they can improve.

113 Parents and carers are kept well informed about their child’s achievements through progress reports and full reports in each year. Reports are of a consistently good quality and provide clear and detailed information on personal and academic development. In most instances comments from subject teachers in the full reports give a clear indication of progress and for many identify very appropriate subject-specific targets for improvement.
Sixth form

114 The following table shows the overall grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons observed. These grades are based on the observations of 38 lessons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sixth form</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

115 Teaching and assessment are good or better in over nine out of ten lessons. They are good with outstanding features in just under a half of lessons. These figures illustrate teaching and assessment of exceptionally high quality.

116 This very high quality is also reflected in lessons observed in the six subjects inspected. Teaching and assessment were judged good or better in all subjects with outstanding features evident in history, geography, and art and design.

117 In nearly all lessons teachers use their subject knowledge very well to engage students actively in their learning and to probe their depth of knowledge and understanding. Lessons are planned in detail and on nearly all occasions teachers ensure that tasks provide sufficient challenge for all students.

118 Teaching is highly successful in promoting students’ confidence to work both independently and with others. Teachers provide very good support and encouragement for students and nearly always establish excellent working relationships with them both within and outside of lessons.

119 Assessment procedures are highly systematic and robust. Marking is nearly always undertaken extremely thoroughly with detailed feedback from teachers that illustrates clearly strengths and aspects for improvement. Students are also involved very constructively in assessing their achievements and that of their peers in many subjects.

120 Students meet individually with their subject teachers and form teachers as part of their half-yearly learning review. They write their own comments on their progress and performance and this is supplemented with comments from their form tutor. These form an essential part of progress reports in each year that provide very helpful information to parents and carers. Overall the process is highly successful in enabling students to be aware of their progress and identify aspects where they can improve.

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

**Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

121 This grade matches the grade in the school’s self-evaluation report.

122 The curriculum meets fully all statutory requirements. It provides a wide range of learning experiences. The curriculum successfully encourages pupils of all
abilities to gain appropriate qualifications. All subjects of the NC are taught to the pupils. Good provision is made for vocational education within the option menus at KS4.

123 A wide range of options, 30 academic and five vocational, are offered as part of the 14-19 Learning Pathways at KS4. The school works well with colleges and local businesses to ensure full delivery of the vocational curriculum. The level of co-operation is outstanding and transparent. Two Learning Coaches provide effective support and guidance, particularly for pupils on vocational courses.

124 The school has a very positive approach to curriculum innovation. A new Integrated Curriculum has been introduced into Y7 and Y8. It emphasises the development of learning skills for all pupils. This is an outstanding feature. This skills-based curriculum has revitalised teaching strategies and generated a joy for learning. The WBQ has been introduced into Y10 to underpin the curriculum for all pupils.

125 Each department plans well to include appropriate aspects of key skills within the curricular provision. This is co-ordinated well and ensures a range of strategies to support pupils’ learning effectively. The Integrated Curriculum at KS3 and WBQ at KS4 greatly enhance the provision for developing pupils’ key skills, leading to accreditation at the end of KS4.

126 A well-planned and co-ordinated PSE programme, delivered by form tutors, reinforces greatly pupils’ academic, social and personal development. Pupils benefit from stimulating learning experiences in PSE lessons and form periods. Provision for PSE meets national guidelines. Personal and social skills are developed well in a wide range of whole-school activities.

127 The wide range of extra-curricular activities is exceptional and supported extremely well. Many pupils take advantage of creative timetabling which gives access to a wide range of activities immediately after school. Transport and catering arrangements are provided for pupils to make it easier to attend activities of their choice. Many of the courses and activities lead to further qualifications.

128 The provision of social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is very good. Well-conducted assemblies and form periods make major contributions in this area. They are enhanced by outstanding relationships between pupils and teachers. Pupils study their own and other cultures through a variety of topics in many subjects. Subject departments organise good visits which enrich greatly pupils’ learning experiences and cultural development.

129 The school’s links with parents are good. Nearly all parents are highly complimentary of the school. There are numerous opportunities for parents to discuss any concerns with the staff. The school has strong links with its partner primary schools, both academic and pastoral. Exceptional relationships within the community extend understanding of what the school is trying to achieve for all learners.
Good work-related education is provided. It includes relevant courses and opportunities for pupils to experience the world of work, provided by a number of local employers. They support pupils well in establishing good working relationships and habits. Careers Wales staff members provide valuable inputs into work-related lessons within the PSE framework.

The school provides aspects of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig in schemes of work in many subjects. Staff members promote pupils’ bilingual development through their use of basic Welsh greetings and phrases in their lessons. They encourage the progression of pupils’ use of incidental Welsh.

The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to all activities. The provision to tackle social disadvantage positively is a strong feature of the school’s inclusive ethos. All pupils are encouraged to gain qualifications in the courses they study.

Aspects of sustainable development and global citizenship are incorporated into the curriculum of many subjects. The Eco committee actively promotes pupils’ understanding of the importance of sustainability. The school’s allotment helps raise awareness of self-sufficiency. The school has gained the Eco schools silver award. Pupils understand the significance of recycling and are aware of the importance of healthy-eating initiatives.

There are many initiatives to develop pupils’ entrepreneurial skills. These help to develop problem-solving and team-building skills. Arrangements for all Y9 pupils to participate in activities in the Summer Learning Week in June are particularly rewarding and refreshing. Pupil teams are encouraged to design, make, market and sell small items in a competition judged by external experts.

Pupils’ experiences encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. This reflects successfully the WAG priority to lay foundations for lifelong learning. The curriculum provides good progression between years and key stages. It meets legal and courses requirements including provision for a daily act of collective worship.

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

**Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

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

The management of support and pastoral systems has a very high profile and a significant positive impact on pupils’ learning. Progress leaders and form tutors have a very good knowledge of pupils in their care. Excellent working relationships have developed. Very close links with support agencies through monthly multi-agency meetings are outstanding. Individual pupils are discussed sensitively and appropriate support interventions are focused where required.

Productive links with parents continue to develop. Initiatives such as immediate responses following open evenings and direct telephone mentoring
encourage parents to be more involved in their child’s learning. Pupils’ views are respected and taken into account. The school council is involved actively in teaching and learning issues such as peer mentoring, development of Positive Learning Relationships (behaviour policy) and consultation on the school day.

Both KS3 and KS4 pupils are provided with comprehensive details of courses available at the next stage of education. Form tutors, Careers Wales staff and learning coaches are involved in a carefully planned guidance programme. The planned Y11 pathways schedule is particularly extensive and provides pupils with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make the correct pathway choices in the sixth form. This includes focused interviews and mentoring by members of the business community as well as college taster days.

Learning coach support has a high profile in the school. The two trained coaches are enthusiastic and have developed very good relationships with pupils. They provide mentoring, coursework support in the Support Centre as well as in-class support. They give very effective impartial advice and guidance particularly to pupils following vocational courses at KS4.

