

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF THE  
SCHOOL INSPECTIONS ACT 1996**

***YSGOL GYFUN ABERAERON***

***Stryd y Fro***

***Aberaeron***

***Ceredigion***

***School Number: 667-4042***

***Date of Inspection: 26-29 April 2004***

***by***

***Mr D Gwynfor Evans***

***Registered Inspector***

***Date: 30 June 2004***

***Under Estyn Contract Number: CT36/03***

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## **CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES**

A new nomenclature to describe pupils' progress through school was introduced in 1989. This system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to age 18 is intended to ease communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs and emphasise the importance of continuity.

The term "Reception" (R) is applied to the year group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) who attain the age of 5 during the academic year. "Year 1" (Y1) is applied to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on to Y13, the year group who attain the age of 18 during the academic year:

{PRIVATE }	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Years	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

Key Stage(KS) 1 of the national curriculum consists of Y1 and Y2; KS2 of Y3 to Y6; KS3 of Y7 to Y9; KS4 of Y10 and Y11 (which is the final year of compulsory education).

## **GRADE DESCRIPTIONS**

The five-point grading scale used to represent the main judgements in this report is as follows:

1. Very good: many good features, some of them outstanding.
2. Good: good features and no major shortcomings.
3. Satisfactory: good features outweigh some shortcomings.
4. Unsatisfactory: some satisfactory work but shortcomings in important areas.
5. Poor: many shortcomings.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS IN COMMON USE

A	Advanced
ACCAC	Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
AS	Advanced Subsidiary
AVCE	Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education
CAD	Computer-aided Design
CAM	Computer-aided Manufacture
CEG	Careers Education and Guidance
CSI	Core Subject Indicator
EIO	Education Inclusion Officer
ELC	Entry Level Certificate
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEP	Individual Educational Plan
ILS	Individual Learning Systems
KS	Key Stage
LAC	Looked After Children
LEDCs	Less Economically Developed Countries
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
MEDCs	More Economically Developed Countries
NC	National Curriculum
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PS(H)E	Personal and Social (Health) Education
RoA	Record of Achievement
SATs	Standard Assessment Tasks
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SMT	Senior Management Team
UA	Unitary Authority
WJEC	Welsh Joint Education Committee
WRE	Work-related Education
Y1-Y13	Year 1 - Year 13

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## 1. CONTEXT

### The school and its priorities

Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron is a unitary authority (UA) maintained 11-18 mixed comprehensive school serving the coastal town of Aberaeron and the largely rural surrounding area. There are 748 pupils on roll, of whom 115 are in the sixth form. At the time of the last inspection in April 1998, there were 784 pupils on roll, of whom 139 were sixth form students.

The school is a traditional bilingual school and although Welsh is the predominant language of only about a quarter of the pupils, the school estimates that approximately half of them speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard.

The school caters for pupils representing a full range of academic ability and socio-economic background; it considers that the area it serves is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Thirteen per cent of the pupils are registered as being entitled to free school meals, a figure below the national average but broadly in line with the county average. There are 29 pupils (3.8 per cent) with statements of special educational needs (SEN). Of them, 11 (1.4 per cent) have statements that include modification to the National Curriculum (NC). A further 110 (14.6 per cent) are identified by the school as having SEN.

The school's mission is 'to provide a centre of excellence within a bilingual community in which all individuals are encouraged to develop their maximum potential'. It has appropriate aims and objectives to realise its mission and the School Development Plan (SDP) for the period 2002 to 2005 addresses whole-school issues and needs. As a traditional bilingual school it also aims to ensure bilingual provision in every aspect of school life to enable pupils to integrate satisfactorily and happily into a bilingual community.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

### The main findings of the report

#### Educational standards achieved

##### Good features

- Standards achieved by pupils were satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of the classes observed. Standards were good and sometimes very good in 71 per cent compared with 56 per cent in the last inspection.
- In Key Stage (KS) 3, standards were at least good in 57 per cent of the lessons observed, and in KS4, they were good or better in 76 per cent. In the last inspection the proportion of good or very good standards in KS3 and KS4 was about 52 per cent.
- Standards in the sixth form were the highest with standards good or very good in 91 per cent of the lessons observed.
- In the NC tests at the end of KS3 in 2003, 63 per cent of the pupils achieved at least level 5 in mathematics, science, and either Welsh or English (core subjects indicator-CSI) compared with 57 per cent in the UA and 54 per cent nationally. Compared with schools of similar social backgrounds, these results are above the national average.
- The school's external examination results at the end of KS4 as an average over the last three years are above national averages and on a par with the county figures.
- In 2003, 83 per cent of the students achieved at least two or more A-C grades in A Level examinations compared with 77 per cent in the UA and 68 per cent nationally. The average points score per student was 22 compared with 21 at county level and 20 nationally.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve well across the curriculum.

- Standards in personal and social education (PSE) are good, and similarly, standards in the programme of career guidance are also good.
- Pupils' key skills are developing well across the curriculum in the majority of subjects.

**Shortcomings**

- Standards were unsatisfactory in five per cent of the lessons observed.
- Results in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Examinations in 2003 were well below the average achieved by the school in recent years and, in a number of subjects, below the targets set by the school.
- There is a significant underachievement in a minority of boys in KS3 and in a larger proportion of boys in KS4.
- Although the use of information and communications technology (ICT) is good and sometimes very good in some subjects, in others, it is underdeveloped and thus standards are uneven.
- A minority of pupils, as evidenced in incomplete work and gaps in their knowledge, underachieve because they do not attend school regularly.
- In a minority of classes, poor behaviour and negative attitudes have a detrimental effect on pupils' standards of achievement.

**Standards in subjects and areas of learning**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>KS3</b>	<b>KS4</b>	<b>The sixth form</b>
Welsh	Good	Good	Good
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good	Good
Design and technology	Good	Good	Good
Information technology	Good	Very good	-
Computing	-	-	Very good
Information technology AVCE	-	-	Good
History	Good	Good	Good
Geography	Good	Good	Very good
Modern foreign languages	Good	Good	Good
Art	Not inspected	Not inspected	Not inspected
Music	Satisfactory	Good	Very good
Physical education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Religious education	Satisfactory	Good	-
Religious studies	-	-	Good
Personal and Social education	Good	Good	Good
Business Studies	-	Not inspected	-
Health and social care	-	Good (GCSE)	Good (AVCE)
Home economics (GCSE)	-	Good	-
Economics	-	-	Not inspected
Electronics	-	-	No judgement
Media Studies	-	Very good	Very good
Engineering NVQ	-	Good	-
Leisure and Recreation AVCE	-	-	Good
Child Care (Entry Level)	-	-	Good

**Standards in the key skills across the curriculum**

Key skill	KS3 and KS4	Sixth form
Listening	Good	Very Good
Speaking	Good	Good
Reading	Good	Very Good
Writing	Good	Good
Numeracy	Good	Good
Information and Communication Technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Creative	Good	Good
Problem solving	Good	Good

**Quality of education**

**Good features**

- The quality of the teaching was at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of the 185 lessons observed, and was good or very good in 71 per cent of the total. In the last inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons and good or very good in 65 per cent.
- The best teaching was seen in the sixth form where it was at least good in 93 per cent of the classes, and in 25 per cent of these it was very good.
- Good features in the vast majority of lessons across the curriculum are the teachers' good subject knowledge, clear planning and good relationships with their pupils.
- In the majority of lessons, the tasks set are appropriately differentiated for pupils with SEN. The pupils make good progress.
- The school has appropriate arrangements for the assessment and recording of pupils' achievement and progress. The procedures for analysing performance data in order to assist in improving performance are good.
- The curriculum in KS3, KS4 and the sixth form is good and offers an appropriate range of subjects and courses. The provision is socially inclusive generally, ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.
- Planning for the development of key skills in KS3 and KS4 is very good. It is good in the sixth form. The school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2001.
- The quality of support and guidance is good. The arrangements for the development of pupils' PS(H)E are good as is the effectiveness of careers education and guidance.
- The provision for pupils with SEN and those for whom the NC has been modified is good.
- The information provided for parents is very good. Links with the community and the contributory primary schools are also very good. There are good partnership arrangements with industry.
- The quality of work experience organised for pre-16 pupils and post-16 students is very good.

**Shortcomings**

- The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in four per cent of lessons and in a minority of subjects.
- In a minority of lessons, weaknesses in teaching such as low expectations, lack of pace, poor class control and the failure to share clear aims and objectives with pupils, restrict pupils' progress and achievement.
- Core provision in ICT, physical education and religious education in KS4 is not reported on in the annual reports to parents.

- Provision for religious education for all pupils in Y11 and for students in the sixth form does not accord with statutory requirements.

**The ethos of the school and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.**

**Good features**

- Pupils' spiritual awareness is appropriately developed in morning acts of worship assemblies and in religious education lessons.
- Pupils' moral development is good. Most pupils show respect for others. The school has a strong ethos of supporting charitable causes and active citizenship.
- Relationships of pupils with their teachers and with one another are generally good.
- At all stages, pupils have the opportunity to take part in decision making through the school council.
- Pupils' cultural development is good. They have a good awareness of their own culture and heritage and develop a good appreciation of other cultures through their studies and visits abroad.

**Shortcomings**

- In a small minority of classes observed during the inspection, pupils' behaviour and attitude were poor. All staff did not apply consistently school procedures and policies on behaviour and discipline.
- Despite the school's efforts to improve attendance, it remains unsatisfactory. Recording the attendance of pupils is not applied in some lessons in KS3 and KS4. The recording of the attendance of sixth form students is inconsistent.

**Management and efficiency of the school**

**Good features**

- The school has a caring ethos that reflects the social and cultural background of the area it serves.
- The governing body takes an active interest in all aspects of the school's life and work. Members are fully involved in the decision-making process relating to curricular, finance, staffing and accommodation issues.
- The SDP is an effective tool to guide whole-school developments.
- Financial planning and control procedures are effective. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure value for money.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good in some departments; it is very good in ICT, geography and religious education.
- The school is appropriately staffed. Performance management procedures have been implemented.
- The school was awarded 'Investor in People' status for the second time in 2003.
- Overall, the quality of the buildings and rooms is good with many very good features.

**Shortcomings**

- The overseeing and monitoring at senior management level are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure the effective and consistent implementation of some whole-school policies and procedures.
- Although there are examples of good and very good leadership at middle management level in some departments, these qualities are underdeveloped in others. There is not yet a sufficiently strong culture of corporate responsibility, particularly in the area of self-evaluation and planning for improvement across and within all departments.

- The lack of on-site facilities for outdoor physical education impacts adversely on the standards achieved by pupils in physical education.
- A few health and safety issues were reported to the headteacher during the inspection.

### **The effectiveness of the school's attempts to address the key issues identified in the last inspection report**

The school has made good progress in addressing some of the key issues in the last inspection, others remain as areas for further development.

1. Drama and sociology have been removed from the curriculum since the last inspection and whilst alternative arrangements have been made for pupils studying German to study statutory religious education in Y10, the arrangement does not currently apply to Y11 pupils.
2. Changes in the optional arrangements in KS4 and Y12/Y13 have overcome some of the difficulties of choice faced by pupils. However, the delivery of German continues to affect other subjects.
3. There has been some rationalisation of provision at sixth form level, such as the delivery of electronics through video-conferencing facilities. The school is also playing an active role within the authority in the planning of 14-19 education. Nevertheless, classes remain small in some subjects and hence expensive in terms of staffing and resources.
4. With the completion of the building programme and the improved facilities in ICT, the school has made good progress in extending the ICT skills of pupils particularly within specific ICT lessons. The use of ICT is variable within and across subjects and standards are uneven.
5. Collective worship now takes place at the beginning of the school day and the school now complies with statutory requirements.
6. Despite various initiatives to improve attendance, it remains unsatisfactory.
7. Improvements have been made to the quality of reporting to parents and better use is made of the new Contact Diaries to develop home-school links. However, core provision in ICT, physical education and religious education in KS4 is not reported on in the annual reports to parents.
8. The school has now implemented Performance Management arrangements to replace a staff appraisal policy.

## **3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

### **3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning**

Pupils' standards of achievements when they transfer to the school at age 11 correspond broadly to the national averages in recent years. This is reflected in the pupils' NC test results at age 11 at the end of KS2 and is confirmed by other tests administered by the school.

Pupils' standards of achievement were at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of the classes observed during the inspection. In KS3, they were at least good in 57 per cent of the total and very good in seven per cent of them. In KS4, standards were good or better in 76 per cent of the classes, and were very good in nine per cent of those classes. These statistics are an improvement on those recorded at the time of the previous inspection. On that occasion, the proportion of good or very good standards in KS3 and KS4 was about 52 per cent.

In KS3, standards of achievement are good in Welsh, English, science, design and technology, ICT, history geography and modern foreign languages. They are satisfactory in mathematics, music, religious education and physical education. Art was not inspected.

In the NC tests at the end of KS3 in 2003, 63 per cent of the pupils achieved at least level 5 in mathematics, science, and either Welsh or English (CSI) compared with 57 per cent in the county and 54 per cent nationally. In English and science, results were above those of the county and of Wales; in mathematics, they were above the national percentage but slightly below the county, and results in

Welsh were below the county and Wales. Compared with schools having similar social backgrounds, these results are above the national average.

The difference between the performance of boys and girls is greater than the national difference. The percentage of boys achieving at least level 5 in the CSI was 55 per cent compared with 71 per cent for the girls. This represents a gap of 16 per cent compared with nine per cent nationally.

In KS4, pupils' standards of achievement are very good in ICT and media studies. They are good in all other subjects except physical education where they are satisfactory. Art and business studies were not inspected.

The school's examination results at the end of KS4, as an average over the last three years, are above national averages and on a par with county averages. The results in 2003, however, were well below the results achieved by the school in recent years. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE A\*-C grades in 2003 was 52 per cent, compared with 63 per cent in the county and 51 per cent nationally. The percentage achieving five or more GCSE A\*-G grades (87 per cent) was lower than the county percentage (89 per cent) but higher than the average for Wales (85 per cent). Forty-four per cent of the pupils achieved A\*-C grades in every one of the core subjects, mathematics, science, Welsh or English, compared with 47 per cent in the county and 38 per cent nationally. Value added data indicate that Y11 pupils in 2003 performed as well as expected in the majority of subjects at the end of KS4 in comparison with their achievements in the SATs at the end of KS3. However, results in a number of subjects were significantly below the targets set by the school.

The results of the Entry Level Certificate (ELC) examination are good, and an appropriate number sit the examination.

