

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

**Llangatwg Comprehensive School
Main Road
Cadoxton
Neath
SA10 8DB**

School Number: 6714066

Date of Inspection: 27/02/06

by

**Trevor Guy
15865**

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- * secondary schools;
- * special schools;
- * pupil referral units;
- * independent schools;
- * further education;
- * adult and community-based learning;
- * youth support services;
- * LEAs;
- * teacher education and training;
- * work-based learning;
- * careers companies; and
- * the education, guidance and training elements of Jobcentre Plus.

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- * makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gsi.gov.uk

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

The inspection of Llangatwg Comprehensive School took place between 27/02/06 and 03/03/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Trevor Guy undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

Contents	Page
Context	1
Summary	2
Recommendations	7
Standards	8
Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?	8
The quality of education and training	11
Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	11
Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	13
Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	15
Leadership and management	18
Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	18
Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	19
Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	20
Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning	23
Mathematics	23
Design and technology	24
Modern foreign languages	25
Geography	26
Religious education (including religious studies)	28
Drama	29
School's response to the inspection	31
Appendices	32
1 Basic information about the school	32
2 School data and indicators	33
3 National Curriculum assessments results	34
4 Evidence base of the inspection	36
5 Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	37

Context

During the week of the inspection, severe weather resulted in the school being closed for one day and reduced numbers of pupils for a second day. The school co-operated fully in difficult circumstances so that the inspection team was able to assemble all the evidence necessary to carry out the inspection.

The nature of the provider

1. Llangatwg is an 11-16 co-educational, community school in the unitary authority of Neath Port Talbot and was last inspected in 2000. The 822 pupils on roll are from an almost entirely white, English speaking background.
2. The area served by the school is semi-rural and, in common with other communities in the South Wales valleys, experiences a higher than average degree of social and economic disadvantage. Just over 20% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure which is above the national average.
3. The pupils entering the school from its 9 associate primary schools represent the full range of ability; of these there are a greater number who, on a number of indicators, are of lower than average ability. Statements of special educational need (SEN) have been made for 11 pupils and a further 196 pupils are on the school's SEN register and are therefore recognised as having some form of additional learning need.

The school's priorities and targets

4. The school seeks to, "provide a quality education for all its pupils to enable them to meet, with confidence, the challenges of the future."
5. In working towards these aims, the school has two main priorities:
 1. to raise levels of attainment throughout the school and to improve further examination results;
 2. to create and maintain a positive learning environment for everyone within the school.
6. Particular targets to raise attainment include making better use of data, developing appropriate and varied approaches to teaching, enhancing the pupils' skills as learners, particularly through the assessment programme, and monitoring teaching and learning.
7. Targets relating to the learning environment include involving pupils more in the school, developing their self-image, promoting their roles as good citizens, caring for the environment and promoting the image of the school.

Summary

8. Llangatwg Comprehensive School has been making good progress in raising the achievements of its pupils and improving the learning environment. The headteacher and other members of the senior management team have given a positive lead in seeking to improve the quality of teaching and this adds to the strength which is found in the faculties' care and support for pupils. It is to the school's credit that so many pupils wish to continue their education when leaving school at 16.
9. Good progress has been made on most of the issues identified in the last inspection, in particular with regard to the quality of teaching, key skills, assessment, attendance and improving results in external tests and examinations. There remain some areas for further development and a need to meet certain statutory requirements.

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

10. The following table shows pupils' standards of achievement in the subjects that Estyn selected for inspection at Llangatwg Comprehensive School.

Inspection Area	Key stage 3	Key stage 4
Mathematics	2	2
Design and technology	3	2
Modern foreign languages	2	2
Geography	2	2
Religious education (including religious studies)	3	4
Drama	-	1

11. Standards in 60% of lessons in the six subjects inspected were judged to be grade 1 or 2 which is a significant improvement on the previous inspection. Standards in 96% of lessons were judged to be grade 3 or higher, a similar figure to that seen in the previous inspection. The important shortcomings in the

grade 4 for religious education in key stage 4 relate to the statutory religious education course for which there is inadequate provision, rather than the GCSE Religious Studies course where standards are good.