Continuity and progression in teaching and learning, behaviour management and assessment for learning are supported by innovative transition arrangements with a large number of partner primary schools. Dialogue between co-ordinators of core subjects supports learning from KS1 to KS3 with a clear understanding of the data transferred. The innovative skills-based Integrated Curriculum in Y7 supports continuity and progression further. A ‘Welcome to Wales Day’ arranged for pupils from primary schools in England is particularly outstanding.

The innovative Support Centre is central to the provision of personal support and guidance of high quality. Fixed-term exclusion rates have fallen significantly following planned supportive interventions. Restorative mediation is used successfully to build up positive relationships. Specific issues that need action are highlighted in daily breakfast meetings with progress leaders, support and guidance managers and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). This is reinforced by very good sensitive support from the school counsellor and school nurses. It is supported further by the very well-planned and delivered PSE programme at KS3 and through the WBQ at KS4.

The school has effective procedures for monitoring behaviour, attendance and punctuality. Highly effective intervention strategies are used to support pupils with behavioural difficulties. The monitoring of sixth-form attendance continues to be developed. Monitoring and tracking of academic progress through learning reviews in each year group are very robust. This is outstanding practice. Extensive relevant information and data produced have significant impact on supporting teaching and learning. This is evaluated fully.

The school has developed a highly-effective holistic approach to careers and pathways’ guidance. Pupils at both KS3 and KS4 are involved in planned activities to enable them to research possible opportunities and raise their awareness of different careers pathways. The very successful annual Careers
and Higher Education Fair is supported by a large number of local businesses and universities. It allows pupils and students to access information and make early contacts. This is an outstanding feature.

The CHEAKS initiative supports sixth-form students very effectively on future academic pathways. There are very close links between Careers Wales and the pathways co-ordinator. The school has received the Quality Award for Careers Education.

The wellbeing of pupils is a high priority. Procedures for child protection are sensitive and highly effective. Staff members are trained to deal with disclosures appropriately. Positive relationships are nurtured through emotional and social support of high quality. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and participate in an extensive range of physical activities, both in and after school. The Food and Fitness policy recognises this as an essential part of a child’s education. The LA works closely with the school in dealing with complaints from parents by providing expertise and advice.

There are very effective and well-established systems to identify pupils with SEN. The Additional Needs Transition Co-ordinator has strengthened transitional links by visiting all 29 partner primary schools, including some in England. Screening procedures support the information and recommendations of these schools. Pupils with SEN make very good progress and all pupils on the SEN register leave school with qualifications including GCSE.

The quality of provision for pupils with SEN including those with profound and complex difficulties has outstanding features. Pupils with SEN are taught alongside their peers for the majority of their lessons and have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy skills in smaller groups has ensured that measurable progress has been made in these areas. Their learning has been enhanced further by the skills-based curriculum in Y7 and Y8. At KS4, a rich programme of vocational courses meets the needs and aptitudes of all pupils.

Effective use is made of trained sixth-form students in paired reading sessions which include a wide range of reading activities in form periods. They not only benefit the pupils but also help the students to develop their responsibilities and social skills. Learning Support Assistants are also involved effectively in daily reading and spelling clinics. Identified pupils with specific learning difficulties are supported by specialist teachers from the LA support service. Most pupils make very good progress in developing literacy skills.

Subject departments are very well informed about individual needs and SEN issues. Special needs have a very high profile in the school. Individual Learning Plans (ILP) and Individual Education Plans (IEP) are very detailed and highlight strengths and weaknesses, current assessments, targets and strategies to meet targets. In their planning, most members of staff identify learning objectives devised to meet individual needs in accordance with IEPs and ILPs. Targets are shared with pupils and copies are sent to parents. They
are reviewed regularly. Form tutors phone the home at prearranged times to discuss the targets. This is an outstanding feature.

151 Very good, sensitive in-class support is provided by LSAs. They are very well managed and have effective partnerships with most members of staff. They use their initiative to provide strong support for learning. They meet on a daily basis with the additional needs co-ordinator. They are also involved in fortnightly training sessions with the deputy headteacher in charge of learning and teaching. This is a significant strength.

152 A small special class for a group of pupils of different ages who have profound and complex difficulties is a very significant feature of the provision and an integral part of the school. A broad and balanced curriculum is provided, adapted to meet their diverse needs with an emphasis on developing self-help and life skills. Progress is closely monitored through baseline assessments and the Personal Achievement File which records all aspects of development.

153 The teacher in charge is dedicated and enthusiastic and is supported well by two equally dedicated and appropriately qualified assistants. Relationships in the special class are a significant strength. The additional needs co-ordinator provides very good leadership and guidance. As a member of the SLT she is able to raise and maintain an awareness of SEN in the school. The school is innovative and forward-looking in the way it supports pupils.

154 The school responds very effectively and sensitively to the needs of pupils from all backgrounds. The inclusive nature of the school is based on equality and positive relationships. The values of inclusion feature prominently in the school’s vision statement and are evident in school policies. Provision and support for looked-after children (LAC) are outstanding.

155 Gender and racial equality are promoted through curricular modules and comprehensive updated policies. The racial equality policy highlights cultural diversity, reflecting the school’s promotion of equal opportunities. The disability equality scheme and access plan are appropriately detailed with relevant targets, strategies, outcomes and timeframes.

156 The anti-bullying policy is incorporated into an initiative called ‘Building Positive Relationships by Looking Out For Each Other’. This has been reviewed effectively by the school council and discussed by parents and members of staff. A confidential e-mail address has been set up where pupils can send an informative confidential message that can only be accessed by a progress leader or a peer mentor from CREW (Caring Response to Everyday Worries). This is an outstanding feature.

157 Diversity is valued and celebrated. Extensive international links and visits to Kenya, Uganda, Borneo, USA and exchanges with a school in Italy further enhance learning and reinforce the recognition of diversity and respect for others who are less fortunate. The charity committee is very active in supporting local and national charities on a monthly basis. This is reinforced by modules in the religious education and PSE programmes.
Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

158 The grade matches the grade in the school’s self-evaluation report.

159 Leadership and management are highly successful at all levels. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She succeeds well in leading by example and in motivating and inspiring staff to improve standards and the quality of educational provision.

160 The headteacher is supported by a dynamic and gifted leadership team. Together they are highly effective in giving clear direction and in promoting a common sense of purpose with shared values and goals. Senior leaders interact well with staff, sometimes taking on roles at other levels. This enables them to have greater insight into the impact of policy and practice.

161 Middle leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They manage their teams efficiently and promote a common ethos and strong team approach. Management procedures reflect a consistent approach to the school’s mission statement by emphasising high achievement and lifelong learning. The improvement in the effectiveness of middle leaders is a consequence of the determination of senior leaders to develop a clarity of mission and purpose and to address the learning needs of pupils and students.

162 Leaders and managers are committed to promoting equality for all in the school community and to developing their skills. The school promotes successfully core values which include removing barriers to learning and a commitment to developing the skills of all in the school community. Staff members have many opportunities to contribute to team and school development planning.