The percentage of boys achieving the KS4 core subject indicator shows a significant downward trend in the last four years. The difference between the performance of boys and girls in the 2003 GCSE examinations is greater than the national difference. This can be seen in the percentage of pupils achieving at least a grade C in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh. In 2003, 27 per cent of the boys achieved this whilst the girls' figure was 47 per cent. Nationally, the figures are 34 per cent and 41 per cent respectively. The difference is also obvious in the percentages of pupils achieving at least five grades A\*-C. For boys, the figure was 41 per cent (below the national average of 45 per cent for boys) whilst the girls' figure was 69 per cent (above the national average of 57 per cent for girls). The school's self-evaluation process highlights the underachievement of boys, particularly in KS4, and is one of the priorities identified in the current SDP.

Standards in PSE are good in both key stages and standards within the careers guidance programme are also good.

Pupils of higher ability achieve standards that are generally good in most subjects in both key stages. In ICT and science they achieve very good standards in both key stages and also in geography in KS3. In some lessons in history, able pupils are insufficiently challenged.

Pupils with SEN make good progress in the vast majority of subjects and very good progress in science and religious education. They do well in specific sessions designed to boost literacy and numeracy skills as well as in a range of subjects across the curriculum. They are given consistent support and care and work adapted appropriately to meet their needs.

Pupils of average to lower ability generally do less well, in relation to ability, than the most able and those with SEN. Expectations of them are not always high enough, nor the tasks challenging enough. In some subjects, including to some extent the core subjects, they have a less secure understanding of basic concepts. Incomplete written work and homework and sporadic absence slow the pace of progress and have a detrimental effect on their standards of achievement.

### **3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum**

Standards in key skills are good across KS3 and KS4. The school was the first in Ceredigion to be awarded the Basic Skills Award and all departments are currently following a basic skills development plan in preparation for their application to renew the award. The whole-school literacy policy has clear aims and objectives with guidelines for departments in relation to speaking and listening, reading, writing and the development of ICT skills. The implementation of the policy is

monitored through the school's recently established procedures, which include a cycle of sampling pupils' work and lesson observations.

### **Listening, speaking, reading and writing**

A number of well-monitored literacy initiatives are overseen by the effective basic skills co-ordinator. A literacy booklet is provided for Y6 parents and guidance is given regarding the development of reading skills. Pupils who are identified as having poor literacy skills are withdrawn from lessons and receive additional support from the SEN department. There is a whole-school reading policy which provides a period of 30 minutes for reading throughout the school on Friday mornings and a spelling clinic is held for up to 30 minutes in the mornings from Monday to Thursday. 'Blitz weeks' encourage whole school awareness of specified targets, such as the use of capital letters and apostrophes and the 'Buddy scheme' currently operates with help from sixth formers. However, the value of the newly instituted Individual Learning System (ILS) Successmaker sessions is undermined by the fact that pupils are withdrawn from normal English and Welsh lessons.

Across the curriculum standards of speaking and listening are good. Pupils in both key stages are generally attentive listeners, though a minority has difficulty in sustaining concentration and listening considerably, rather than talking over others. Most pupils are willing to contribute orally in lessons, but their use of language tends to be informal and responses may be rather brief. Pair and group discussion is a prominent and effective feature of many lessons.

Standards in reading are good. Most pupils read fluently, with expression and understanding, and have the research skills to extract relevant information from a range of sources. Wider reading for pleasure is promoted by the English and Welsh departments, which provide timetabled time for all pupils in KS3 to use the school lending library.

Standards in writing are good overall. Pupils write regularly in most subjects and have good note making skills. They write in a variety of styles for a range of different purposes and extended writing features throughout the key stages in Welsh and English. The use of frameworks, drafting and revising, particularly with the help of ICT, improves the accuracy and presentation of written work, but poor spelling and expression continue to blemish the written work not only of those identified as having poor literacy skills, but of many average and even some of the more able pupils.

### **Numeracy**

Standards in numeracy across the curriculum are good throughout the school. The school has a clear numeracy policy and the co-ordination of this key skill is the responsibility of the head of mathematics. Nearly all departments have a numeracy policy included in their scheme of work. In physical education, pupils are able to collate and analyse data at all key stages and are aware of units of measure. In religious education, pupils deal with numbers in sacred texts whilst in modern foreign languages graphs are used by the pupils. In science, the pupils can apply formulae and rearrange the same correctly and draw graphs as appropriate to represent results. In design and technology and ICT, there are high expectations by teachers and pupils measure and weigh accurately. In Welsh, pupils use different graphs to represent data and in media studies good use is made of pie charts. In geography, the pupils are able to interpret information in numerical form and the work done is well presented. In mathematics, this aspect is well developed with pupils of all abilities able to calculate effectively and to draw graphs to an acceptable degree of accuracy. They can also solve equations at levels appropriate to their ability. In mathematics, the pupils who draw quadratic graphs could be more accurate, since curves are not always sufficiently smooth at the minimum or maximum point.

### **Information and communication technology**

Standards in ICT skills across the curriculum are at least satisfactory in all subjects apart from mathematics. Standards are good in design and technology, geography, modern foreign languages, music and religious education. Standards are very good in geography at KS4. There are strengths in pupils' skills in presenting their work using the computer in several subjects and notably so in English, media studies and history. Overall, staff are competent and confident in the use of ICT. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to use and improve their information technology ability in word processing and when collating information from various sources and presenting their work. The Internet is used for research in some lessons notably, history, geography and modern foreign

languages. In design and technology, graphics software is used well by pupils to produce orthographic views and isometric views of their designs. Pupils are also given good opportunities to use computer aided manufacturing (CAM) equipment to produce and enhance some aspects of their products. Recently acquired equipment and software is used well by pupils for composition work in music. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to use sensors to develop their measuring skills in science lessons, whilst in mathematics very little use is made of the computer for any work.

### **Creative skills**

Creative skills are good. They are well developed in many subjects. Effective postcards, posters and three-dimensional models feature in the work of the Welsh, English, geography, religious education and history departments. Dialogues, role-play and imaginative writing of various kinds, including play scripts, story boards and newspaper articles appear extensively in Welsh, English, modern foreign languages and media studies and these are often enhanced by the use of well developed ICT skills.

### **Problem solving**

Problem solving is an increasingly common feature of many lessons, particularly in English and media studies and pupils explore a wide range of problems, including religious and moral questions in religious education and reaching decisions such as where to place a supermarket in geography. However, in science, investigative skills are underdeveloped and few examples of practical work were seen. Time militates against the production of three-dimensional models, which pupils usually undertake in religious education at KS3.

## **4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Pupils' spiritual awareness is appropriately developed through the well-planned daily acts of worship based on weekly themes. These acts of collective worship develop pupils' sense of enquiry and provide a good opportunity to understand and gain insight into matters of spiritual and moral worth.

The school's bilingual acts of worship, which are very well organised, contain elements of Christian and other faiths. They provide a good forum for recognising and celebrating pupils' considerable musical and sporting achievements. Pupils from different classes in turn present interesting themes.

Due to the unsatisfactory acoustics, sometimes pupils' presentations cannot be clearly heard especially at the back of the hall. Pupils often perform as individuals with piano recitals or as an instrumental wind group. There is no hymn singing by the whole school and the assembly duration sometimes causes physical discomfort since few of the pupils are seated.

These acts of worship now meet the statutory requirements.

Religious education lessons for KS3 and KS4 provide pupils with a very good opportunity to develop spiritually through discussion and by reflecting on such topics as environmental issues and stewardship. Pupils are successfully encouraged to consider life's fundamental questions. Pupils are also encouraged to develop their own independent beliefs and values and the high quality input enhances their understanding of a range of the religious stances and beliefs represented in Britain.

Pupils' moral development is good. The school effectively fosters values such as honesty, fairness and respect for the truth. Pupils throughout the school have a clear view of what is expected of them. The majority of the pupils show respect for others. The school has a strong tradition of supporting charitable causes and making generous contributions to appeals.

The relationships between pupils and staff and of pupils with one another are generally good and sometimes very good. At all stages, pupils have the opportunity to take part in corporate decision making through the recently established school council.

Pupils' cultural development is good and many subjects such as music, history, geography and religious education contribute positively to pupils' cultural development. Through actively participating in the school eisteddfod, by participating in the school's choir or orchestra and through experiencing the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* across many subjects, pupils' awareness and understanding of their own culture and heritage are well developed.

Pupils gain a good appreciation of other cultures through their studies in art, English, history, geography and religious education and through the many school-arranged visits to art galleries, local and national museums and theatres and particularly through the extended visits abroad.

Through the implementation of appropriate policies, the school promotes equal opportunities and racial equality effectively.

Pupils' response to the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very positive.

## 4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

The overall quality of pupils' behaviour, their attitude towards learning and the interest they show in their work are satisfactory. However, there are variations in the quality of pupils' behaviour and attitudes between subjects and within subjects. There are clear and well-explained policies and arrangements in place for promoting good behaviour, however, there is a lack of consistency in their implementation.

The school has a detailed policy on behaviour management and the School Prospectus provides clear information and guidance to parents on school expectations and the rewards and sanctions arrangements. Emphasis is placed on the importance of parental support and co-operation in helping to control and modify behaviour. Good classroom management practices were observed in many lessons and, in those classes, pupils remained on task and had a positive attitude towards learning.

In a minority of classes, behaviour is not well managed and many individuals disrupt the learning of others in the group. Evidence of lack of effort was found among a number of pupils across the school but particularly in Y8 and, to a lesser extent, in Y11.

Behaviour around the school in the corridors, during break and lunchtime periods is good.

Relationships between staff and pupils are generally good and are based on the staff's thorough knowledge of individual pupils. As a result, the majority of pupils feel valued, are motivated and their attitude towards work and school life has an evident effect on the standards and progress achieved.

The school has a merit award system in place but little evidence of its use was observed during the inspection. There are clear and well-defined reporting, referral and sanctions arrangements in place for pupils who break school rules or display unacceptable behaviour, but emphasis is also placed on care and support. There is a youth liaison officer who meets weekly with pupils who have been referred to her for behavioural, attitude and problems of disaffection. This is a very good feature of the school's pastoral support programme.

The policy statement on anti-bullying is good and is aimed at making it difficult for bullies to carry out their activities and everyone is encouraged to support victims and to report their distress. During interviews, pupils confirmed the effectiveness of the school's strategy.

Excluding a pupil is regarded as a last resort action and, in the last year, a total of 40 fixed term exclusions were served on boys and six on girls. Twenty-five of these exclusions related to pupils in Y8 and Y9. Two Y10 pupils were permanently excluded.

## 4.3 Attendance

Over the last three complete terms prior to the inspection, attendance for Y7-11 was unsatisfactory at 88.27 per cent and remains a key issue for action as it was in the previous inspection. In KS3, attendance was 91.3 per cent and in KS4, 80.1 per cent. During the last two terms, senior staff, heads of year together with the education inclusion officer (EIO) and administrative staff, have been working hard to improve attendance rates and to reduce unauthorised absence. The senior management and other staff are fully aware of the need to improve attendance levels and of the need

to develop a strategy to address key issues such as attendance during the summer term and the increasing practice of parents taking their pupils out of school time for their holidays, which is having a detrimental effect on attendance rates.

The school emphasises the importance of ensuring good attendance for a successful education in many of its formal publications and other information to parents. Detailed guidance is provided for staff, pupils, parents and guardians on the procedures to follow in the event of unexpected absence.

The majority of parents respond well to the school's efforts towards improving attendance levels. Governors and senior management have set a target of increasing attendance further across the whole school and satisfactory progress is being made to achieve the school target of 92 per cent attendance for the current academic year.

Although emphasis is placed on reminding parents of the importance of avoiding taking holidays during term time, over a hundred families during the year, have ignored the school's advice.

Good efforts are currently being made by the assistant head (pastoral), heads of year, members of the support staff and the EIO to reduce core absenteeism. Increased targeting of pupils with attendance of between 80 and 90 per cent is proposed along with more regular meetings to monitor attendance.

Overall, punctuality throughout the school day is satisfactory. At the start of the day it is good but a significant number of pupils arrived late to lessons during the period of inspection.

The school maintains an accurate register of attendance and the system of recording attendance conforms fully to the statutory requirements. The presence of pupils in individual lessons is not consistently recorded.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

Teaching was at least satisfactory in KS3 and KS4 in 96 per cent of classes observed. In KS3, it was at least good in 62 per cent, of which 13 per cent was very good. In KS4, it was good or better in 75 per cent and very good in 20 per cent. These figures are above the Welsh Assembly Government expectations for 2002 of 95 per cent satisfactory or better and 50 per cent good or better. The quality of teaching in KS4 has improved from 68 per cent good or very good recorded in the last inspection to 75 per cent in this inspection, and from 61 per cent to 62 per cent in KS3.

Teaching is very good in information technology in both key stages. Overall, it is good in both key stages in Welsh, English, science, religious education, modern foreign languages, history, geography, design and technology and PSE, and is good in KS4 in mathematics, music, health and social care and media studies, with some examples of very good teaching in science, religious education design and technology and media studies. In physical education, there are examples of good teaching, but it is satisfactory overall. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, mostly single lessons in a few subjects, four per cent overall.

Good features in the vast majority of lessons across the curriculum are the teachers' good subject knowledge, clear planning and good relationships with their pupils. Pupils receive much pastoral support from subject teachers as well as good support for their academic progress.

In subjects where teaching is consistently good, and in some lessons in other subjects, there are some or a number of the following good features: lively, didactic style; high expectations; good use of resources, including interactive whiteboard technology; brisk pace and the use of a variety of techniques.

In a number of other lessons, however, pupils are too passive and insufficiently involved in their own learning. The aims and objectives of the lessons are not shared with the pupils so that they know in advance what is expected of them. This relates to all levels of ability to a varying degree. In a minority of lessons teaching is over-directive and does not allow pupils to explore their understanding and develop their investigative and oral skills.

In most classes, there is a reasonable match of work to pupils' abilities, helped by the setting system in KS3. Expectations of pupils of average to lower ability are satisfactory overall and the provision for pupils with SEN is good. The quality of teaching in the lessons they attend when withdrawn from mainstream provision is often very good.

The quality of teaching in the PSE lessons is good in general. It contributes well to the personal and social development of the pupils. The quality of careers' teaching and guidance is good.

In a small minority of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory and in others where it is generally satisfactory, some weaknesses that hinder pupils' progress and achievement are evident. Some non-specialist teaching in Welsh, religious education, and physical education limits the range of learning activities. In these and other lessons that have shortcomings, there is insufficient pace and challenge, expectations are too low, or behaviour is not well managed. In some subjects, and in particular mathematics, teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to use ICT to enhance their learning nor to improve their skills in this aspect of key skills development.

A minority of pupils display challenging behaviour, and when teachers lack adequate skills of class management, this has a deleterious effect on the learning of all pupils in the class.

In most classes, teachers set homework to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. Pupils do not always co-operate fully and there are examples of gaps and incomplete work in pupils' books.