12. In the subjects inspected at key stages 3 and 4, the percentages of grades awarded exceeded the national targets set by the Welsh Assembly Government and were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
17%	43%	37%	4%	0%

13. In National Curriculum assessments at key stage 3 the school has made particularly good progress in the last three years. In 2005, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level 5 or higher in all 3 core subjects was above both the LEA and national averages and the results compare particularly well with those in similar schools across Wales.
14. In key stage 4, GCSE results for pupils gaining 5 or more passes at grades A*-C are below the LEA and national averages but are mostly consistent with the ability of the pupils. Pass rates in 2005 at grades C and above in mathematics were outstanding, in English they were good and while science results showed some improvement, they were well behind the other two core subjects. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more passes at grades A*-G has been rising steadily and is now above national pass rates. In 2005, the school was in the top 25% of similar schools in Wales on nearly all indicators.
15. Pupils make good progress in key stage 3. Progress in key stage 4 varies more from subject to subject. Less able pupils perform well and few leave school without some form of qualification. More able pupils are not always fully challenged and this does reflect in the rate of progress they make in some classes.
16. There are wide variations in performance between boys and girls in some years and not in others. Taken overall, girls outperform boys in most respects though in 2005 the more able girls did not perform quite as well as they might given their ability.
17. Pupils, in most cases, have achieved good standards in the different skills they need to be effective learners. Opportunities are not often presented to develop further the higher order skills to which the more able pupils in particular can aspire.
18. Pupils across both key stages have good communication skills. They read well, are able to write with a fair degree of accuracy and most present their work well. Pupils display good, basic numeracy skills and apply them well when given the opportunity. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and are now good at both key stages. The good standards in numeracy and ICT are not seen consistently in all subject areas.

19. The great majority of pupils are well motivated and comply with school rules and routines. Pupils' behaviour is good. Learning is affected in a small minority of lessons by poor behaviour which is mainly low level disruption. The moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good; provision for their spiritual development is less effective.
20. Pupils have the basic skills necessary to solve problems and they are good at applying these skills in different subjects. Pupils co-operate well in lessons, both with the teacher and other pupils. They can take responsibility and help others e.g. in the paired reading scheme. With guidance, pupils understand what they need to do in order to improve. Pupils often show imagination in the ideas they have for writing and design work. They are particularly creative in Drama.
21. Good progress has been made in raising levels of attendance and the average attendance for the last 3 terms before the inspection was 90.2%.

The quality of education and training

22. In 2 lessons in every 3, the teaching is good with no important shortcomings; this greatly exceeds the national target of 50%. In more than 1 in 8 lessons there are outstanding features.
23. Grades for the quality of teaching in all lessons observed in key stages 3 and 4 were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
13%	51%	28%	8%	0%

24. In key stage 4, a good majority of lessons are good with no important shortcomings. More shortcomings are apparent in key stage 3.
25. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive. Teachers generally have a good subject knowledge. While the majority have put into practice a number of the teaching initiatives recently introduced by the school, this has not been the case with all teachers. Teachers mostly use a range of well chosen resources and stimulating activities to promote pupil learning. In a minority of lessons, the pace is too slow with little to challenge pupils.
26. Good progress has been made in making assessment more regular and informative for pupils in their learning. Marking is mostly accurate and pupils are tracked throughout their school career using a wide range of data.
27. Reports to parents are detailed and usually set specific targets for pupils but some teacher comments are worded in language that is too technical. Reporting procedures do not comply with requirements with regard to religious education.
28. The school provides a curriculum that meets the broad needs of its pupils. The curriculum is well designed to give continuity of learning between years and key stages and pupils can also gain a range of appropriate qualifications at key stage 4.

29. The provision for religious education at key stage 4 is inadequate and the current key stage 3 statutory programme of study in design and technology is not being fully covered.
30. The arrangements for less able pupils, including those with SEN, are good. Pupils with additional learning needs are identified at an early stage and given good support. The school meets the statutory requirements of the SEN Code of Practice. More able pupils are often not sufficiently challenged in the work they are given.
31. There is a very good variety of clubs and activities during lunch-time and after school and these offer pupils the opportunity to improve their performance in subjects, broaden their interests and help their personal development.
32. Curriculum links with the associate primary schools and further education college are very good and enhance pupils' learning. Parental support for the school, beyond that related directly to their own children, is limited, although the school has made efforts to engage parents more. The pupil planners are not used consistently well to strengthen home-school links.
33. Provision for work related education is good and pupils receive good information to allow them to make their option choices at 14+ and career choices at 16+.
34. The school is a caring community where pupils are well known to staff and treated as individuals. The organisation of the school's care and support for pupils, through the faculties, works well. In addition, the Pupil Welfare Support Officer (PWSO) provides outstanding care and support for pupils.
35. The school's system for monitoring attendance is most thorough and the school has well documented child protection procedures. There have been health initiatives in the school but with limited impact on pupils' attitudes to more healthy lifestyles.
36. The pupils' voice, through the School Council, is not sufficiently representative or strong.
37. Both boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum and other school activities.
38. The school deals effectively with incidents of inappropriate behaviour towards others. A clear anti-bullying policy and procedures are in place and understood by pupils.