163 The school is highly successful in promoting the national priorities of WAG. For example, the leading role taken by the school in the local Learning Pathways 14-19 network and the introduction of the skills-based Integrated Curriculum at KS3 are outstanding features.

164 Senior and middle leaders are very effective in monitoring and improving the performance of staff. There has been a considerable improvement over the last few years. They set challenging targets for the improvement of teachers and their teams and review their progress in meeting these targets.

165 Members of the SLT are linked to subject and progress leaders. They regularly discuss issues, monitor learning and teaching and use a cycle of review to identify areas for development. Procedures for staff appraisal and review leading to professional development are robust. Formal monitoring and review arrangements and the informal interaction between senior and middle leaders provide numerous opportunities to identify professional development needs.
These professional development needs are identified clearly in contexts such as whole-school development planning, team and individual needs and curriculum change and requirements. For example, subject leaders are asked, in their improvement planning, to summarise the agreed areas of focus for each teacher and support staff members in their departments. These areas of focus are linked to the departmental priorities. The process contributes strongly to the school’s vision and goals.

The professional development needs of teachers are, for the most part, met by the expertise within the school and external providers. The school has been highly creative in nurturing teachers’ skills by using the experience and gifts of its existing staff members. This approach provides extensive opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice. These include observation of other colleagues, working groups, coaching and curriculum innovation.

Performance management procedures are carried out appropriately, in line with national requirements. There is a detailed policy which explains the processes and practice. These include the recommended cycle of self-analysis, planning, monitoring, self-evaluation and review. The Performance Management arrangements in the school succeed in providing excellent opportunities for professional dialogue and helping staff evaluate and improve their practice.

The GB provides exceptional support to the school. It succeeds well in providing a sense of direction and adopting the role of the critical friend. Governors play an excellent part in helping to set the school’s strategic direction.

Governors are extremely well informed about the work of the school and the issues that affect its performance. They receive regular reports from the headteacher as well as presentations by other staff members. Their links to year groups are innovative and help them to experience a broader range of aspects of school life and learning. The new committee structure gives governors a better understanding of their roles and helps them engage in strategic planning. They evaluate their own performance by reflecting on the quality of their meetings, activities and decisions.

The governors’ evaluation of the quality of the school’s work is an outstanding feature. They analyse and evaluate the school’s examination results and discuss data and trends. Governors make every effort to know whether strategies are working. They take seriously the role of the critical friend, asking pertinent questions and sometimes challenging decisions to gain greater clarity.

The GB fulfils all its legal requirements. Governors produce an appropriate annual report to parents and organise the annual parents’ evening. The school prospectus, produced as a booklet and CD ROM, contains all the required information.
Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>173 This grade matches the grade in the school’s self-evaluation report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>174 The findings of the inspection team regarding other key questions match exactly those of the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175 The school has an outstanding and fully embedded culture of self-evaluation. It is driven by almost all leaders and managers at all levels. They are very aware of their roles and responsibilities and are extremely well informed about the areas for which they are responsible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176 The planned, highly-systematic and robust arrangements for monitoring and evaluating performance across the whole school are outstanding. They draw upon a very wide range of relevant, first-hand evidence. The systems focus extremely well upon supporting learners to reach their potential. The monitoring of the quality of provision in the new KS3 Integrated Curriculum has been particularly effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177 The strong, positive relationships and professional dialogue that are present within the school enable subject and progress teams to reflect upon their work and establish clear priorities for improvement. This process has enabled the SLT to set challenging targets for improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178 The school’s self-evaluation report is based upon the seven key questions of Estyn’s Common Inspection Framework. It is extensive, detailed and provides a clear analysis of strengths and areas for development. All subject and progress teams produce self-evaluation reports that reflect on the quality of performance in their area. Most reports are of a high standard. A few are too descriptive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>179 The school attaches considerable importance to seeking the views of pupils and other interested parties. The extent to which stakeholders are involved actively in this process is outstanding. It includes leading contributions towards developing and implementing restorative procedures, the anti-bullying policy, ‘Looking Out For Each Other’ and the addition of expertise to the vast extra-curricular menu from the local community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180 The school council is a strong, proactive body. It was responsible for canvassing stakeholders’ opinions on, and initiating the change to, the new Behaviour for Learning Policy and in reviewing the anti-bullying policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181 Planning for improvement is very good overall. Subject and progress teams identify extremely well their key areas for development. Nearly all subject teams produce very thoughtful and effective improvement plans of excellent quality. There are clear and strong links between subject and whole-school self-evaluation and planning for improvement. These links are not as strong in the improvement plans of progress teams.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nearly all targets for improvement focus well upon improving standards, learning and teaching. The GB and headteacher ensure that, wherever possible, resources are allocated very effectively to support priorities for development and to meet challenging targets for improvement. This strong feature has ensured an improvement in all core subjects at GCSE, Threshold Levels 1 and 2 and that no pupil has left the school without a qualification in the last two years.

Overall, self-evaluation and planning for improvement are outstanding. They have led to excellent progress in addressing nearly all of the key issues from the last inspection. In particular, this progress is evident in:
- the monitoring and planning for improvement in standards of teaching and learning;
- the setting and marking of homework;
- the use of form tutor time;
- standards at KS3 and KS4;
- the performance of boys;
- pupils’ key skills at KS3 and KS4;
- a shared sense of purpose within the school community;
- attitudes and behaviour at KS3 and KS4; and
- planning to extend and improve accommodation.

In addition, the health and safety concerns have been addressed and the time for Welsh at KS3 has been increased. The statutory requirements regarding Welsh at KS4 and the daily act of collective worship have been met.

Within the sixth form excellent progress has been made with regard to standards and the provision for students outside of examination courses. The statutory requirement with regard to religious education has been met and progress has been made in developing systems to monitor attendance in the sixth form though, at present, they are not fully effective.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

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

There are sufficient, very well-qualified, specialist teachers to deliver the curriculum. The very high number of pastoral, academic and technical support staff, give outstanding service. Staff members who manage the reception office and other clerical staff supply a very good administrative service for the SLT and teachers, and ensure that the school day runs smoothly.

Systems for mentoring and managing newly-qualified teachers and teachers new to the school are very thorough. The workforce remodelling process has been implemented fully. All teachers are given their statutory non-contact time for planning, preparation and assessment and this time is used effectively.
use of general teachers to provide cover and ensure continuity in classes works very well.

189 There is a very good range of learning resources. Most classrooms have computers and an interactive whiteboard or projector. There are many up-to-date computers throughout the school running a good variety of software. The library is managed very well but, following a rationalisation of stock, there are now fewer books than at the last inspection. Much thought has gone into presenting the books in an appealing way and the resource centre is used well.

190 Excellent use is made of all available accommodation. Since the last inspection many excellent improvements have been made to extend the learning environment. The older temporary classrooms, however, do not provide a good setting for education.

191 Internally, the standard of decoration is very good. It is enhanced by attractive displays of artwork and pupils’ own work. Facilities for physical education are very good. The school makes full use of the adjoining leisure centre for physical education and dance and the all-weather playing surfaces and playing fields are used very well, by the school and the community. The grounds are free of litter and maintained very well.