## **5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

The accuracy and frequency of assessment are satisfactory overall. The whole-school assessment policy sets out clear aims and objectives, including guidelines for the setting of homework. Most departments use these guidelines to direct their own assessment practices and a full range of assessment techniques is used. Examples of good practice, including constructive comments on pupils' work, self-assessment and target setting are to be seen in history, geography and music. In some departments, there is inconsistent use of self assessment, target setting and homework, though it generally becomes more focussed in KS4 when pupils are given a clear idea of how their performance relates to examination criteria and grades.

Good use is made of assessment to improve standards of achievement in some departments, where pupils' strengths and weaknesses are clearly and consistently identified. In other departments, practice varies from teacher to teacher. Nevertheless, pupils are generally confident that they know how they are achieving and that they are receiving the support and guidance they need in order to improve. Teachers provide useful oral feedback to individuals and to the whole class and use contact diaries to record pupils' performance in the half yearly review. This provides a record of effort and attainment and is linked to parents' evenings in which any relevant questions that arise from the review are discussed. The review is linked to the recently developed whole school praise system, though this is currently inconsistently used within departments.

Arrangements for recording pupils' achievement and progress are good. Effective links with partner primary schools ensure the efficient transfer of assessment data, including KS2 results, and these, together with school-based Y7 test scores, provide the basis of pupil assessment records. The system for tracking pupils' progress provides data for each individual from the year 2000. This system can be consulted at any time and is used in the tutorials in the extended registration period on Tuesday mornings when teachers monitor their form groups. The head of year receives a print out of the previous review at the point of change over. This system works within the cycle of assessment recording and reporting to provide an effective overview for parents, pupils and teachers.

Systematic intervention is made by subject teachers and through the pastoral system for pupils who are underachieving and extra support is provided in different ways. Pupils with SEN are effectively identified on entry into the school and their individual educational plans (IEPs) are included in their contact diaries for easy access.

The use made of the analysis of internal assessment and external examination data is good at whole school and department levels. Detailed comparison of external examination results with local and national figures is used to determine targets.

Reporting to parents meets statutory requirements. Parents receive one full report annually as well as the half yearly review. The annual reports have a standard format that allows for the recording of strengths and weaknesses. Each subject report evaluates attainment, effort and general progress and sets targets for improvement. However, reports are not consistent across and within some departments in providing detailed comments on the relevant subject specific skills and some target setting is too general. Comprehensive Records of Achievement (RoAs) are issued to pupils at the end of KS4, but core provision in ICT, physical education and religious education is not reported on in the annual reports to parents in KS4.

Although changes have been made in the system of reporting since the last inspection there is still inconsistency in practice in important areas, including self-assessment and target setting.

### 5.3 Curriculum

Overall, the quality of the curriculum is good throughout the school.

The curriculum at KS3 is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements for NC and religious education. The curriculum at KS4 is broad and balanced but statutory requirements are not met in Y11 since all pupils are not given the opportunity to study religious education. Pupils opting for German lose a significant amount of their physical education allocation and this has an adverse effect on standards at both key stages for them. The combined effect of the loss of time to German and the time needed to walk to and from the playing fields means that NC requirements are not met for those pupils studying German. Curriculum provision adequately reflects the overall aims of the school and is socially inclusive, in that it provides for pupils' needs interest and abilities, and, with the exception of the issues noted, ensures equality of access for all pupils. The pupils are taught for the recommended 25 hours weekly.

In KS3, pupils study all the subjects specified in the NC and religious education. In Y7, pupils are taught in form groups and one group is small to allow for their special needs. In Y8 and Y9, German is provided for a group from each half-year at the expense of time taken in Y8 from English, Welsh, French, mathematics and science. In Y9, pupils studying German are unable to attend three of the six lessons in the rotational block that includes religious education, PS(H)E, physical education and ICT. There is an element of setting in Y8 and in Y9 this is expanded to include all subjects except art, music, games and the rotational block. The time allocation for the subjects over the key stage is adequate and generally meets recommendations. In music, there are large classes at KS3 which inhibits effective group work and hence depresses standards.

In KS4, pupils study a core of English, Welsh, science, mathematics, design and technology, games and PSE. The PSE programme covers religious education, careers education, physical education and ICT, but the full programme is not available to those who study German. In addition, pupils studying German attend two lessons after school, but during this time they also get the opportunity to gain a qualification in ICT. In addition, the pupils in KS4 choose from three option blocks where a wide variety of subjects is offered. In Y10, pupils can study engineering which covers two option blocks. This course is delivered by an outside provider. There is an opportunity for pupils to opt for health and social care and this also covers two option blocks in KS4. Most pupils study double science but the facility exists for the more able to study three separate sciences.

The quality of planning for the development of key skills in KS3 and KS4 is very good. There are whole-school policies in place and the planning is included in the schemes of work of nearly all departments. The arrangements for PSE and careers education are also good and provide the pupils with valuable experiences and opportunities. All pupils in Y10 are given good work experience opportunities.

The effectiveness of curricular provision is good and all departments have in place appropriate schemes of work that are good and closely follow recommendations. These reflect differentiated work for pupils of different abilities as appropriate. There are good curricular links with the feeder primary schools. Homework is set as appropriate in most subjects but the homework timetable is not fully adhered to by all staff. The setting of homework is variable within departments.

The extent to which the pupils' development is enhanced by extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The music department runs a wind band, a brass group, a string group and an ensemble as well as an Y7 and senior girls' choirs. Good quality vocal and instrumental tuition provided for one in eight of pupils on roll, together with a number of extra-curricular groups of a good standard, complements the work of the music department. These make a valuable contribution to the life of the school and the community. There are concerts held locally and the school eisteddfod is a major event in the school calendar. There are subject clubs arranged as required to give pupils the opportunity of improving their performance in external examinations. There are various school teams. These, especially the girls, regularly gain outstanding success in different sporting competitions at local and national level. Individuals have also gained local and national honours in sporting events. Departmental visits are arranged to enhance the curricular opportunities for pupils.

The provision made for pupils for whom the NC is modified is good and it is very good for those for whom the national curriculum is disappplied.

#### **5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare**

The quality of support offered to the pupils is good. The school has a caring ethos which reflects the social and cultural background of the area it serves. The relationship between staff and pupils is generally good. Staff are always prepared to give time to support pupils who have personal or academic difficulties.

The school has a clearly defined pastoral system, which is managed by an assistant headteacher. A new team of heads of year has been established to work within carefully thought out working practices and procedures. The school has a full time youth worker with a counselling role, which is very much valued by the pupils. A number of initiatives have been introduced to support pupils such as a smoking cessation programme and a general whole-school health and fitness project.

Links with primary schools are well established, ensuring a smooth and effective transfer of pupils into Y7. The school has taken steps to raise the profile of the form tutor. The latter lies at the core of the pastoral process using the contact diary and the praise system, monitoring progress and contributing to the delivery of the personal skills programme. The pastoral programme (part of the wider PSE curriculum) is delivered in a thirty minute weekly session designed to contribute to the pupils' personal development. In KS3 and KS4, the programme consists of five focus areas including school council activities, promoting positive behaviour, study skills, working with others and citizenship and recording and reporting. The programmes have made a significant contribution in terms of meeting pupils' needs and aspirations and emphasise the value placed on the pupil as an individual.

The pastoral programme is supplemented in KS3 by an hour per fortnight of PSE. This programme includes sex and relationships' education, general fitness, substance misuse and health and careers education. The programme is well organized by the coordinator and is in line with Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales' (ACCAC) PSE Framework and Guidance. The PSE programme is taught by identified staff who teach specific year groups. They are supported by specialists, who are brought in to deliver aspects of sex education and substance misuse. In KS4, the programme forms part of a revolving timetable, which includes ICT, careers education and physical education. Very good use is made of outside speakers and specialists such as the nurse, police liaison officer and the community police.

A multi-agency group meets on a regular basis to discuss the pupils deemed 'at risk' in terms of behaviour, attendance and academic progress. The group identifies individuals and formulates a strategy to support the pupil and their parents to resolve the difficulties experienced.

The provision for careers education and guidance is good, having been recently revised to accord with the ACCAC, work-related education (WRE) framework and guidance. The Careers Education and Guidance (CEG) co-coordinator manages the programme. Key Stage 3 pupils receive CEG as part of the PSE programme with a total time allocation of one hour per fortnight. Key Stage 4 pupils receive CEG as part of the carousel PSE programme with a total time allocation of thirty minutes per fortnight. Some aspects are delivered as suspended timetabled activities such as real game, journey to work, employability/skills/interview day, time for choice and theatre production on post-16 options.

Detailed guidance is provided for Y9 in respect of their option choices. The school is very well supported by staff from Careers Wales West.

Year 10 pupils are thoroughly prepared for the five days work experience which is a very positive experience for all participating pupils. A comprehensive programme prepares students for life after 16 when all Y11 pupils are interviewed by Careers Wales West staff. All possible information and guidance is made available for pupils to ensure a smooth transition into the world of work or further education. Outside speakers are used extensively, especially the local authority nurse, police, local business people and other people with specialist skills. A full mock interview programme is organized every year utilizing the skills of local business people and members of the local Rotary Club. The school is involved in a variety of initiatives such as the Dynamo project.

The school has a detailed child protection policy which complies with Circular 52/95. Provision is made for children looked after by the local authority and procedures in respect of the production and review of care plans are fully implemented. Policies and procedures for ensuring the health and safety of the pupils are good with detailed health and safety and risk assessment policies. A few health and safety issues noted during the inspection were reported to the headteacher.

## **5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN**

The provision for pupils with SEN is good.

Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve well across the whole curriculum in both key stages. Currently, there are 29 pupils with statements for SEN; for 11 of these pupils the NC is appropriately modified. In addition, there are 110 pupils on the SEN register on various stages of the Code of Practice varying from School Action to School Action Plus enhanced.

The school, which is a designated school for pupils with physical disabilities, has a well-defined special needs policy, which leads to good practice; this enables all pupils with SEN to have a broad and balanced curriculum. There are very effective strategies in place for early assessment and positive intervention.

The role of the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) and his team is strongly supported by the headteacher and the efficient line- manager, and the department's role in monitoring progress is well developed. The SENCO provides good leadership for support teachers and the learning support assistants (LSAs) whom he meets on a fortnightly basis. He is able to use his time not only for direct teaching but also for monitoring individual pupils' progress and liaison with partner primary schools and external agencies. He collects data on the number of pupils in each year group who are at various stages set out in the new Code of Practice. The SENCO also regularly makes an input into the school's academic board meetings and to governors' meetings ensuring that all staff and governors are aware of the latest developments in this field. The governor with responsibility for SEN gives the department good support.

The SEN register, which is updated every half term, indicates that through the school's careful monitoring, pupils are regularly and appropriately added to and removed from the register.

In addition to the SENCO, there are two support teachers whose work with individuals and small groups in strengthening pupils' basic skills in spelling and reading (in both languages) is very good.

There are link teachers in all subject departments. This ensures close co-operation between the SEN department and all other school departments. The special needs team has agreed objectives to target pupil support effectively and to regularly monitor the progress made by pupils with SEN taught in mainstream classes

The school has a strong desire to meet pupils' curriculum entitlement in full and the extensive range of teaching and learning strategies utilised has a positive impact on pupils' performance. There is a strong commitment to inclusivity although effective use is also made of withdrawal from classes of individual and small groups to receive additional support when the need arises.

Teachers in all departments receive full information on pupils' individual plans and most make good use of them in planning pupils' work. These have clear diagnostic comments about individual difficulties and identify appropriate objectives for learning. They set well-considered targets for

improvement and many departments add subject specific targets to the IEPs. Teachers consistently have high expectations. Effective use is made of differentiated work and full use is made of all the available resources.

There are 16 learning support staff including the four members of staff with NNEB qualifications. These make a positive and sometimes very positive contribution to pupils' progress. 'Circle time' is provided for pupils with statements of SEN by some LSAs approximately every fortnight. These sessions provide a very effective forum for pupils to voice their concerns and to show support for each other through developmental group work.

Most of the learning support staff is UA funded to support individual pupils with statements. The LSAs' support for statemented pupils is focused but not obtrusive and whenever possible they offer help to other pupils in the class which helps to prevent pupils with statements becoming over dependent on their support. The LSAs' good work improves access for pupils to all aspects of the curriculum through their adapting of reading materials and supporting pupils in writing notes and homework instructions. They regularly share information with classroom teachers on the activities undertaken with pupils and explore their difficulties and progress. The school supports four of the LSAs in gaining professional qualification through day release in the local college of further education.

The school sees the development of literacy as crucial, and the recently established ILS is co-ordinated by an NNEB. The opportunity for pupils to spend short periods working on a computer assisted learning program several times a week is already showing positive results in strengthening literacy and numeracy skills.

In addition, there is a *Buddy* scheme co-ordinated by one of the SEN team, through which Y12 students volunteer to support younger pupils during one of the morning pastoral periods. Pupils receiving this extra help say that they enjoy working with older pupils though it has not always been possible to guarantee that all the Y12 volunteers are available when they are timetabled to assist.

There are good links with the UA and many other outside agencies. The co-operation with Careers Wales West, especially in the transition from KS3 to KS4, is particularly effective and a representative from the further education college also attends these transition meetings to ensure that all possible educational opportunities that might benefit the pupils are explored. Pupils with SEN have good opportunities to gain work experience in Y10 and they are sometimes accompanied by their designated LSAs.

The quality of the liaison with the associated primary schools conducted by the headteacher and the head of Y7 is very good. The SEN department works closely with the pupils and staff of Y5 and Y6 in the partner primary schools to ensure that the transition to the secondary phase is as smooth as possible. Pupils from Y5 and Y6 are invited to attend the school with their LSAs for a morning session or longer to become familiar with the surroundings and to see what kind of provision is available.

There is very good liaison with and valuable input by county specialist teachers, the county mobility officer (who assists a blind pupil) and from the Family Support team. There is good co-operation with an educational psychologist, and paediatricians have given good support to the school in dealing with pupils' medical problems.

The co-operation between the school, foster parents and various Social Services departments with regard to 'Looked after Children' (LAC) is very good, ensuring that they are provided with the best possible learning and pastoral support during their stay in school.

## **5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions**

The partnership with the local community, partner primary schools and other external agencies is very good. The partnership with parents and initial teacher training institutions is good.

The school places a high priority on promoting a close home-school partnership. It provides comprehensive and very good information for parents including a well-designed school brochure, a

welcome booklet for Y6 pupils and a booklet to support Y7 pupils with literacy. A diary of school events is produced regularly along with a termly newsletter. A notable feature is the production of a school magazine 'Y Ddolen' which is sponsored by local businesses. The school keeps in touch with all parents on a regular basis and the home-school agreement is included in the pupil contact diaries. The governors' annual report to parents is comprehensive and very informative, extending beyond the stipulated items that are required to be included.