Leadership and management

39. The good progress made by the school, particularly over the last two years, reflects the clear focus on raising standards by the senior management team. The headteacher leads by example in having a close knowledge of individual pupils and a positive influence on the school's ethos. Staff understand and support the

direction of the school as it seeks to improve the quality of teaching and meet the different learning needs of the pupils.

40. While the heads of faculty give a clear lead on matters relating to the care and support of pupils, the leadership on curriculum and learning and teaching issues is not wholly effective in some of the faculties.
41. The target-setting process draws properly on a detailed knowledge of pupils and has helped to raise expectations. The knowledge gained from the results in different subjects is properly used to tackle issues of underperformance.
42. Governors have a sound understanding of their role and are generally well informed about issues in the school which helps them to arrive at appropriate decisions. They have not sufficiently challenged senior managers about curriculum provision. Their monitoring of the budget and financial controls are particularly good.
43. The school's framework for monitoring and self-evaluation sets out an appropriate process but this has yet to be implemented consistently. Managers have not been sufficiently rigorous in monitoring action plans following reviews. The inspection team's findings agreed with the school's self-evaluation on 3 out of the 7 key questions and were a grade lower on the other four.
44. Review processes have led the school to focus its planning on two areas which are relevant to the school's needs. The structure of the school plan is sound though omits any longer term planning for the development of the curriculum.
45. The school has enough well qualified and experienced staff to teach most aspects and subjects of the curriculum in key stages 3 and 4. In most areas of the curriculum, pupils have access to a good range of appropriate learning resources. Particularly good use is made of resources outside of school to enrich the curriculum.
46. In general, accommodation is fit for purpose and efficiently maintained, though there is spare capacity in the school. The Library Resource Centre is under-used, except when it is staffed in the middle of each day.
47. The school manages its finances very well. Spending is closely monitored and regular budget reports are scrutinised by governors. Deployment of staff is generally efficient and the programme to meet their training needs is well planned and relevant.

Recommendations

In order to build upon the good progress currently being made, the school needs to:

- R1: raise standards in Religious Education in key stage 4 and ensure that requirements are met in this subject with regard to the Agreed Syllabus and reporting to parents;
- R2: improve planning in Design and Technology at key stage 3 to ensure that the statutory programme of study is fully covered and to raise standards;
- R3: develop further the good initiatives already being taken to improve learning and teaching and apply them more consistently in all lessons;
- R4: provide greater challenge to more able pupils;
- R5: bring greater rigour and consistency to self-evaluation and ensure that all middle managers are fully involved in the process and put action plans into practice.

The school's planning already recognises the issues identified in recommendations 3, 4 and 5.

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

48. This grade is the same as the school's own evaluation.
49. Standards in 60% of lessons in the six subjects inspected were judged to be grade 1 or 2. This shows a significant improvement from the previous inspection. Standards in 96% of lessons were judged to be grade 3 or higher, a similar figure to that seen in the previous inspection. The important shortcoming in the grade 4 for religious education in key stage 4 arises from inadequate provision for the subject.
50. In key stage 3, there are good features and no important shortcomings in geography, mathematics and modern foreign languages. In design and technology and religious education, good features outweigh shortcomings.
51. In key stage 4, standards are good with outstanding features in Drama. In Design and Technology, French, Geography, German, Mathematics and Religious Studies (GCSE course) there are good features with no important shortcomings. While there are good features in religious education, there are also important shortcomings.
52. In national curriculum assessments at key stage 3 the school has made particularly good progress in the last three years. In 2005, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level 5 or higher in all 3 core subjects was above both the LEA and national averages and the results compare particularly well with those in similar schools across Wales.
53. In key stage 4, GCSE results for pupils gaining 5 or more passes at grades A*-C are below the LEA and national averages but are mostly consistent with the ability of the pupils. Pass rates in 2005 at grades C and above in mathematics were outstanding, in English they were good and while science results are showing some improvement, they were well behind the other two core subjects.
54. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more passes at grades A*-G has been rising steadily and is now above national pass rates.
55. In 2005, the school was in the top 25% of similar schools in Wales on all but one indicator.
56. Less able pupils do well and few leave school without some form of qualification. Pupils in the designated year 7 SEN class make good progress and achieve good standards. Pupils with SEN in other year groups also make good progress.
57. More able pupils are not always fully challenged and this does reflect in some of the results they achieve and also in the rate of progress they make in some classes.