192 Although the school is accessible to disabled users, access to reception for wheelchair users is not easy. There are no signs informing them of the way into the school.

193 Although the school, with agreement from the LA, runs a deficit budget there is a strong medium-term plan to rectify this. Systems for allocating funds to departments are transparent and spending decisions are consistent with the SIP. The budget is managed very effectively. The SLT and the GB monitor expenditure very closely, ensuring that funds are spent wisely.

194 In spite of shortcomings in accommodation, the school makes exceptional use of all available resources. This, together with the very high standards of attainment, ensures that the school gives outstanding value for money.

195 The sixth form is very well staffed by subject specialist teachers who have excellent subject knowledge and many are highly qualified. There is a very good range of resources available which enable the curriculum and all learning pathways to be delivered properly and very effectively. The provision of computers is generally good.

196 Accommodation for sixth-form students is satisfactory. Some difficult decisions have been taken, which include the loss of the common room, to improve the learning environment for all sixth-form students. The designated library area with computers for sixth-form students is used very well. The students also make very good and mature use of the hall area, both to study and to socialise.

197 The value for money, when all resources are taken into account and balanced against the excellent results achieved by sixth-form students, is outstanding.
Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</th>
<th>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</th>
<th>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welsh second language</td>
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<tr>
<td>KS3</td>
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<td>KS4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sixth form</td>
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198 Examination results in Welsh second language at GCSE in the last two years in both the full course and the short course have been well above local and national averages for passes at grades A*-C. These results represent good achievement for these pupils.

199 No candidates undertook, or were entered, for the Welsh second language course at A2 level in 2008 or 2009. In 2009, examination results at Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level in Welsh second language were well above local and national averages for passes at grades A and B. These results represent very good achievement for these students.

Key Stage 3

Good features

200 Most pupils speak clearly with good pronunciation and intonation. They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. They all respond very well to starter activities in lessons and they are already very familiar with the skills they intend to acquire in most lessons.

201 Most pupils across the ability range are able to discuss a range of topics with a good grasp of Welsh syntax. They use a variety of activities and games to improve their language accuracy. The majority of pupils speak aloud well. They use basic language patterns confidently and give simple explanations and opinions appropriately. They can extend their answers well, using the present and past tenses effectively and take advantage of regular opportunities to feed back their findings in paired work and in groups.

202 Most learners read aloud clearly with appropriate emphasis to show understanding. They readily understand simple sentences on familiar topics like “Ffilmiau” or “Cerddoriaeth” that are within their experience, either by responding orally or in structured basic written tasks.

203 Written work is usually completed to a good standard and neatly presented. Most learners generate a range of sentence patterns and give their opinions well. Standards of language accuracy are satisfactory on the whole and pupils make good use of the language file (Ffeil Iaith) available to them to produce work that is accurate in the main. More able pupils vary tenses very well and many write with good fluency in extended sentences.

204 Standards in oracy and in written work are good. The majority of pupils take advantage of regular opportunities to read aloud and a few participate in these activities confidently and mostly with appropriate expression.
The majority of pupils listen purposefully to the contribution of others and they participate confidently in role play. This deepens their understanding of their work.

The majority of pupils speak aloud well. They use basic language patterns confidently and give simple explanations and opinions appropriately. Many of these pupils extend their answers well, using the present and past tenses effectively.

The majority of pupils read well and respond to various very good visual stimuli to prompt further discussion, especially those pupils with SEN who make good progress.

Most pupils listen attentively and undertake writing tasks competently; many can write with good fluency in extended sentences.

**Shortcomings**

The majority of pupils do not use ICT enough to support their learning.

In a majority of lessons, there is insufficient challenge for the more able pupils.

In a majority of lessons, a number of pupils do not speak aloud with enough grammatical accuracy and intonation.

**Key Stage 4**

**Outstanding features**

The most recent results gained by boys and girls at GCSE in both the full course and the short course exceed local and national averages for passes at grades A* - C in all cases. In around half of these cases the results gained by the school are more than 20 percentage points higher than the local and national averages. These results demonstrate outstanding attainment.

In 2009, the percentage of pupils who gained the two highest GCSE grades, grade A* or A, was significantly higher than both the local and the national averages. The relatively high number of pupils who gained the highest grades is an outstanding feature.

**Good features**

The majority of pupils speak with appropriate pronunciation and intonation and many read aloud with meaning and expression.

Standards of oracy are good. Most pupils understand their teachers without difficulty when teachers respond to them in the target language. In paired-work, they ask and answer questions appropriately and the majority of more able pupils can hold a conversation of several exchanges. With good encouragement from the teachers, most learners extend their answers by providing more detail and by giving appropriate reasons to support their views.
Most learners understand the main flow of the lesson well: the starter activities, the skills they will acquire and how to move on to the next stage in their own personal development; these are good features. Most pupils respond well orally to a varying degree of stimuli and or to structured tasks.

Writing standards are good and the majority of learners show a sound grasp of grammar and spelling. Work is neatly presented on the whole and learners make good use of the very good support materials available to them to produce work that is accurate in the main. This is a strong feature of the department.

A minority of more able pupils produce work that contains a greater variety of language structures, tenses and vocabulary.

Pupils with SEN make good progress in relation to their abilities.

Shortcomings

A minority of pupils' oral contributions are limited.

The language of a few learners is prone to grammatical errors, such as incorrect positive and negative answers and the use of the interrogative instead of the first or third person of the verb.

A significant minority of able pupils would benefit from extension work to meet their needs.

Sixth form

Outstanding features

In Y13, nearly all students speak with a very good degree of fluency in Welsh. Their grammatical accuracy in the use of Welsh is excellent. The way they interact with each other when discussing literary tasks such as the play “Siwan” by Saunders Lewis is outstanding.

In Y13, most students demonstrate a high level of skill in literary appreciation. They comprehend and interpret various literary techniques to support their study of Welsh literature. They use this knowledge to very good effect in the work they undertake in class and in various written assignments. This is an outstanding feature.

Good features

Most students' discussions on aspects of poetry and the play are good and they use appropriate terms to do this. They strengthen their arguments and contentions with appropriate quotations from the set text. Most students' understanding of the various aspects of poetry and their use of poetic techniques are good. Their knowledge of and appropriate use of assessment criteria improves the standard of their work.

Many students produce written work of a very good standard, in a variety of forms and their work displays an appropriate grasp of standard Welsh. They use a range of styles and registers to a very good standard.
Listening and discussion skills are very well developed in Y13 and students respond well to one another and to their teachers. Many engage in a natural conversation in the target language, they discuss the set texts with thorough understanding and extend their vocabulary using a wide range of complex language structures.

In Y12, most students’ skills in literary appreciation are good. A majority of students have acquired more specialist vocabulary and terminology and are making good use of it. They make accurate and purposeful notes on set texts, justify their opinions with well-thought-out reasons and many also quote appropriately from the text to support their comments.