In addition to parents' evenings, open and induction evenings, school performances and careers' events, parents are always welcome to make appointments to discuss their child's work. Although parents and carers are very supportive of all these activities and several individual parents help with the organising of after school clubs, holiday activities, the preparation for competitions and school performances and providing placements for pupils on work experience, currently there is no parent-teachers' association. The responses from parents to the pre-inspection parents' questionnaire indicated that a significant number of parents are dissatisfied with some issues relating to the organisation of the school particularly pupil behaviour, school values and attitudes and also that they did not feel encouraged to take an active part in the life of the school.

The partnership with the community is very good and is a notable feature of the work and life of the school. The school's calendar of events, displays around the corridors and local press coverage details indicate the wide range of the pupils' participation in the life of the community. School events such as the eisteddfod, music, dance and drama productions are popular with the parents and members of the public. There is a close partnership with the senior citizens of the town and an annual concert and tea party is organised for them at the school. Various parties of pupils are frequently asked to perform at civic and other cultural events across the county. Pupils also visit local establishments such as local hospitals, day centres and residential homes.

There are good links with Careers Wales West which supports pupils in developing appropriate knowledge and skills. Also, there is close collaboration with many local authority support agencies. Many members of the community, including local business people, voluntary and charitable agencies, local poets, artists and musicians, fire, police and the armed forces share their expertise with the pupils and staff and provide good support to the school in the delivery of careers and PSE programmes.

Very good use is made by the school of facilities in the town and surrounding area including local chapels and churches, the Memorial Hall and other performing venues. In addition to performing at school organised events and services pupils support other dance and theatrical groups. The community makes extensive use of the school's facilities and resources for music rehearsals, evening classes, activities of voluntary organisations, a local youth club and sporting organisations.

The school is commended for its efforts in raising significant sums of money for a range of local and national charities throughout the year. A major fund raising event organised by the school is a sponsored walk which raises a five-figure sum of money and for which the staff and pupils receive the generous support of parents, friends and local businesses.

Pastoral and other links with the partner primary schools are very good and the further strengthening of the continuity and progression arrangements from KS2 to KS3 continues to be a development priority for the school. A structured programme of events is organised for the Y6 pupils from the seventeen feeder schools to familiarise them with the school. This also includes a range of opportunities for open dialogue between staff. Well-designed welcome and language packs are made available for pupils and parents. Primary schools are informed of the progress being made by their former pupils in Y7. Links between the headteachers and other staff of the secondary and primary schools are very well developed. A very good feature is a working group to implement a three-year plan for KS2/3 progression. Senior staff and other subject teachers actively participate in curriculum based links particularly in the core subjects. Following the appointment of KS2/3 link teachers, mathematics and language projects have been successfully developed and bridging units for the four core subjects have been completed.

Good partnership arrangements exist with Aberystwyth University. A well-prepared induction programme is in place with good mentoring, feedback and reporting arrangements for the students, across several subject areas.

## 5.7 Partnership with Industry

The existing school partnership arrangements with industry are good and make a good contribution to curricular provision and pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world of work.

Although the school has no whole-school policy for WRE nor a co-ordinated strategy for staff to implement, a wide range of links and activities does exist with the world of work. No teacher has been on work placement experience in the world of work but there are some staff who have had experience of industry prior to becoming teachers.

The school is working towards achieving the Careers Wales Quality Award. Some subject areas, particularly design and technology, engineering, modern foreign languages and vocational studies have good links with the world of work which significantly enhance pupils' knowledge of industry and commerce. Pupils across several year groups are engaged in visits, project work, local and national competitions and innovation awards. All these activities enable the pupils to increase their skills base and deepen their knowledge and understanding of world of work concepts and processes.

Close links exist with a range of industrial and commercial concerns in the county. They support the school during Y8 raising awareness of industry periods, Y9 Journey to Work module, Y10 work experience programme and Y11 mock interviews. A good feature is the medical compact with medical professionals at Aberystwyth Hospital.

The Y10 work experience programme is very effectively organised and implemented. Good partnership arrangements exist with Careers Wales West and good use is made of the education business partnership programmes such as Young Enterprise and Project Dynamo. Pupils also participate in the Wales engineering education scheme.

## 6. MANAGEMENT

### 6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

The scope and planning of the school's procedures for its evaluation of the standards achieved and the quality of its provision are good. However, the range and nature of objectives for improvement that the school has set in response to its self-evaluation are satisfactory. As yet, a self-evaluative culture, which has clear strategies for improvement, is not sufficiently embedded through the whole school.

Following the previous inspection a detailed action plan was drawn up. Although the school has made good progress in addressing some of the key issues identified in the inspection report, others remain as areas for further development.

The school's self-evaluation report is a substantial document produced by collecting information from a range of sources.

The school's performance in external tests and examinations is collated and thoroughly analysed by an assistant headteacher. The results are subjected to detailed investigations, conclusions are arrived at and targets set. Issues are dealt with honestly and realistically and the school is taking steps to correct and improve areas where shortcomings have been identified. The decline in boys' performance over the last few years is highlighted. The report, on this issue, is analytical, realistic, identifying strengths and areas for improvement and sets targets.

The quality of teaching and learning is checked in a number of ways including, monitoring of pupils' work, monitoring lessons and evaluating teaching units. Pupils' books are collected by the departments, checked and passed to the senior management team (SMT) for further checking. A report is written and the outcomes discussed with individual teachers. Heads of departments are encouraged to observe lessons delivered by teachers in their department. Some departments have adopted a culture of self-evaluation and lesson observations take place. Many departments evaluate their lesson plans and make adjustments to the plans as required. Other departments are in the process of implementing self-evaluation procedures or moving towards accepting that the policies they have need to be implemented thoroughly. In February, departments were requested to take stock of the quality of teaching in the department together with issues relating to accommodation and resources.

While the school has moved forward on this issue there is some way to go to ensure consistency in practice.

Recently, the school used an UA organised questionnaire on teaching methods to ascertain pupils' opinions. This provided valuable feedback on preferred teaching styles. This information was disseminated to staff.

The effectiveness of development planning and target setting is good but the implementation of the monitoring is satisfactory. Since 1998, there have been both annual and medium-term development plans. The headteacher reports on progress to the governors every term and the plan is evaluated annually by the governors and progress is checked against targets. The plans are realistic and challenging.

The junior (KS3 pupils) and senior (KS4 and the sixth form) school councils were established last September and they meet every two weeks. Issues that are raised in form tutor periods and are taken by form representatives for discussion at the councils. Issues already raised include the availability of chairs for junior assembly and making benches available outside for pupils at break and lunchtime. Sometimes, the SMT request the school council to discuss issues to discover views and obtain suggestions for solutions to problems. This is a positive development allowing pupils the opportunity to participate in the decision making process.

## **6.2 Leadership and Efficiency**

The school has a caring, supportive ethos that reflects the social and cultural background of the area it serves. The school is managed and led satisfactorily. The headteacher, staff and governors display a commitment to ensuring that pupils achieve success and realise their potential.

The governing body takes an active interest in all aspects of the school's life and work. There is an appropriate committee structure and meetings of the full governing body are held for decision making. The minutes of meetings of the governors show that the members give thorough and appropriate attention to the reports, reviews and presentations by the headteacher, members of staff and external agencies. Recently members have been linked with individual departments to enable them to have a more direct involvement in and input into the whole-school self-evaluation process.

The school's leadership team consists of the headteacher, one deputy head and three assistant heads. The headteacher has been in post since 1995 having previously been deputy headteacher since 1984. The deputy headteacher is an experienced member of the management team having been in post for seventeen years. The three assistant heads are recent appointments, although they all have considerable teaching experience at the school. As a result of the restructuring of the SMT, responsibilities in the team have been redefined so that there is a selection of departmental responsibilities, oversight of whole-school issues and links with various organisational systems. Despite the defined management structure, the overseeing and monitoring at headteacher and SMT level are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure the effective and consistent implementation of whole-school policies, practices and procedures.

The school's method of planning for the future is well established in the school. The SDP is an effective tool to plan and guide whole-school developments. It develops through staff and SMT before being presented in draft form to the governing body. The process involves an annual review which incorporates school and departmental development plans and also takes into account the UA Education Strategic Plan. The process is further enhanced by departmental reviews with members of the SMT, together with individual departmental audits.

The quality of departmental leadership and management is variable. Although most departments have an awareness of what needs to be done to ensure progress and improvement, there are inconsistencies in practice within and across departments. The information technology, design and technology, geography and religious education departments are very well led and there are good features to the leadership in history, English, mathematics and in the vocational areas. Within these departments, there is sharing of good practice and efficient management and leadership which have a clear impact on the good and sometimes very good standards achieved. In other departments, there is not yet a sufficiently strong culture of corporate responsibility particularly in the area of self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

Leadership in pastoral care is good. Support and guidance structures from class tutors through to year heads and the SMT make a valuable contribution to the personal and academic development of the pupils.

There is a well-planned cycle of meetings of academic and pastoral teams, by means of which staff can communicate and move forward. There are several working parties of staff, namely assessment, pastoral, academic board, improving school effectiveness, collective worship and health and safety. These are good features. Departmental meetings have focused more attention on priorities arising from the SDP such as raising standards and teaching and learning issues, but there is still insufficient emphasis in some.

Financial planning is prudent and is effectively managed by the headteacher and the administrative officer who monitor spending on a regular basis. The budget is set by appropriate reference to the curriculum and the consequent staff, accommodation and learning resource requirements. Expenditure is closely linked to the priorities identified in the SDP. The finance sub-committee meets regularly to monitor expenditure and assess the impact of spending on developments and standards. Capitation is awarded to departments on a pupil related formula system. Additional monies are also made available to departments through a bidding system.

The daily organisation and administration of the school are efficient and effective and in this the administrative and support staff play an important and valuable role.

Statutory requirements regarding pupils' entitlement to all curricular subjects are met by the school with the exception of the provision of religious education for all pupils in Y11 and for students in the sixth form. The school follows the guidelines set out in the circulars of the Welsh Assembly Government and gives appropriate consideration to advice it is given by ACCAC.

### **6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources**

#### **Staffing**

The school is staffed by 47.9 full time equivalent teachers giving a pupil:teacher ratio of 15.62:1 which is better than the national average of 16.7:1 and is also slightly better than was the case at the school in 1998 (16:1). There is a reasonable balance of age and experience within the staff. The teachers are well qualified and their qualifications match the subjects they teach in the vast majority of subject areas. The contact ratio of 81.3 per cent is slightly lower than in 1998 (82per cent) and is reasonable for a school of this size.

There are 16 LSAs financed by the UA to support pupils with pupils with statements of SEN. The LSAs provide very good and dedicated care and support for the pupils in their charge and for others as needed and as circumstances allow.

The clerical and technical non-teaching staff provide very good support and are essential in contributing to the smooth running of the school.

The site manager, caretaker and cleaning staff ensure that the building is kept in good repair, clean and safe for pupils.

The professional development of staff is good. Staff attend a variety of courses some of which are organised by the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) and others by the UA. The school has purchased into UA's professional development programme. The deputy headteacher has devolved the responsibility to the departments for the professional development of the staff in the department but he keeps an accurate record of all the courses staff have attended. All courses are evaluated carefully and records kept.

The induction programme for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) is organised by an assistant head. The induction is very well organised and gives very good support for NQTs. A performance management policy has been produced and is being operated effectively.

#### **Accommodation**

Overall, the adequacy of the accommodation for the number of pupils is good. There has been a major improvement in the accommodation since the last inspection and in the vast majority of areas the

accommodation is very good. However, in order to access out-door facilities in games and athletics, pupils have to walk some distance to the playing fields and this impacts adversely on standards achieved in physical education.

The refurbishing and the new building programme have affected almost every part of the school with the result that there is excellent accommodation for the overwhelming majority of departments and the vast majority of staff have their own specialist rooms. It has also allowed the school to arrange department suites and thus enabling more effective communication and easier sharing of resources.

The accommodation for pupils with SEN is very good.

Many classrooms throughout the school are enhanced by interesting displays, which provide a stimulating learning environment. Displays in corridors celebrate the successes and achievements of pupils.

Pupils respect the fabric of the accommodation and the site is free from graffiti and litter.

### **Resources**

The resources available to staff are good and they are at least sufficient and appropriate to support the curriculum. The resources have a good effect on pupils' standards of achievement. Departments are allocated funds according to a formula based on the number of pupils and the number of lessons and weighted for practical subjects. Departments can also bid for additional funding.

The school has five ICT rooms and other computers are located in classrooms, laboratories and the school library. The ICT rooms in the design and technology department are used mainly by that department but others are well used by other departments on a booking system. The school is well provided with 166 computers giving a pupil:computer ratio of 4.5:1.

A full time librarian effectively manages the school library and its use as a quiet room. There are approximately 10 books per pupil but the quality and range of non-fiction texts are good in both English and Welsh. Some departments make use of the library and the ICT resource room attached to the library. With the additional ICT suites now available less use is made of this room.

There is a small well-resourced careers library although it is insufficiently equipped with computer technology and an appropriate range of software packages to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of information and guidance research.

## **7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

#### **Welsh**

Standards of achievement in KS3 and KS4 are good.

#### **Good features**

##### **KS3**

- Pupils listen well and respond to their teachers and other pupils extensively, using correct and appropriate language.
- Pupils can read a range of reading materials meaningfully. The more able can compare the content and style of different texts.
- Many pupils can hold a conversation on a good range of topics and can discuss literature using correct language and employing relevant quotations.
- Many pupils can write factual and fictional pieces of good quality. Generally, their spelling and punctuation are correct, and they use well-lined sentence structures.
- The most able make very good progress in all language skills.

#### **KS4**

- The majority of pupils can discuss topical issues quite confidently.
- The most able can analyse the content and style of poems orally and in writing, and can justify their opinions.
- Most pupils read clearly with very good intonation and pronunciation.
- Mother tongue pupils and good learners can write extensively and for different purposes. They can develop characters, ideas and arguments effectively. They have quite a sound grasp of sentence structures, spelling and punctuation.

#### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- A minority of pupils of lower ability in second-language classes are unable to offer sufficiently extended and correct responses orally and or writing.

#### **KS4**

- The written responses of a minority of pupils are limited and contain mistakes.
- Some second-language pupils have the skills to follow first-language courses, and are consequently underachieving.

### **English**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils across the ability range are well motivated and interested in their English lessons and those with SEN make good progress, benefiting greatly from the support they receive.
- Pupils of all ability levels are confident in oral work; they have good listening skills and are able to pose and to respond to questions purposefully.
- In frequent pair and group work, pupils in both key stages exchange views and ideas freely and collaborate to solve problems and deepen their understanding through discussion.
- Pupils demonstrate good word recognition skills, reading fluently and with expression.
- They develop their skills as readers from reading with understanding to grasping implication and inference in informative and literary writing.
- Higher ability pupils deconstruct texts of various kinds with well-developed analytic skills. Their responses in discussion of a wide-range of texts reflect growing awareness of how language works and of the effect of stylistic choices in creating mood and targeting audiences.
- In KS4, pupils across the ability range show good knowledge and understanding of their set books and able pupils interpret and reflect on different texts with sensitivity and perception.
- In both key stages, pupils undertake a range of writing for different purposes and audiences, demonstrating increasing confidence in expressing and justifying their views in writing.
- Key Stage 4 coursework files include well-drafted pieces of creative and informative writing and ICT is effectively used by most pupils to improve their work.

#### **Shortcomings**

- There is a significant gap between the performance of boys and girls.
- Oral contributions tend to be brief and rather informal except in the case of the most able pupils.

- Amongst the middle to low ability range pupils, especially boys, there is a tendency to skim read in order to avoid confronting unfamiliar vocabulary and expression.
- The written answers of weaker pupils often lack clarity and insecure spelling and punctuation flaw the day-to-day written work of many pupils across the ability range.

## **Mathematics**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils are able to deal effectively with all aspects of number at levels appropriate to their ability and understanding. This includes fractions, decimals and percentages as well as general number.
- Pupils are adept at working out questions mentally without the need to frequently revert to using calculators in all aspects of this subject. This can at times mean quite complex questions are worked out mentally.
- Pupils can solve equations at a level appropriate to their ability and they can interpret and enumerate formulae using mathematically related symbols.
- Every pupil can name two and three-dimensional shapes, draw graphs correctly and can use coordinates to show the location of a point.
- Pupils deal effectively with probability and can correctly explain the meaning of a random event.
- Pupils with SEN can deal effectively with areas and perimeters, showing interest in their work and also have the capability to tackle even more complex work.
- Some pupils, mainly the more able, do a considerable amount of work during this key stage and achieve good standards.
- Middle and higher ability pupils can use trial and improvement methods to solve equations.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils can deal effectively with simultaneous and quadratic equations according to their ability and are able to solve these equations by graphical methods as well.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the work covered on shapes and can calculate areas, perimeters and volumes as appropriate. They are able to deal appropriately with shapes in two and three-dimensions.
- The more able pupils at this key stage are able to deal accurately with more complex work and are able to complete this to a good standard. They are able to deal effectively with questions that involve two or three processes to determine the answer.
- Lower ability pupils are able to increase and decrease a given numerical or monetary value by a given percentage and this includes percentages which are not whole numbers.
- Pupils can record discrete data in frequency tables and understand how to find the mean, median and mode of a set of values and can work out questions involving probability that requires the use of tree diagrams and the addition or multiplication of probability.
- Pupils understand the meaning of the locus of a point and can use a pair of compasses or other means to construct the path of a point.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- There is a considerable amount of incomplete work in the pupils' exercise books and not all pupils attempt or complete the homework set.

- There are shortcomings in the quality of the presentation of the work of a significant number of pupils. The working out done to establish an answer is not always included.
- Some middle ability pupils do not make sufficient progress since their attention span is limited and variable.
- Pupils are not always able to recall or explain the work that has been covered previously.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils at this key stage are not always able to recall quickly work that has been covered previously.
- Progress is hindered by a great deal of incomplete work in many exercise books.
- Pupils do not always set out their answers in full and this means that the work is less useful when they are asked to revise.
- Pupils do not always refer to the work marked by their teachers to ensure that the topic covered is fully understood.

### **Science**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and good overall in KS4.

#### **Good features**

##### **KS3**

- The majority of pupils have a good understanding of the essential topics covered in each year group.
- Pupils are able to recall key concepts and apply them to a range of problems in everyday life.
- Pupils with SEN, being well supported, are making good progress.
- Constructive discussion allows pupils to consolidate their understanding of scientific concepts.
- Pupils have developed a good scientific vocabulary.
- Pupils demonstrate good writing skills through a range of written tasks according to their ability.

##### **KS4**

- The programmes of study are covered thoroughly and as a result, pupils' overall standards of achievement are good.
- In the triple award science groups, the standards are high and pupils have a good understanding of concepts. They are able to apply that knowledge to everyday problems.
- The standards achieved by pupils with SEN are good.
- Pupils consolidate their understanding through constructive discussion of scientific concepts.
- Pupils make good progress overall in their skills in numeracy and data handling.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **KS3**

- A minority of average ability pupils have a slightly less secure understanding of their work and as a consequence have greater difficulty in applying their knowledge to every day problems.
- The skills of planning, observing and evaluating associated with investigative skills are satisfactory only.

- Although there are examples of the use of ICT in science, progress in this area at present is only satisfactory.

#### **KS4**

- There is underachievement among boys as evidenced in the GCSE Double Award results in 2003 when 65.2 per cent of girls and only 36.55 per cent of boys achieved a C grade or better. The standards of achievement of the present Y11 cohort are adversely affected by the behavioural difficulties experienced in at least one Y11 boys' group.
- Pupils' scientific investigational skills are not fully developed.
- Pupils' ICT skills are insufficiently developed.

### **Design and technology**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

#### **Good features**

##### **KS3**

- Most pupils have a good understanding of the design process and principles and they apply these successfully when designing their projects. Pupils' innovative and creative skills are generally satisfactory and occasionally good but the scope for creativity is sometimes limited in some tasks. Standards of modelling, modifying, improving and evaluating their projects are satisfactory.
- Standards in making are satisfactory and good for the most able. Pupils work in a wide range of materials and components in the production of products that are accurate and finished to a satisfactory standard. The most able show very good knowledge and understanding of materials and components and their use, as for example in the electronic moisture tester in Y7. Product outcomes are true to the original design specification.
- In most modules of work, pupils use ICT applications well. The most able show very good skills and competences when researching and presenting their work. They also show good skills in using computer-aided design (CAD) and CAM equipment to design and make some embellishments to their products.
- Pupils of all abilities demonstrate competency with regard to practical cookery and have a sound basic knowledge of the value of nutrients in diet.
- When designing and making items using textiles, pupils show a good degree of initiative and imagination especially when utilizing recycled materials in Y9 and achieve good standards.

##### **KS4 - Resistant materials and textiles**

- Most elements of pupils' design work are good and often very good. Pupils' are encouraged to design and make products that are relevant to them, have an actual purpose and this results in higher motivation and good design solutions and outcomes. The most able develop projects that are often very innovative in nature.
- In their project work, pupils apply a satisfactory range of presentation techniques to a good standard. Very good use is made of information and communication technology in research, designing, CAD/CAM, modelling and presentation.
- Making skills are good and often very good. Pupils work accurately and finish their work well. They have a good understanding of manufacturing techniques.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **KS3**

- In all aspects of their work, the standards of graphicacy are weak in some pupils' portfolios where there is little flair and imagination in the way they visually present their ideas.

- In some instances, pupils' design ideas are not creative enough, being limited by the over prescriptive nature of the task.

#### **KS4**

- Standards in sketching quick creative solutions as their designs progress are weak. Pupils rely too heavily on traditional presentation methods and do not often present work with any extended levels of creativity, flair and imagination.

### **Information technology**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and very good in KS4.

#### **Good features**

##### **KS3**

- Pupils manage computers efficiently and effectively. They show high confidence and competence levels when conducting fundamental computer operations such as logging on, calling up and saving their work and accessing appropriate applications and the Internet. Pupils can also explain what they are doing using a good standard of technical vocabulary
- Standards of communicating information are good. Pupils confidently combine text and images, change and arrange fonts, colour and layouts in appropriate combinations, according to their individual designs. In addition, by Y9 most pupils show good standards and skills in using a very broad range of software applications including the Internet to research. They use spreadsheets and database well. They show good standards in using CAD software to produce accurate drawings and know how to programme a machine to produce outcomes of a good quality. More able pupils use fairly complex lines of enquiry to test identified hypotheses using databases and spreadsheets.
- When working on projects and producing a range of outcomes, pupils demonstrate a clear awareness of who their audience is and what impact they desire to create. They show a good awareness of tone and colour in their writing with good literacy skills.

##### **KS4**

- All pupils plan their coursework projects to a very good standard using clear, well reasoned criteria to identify what design features they wish to develop and why.
- Final coursework projects are real software design solutions linked to actual requirements from businesses or clubs. Pupils make very good use of the feedback provided by their clients as they develop their design solutions. Data capture screens are aesthetically pleasing and show a good knowledge and understanding of the formats required when inputting data. Pupils use a range of validation checks well to ensure that data are in the correct format for processing and their work shows a very good understanding of the use of these checks.
- When working on their projects, pupils are good at using the correct technical terminology and vocabulary to explain the processes and procedures that they are using as they develop their designs.

#### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings in either of the key stages.

### **History**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

#### **Good features**

##### **KS3**

- Pupils are at ease with the evaluation of primary sources, and handle the chronology related to their periods of study securely.

- Pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other.
- Oral responses are fluent and confident and pupils benefit from well-conducted pair work and group work.
- Written work accurately reflects the abilities of the pupils and demonstrates good background knowledge of the topics being studied.
- Pupils' historical skills are well developed through the use of ICT.
- Good standards are achieved by pupils with SEN.

#### **KS4**

- Written work is of a good standard and accurately reflects pupils' abilities.
- Standards of listening and speaking are good, with pupils demonstrating good background knowledge of the topics being studied.
- Pupils are familiar with problems and issues raised when evaluating a range of source materials and demonstrate good evidential skills in their written responses.
- Pupils demonstrate a sound grasp of historical concepts in both oral and written responses.
- Pupils are well able to select, recall and organise historical information.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of chronological development and awareness of change and continuity over time.

#### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils generally lack in-depth knowledge of particular topics through extended productive work (for example, projects/research topics).

#### **KS3 and KS4**

- The commendable active learning strategies that have been developed in the department lack sufficient differentiation by task, with the consequence that more more able pupils are insufficiently challenged.

### **Geography**

Standards of achievement in KS3 and KS4 are good.

#### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Most pupils interpret maps and statistical data accurately and acquire a good range of geographical skills.
- The majority of pupils achieves a good understanding and knowledge of the local area and Wales through their study of a number of appropriate themes.
- Most pupils demonstrate a good and developing understanding of geographical terms and vocabulary. They are able to apply them with accuracy and in context.
- Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of the location of places. They display a very good understanding of the geography of Italy and the physical geography of Brazil. Project work completed on Italy and shopping in Aberaeron is generally of good quality, demonstrating high-level enquiry skills amongst most of the pupils.
- Many pupils have a good understanding of complex models. Year 8's work on the identification of urban land use zones, using photographs, is particularly good.

#### **KS4**

- Most pupils demonstrate a good level of analytical and interpretative skills in respect of complex geographical data with the ability to express their decisions in written, graphical, map or statistical formats.
- Pupils have a growing understanding of the relationship between people and the environment. They understand the factors influencing the growth of urban land-use patterns.
- Fieldwork and enquiry based projects contribute to the pupils' thorough understanding of process in physical and human geography. Coursework assignments demonstrate the pupils' understanding of the processes at work in the formation of patterns and features associated with river activity and urban development. Some of the assignments are very good.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of development as applied to More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) and Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) They understand the 'differentiated development' within countries such as Brazil where a number of development indicators have the characteristics of MEDCs and others of LEDCs.
- The majority of pupils are competent in the application of an extensive range of geographical terminology. They use terms with increasing precision and accuracy.

#### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- A minority of pupils are unsure of the meaning of a number of basic geographical terms.
- The behaviour of a minority of pupils has a detrimental effect on standards of achievement in some classes.
- Incomplete works hinders the progress of a small number of pupils.

#### **KS4**

- Some pupils' files display untidy presentational skills and a significant amount of missing and incomplete work.
- The behaviour and negative attitude to work of a small minority of pupils leads to a lower standard of work.

### **Modern foreign languages**

Overall, standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

#### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- The majority of pupils in both French and German demonstrate attainment corresponding to appropriate NC levels in all four skills.
- Pupils studying German progress quickly in Y8 and Y9 particularly in reading and writing.
- Some pupils in both French and German speak confidently and most pupils have accurate pronunciation.
- Pupils show increasing awareness of grammatical concepts across the key stage and produce complex sentences in writing.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils make significant progress in all four skills across the key stage.
- Written work in both languages is characterised by a high degree of accuracy.
- Pupils show increasing ability to understand authentic texts.

- Accents are generally good.
- More able pupils demonstrate accuracy and range in speaking and writing.
- Pupils are able to recycle language from previous contexts to improve their speech and writing.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- Some pupils in the middle and lower sets have difficulty recycling language from previous contexts and make little use of the target language during lessons.
- A small number of pupils in Y8 and Y9 lack confidence and motivation and minor disruptions in lessons impact negatively on standards in listening and speaking.
- Pupils show little initiative in their use of the target language orally.

#### **KS4**

- A minority of pupils lack confidence and are reticent to engage in more extended oral interactions.
- Some pupils struggle to understand unpredictable speech in the target language.
- Most pupils show little initiative in their use of the target language in lessons.

### **Music**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4.

#### **Good features**

##### **KS3**

- Pupils in Y7 sing in unison with a pleasing tone and clear diction.
- Pupils, across the key stage, perform various instrumental pieces with a good degree of accuracy and, in general, maintain secure ensemble when performing in pairs or as a whole class.
- Many Y7 rhythmic compositions, fanfares in Y8 and a few descriptive “Film music” pieces in Y9 show imagination in the combining of different patterns, motifs and sounds.
- Pupils have an awareness of musical elements. They can identify instruments and basic features when appraising different recorded extracts of music. A few make pertinent comments about their own practical work.

##### **KS4**

- Pupils make suitable progress in vocal and instrumental performing and, in general, achieve very good standards.
- Year10 pupils make good progress in the other elements of the course.
- Compositions by Y11 pupils often display imaginative treatment of musical ideas and good understanding of style and structure. Many pupils make good use of ICT to enhance the quality of their work.
- Pupils, in general, can identify technical and expressive features well when appraising music from the different areas of study.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **KS3**

- Although standards in performing, composing and appraising are satisfactory, many pupils, in certain large Y8 and Y9 classes, are underachieving.

- In certain classes, singing lacks adequate refinement and conviction. A few pupils are unable to play in time with others in group performance.
- A significant minority of pupils, in certain Y8 and Y9 classes, have difficulty in making progress in composing without teacher support. Progress is often slow and limited. In general, pupils' melodic improvisation and composing skills are not well developed.
- Evaluations by many pupils when appraising their own practical work are often brief and superficial. Many are reluctant to express opinions.