More able learners in Y13 are able to make synoptic links with other texts.

Most students produce coursework of good quality that includes extended and varied pieces of writing for a range of purposes, showing the ability to elaborate and develop ideas coherently. Standards of language accuracy in coursework are good. The work is presented well with good use made of ICT.

A few students write with a high level of fluency using sophisticated language to explain how characters develop in the play and why.

Shortcomings

A few students prefer to listen than to contribute to discussions on the set text; many do not respond in depth on aspects of poetry and in a significant majority of students, their work is prone to grammatical errors.

A few students do not make synoptic links with other texts to demonstrate a broad base of learning to support learning.

Mathematics

**KS3**  Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings  
**KS4**  Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings  
**Sixth form**  Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Examination results in mathematics at GCSE over the last two years have been consistently above both the national averages and local averages for passes at A* to C and A* to G grades. These results represent good achievement for these pupils and are slightly above those expected for pupils of similar abilities.

Examination results at A level over the last two years have fluctuated. In 2009, the results for passes at A and B grades were well below local and national averages. These results were in line with student’s abilities.

A small number of pupils sit the GCSE statistics examination. These pupils opt voluntarily to take this subject and all achieved passes at A* to C grades.
Key Stage 3

Good features

237 The more able pupils across the age and ability ranges answer questions orally with clarity, understanding and accuracy.

238 Most pupils have a sound knowledge of number, vulgar fractions, decimal fractions and percentages and the relationship between them. They have spatial awareness and understand the concepts of the area and volume using appropriate units.

239 Pupils in Y7 investigate competently the relationship between a large polygon and the number of smaller ones that could be drawn inside. This quality of problem-solving is a benefit from the Cognitive Accelerated Mathematical Education (CAME) lessons.

240 In Y8 pupils of higher ability accurately identify number sequences and use algebraic expressions appropriately. Pupils of lower ability explore the relationship between similar shapes and the lengths of corresponding sides using isometric paper.

241 In Y9, pupils of higher ability have a good understanding of the methods of solution of pairs of linear simultaneous equations. The lower ability Y9 pupils are able to draw triangles using rulers and protractors accurately. They can also draw accurate scale diagrams.

242 Pupils with SEN make good progress.

243 Most pupils across the ability ranges use calculators appropriately and effectively in their work.

Shortcomings

244 In a small minority of classes pupils do not always complete their work or correct work that is wrong. They lack confidence in their mathematical abilities.

245 The more able pupils in a small minority of classes do not achieve their potential.

Key Stage 4

Good features

246 The more able pupils answer questions clearly and accurately giving explanations that illustrate a good understanding of mathematical concepts. Most of the more able pupils make good progress.

247 Most pupils understand the concepts of area and volume using appropriate units and have a wide spatial awareness. They have a sound knowledge of
number, vulgar fractions, decimal fractions and percentages and the relationship between them.

248 The more able Y11 pupils have a clear understanding of the trigonometry of the right angled triangle and the formulas for the area of all triangles. They can use this knowledge to solve everyday problems. Lower ability Y11 pupils have a good knowledge of angles with lines and triangles and can apply this to answer appropriate questions.

249 In Y10, the more able pupils draw cumulative frequency graphs and use these graphs to determine the median and inter-quartile range of the data. Lower ability Y10 pupils have a good knowledge of basic probability and apply this well to everyday situations.

250 Pupils with SEN make good progress.

251 Calculators are used appropriately and accurately by most pupils.

**Shortcomings**

252 A small minority of pupils do not always complete their work or correct work that is wrong. This mainly occurs when pupils have been absent. They lack confidence in their mathematical abilities.

253 In a small minority of classes, the more able pupils do not achieve their potential.

**Sixth form**

**Good features**

254 Students in Y13 have a good understanding of a range of concepts in pure mathematics and mechanics or statistics. They are learning to adapt this knowledge to solve associated questions.

255 In Y12, students make good progress in understanding the basic concepts of pure mathematics and mechanics. In addition, a small number of students are studying further mathematics, decision theory and statistics.

**Shortcomings**

256 There are no significant shortcomings.
History

KS3 Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
KS4 Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
Sixth form Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

257 Examination results in history at GCSE in the last two years have been well above local and national averages for passes at A* to C grades. These results represent good achievement for these pupils.

258 Examination results in history at A level in the last two years have been well above local and national averages for passes at A and B grades. These results represent outstanding achievement for these students.

Key Stage 3

Outstanding features

259 There are unusually high levels of oracy and literacy in each year group. They enable pupils to demonstrate more fully the extent of their knowledge and understanding of historical topics.

260 Pupils in Y8 are capable of high levels of critical historical reasoning. For example, in a written investigation of the culpability of Richard III for the murder of the princes in the tower, they can combine evaluation of primary sources as evidence for defence or prosecution with references to the work of A.L. Rowse and other historians of the period.

261 This is continued in Y9, where pupils carry out an extended evaluation of Prys Morgan’s view that Wales was ‘the engine of empire’ in the 19th century, making critical use of a wide range of both primary and secondary sources.

262 Pupils achieve a very high level of empathetic reasoning by the end of Y9. In their study of the first world war in one class, for example, pupils wrote letters both to, and from, the Front, showing not only a keen knowledge of trench and home conditions, but also a sophisticated sense of period.

Good features

263 Pupils in Y7 use their contextual knowledge to make very sophisticated inferences from visual sources offering evidence of the dangers of child labour in the 19th century. For example, one pupil observed: “The clothing is ill-fitting – probably because they can’t afford more than one set of clothes”.

264 Thinking skills developed as part of the Integrated Curriculum in Y7 have a positive effect on pupils’ historical reasoning.

265 Lower-attaining pupils achieve well and are caught up in the general drive for hard work and high standards. Pupils with SEN achieve good standards.
Shortcomings

266 There are no significant shortcomings.

Key Stage 4

Outstanding features

267 The most distinctive development at KS4 is pupils’ ability to construct and analyse long-view narratives as a means of calculating the significance of past events as trends, turning points or ‘false dawns’.

268 For example, pupils in Y11 identify trends and turning points in long-term narratives dealing with American foreign policy and the development of Civil Rights. In the latter case, one group of pupils argued that the real turning point occurred in the 1950s, rather than the better known 1960s, because of the relative strength of opposition.

Good features

269 Pupils in Y10 studying the impact of war on Germany understand that unreliable evidence can still be useful. As an example, they refer to an announcement by Goebbels in 1944 minimising the effect of Russian invasion of Germany.

Shortcomings

270 There are no significant shortcomings.

Sixth form

Outstanding features

271 Students in Y12, using similar long-view techniques to those observed in Y11, demonstrate the relative impact of a series of protests and risings in 19th century Wales. Their analysis and evaluation of a collection of sources dealing with conditions in Merthyr before the rising are outstanding.

272 In a Y13 class, students use interpretations of artefacts to make generalised statements about life in Celtic and Roman Britain. Initial deductions, based on the physical properties of each artefact, are supported by contextual knowledge. By fixing the identity of objects in this way, the students are then able to make wider inferences, not only about Celtic and Roman Britain, but also about the mingling of both cultures.

Good features

273 Students studying ‘Medea’ in a Y12 Classical Civilisation class, show detailed awareness of the feelings of Medea during her exile in Athens. They know that
the actions of people in the past can only be interpreted and explained by reference to contemporary values and beliefs.

274 In two lessons in Y13, first Molotov and then Stalin and Churchill are put on trial, accused of starting the Cold War. Students, acting for both the prosecution and defence, research their arguments very thoroughly, acquit themselves well in argument and rebuttal and generally show an ability to think quickly and effectively in response to developing situations.

Shortcomings

275 There are no significant shortcomings.

<table>
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<th>Geography</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KS3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>KS4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sixth form</strong></td>
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</table>

276 Examination results in geography at GCSE in the last two years have been just above national averages for passes at A* to C grades. These results are broadly in line with pupils’ ability.

277 Examination results in geography at A level in the last two years have been well above national averages for passes at A to C grades. These results represent very good achievement for these students.

Key Stage 3

Good features

278 Many pupils develop a good understanding of the social, economic and political issues linked with the heroin trail. They fully understand why Afghan farmers grow opium, the methods of marketing and the difficulties involved in stopping the illegal trade.

279 Most pupils demonstrate a good grasp of geographical terminology. They use key words appropriately and accurately in a variety of contexts.

280 Pupils with SEN generally complete work of a good standard in relation to their ability.

281 Competence in a range of geographical skills is good. Pupils use maps, photographs, statistical and graphical data, written texts and atlases with confidence.

282 Most pupils demonstrate a good understanding of place. They are proficient in locating and mapping crime in Monmouth, the heroin trail from Afghanistan to the UK and the major physical and political features of the Indian sub-continent.
Many pupils have a good understanding of the reasons for the introduction and the consequences of China’s ‘one-child policy’. They are very adept at constructing a line graph to measure the policy’s level of success.

Shortcomings

A few pupils are insecure in their map-reading skills.

A very few pupils lack a positive attitude towards their work. This has a negative impact on their standard of work.

Key Stage 4

Good features

Most pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of geographical vocabulary. They apply the terminology to their studies with increasing precision and accuracy.

Pupils display a good knowledge of the location and characteristics of place. Their study of the Amazon Basin with reference to the inhabitants and the environment is good.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the relationship between people and the environment. They use the rainforest case study in Brazil to good effect.

Pupils with SEN display a sound understanding of all aspects of their work in relation to their ability.

Most pupils have a good understanding of development and the indicators deployed for its measurement. They are competent in applying the indicators to the appropriate social, economic and environmental categories using a Venn diagram.

Shortcomings

A few pupils are insecure in the application of indicators to the appropriate social, economic and environmental categories.

The exercise books of a few pupils display missing or incomplete work. This has an adverse effect on standards.

Sixth form

Outstanding features

Students demonstrate an outstanding grasp of the positive and negative impact of planned change on the lives of people living in the deprived areas of less economically developed countries. They fully appreciate the sustainability aspects which apply to areas such as Dharavi in Mumbai.
Most students show a thorough understanding of the impact of redevelopment schemes on traditional areas of heavy industry. Their knowledge and understanding of the social, economic and environmental impact of the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation on the bay area are outstanding.

Students have a very good grasp of sustainability issues with reference to the management of water supply and demand. They use the Colorado Basin case study to good effect.

Good features

Many students demonstrate a good depth of knowledge, understanding and skill in the subject. They are proficient in the use of maps, statistical data, printed source material and ICT.

Students use complex geographical terminology with confidence. Their research work is good. Their completed assignments demonstrate high and often very high standards.

Most students use a wide range of statistical techniques, map skills, graphical representation, diagrams and ICT in analysing and recording data on all aspects of their course to good effect.

A mature approach to the subject by students contributes to the achievement of good geographical skills including a sound understanding of increasingly complex geographical concepts.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Art & Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KS3</td>
<td>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS4</td>
<td>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth form</td>
<td>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Examination results in art and design at GCSE in the last two years have been below national averages for passes A* to C and A* to G grades. These results are lower than those to be expected of pupils of similar ability.

Over the last two years, the percentage of students who have gained AS (Applied), at grades A to C has been below local and national averages. These results are lower than those to be expected of students of similar ability. However, the percentage of students who have gained A level grades A to C in Fine Art are above local and national figures and this represents very good achievement for these students.
Key Stage 3

Good features

303 The work of pupils, including those with SEN, shows progressive development of skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the key stage.

304 Most pupils use primary and secondary sources effectively to fuel their investigations and their work exemplifies the embedding of the visual elements of art and design. All pupils show solid evidence of their ability to use effectively a diverse range of materials and techniques, such as drawing, painting, ceramics, papier mache and printmaking. They also utilise the work of a range of artists and art forms from around the world, including Welsh examples, to inspire their creative making.

305 Pupils in Y7 display good analytical skills as they work in groups to compare and contrast photographs of celebrities, make well-considered judgements about the work of Pop artists and confidently communicate their findings verbally and visually via a mind map.

306 All pupils in Y7 successfully explore other cultures and this results in a range of varied two and three-dimensional outcomes. One group in Y7 demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal art through their carefully annotated drawings and effectively painted three-dimensional burial poles. They successfully reference suitable images of animals from secondary source materials to create well-composed designs which are skilfully painted on burial poles using Aboriginal painting techniques.

307 All pupils in Y8 work to the theme of ‘Movement’ and explore a range of materials. Most pupils in one Y8 group produce designs of good quality for their sea-life ceramic vessels showing good pencil control and individual, imaginative responses. Most pupils illustrate successfully how the work of ceramicist Carla Potter and Welsh ceramic artists, Pearl Davies, Jan Merry and Barbara Phelps have influenced their designs.

308 Groups of pupils in Y9 create effective exploratory illustrations of a character from Shakespeare’s ‘Tempest’ showing good pencil drawing skills. A few pupils produce mature drawings showing a sophisticated use of mark-making techniques. Many pupils create individual, imaginative responses of good quality.

309 In addition, most pupils in Y9 create fairly accurate self-portraits which they manipulate imaginatively to show the influence of their effective research into the work of H. R. Giger.

Shortcomings

310 Pupils’ use of sketchbooks is inconsistent and, generally, work is not annotated.
The majority of pupils in Y7 and Y8 do not use ICT to carry out research into the work of artists and designers or for creating images in art lessons.

**Key Stage 4**

**Good features**

312 In Y10 all pupils following the vocational course work in groups productively to draw elements of a range of animals to design effectively zoomorphic pots which are inspired by examples from around the world. All designs are of a good standard showing a thorough understanding of the brief, good use of imagination and competent technical skills.

313 All pupils in Y11 who follow the vocational course display proficient technical skills through their range of lively, interesting ideas for skateboards and snowboards based on the work of contemporary designers.