**KS4**

- A few Y11 compositions are musically less interesting.
- The appraising skills of a few pupils are uneven. They are good in certain tasks but not always secure in others.

**Physical education**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and KS4.

The school provides a satisfactory extra-curricular programme and a number of school teams and individuals have gained representative honours. Some of the girls have achieved outstanding successes at local and national level.

For a significant number of outdoor activities, pupils travel to off-site facilities. This impacts adversely on lesson content and pace of learning and, in KS4, for some pupils studying German, means that the requirements of the NC are not fully met.

**Good features****KS3**

- Pupils recognise and apply the principles of warm up within physical activity.
- In athletics, most pupils have acquired a satisfactory range of skills. More able pupils demonstrate increasing efficiency in running, jumping and throwing activities. Most average and lower ability pupils work hard to improve their performances.
- In tennis, pupils collaborate well in pair and group activities. More able pupils demonstrate precision and accuracy in their match play and are able to sustain a rally of some length.

**KS4**

- In athletics, most pupils demonstrate a satisfactory range of techniques. More able pupils use skills with increased refinement and consistency. Moreover, they are able to sustain these qualities in competitive situations.
- In soccer, most pupils confidently send and receive the ball in game situations.
- In badminton, pupils show an awareness of the rules of the game. More able pupils possess a good repertoire of shots, and in competitive situations attempt to outwit and outmanoeuvre their opponents.
- Pupils following the GCSE course make intelligent and clear contributions to class discussion. For the most part, GCSE files are well presented.

**Shortcomings****KS3**

- Some pupils lack control when performing basic athletic skills and have difficulty in remaining on task.
- Pupils rarely use observational skills to comment upon and refine one another's performances.

**KS4**

- Pupils rarely judge performance and use their evaluation to improve the efficiency and quality of their work.
- In games, a some pupils do not use space effectively and have limited tactical awareness.
- GCSE pupils make little use of ICT to enhance their work.

**Religious education**

The school's religious education provision is firmly based on the locally agreed syllabus (1996) and addresses the attainment targets in KS3. However, it fails to fulfil the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus with some pupils in KS4. There has been little improvement in provision since the last inspection.

Standards are satisfactory in KS3, good in oral and assignment work in KS4.

**Good features**

- Year 7 pupils have a good understanding of the significance of key sites in Judaism. They are familiar with the structure of the *Torah* and other sections of the Jewish Bible. In most classes, pupils of all abilities make good progress through meticulous lesson planning and the use of ICT and artefacts.
- In their study of Judaism, pupils are familiar with some characteristics of the Hebrew language and with the form of worship which takes place in a synagogue. They can explain the significance of key articles and furnishings such as the Ark, the scrolls, the prayer shawl and the yad.
- In their study of the role of Jesus as leader, Y8 pupils are familiar with the way Jesus has been depicted through art in various cultures. They know about the continuing mystery surrounding the Turin shroud and the impressions created by Holman's representation of the Light of the World.
- They make very pertinent observations and confidently express their views on beliefs and offer interesting interpretations on events. They convey thoughts and feelings confidently and discuss ideas effectively in small groups. They know about celebrations such as *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur* and the Passover *Seder*.
- Year 9 examine various Christian interpretations of the Fall and original sin. They can effectively compare the difference between the Islamic and the dual Judaic concepts of creation. They study the role Christians believe they should have in preserving God's creation and the importance of stewardship and accepting responsibility. They explore the role of man in preserving and not polluting and understand why it is important to ensure that various species of animals and birds do not become extinct through neglect, abuse or economic factors.
- In KS4, Y10 pupils examine the link between religion and state. They demonstrate good understanding of the role of law and order in religion and in a secular society. They examine contemporary examples of racism and prejudice.
- Year 11 pupils consider the arguments for and against capital punishment and, through careful analysis of newspaper articles and video presentations, and demonstrate good knowledge of life and death issues.

**Shortcomings**

- Pupils in KS4 do not produce enough extended writing.

**Personal and social education**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

**Good features**

- The majority of pupils gain knowledge and understanding of a wide range of issues such as health and sex education, substance misuse, study skills, environmental issues and careers education.

- Most pupils speak confidently and listen well to teachers, other pupils and visiting speakers.
- They understand the dangers of smoking and the consequences in terms of health. A very good dramatic presentation of peer group pressure and the negative effects of smoking was delivered by a class in Y7.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on progress. They collect and record evidence of their own academic and pastoral achievements.
- Most pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the world of work and the opportunities available for employment and in further education.

#### **Shortcomings**

- A minority of pupils do not concentrate on set tasks thereby depressing the standards achieved.

### **Health and Social Care (GCSE)**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils acquire a basic but sound knowledge of people's physical needs at various stages in their lives when they need to be cared for by professionally trained staff.
- They are aware of the wide range of care services available within the area.
- They demonstrate an understanding of the need for staff within the health and social care employment sector to act always in a proper manner and to respect the privacy of their patients.

#### **Shortcomings**

- Some pupils demonstrate a degree of immaturity when dealing with certain issues raised as part of their studies.

### **Home Economics – Food and Nutrition (GCSE)**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils have a good understanding of the value of home cooked products compared with commercially produced ones.
- They demonstrate good practical cookery skills and appreciate the value of careful planning as well as adherence to a flow chart.
- They research thoroughly during the process of developing ideas and the majority takes responsibility for their own learning programme when they are engaged in project work.

#### **Shortcomings**

- Graphic skills are not well developed; consequently, work recorded in folios is sometimes not well presented as well as containing some spelling mistakes.

### **Media studies**

Standards of achievement are very good at KS4.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils develop their interest in a variety of media forms in a lively exchange of ideas and views.
- They are able to take an investigative and critical approach to media, showing understanding of the codes and conventions of media production.

- They recognise the way in which media is influenced by different audiences and show a good understanding of media practices.
- They plan and create media artefacts for various audiences, making thoughtful and creative use of key presentational elements.
- They evaluate their own and their peers' production work with mutual respect and tolerance.
- They investigate media organisations, such as advertising producers and the television industry, familiarising themselves with the structures with which the media product takes shape.

#### Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### Engineering NVQ

Standards of achievement are good.

#### Good features

- Pupils' standards are good. They are well motivated and show a keen interest in their work. The most able produce very good standards. There are high levels of perseverance on tasks as they seek to perfect their outcomes.
- Almost all pupils show good practical skills and use tools and equipment confidently and competently, as for example demonstrated by a small group who showed good skills in using welding equipment safely and accurately to join metal. Most pupils can speak with conviction about what they are doing, as for example in explaining the tolerances levels accepted in setting tappets on a car engine.

#### Shortcomings

- Not all pupils are aware of how well they are doing in their work especially in relation to the theoretical aspects of the course and this affects standards at an individual level since they are not sure what they need to do to improve.

## 8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### 8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

The school has made good progress in addressing some of the key issues in the last inspection; others remain as areas for further development.

#### 1. Take steps to raise standards of achievement in drama and statutory religious education in KS4 and the quality and provision in sociology.

The post inspection action plan included targets for improving standards in drama, but following a review of curriculum provision in 2002, drama was removed from the curriculum. Although various options were considered to extend the curriculum time for religious education in KS4, the only additional time allocated is through a conference approach and stronger cross-curricular links. Alternative arrangements were made for those studying German in KS4 to have the same opportunity to study religious education as other pupils in the year group. However, these arrangements do not apply to the present group in the Y11 cohort. The issue of standards has been addressed through reviewing and modifying schemes of work and introducing written assignments for assessment purposes. Sociology was removed from the curriculum in 1998/1999.

#### 2. Re-examine optional subject arrangements in KS4 and Y12-Y13 to overcome some difficulties of choice faced by pupils and resolve issues concerning the delivery of German as it affects other subjects.

Since the last inspection, optional subject arrangements have been reviewed in KS4. It is now possible for pupils to study both geography and history; vocational courses, namely engineering

and health and social care have been introduced as well as Open College modules to address the problems of disaffection in KS4. New subjects have been introduced in the sixth form: Advanced (A) and Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level in physical education, Advanced Certificate in Vocational Education (AVCE) leisure and recreation and ICT, and history through the medium of Welsh. The delivery of German as a second modern language as it affects other subjects in Y8, Y9 and KS4 was given careful consideration, however, it was decided that no change would be made to the curricular arrangements.

**3. Consider the viability of small classes in some subjects in Y12-Y13 with a view to the rationalisation of some aspects of provision.**

The school has considered various options to rationalise sixth form provision including the use of video-conferencing facilities as in the case of delivering A level electronics. There are continuing discussions with other educational establishments and providers regarding collaboration at post 16. The school also plays an active role in the planning of 14-19 education within the authority. Nevertheless, classes remain small in some subjects and hence expensive in terms of staffing and resources.

**4. Extend the use of pupils' good information technology skills to all subjects.**

The completion of the building programme has considerably enhanced the school's ICT facilities. An ICT technician has been appointed to support the work of the ICT department and the provision provided for other departments across the school. A new suite with 30 computers and an interactive whiteboard and projector have been provided and has been in use since September 2002. Pupils and students are encouraged to use the enhanced facilities and the ILS programme which has been re-housed in an area in close proximity to the new ICT suite. Staff have received training and departments have signposted ICT activities in their schemes of work. In this inspection, it was judged that the use of ICT is variable between and within subjects and thus standards are uneven.

**5. Ensure full compliance with statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and review the timing of the thought for the day and its appropriateness as a substitute for a daily act of worship for whom this is provided.**

The pattern of the school day has been changed; collective worship now takes place at the beginning of the school day in whole-school assemblies, year groups or form groups. The quality of collective worship in the school was judged to be good in this inspection and the school now complies with statutory requirements.

**6. Continue to pursue present policies to improve attendance rates.**

The school has produced a new attendance policy. A new telephone system has been introduced for parents to report absences and for staff to report absences from lessons. An early, 'First Day' response to absences has reduced the number of unauthorised absences and parents are reminded through termly newsletter of the importance of regular attendance and encouraged to arrange family holidays to coincide with school vacations. Pupils are also required to record their total attendance figure for the week in their contact diaries and there is also a reward system for good attendance. An assistant head has responsibility for pastoral care and there is close liaison with the heads of year, form tutors, the EIO and the on-site youth worker. A home study system was introduced for sixth form students in 1999 but discontinued in 2003. Despite these initiatives, attendance rates across the school remain unsatisfactory. Attendance for Y11, Y12 and Y13 are a cause for concern.

**7. Improve the quality of reporting to parents so that they receive details of progress and helpful information on how achievement can be improved; make better use of the "contact book" to develop home-school links.**

Reports for Y7 to Y11 were revised so that comments on progress and how achievement could be improved could be included. Pupils have the opportunity to make personal comments in their reports. However, at KS4, core provision in ICT, physical education and religious education is not reported on. In 2000, comment banks were introduced into the pupils' RoAs in Y11 and pupils

were encouraged to include a personal statement in their RoAs. Year 12 reports were also modified in 2001/2 to include a summative statement.

New contact diaries were introduced in 2003. Various steps have been taken to improve them as a means of communicating with parents. They also include the results of the Whole-School Review which monitors pupils' progress twice a year.

#### **8. Implement a staff appraisal policy.**

The staff appraisal policy has now been replaced by performance management arrangements. All members of staff have been trained in new arrangements which now form part of the whole-school self-evaluation procedures.

### **8.2 Key Issues for Action**

In order to build on current achievement, the school should:

1. Continue to improve standards generally, and in particular:
  - Standards in physical education in the sixth form.
  - Standards in those subjects judged to be satisfactory as opposed to good in some key stages.
  - The performance of boys, particularly in KS4. \*
  - The use of ICT in some subjects.
2. Ensure that the overseeing and monitoring procedures carried out at senior management level focus specifically on securing the effective and consistent implementation of all school practices and policies.
3. Further develop the role of middle management. \*
4. Ensure that staff training contributes constructively to enabling all members of staff to adhere to the school's policies and practices in relation to behaviour and discipline.
5. Reinforce strategies to improve attendance levels. Review procedures for recording the attendance of sixth form students, and attendance in lessons generally across the school.
6. Record pupils' progress and achievement in core ICT, physical education and religious education in KS4 in the annual reports to parents.
7. Conform to statutory requirements by providing religious education for all Y11 pupils and sixth form students.
8. Attend to the health and safety issues reported to the headteacher during the inspection.

\* These issues are included in the current SDP

**APPENDIX****A. Basic Information About the School**

Name of School	Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	11 – 18
Address of school	Stryd y Fro Aberaeron Ceredigion
Post-Code	SA46 0DT
Telephone Number	01545 570217

Headteacher	Miss J Marina James
Date of appointment	November 1995
Chair of Governors	Dr Julian Evans
Registered Inspector	Mr D Gwynfor Evans
Dates of inspection	26–29 April 2004

**B. School Data and Indicators**

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>								
Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	115	138	120	114	146	55	60	748

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	46	2	47.9

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	15.62:1
Average teaching group size	19.22
Overall contact ratio	81.3%

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>								
Term	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Summer 2003	89.7	90.8	89.8	86.3	33.6	34.6	18.2	78.2
Autumn 2003	93.4	91.0	91.4	92.4	85.5	86.5	75.1	90.7
Spring 2004	92.7	91.1	92.3	92.6	90.8	81.6	64.8	88.8

<i>Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.</i>	46 Temporary 2 Permanent
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### C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2003															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 115															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
EN	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	21	44	19	11	0	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	2	9	22	34	22	9	0	0
	Test	School	0	3	0	0	0	0	4	22	36	27	9	0	0
		National	0	3	2	2	0	0	8	21	31	23	10	n	0
WE	Teacher assessment	School	0	1	0	0	0	1	11	24	30	29	3	0	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	19	34	29	10	0	0
	Test	School	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	26	39	27	1	0	0
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	4	19	35	28	10	0	0
MA	Teacher assessment	School	0	1	0	0	0	0	6	17	27	27	22	0	0
		National	0	1	0	0	0	1	8	20	25	29	14	0	0
	Test	School	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	19	23	30	18	0	0
		National	0	5	1	1	0	0	7	19	21	32	14	0	0
SC	Teacher assessment	School	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	10	44	29	13	0	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	0	8	21	32	25	11	0	0
	Test	School	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	9	40	27	20	0	0
		National	0	4	1	1	0	0	6	19	31	25	14	n	0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
By Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In school:	67	In school:	62.6
Nationally	54.4	Nationally	53.5

D - Pupils exempted under statutory arrangements from part of the National Curriculum

A - Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence

F - Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence

W - Pupils who are working towards level 1

EP - Exceptional Performance, where pupils at Key Stage 3 perform above level 8.

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, CoE, GNVQ and NVQ			
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2003: 116			
The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2003:			
	School	UA	Wales
Were entered for 5 or more GCSEs	87	89	87
Achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C	52	63	51
Achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-G	87	89	85
Achieved GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language)	44	47	38
Entered at least one CoE, GCSE short course or GCSE	96	97	97
Achieved one or more GCSE grades A*-C	81	82	74
Achieved one or more GCSE grades A*-G	96	94	93
Achieved no graded GCSE	4	6	7
Achieved one or more CoE only	0	2	3
Achieved a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1			
Achieved a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2			
Achieved at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	52		
Achieved at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	87		

<b>For pupils aged 17, results in GCE A level, GNVQs and NVQs</b>			
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2003: <b>58</b>			
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2003: <b>10</b>			
	<b>School</b>	<b>UA</b>	<b>Wales</b>
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	83	77	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	100	97	94
Average points score per candidate	22	21	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	0		
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	6		

#### **D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection**

The inspection team consisted of 15 inspectors who visited the school for a total of 50 inspection days. During that period, inspectors observed 185 lessons. Inspectors visited acts of worship, tutorial and registration sessions, and some extra-curricular activities. Written work of every year group was scrutinised by the inspection team. A formal discussion with groups of pupils and students from Y7 to Y13, and informal discussions with several other pupils and students. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour outside lessons during breaks, lunchtimes and other times. Interviews were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the three assistant heads, heads of department, co-ordinators, other members of staff with specific responsibilities, and with non-teaching staff. The registered inspector, together with another inspection team member, attended a meeting of governors and a meeting with 21 parents before the inspection. The inspection team analysed 135 responses to the parents' questionnaire before the inspection. The school provided comprehensive documentation before and during the inspection. Post-inspection meetings were held with departments, the SMT and governing body.

**E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team**

<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Aspect Responsibilities</b>	<b>Subject Responsibilities</b>
Mr D G Evans	Rgl	1. Context 2. Main findings 3.1 Educational standards achieved by pupils 5.1 Teaching 6.2 Leadership and efficiency 8.1 School improvement	Welsh PSE physical education
Mr G G Jones	Lay	4.2 Behaviour and attitudes 4.3 Attendance 5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions 5.7 Partnership with industry	
Mr D Treharne	Core	4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 5.5 Provision for pupils with SEN	religious education
Dr J Hughes	Core	6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement 6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Science electronics
Mr Peredur Francis	Core	5.3 Curriculum Sixth form co-ordinator numeracy	mathematics
Mrs M M Williams	Core	5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting 3.2 Key skills	English media studies
Mr H Llewelyn	Core	5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare	Geography leisure and recreation PSE
Mr Z Davies	Team		Welsh,
Mrs A Williams	Team		Science
Mrs E Jones	Team		Design and technology, home economics, child care, health and social care
Mr K Hopkins	Team	Information and communications technology	information technology computing design and technology engineering
Mr D Barnes	Team		History
Mrs L Meiring	Team		modern foreign languages
Mr A W Jones	Team		music
Dr N E Thomas	Team		physical education

*The visiting inspectors wish to thank the governors, the headteacher and all the staff for the co-operation and courtesy they received during the inspection.*

**YSGOL GYFUN ABERAERON - THE SIXTH FORM****CONTEXT**

Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron is a UA maintained 11-18 mixed comprehensive school serving the coastal town of Aberaeron and the largely rural surrounding area.

The school is a traditional bilingual school and although Welsh is the predominant language of only about a quarter of the pupils, the school estimates that approximately half of them speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard.

Currently, there are 115 students in the sixth form. There are 55 students in Y12 and 60 in Y13. The school indicates that the students come from an area that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. About 13 per cent of the students are registered as entitled to free school meals.

The school has an open access policy regarding the sixth form. It offers the students a broad curriculum and a good range of experiences.

The school's mission is 'to provide a centre of excellence within a bilingual community in which all individuals are encouraged to develop their maximum potential'. It has appropriate aims and objectives to realise its mission and the SDP for the period 2002 to 2005 addresses whole-school issues and needs. As a traditional bilingual school it also aims to ensure bilingual provision in every aspect of school life so as to enable its pupils to integrate satisfactorily and happily.

**MAIN FINDINGS**

Overall, students achieve good standards and, in some subjects, very good standards. In 91 per cent of classes observed, standards were at least good, including 16 per cent in which they were very good. These are very high figures. Standards were unsatisfactory in a very small minority of classes.

Examination results in both A-C and A-E categories have been above the UA and national figures during the last three years. Key skills initiatives have not been successful in recent years, with no students being entered for examinations.

The quality of teaching overall is good, and in a quarter of the classes observed it was very good. Teaching was good in a further 58 per cent, satisfactory in a 14 per cent and unsatisfactory in three per cent. In the majority of lessons, good and very good teaching ensures that students are well prepared for examinations, practicals and course work assignments; opportunities for students to become independent learners are developing. Relationships between students and teachers are good.

General responsibility for the sixth form rests with the head of Y12 and the head of Y13. Both have been in post since September 2003 and are, therefore, in the process of developing their leadership and management roles with this age group. One member of the SMT has overall responsibility for the sixth form. The monitoring of students' progress is good and students feel that they are well supported in their personal and academic development. However, sixth form lessons are not observed on a regular basis as part of the whole-school self-evaluation programme.

The students overall are proud and supportive of their school with about 60 per cent of Y11 pupils joining the sixth form. There is a contract in place between the school, the students and their parents but this needs to be reviewed to include more specific information of what is required of the students.

Students are mature, open and friendly. Their behaviour is very good in lessons and throughout the school, they are keen to learn and generally enjoy their time in the school. Some Y12 students have completed a sports disability course and they volunteer to help others one Saturday a month. Others have completed a football leaders or a Dragon sports course and are qualified to go out to primary schools to help in football coaching or with other sports. A number of girls have been accepted to help

the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) with the local "Meals on wheels" service. A number of students are also following the "European computer driving licence" course which is run by the University in Lampeter. Some of the students are also involved with the School Council and this gives them the opportunity to contribute to the decision making process.

The support and guidance given to students are good. Students receive good feedback regularly on their progress and are set specific targets to improve the quality of their work.

All subject teachers report on students on a half termly basis. This followed by an interview with the head of Y12 or the head of Y13. Where underachievement occurs, the subject teacher writes a further report after three weeks. Where necessary, further interviews are arranged with the head of Y12 or Y13 and parents are consulted. Reports to parents are detailed and identify the progress made and targets for improvement in most subjects.

The nature, scope and design of the post-16 curriculum are good and give the students many opportunities. The choice of courses offered to the students is extensive. Students can choose from a list of 22 subjects including the non A-Level Foundation Level course and this is a good number in a school of this size.

Students are given good advice about the courses they should follow in the sixth form. Careers guidance is good and students are generally well prepared for the choices they must make on higher education and employment. The input of Careers Wales West and a range of visiting speakers enhance the programme. All sixth form students attend a minimum of five days work experience.

Courses are appropriately staffed and teaching facilities and resources are of a good standard. The accommodation available to the sixth form is good and they have a designated common room with a pool table and the facilities to play music. The quality of the furniture in this facility is satisfactory. The students do their private study in the library which is available except for one period per day. The students benefit from a good supply of appropriate textbooks, study guides and other resources.

Attendance in the sixth form is unsatisfactory in Y12 and poor in Y13. During the last three complete terms prior to the inspection attendance in Y12 was 67.5 per cent and in Y13 52.7 per cent. Attendance figures for the summer examination term are a cause for concern. Registration arrangements are confusing and although students are asked to sign in and out, and attendance in lessons is generally recorded it is clear that the school does not hold an immediate and verifiable central record of attendance in the sixth form at any one time.

The students play a full part in the life of the school contributing to its activities in cultural, sporting, fund-raising and charity events. They play a large part in the school productions, the eisteddfod and in activities in the local community. Year 12 students produce the annual school magazine. A number are involved with the "Buddy Scheme" where they assist Y7 pupils with their reading.

Students in the sixth form have a number of opportunities to experience the world of work. They participate in the Young Enterprise Scheme established with the support of the local Rotary Club, take part in the Barclays New Futures project and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Students from the modern foreign languages department and also the science department have experienced the world of work through involvement with the National Trust and the Royal Society of Chemistry.

## STANDARDS

### Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

In classes observed during the inspection, standards were very good in 16 per cent of the total, good in 75 per cent, satisfactory in three per cent and unsatisfactory in six per cent.

The standards achieved by students in their courses are listed below:

Subject	Sixth Form
Welsh	Good
English	Good
Mathematics	Good
Science	Good
Design and Technology	Good
Computing	Very good
Information Technology AVCE	Good
History	Good
Geography	Very good
Modern Foreign Languages	Good
Art and design	Not inspected
Music	Very good
Physical Education	Unsatisfactory
Religious Studies	Good
Personal and Social Education	Good
Health and Social Care AVCE	Good
Economics	Not inspected
Electronics	No judgement
Media Studies	Very good
Leisure and Recreation AVCE	Good
Child Care (Entry Level)	Good

**Standards in key skills across the curriculum**

Listening	Very Good
Speaking	Good
Reading	Very Good
Writing	Good
Numeracy	Good
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory
Working with others	Good
Creative skills	Good
Problem Solving	Good

Overall, students achieve good standards in their courses. Examination results in both A-C and A-E categories have been above the UA and national figures during the last three years. All candidates have achieved a 100 per cent pass rate (Grades A-E) in the last three years. In 2003, 83 per cent of students gained at least two grades A-C, compared to 77 per cent locally and 68 per cent nationally. The average points score per candidate of 22 was higher than for the UA (21) and for Wales (20). Over the last three years, male students have performed better than female students in A level examinations.

Most students make at least good progress from KS4 and many of them take much of the responsibility to maintain this progress through independent research. In computing, music, geography and media studies, students achieve very good standards in all aspects of their A level studies. In other subjects, with the exception of physical education, students have a good understanding of key concepts and the presentation and organisation of their written work are of a good standard. Work in the vocational areas is of a good standard.

Students' literacy skills are good overall. Their listening and reading skills are very good, speaking and writing is good. Students work effectively in groups, listening attentively to teachers' and to each others' presentations and contributions to discussion. They explore issues confidently, building effectively on their own and each others' ideas.

Students undertake independent research and project work, obtaining information from a wide range of sources to inform their work. They respond well to the variety of texts they study, but extended reading is under-developed in history.

Students are skilled at note taking and they write at length, both for the purposes of on-going study and for the lengthy course work tasks that form a significant part of assessment for all subjects at AS and A level.

Students use ICT skills capably in a range of contexts in a number of subjects, particularly to enhance the presentation of their work. The school newsletter produced by media studies' students provides excellent examples of these skills in practice. Students select appropriate software to complete various tasks but in mathematics, the use of ICT is underdeveloped.

Standards in numeracy are good. Creative skills are well developed in a number of subjects and problem solving is an increasingly common feature of many lessons. Students generally take responsibility for their own learning, whether they are following AS, A level or vocational courses.

There is a fall off in the number of students who continue their courses from Y12 to Y13. Last year 13 pupils left at the end of Y12 for various reasons, one of which was to gain employment. They are appropriately prepared for the choices they must make for higher education or employment.

## THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Teaching and Assessment

The quality of teaching overall is good. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 97 per cent of the classes observed. It was good or very good in 93 per cent of the classes, including 25 per cent that were graded as very good. These are high figures.

Teachers generally have a good knowledge of their subject and course requirements. Relationships between teachers and students are very good and this creates a very positive learning environment in most classes. Students are well prepared for examinations, practicals and course work assignments, except in physical education, where students' work is incomplete.

Teachers in most lessons use a wide range of teaching techniques and learning resources to present information and encourage discussion. The school is well resourced and students receive useful materials to assist them in their studies. The school has good computer facilities but they are not yet used to maximum effect in lessons.

In a number of lessons, there is a high level of student participation that deepens their knowledge and understanding. There is also growing emphasis on independent learning in the sixth form. In a few lessons, the range of teaching techniques is too narrow and some of the tasks lack challenge and depth.

Most teachers mark classwork and homework thoroughly and give effective oral and written feedback to students. The written feedback is detailed and informative, showing students how they can improve by identifying their weaknesses, as well as noting their strengths. In physical education, however, AS and A level files are poorly marked and the grading system is erratic. Feedback lacks detail and students are not given guidance as to how to improve.

The drafting process is effectively used to improve standards of achievement and tests and trial examinations are regularly used in the assessment process to prepare students for external assessment and to predict future success. Students generally have a clear idea of the grade towards which they are working. Reports to parents are on the whole of good quality, providing sufficient detailed information on progress and targets set for improvement.

### Learning experiences

The quality of the sixth form curriculum is good overall.

The nature, scope and design of the post-16 curriculum are good and give the students many opportunities. The choice of courses offered to the students is extensive including some vocational

courses. Students can choose from a list of 22 subjects including the non A-Level Foundation Level course and this is a good number in a school of this size. In Y12, there are plans for students to follow key skills courses and it is hoped to run this after the external examinations. There is no plan at the moment to allow the students to gain qualifications for this aspect of their study. The time allocated to subjects is variable with German in Y12 only being given five periods as opposed to the eight allocated to the others. In Y13 music and leisure and recreation are only allocated eight periods compared to 10 for the others. One design and technology course is allocated four periods. There is no provision for religious education in the sixth form; therefore the school does not meet statutory requirements. This was also highlighted as a key issue in the last inspection. Students do not have the opportunity to follow a non-examination physical education course.

The arrangements for PSE in the sixth form are good. The programme includes a variety of experiences for all students. It consists of careers education and guidance and advice on entry into higher education. Personal and social education is organized during a thirty minutes timetabled lesson. The programme is enhanced by contributions from visiting speakers. Students receive a minimum of five days work experience.

Recently the school has provided a 'First Skills' course – a personal and social skills course for pupils with SEN attending Y12 and Y13. This course is proving to be particularly effective and very good progress has made by the four students (three of whom have SEN) pursuing the course, especially in the modules completed on *Health and Hygiene* and *Myself and Others*. Work done is of a good standard. One of the students undertakes valuable work experience in the school as an LSA for one day a week.

There is very little extra-curricular provision for the sixth form and this was highlighted in discussions with students during the inspection week. In the list provided by the school, only one extra-curricular provision was recorded during the inspection week. However, a significant number of sixth form students are actively involved in the community and they contribute to the substantial amount of money the school raises for charities and good causes.

### **Support and guidance.**

The quality of support and guidance is good. The school's caring ethos and sense of community is reflected in the life of the sixth form. Teachers know their students well and classroom relationships are very good. The students appreciate the strong and caring support received from teachers, both in and out of lessons. The heads of Y12 and Y13 lead a team of tutors who care for the students and monitor their progress. All subject teachers review progress on a half termly basis; this is followed by an interview with the head of the appropriate year group. Where necessary, further interviews are arranged with the head of Y12 or Y13 and parents are consulted.