314 All pupils studying GCSE Art and Design in Y10 investigate natural forms and most pupils create competent drawings from direct observation showing skilled handling of a range of two-dimensional media. They reference successfully the work of Georgia O’Keeffe, Cezanne, Vermeer and Joanna Basford to develop their work as they progress towards their final compositions in which most pupils achieve good standards.

315 The research process features prominently in the work of the majority of pupils in Y10 and Y11. Pupils research systematically and utilise the work of a range of artists, including contemporary and Welsh examples to influence the development of their work in the context of process and ideas.

316 Pupils in both year groups achieve good standards in their work. This covers a good variety of skill areas, such as mark-making, papermaking, printmaking, drawing, 3D, ceramics, painting, graphics, sculpture, photography, ICT and textiles.

317 The majority of learners know their personal targets and understand the process they need to undertake to secure improvements.

**Shortcomings**

318 A small minority of pupils demonstrate weaker technical skills.

319 A minority of pupils do not annotate their work in sketchbooks.

**Sixth form**

**Outstanding features**

320 Most students’ sketchbooks and final outcomes show originality, eagerness to experiment with materials and techniques, well-developed technical skills and thorough research into the work of artists from a range of genres, including
contemporary and Welsh examples. Students’ research generates analysis, reflection and the adoption of components of the artists’ working practices to fuel their own creative responses.

321 Most students’ sketchbooks demonstrate their astute annotated reflections on the development of their work. They regularly engage in peer evaluation of one another’s sketchbooks and group critiques to offer well-considered advice and ideas to drive their work forward. All students know the standard of their current work and the process they need to follow to achieve their target grades.

Good features

322 In Y12, all students make good use of their sketchbooks to demonstrate their ability to successfully explore the human form. They do this through careful manipulation of a range of media and techniques and original development of ideas. These are informed by thorough research into the work of a range of well-selected artists.

323 In Y13, students who follow the course in Applied Art and Design display mature, well-developed investigative skills in response to the brief based on the Forest of Dean. This has resulted in a range of well-made outcomes in areas such as photography, surface pattern, painting, sculpture and printmaking.

Shortcomings

324 There are no significant shortcomings.

Business Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KS4</th>
<th>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sixth form</td>
<td>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

325 Examination results in Business Studies at GCSE in the last two years have been below local and national averages for passes at A* to C grades. These results are in line with pupils’ ability.

326 Examination results in Business Studies at A level in the last two years have been below local and national averages for passes at A to B grades. These results are in line with students’ ability.

327 Significant progress has been made in this subject since the last inspection and changes to the courses offered at both levels have been made in order to address previous issues and shortcomings.

Key Stage 4

Good features

328 Most pupils listen attentively and with respect to the teacher and to one another and many refine their work in response to formative comments made by the
teacher and often by their peers. A majority strive to achieve and often exceed their personal grade targets.

329 Nearly all work well and enthusiastically in groups where they exhibit good communication skills, and work productively together, discussing appropriately with their peers. Many employ business terminology correctly and with confidence.

330 A majority of pupils are able to build upon their prior knowledge and understanding of business concepts and principles.

331 All pupils make good use of ICT to produce coursework evidence. Their assignments are well presented in a neat and coherent manner and most individuals strive to ensure that correct spelling, punctuation and grammar are evident throughout their work.

Shortcomings

332 A few pupils make slightly slower progress than the majority because they have difficulty sustaining their concentration throughout business lessons.

333 A minority are less able to transfer their skills to new situations without help, for example, differentiating customer service needs in organisations outside the range under consideration.

Sixth form

Good features

334 All students work successfully together in a co-operative and helpful manner when investigating business problems and most are able to judge the outcomes of their work very critically and perceptively. All contribute well in lessons and are enthusiastic and willing to give of their best.

335 Students increase their understanding of business issues through topical discussions, self and peer-appraisals followed by group discussions. All demonstrate a sound understanding of business principles and processes such as making strategic decisions and are able to explain how various internal and external factors may influence business outcomes such as profitability.

336 All students make good use of external stimuli such as work-experience placements and visits. These are vocationally orientated to further develop students’ understanding of topics such as organisational structures and the roles and responsibilities of employees.

337 All students are adept in the use of ICT to facilitate communication of written reports, presentations and financial information, such as business cash flows. The latter aspect demonstrates their ability to apply number skills to analyse business performance through the appropriate use of mathematical probability,
functions and formulae. All students are able to understand the way in which these demonstrate the performance of the company concerned.

338 All students make good confident presentations supported by multi-media materials, improvements to which are facilitated through effective peer, self and teacher-assessments.

339 Students in Y13 in particular are able to discuss issues in small groups effectively and exhibit a good knowledge and understanding of relevant course content and their work. In both Y12 and Y13, most students work independently to produce well-presented portfolio assignments. More able students produce work that includes in-depth and extended responses, reflecting a very good understanding of business theory and practice. They make fluent use of relevant terminology and vocabulary.

340 Many students make good progress throughout their courses, responding positively to constructive formative reviews provided by their tutors.

341 All students demonstrate the ability to transfer their knowledge and understanding to a wide range of situations, and most are able to relate these situations to topical business and economic situations. They find, organise and use information from a variety of sources and nearly all can evaluate such data and draw reasoned conclusions from it. They all contribute readily to class discussion, exhibiting well-developed interpersonal and communication skills.

**Shortcomings**

342 A few students in Y12 are less able to use essential skills to analyse and apply critical reasoning in response to different situations using appropriate business and economic techniques, language and vocabulary.
School's response to the inspection

343 We are delighted that Mr Carter and his team have recognised our journey since our last inspection. Our focus has always been to ensure that all our young people have the best possible experience of our school and that they learn to lead their lives. We want our students to be able to think for themselves, make moral choices, achieve their best, recognise their responsibility to others and lay the foundations for the rest of their lives. To know that we are achieving these goals and to have this verified to Estyn’s exacting standards is very satisfying. We would like to thank Mr Carter and his team for their intelligence, insight, sensitivity and courtesy during their time in our school.

344 We are particularly pleased with the recognition that our integrated curriculum in Y7 and Y8 has “generated a joy for learning” and that we have achieved “an excellent culture of learning across the school.” This has been achieved through our passion and commitment to excellence, through the high quality of our staff, the guidance of our governors, the support of our parents and community - and the zest for life of our young people.

345 We are proud of our achievements but we know that this is not the end of the story. There is still much to do. The world continues to change and make ever more demands on our young people, and on us all. Our school will continue to strive for the highest standards. We will also be working towards ensuring that the built environment and the school’s ICT capability are appropriate to outstanding 21st century learning and living.

346 We will continue to focus on making sure our learners are prepared for their futures and that our school both meets all the required standards and reaches beyond them.