A timetabled PSE programme continues through the sixth form. Students are advised on issues relating to time management, study skills, health issues, work experience, careers and higher education opportunities. The programme is enhanced by contributions from visiting speakers.

Careers education is good. Students are well prepared on the choices they must make on higher education and employment. They receive valuable support from the heads of Y12 and Y13, their form tutors and the careers service.

The school makes good use of its close relationship with Careers Wales West. The Y12 work experience programme is well organized and students are given good advice on completing application forms, updating CV's and preparing for interviews. Students are offered opportunities to visit higher education institutions and attend careers conventions.

## **Leadership and management**

General responsibility for the sixth form rests with the head of Y12 and the head of Y13. Both have been in post since September 2003 and are, therefore, in the process of developing their leadership and management roles with this age group. Previously they had pastoral responsibilities with lower age groups in the school. The school's mission to "provide a centre of excellence within a bilingual community in which all individuals are encouraged to develop their maximum potential" is driven

forward by an effective SDP and a committed staff. Examination results at A level confirm that the school is generally successful in achieving its stated aim.

One member of the SMT has overall responsibility for the sixth form. There are good links with the co-ordinators for careers, PSE and key skills. Department development plans set clear targets for students based on analysis of examination performance and teachers' knowledge of the students.

The viability of small classes in some subjects in Y12 and Y13 was identified as a key issue in the last inspection. Currently, electronics is offered using video-conferencing facilities and the school has also considered other options, including links with other providers and establishments, in order to rationalise some aspects of the sixth form provision. However, class sizes are still small in a number of subjects and hence expensive in terms of staffing and resources. Overall, financial planning and management are good. The budget is handled prudently and efficiently and spending decisions are taken after careful consideration of the priorities identified in the SDP.

The school is in the process of establishing appropriate procedures for evaluating its performance and planning future developments in the sixth form. There is a very good analysis made of the external examination results in the sixth form and this is included in the school's self-evaluation report. The monitoring of students' progress is good and students feel that they are well supported in their personal and academic development. The views of the students are taken into account through the newly established school council. Sixth form lessons are not observed on a regular basis as part of the whole school self-evaluation programme.

Overall there is a good balance of age and experience within the staff who teach in Y12 and Y13. The expertise of the staff matches the requirement of the sixth form curriculum. The sixth form students are very well supported by clerical and technical staff in all subject areas. The staff are involved in a well-managed professional development programme which is carefully evaluated.

The sixth form students are provided with a study area and a social area. The site manager and cleaning staff ensure that the sixth form areas are kept in good repair, very clean and as safe as possible for the students. The school library, except for one period in the day, provides a good area for the students to work in. Overall the accommodation for sixth form lessons is good and in the majority of subject areas it is very good.

Students have access to a good range of ICT equipment located in suites around the school and in the library. The library is well stocked with reference books, as are the departments. The students benefit from a good supply of appropriate textbooks, study guides and other resources.

## SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

### Welsh

Standards of achievement are good.

#### Good features

- Students discuss set texts perceptively and demonstrate sound background knowledge and analytical skills. They use rich and correct language orally in general.
- Students produce detailed written work, effectively structured. They are able to change register and style as appropriate to the task and make purposeful use of idiom and sentence structures.
- Reading standards are very good. Students read set texts from all periods and can discern meaning and sub-texts in them.

#### Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

## English

Standards of achievement are good.

### Good features

- Lively and effective discussion in the classroom reflects students' good oral skills and their purposeful exchanges in group work show them using talk effectively to collaborate and improve their own understanding.
- Students' thoughtful contributions in feedback show their effective use of well-developed reading and analytic skills and their ability to develop and modify their own interpretations and opinions.
- Students are skilled in note taking and their written work is consistently of a good standard. That of the most able students is thoughtful, perceptive and well expressed.
- Course work is well presented and fully satisfies the AS and A level requirement for understanding genre, character and motivation, as well as the impact of style and the significance of historical context in the interpretation of a range of literary texts.
- The best course work is rigorous in approach and sophisticated in argument and expression.

### Shortcomings

- The language of discussion is often characterised by a casual vocabulary and a few students are reluctant to contribute orally.
- In draft work written expression is sometimes confused and the technical skills of a minority are somewhat insecure.

## Mathematics

Standards of achievement are good.

### Good features

- Students have the opportunity to study pure mathematics and mechanics at this level.
- In pure mathematics, students understand integration and differentiation and can use these processes to determine maximum and minimum points and the area under a curve.
- Students are able to apply the equations of motion to solve problems as appropriate.
- Students are able to deal effectively with partial fractions and can determine the fractions that represent a given general fraction.
- They understand how to calculate the equation of a tangent and a normal to a curve.
- They can use equations to represent Potential and Kinetic energy accurately and can apply these to solve problems.

### Shortcomings

- The quality of the presentation of work in students' files is variable.
- Some students have difficulty in understanding some of the topics covered.

## Science

Standards of achievement are good.

### Good features

- Students respond well to searching questions on knowledge and understanding in the three subjects.
- Written explanations and answers are well presented showing thorough knowledge of scientific concepts. They maintain comprehensive files of work in all subjects.

- Students can discuss their ideas using scientific terms correctly.
- Students can apply their knowledge to solve problems.

#### **Shortcomings**

- Generally, students' investigative skills are underdeveloped.

### **Design and technology – Product design**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Students have a good understanding of the design process and principles and show good problem solving strategies. Students seek and develop real design problems leading to good standards in project outcomes.
- Most students carry out good product analysis and the most able can confidently comment on and explain a range of processes involved in the production of manufactured products.
- Standards of computer literacy are good with most students using the computer well to research work and on occasions to present ideas using sophisticated CAD packages.
- Making skills are very good with students working accurately and producing products that are true to the original design specification. Good use of CAM equipment is evident in some work.

#### **Shortcomings**

- Graphical communication techniques show little flair and imagination, other than in the work of the more able students. In design folios generally, there is insufficient variety in students' communication and presentation skills.
- Students' skills in quick creative design drawing are underdeveloped. Students do not always show the progression of a design through the series of developmental sketches that most designers use.

### **Computing**

Standards of achievement are very good.

#### **Good features**

- Students have very good skills, knowledge and understanding of a broad range of computer software applications including visual basic which they use with very high levels of confidence and competence.
- Project portfolios show significant strengths in the way students plan and progress their software design solutions for clients. They are adept at considering alternate solutions and focussing on the most effective one. There is realism and a clear sense of purpose in their projects because they are solutions to real business management requirements for a diversity of situations. The software applications produced are detailed, thorough, well tested and modified to meet their client's needs or to address any new requirement that arise as the systems are developed.
- Project and user documentation is clear and well presented. Students speak with conviction about their design solutions using very good levels of technical language that reflects a thorough knowledge and understanding of computer systems.
- Their final designs are well tested and evaluated to determine how closely the finished programme matches the original requirements. Students reflect well on their designs and give realistic potential future additions and modifications which might enhance the systems.

#### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings in the subject.

## Information technology (AVCE)

Standards of achievement are good.

### Good features

- Standards of basic practical skills are good. Students use and apply a range of applications effectively.
- Students show good skills in producing a range of documents to meet the needs of a business of their choice.
- The most able students present work well using a constant style and standard recognised formats. They demonstrate a good understanding of writing style and produce coherent, innovative and imaginative easy to read presentations.
- Most students analyse their documents effectively showing the good and bad points and suitability for the purpose of the document.
- Folio work is of a good standard overall showing good levels of evaluation and identification of improvements to arrive at the completed project.

### Shortcomings

- The most able have developed good independent learning skills but too many are over-reliant on teacher direction and support.
- Because students have very limited experience of industrial practice, their written analysis of how ICT is used in industry is weak.

## History

Standards of achievement are good.

### Good features

- Students participate readily in class discussion, and demonstrate good speaking and listening skills.
- Students have good research skills, readily gathering and effectively organising historical material from a variety of sources.
- Students use ICT effectively to develop their research skills.
- Students are able to evaluate evidence from a range of sources.
- Students have a good grasp of chronology and are adept at handling the concepts of continuity and change.
- Written work is accurate and demonstrates good comprehension of the topics studied.

### Shortcomings

- Extended written work shows limited awareness of historiography.

## Geography

Standards of achievement are very good.

### Good features

- Most students' files are systematically organized with neatly presented notes and diagrams. Their map and graphical work is of a very good standard.
- Students have a very good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of locations with the ability to analyse and record issues relating to them.

- Many students demonstrate a mature approach to the subject. They are competent in a whole range of geographical skills and possess a considerable depth of knowledge and understanding of issues relating to the subject.
- Most students display very good research and enquiry skills and apply sophisticated geographical terminology to produce assignments of the highest quality.
- Students possess a very good understanding of the physical and human causes of atmospheric pollution. They describe in depth the results of such pollution and the responses of relevant authorities to address the problem with reference to their Los Angeles case study.
- Fieldwork completed by students in Cardiff Bay is of very good quality.

#### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Modern foreign languages**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Strengths**

- Students demonstrate a good grasp of the grammar of the target language.
- They make good progress in reading authentic texts and listening to authentic speech and are able to recycle the language to improve their own speaking and writing.
- Through their study of language and literature, they become increasingly aware of the cultural context of the language.

#### **Shortcomings**

- Students show little spontaneity in their use of the target language.
- A significant number of students lack confidence to participate in longer oral exchanges and class discussions.

### **Music**

Standards of achievement are very good.

#### **Good features**

- Students are able and experienced performers and achieve very good standards. They perform with conviction and a very good sense of style.
- Compositions reflect the personal interests of the students in the choice of idioms. They demonstrate imaginative treatment of ideas and good understanding of harmony, style and choice of medium. Effective use is made of ICT to store, refine and enhance the quality of the work.
- Folio essays by Y12 students and those on the set-work and area of study in Y13 reflect personal research and good knowledge and understanding of the music being studied.
- Aural skills are good, overall.

#### **Shortcomings**

- A few compositions lack sufficient refinement.

### **Physical education**

Standards of achievement are unsatisfactory.

#### **Good features**

- More able students have a satisfactory understanding of key concepts.

- More able students respond positively to questioning, and when encouraged to do so are able to expand upon their answers.

#### **Shortcomings**

- A significant number of students fail to participate in class discussions and rely heavily on the contribution of others.
- Average and low ability students have only a superficial understanding of the main concepts.
- Many files include incomplete work.
- Generally, students do not make good use of computers to enhance the quality of their work.

### **Religious Studies**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Students preparing for the A2 examination are developing good study skills. They research their topics well and can argue maturely giving their standpoints and those of expert exponents effectively, both orally and in their written assignments.
- They prepare effective personal study grids on such topics as natural law, situation ethics and Christian values, which provide lucid synopses of the main arguments.
- They understand and deploy many techniques required to prepare a good quality extended essay and use apposite quotations.
- They are developing effective examination techniques giving particular attention to analysis, interpretation and evaluation.
- They make effective use of ICT for presentation and when seeking information from reference books, appropriate and relevant videos, CD-ROMs and websites.

#### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Media studies**

Standards of achievement are very good.

#### **Good features**

- Students' ready and informed responses in discussion reflect a developed awareness of the complexities of varied media texts.
- They express themselves confidently, build on each other's ideas and make effective use of evaluation that involves critical reflection and suggestions for improvement.
- They use media terms relevantly and with sophistication and show a good grasp of the complexities of textual representation in comparison of texts.
- They undertake textual analysis and pre-production and production coursework assignments with an appropriate depth and range of response.
- Their work reflects a clear sense of purpose, a strong sense of audience and sophisticated technical skills.

#### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Electronics**

Electronics is delivered by distance learning in Y12 and Y13. The video conferencing facilities are available adjacent to the electronics laboratory. The work is supervised by a member of the design and technology department. An external tutor from Llangefni visits the school to deliver tutorials and the course has proved to be a success with committed students. There was insufficient evidence available during the inspection week to come to a judgement on standards.

## **Health and Social Care (AVCE)**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students gain a good understanding of the health and social care services established within the area; they liaise with staff employed in the various establishments and they benefit greatly from spending brief periods of employment at those places.
- They gain information about the human body and analyse the effects of diet, smoking and exercise upon health.
- They form sensible opinions and are able to discuss the benefits of alternative therapy in comparison with traditional medicines.
- The majority of students take responsibility for their learning programme and undertake readily the researching, collating and analysing of relevant information.

### **Shortcomings**

- Absenteeism has an adverse effect upon the standards achieved by some students.

## **Leisure and recreation (AVCE)**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Assignments, coursework material and investigative tasks are well organized and neatly presented using ICT.
- Students demonstrate a good level of understanding and knowledge of the leisure and recreation industry including issues such as health and safety, marketing and customer service.
- Most students exhibit a good grasp of the structure of primary information gathering such as questionnaires, surveys and websites.
- The students' ability to evaluate their work and to action any amendments required is good.
- Students work with interest and enthusiasm within a well-structured course.

### **Shortcomings**

- Students' work lacks originality and an independent writing style.

## **Child Care (Entry Level)**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students have an appropriate understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and the value of fruit and vegetables in the diet.
- They appreciate the needs of a mother during pregnancy, childbirth and as the baby grows.

- They can identify potential hazards in the home and are aware of the need to provide very small children with a safe environment.
- They practise basic cookery skills effectively.

**Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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1. Improve the standards in physical education.
2. Improve students' attendance.
3. Ensure that all students are registered as present if on the school site, especially Y13 during the current academic year.
4. Ensure that statutory requirements for the provision of religious education in the sixth form are met.

## Appendix

### Basic Information

Name of School	Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	11 – 18
Address of school	Stryd y Fro Aberaeron Ceredigion
Post-Code	SA46 0DT
Telephone Number	01545 570217

Headteacher	Miss J Marina James
Date of appointment	November 1995
Chair of Governors	Dr Julian Evans
Registered Inspector	Mr D Gwynfor Evans
Dates of inspection	26–29 April 2004

### B. Results of Public Examinations

For pupils aged 17, results in GCE A level, GNVQs and NVQs			
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2003: 58			
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2003: 10			
	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	83	77	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	100	97	94
Average points score per candidate	22	21	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	0		
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	6		

### C. EVIDENCE BASE OF THE INSPECTION

- Thirty-six classes were observed, covering all the curriculum areas inspected.
- Inspectors held discussions with the heads of Y12 and of Y13, with members of the SMT and with heads of departments.
- Inspectors scrutinised work in all the subjects inspected.
- The sixth form inspector on the inspection team met a group of Y12 and Y13 students formally.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation relating to the sixth form before and during the inspection.
- Post-inspection meetings were held with departments, the SMT and governing body.