347 The journey continues.
Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Monmouth Comprehensive School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School type</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age range of pupils</td>
<td>11-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address of school</td>
<td>Old Dixton Road, Monmouth, Monmouthshire,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postcode</td>
<td>NP25 3YT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone number</td>
<td>01600 775177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Headteacher: Ms Carole Herman
Date of appointment: 1st September 2001
Chair of governors / Appropriate authority: Mr Stuart McLester
Reporting inspector: Mr Peter Guy Carter
Dates of inspection: 22nd February 2010 to 26th February 2010

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year group</th>
<th>Y7</th>
<th>Y8</th>
<th>Y9</th>
<th>Y10</th>
<th>Y11</th>
<th>Y12</th>
<th>Y13</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of pupils</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>1643</td>
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</table>

Total number of teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>Full-time equivalent (fte)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of teachers</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staffing information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)</th>
<th>15.1 : 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average teaching group size</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall contact ratio (percentage)</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Y7</th>
<th>Y8</th>
<th>Y9</th>
<th>Y10</th>
<th>Y11</th>
<th>Y12</th>
<th>Y13</th>
<th>Whole school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term 1</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>85.1</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 2</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>89.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 3</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals: 8.8

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection: 25 (temporary) 0 (permanent)
Report by Peter Guy Carter
Monmouth Comprehensive School, 22/02/10

Appendix 3

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

Monmouth Comprehensive School
Monmouthshire
LEA/School no: 679/4060

School comparative information: National Curriculum Assessments 2009 with benchmarking

Key Stage 3

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>LEA 2009</td>
<td>Wales 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>74</td>
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<td>Welsh</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
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<td>Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSI</td>
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<td>57</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School 2009</td>
<td>LEA 2009</td>
<td>Wales 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>77</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSI</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Performance over time (2005 - 2009)

Contextual Information

Benchmarked against schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.
School's results shown in greyed boxes. Column headings refer to...

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Quartile 1</th>
<th>Quartile 2</th>
<th>Quartile 3</th>
<th>Quartile 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>73</td>
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<td>83</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>83</td>
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<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSI</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. Figures for Welsh refer to attainment in Welsh first language only.
2. CSI = Core Subject Indicator. To achieve the CSI a pupil must achieve at least the expected level 5 in both Mathematics and Science and either English or Welsh first language.
3. If there were no pupils eligible for assessment in a subject for a particular year the graph will discontinue and show a gap for that year.
## Pupils aged 15

**Number of pupils aged 15 who were on roll in January 2009: 265**  
**Percentage of pupils aged 15 who:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>entered at least one qualification</th>
<th>achieved the Level 1 threshold</th>
<th>achieved the Level 2 threshold</th>
<th>achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics</th>
<th>Core Subject Indicator (2)</th>
<th>Average wider points score per pupil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School 2008/09</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>61</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49</td>
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<td><strong>Wales 2008/09</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>61</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School 07/08/09</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td>413</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School 06/07/08</strong></td>
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<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Number of boys aged 15 who were on roll in January 2009: 122**  
**Percentage of boys aged 15 who:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>achieved the Level 1 threshold</th>
<th>achieved the Level 2 threshold</th>
<th>achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics</th>
<th>Core Subject Indicator (2)</th>
<th>Average wider points score per pupil</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School 2008/09</strong></td>
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<td>..</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number of girls aged 15 who were on roll in January 2009: 143**  
**Percentage of girls aged 15 who:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>entered at least one qualification</th>
<th>achieved the Level 1 threshold</th>
<th>achieved the Level 2 threshold</th>
<th>achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics</th>
<th>Core Subject Indicator (2)</th>
<th>Average wider points score per pupil</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School 2008/09</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>85</td>
<td>72</td>
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<td><strong>Wales 2008/09</strong></td>
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<td><strong>School 07/08/09</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School 06/07/08</strong></td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>419</td>
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</table>
## Pupils aged 15

| School 2008/09 | 0  | 0.0 | 0  | 0.0 | 0  | 0.0 |
| LEA Area 2008/09 | 2  | 0.7 | 2  | 0.7 | 1  | 0.7 |
| Wales 2008/09   | 2  | 0.9 | 3  | 1.0 | 1  | 0.8 |
| School 07/08/09 | 2  | ..  | 3  | ..  | 0  | ..  |
| School 06/07/08 | 2  | ..  | 3  | ..  | 1  | ..  |

## Pupils aged 17

| School 2008/09 | 96 | 682 | 98 | 631 | 95 | 726 |
| LEA Area 2008/09 | 96 | 626 | 95 | 581 | 98 | 670 |
| Wales 2008/09 | 96 | 688 | 95 | 656 | 97 | 715 |
| School 07/08/09 | .. | 679 | .. | 618 | .. | 734 |
| School 06/07/08 | .. | ..  | .. | ..  | .. | ..  |
Key Stage 4 free school meal benchmarking data for Monmouth Comprehensive School (6794060) (summary data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Free school meals (FSM) benchmarking group (a)</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to and including 10% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10% and up to and including 15% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 15% and up to and including 20% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20% and up to and including 30% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 30% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pupil Level Annual Schools' Census (PLASC)

(a) From 2000, a three-year average of these data is used to determine the free school meal benchmarking group for the school, and so these data are presented as a three-year average from that point (i.e. by taking the data for the current year, and also the two years prior to deriving the figure).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and Maths</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the level 2 threshold</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the level 1 threshold</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the Core Subject Indicator</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average wider points score across all subjects</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 15 year olds achieving a level 2 qualification in English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 15 year olds achieving a level 2 qualification in Mathematics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 15 year olds achieving a level 2 qualification in Science</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Absence data (a):

| Percentage of half day sessions missed due to absence | 2 | 3 | ~ |

Source: Pupil Examination Performance Information and Pupil Level Annual Schools' Census (PLASC)

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

The symbol "~" means that data are not applicable.
The symbol "~" means that data are not available until late 2009.
Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

A team of 15 inspectors, including a peer assessor and the school’s nominee spent the equivalent of 58.5 days in the school. Members of the team held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:
- 133 lessons or part lessons;
- assemblies and registration periods; and
- some extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:
- staff, parents and carers and governors before the inspection;
- senior leaders, middle managers, teachers, learning support assistants and other members of associate staff;
- representatives of the LA;
- members of the community; and
- groups of pupils and students from each year group and representatives of the school council.

The inspection team considered:
- the school’s self-evaluation report;
- 124 responses from parents and carers to a questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- samples of reports to parents and carers; and
- samples of pupils’ and students’ work across the curriculum.

After the inspection, inspectors held meetings with six subject departments, senior leaders and governors.
## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team member</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter Carter</td>
<td>Registered Inspector, KQ1, Context, Summary, Recommendations, Appendices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Williams</td>
<td>KQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald Graham</td>
<td>KQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwyn Griffiths</td>
<td>KQ4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham Davies</td>
<td>KQ5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Sparks</td>
<td>KQ6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhiannon Boardman</td>
<td>Lay Inspector, KQ7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Rees</td>
<td>Welsh second language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Edwards</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Kelly</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huw Llewellyn</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan Samuel-Thomas</td>
<td>Art and Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elwyn Taylor</td>
<td>Business Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Bird</td>
<td>Nominee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Nicholas</td>
<td>Peer Assessor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Acknowledgement

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

### Contractor:

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