58. There are wide variations in performance between boys and girls in some years and not in others. Taken overall, girls outperform boys in most respects though in 2005 the more able girls did not perform quite as well as they might given their ability.
59. The good work the school is doing to raise standards means that pupils make good progress in key stage 3. Progress in key stage 4 varies more from subject to subject; with measures the school has put into place, the number of subjects where the progress at least matched the targets set increased in 2005. A good measure of the school's success is the high proportion of pupils who continue full-time education after leaving school, most progressing to the local tertiary college.

Key Skills

60. Pupils, in most cases, have achieved good standards in the different skills they need to be effective learners. Opportunities are not often presented to develop further the higher order skills to which the more able pupils in particular can aspire.

Literacy

61. Pupils across both key stages have good communication skills. They listen attentively to teachers and are mostly good listeners to other pupils. The good majority speak confidently and can give extended responses to questions and offer their own opinions. They participate well in pair or group discussions and use subject specific terms correctly.
62. Pupils of all ages read well. They read aloud confidently and fluently and with a fair degree of expression. They are able to understand and talk about the different forms of reading material across the various subjects. Pupils in years 7 and 8 regularly read for pleasure and the support given to less able readers ensures they make good progress.
63. Pupils are able to write with a fair degree of accuracy using a range of writing forms across both key stages. They are developing a good subject vocabulary to use in their writing. Many pupils are able to write at length from year 7 onwards and usually structure their work well when given appropriate support from the teacher. The good majority of pupils present their work well.
64. The good features in pupils' bilingual skills outweigh the shortcomings.

Numeracy

65. Pupils display good basic numeracy skills and apply them to new and unfamiliar situations. Graphical skills are generally good. While numeracy skills are mainly good in mathematics lessons, in a minority of other subjects, numeracy skills are also used appropriately and in context; there is, for example, some good work with graphs in science.

66. In the majority of subjects, while pupils have good, basic mathematical skills they are not being sufficiently developed. Either the range of skills being addressed is too narrow or specific skills are not being taken to the higher levels.

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

67. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and are now good at both key stages, though these good standards are not consistently achieved in all subject areas. Pupils use their ICT skills effectively to enhance the presentation of their work.
68. Pupils have a good understanding of file management. They can use a range of software programmes and apply their knowledge of these for a variety of purposes. The ICT skills pupils possess are not consistently used to enhance their learning in all subjects.

Development of personal, social and learning skills

69. The great majority of pupils are well motivated and comply with school rules and routines. Pupils' behaviour is good. They are mostly well-mannered and considerate of others. Most pupils show interest in their work and have a positive attitude towards learning. Learning is affected in a small minority of lessons by poor behaviour which is mainly low level disruption. The amount of litter deposited around the site at breaks and lunchtime does not reflect well on the pupils.
70. The moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good; provision for their spiritual development is less effective.
71. Good progress has been made in raising levels of attendance and the average attendance for the last 3 terms before the inspection was 90.2%. Pupils are punctual to lessons.
72. Pupils have the basic skills necessary to solve problems and they are good at applying these skills in different subjects. They usually arrive at solutions through a careful consideration of the issues and respond positively when faced with open-ended tasks which have no single or simple solution.
73. Pupils co-operate well in lessons, both with the teacher and other pupils. They willingly share ideas, ask questions of each other and support each other's learning. An outstanding feature in GCSE Drama is the high level of collaboration which raises the levels of achievement of all the participants.
74. Pupils are able to take responsibility by contributing to the planning and organisation of their own learning and helping others e.g. in the paired reading scheme. With guidance, pupils know what they need to do in order to improve. In most subjects, they evaluate their own work, understand assessment criteria and plan for self-improvement. In mathematics, the involvement of pupils in the assessment of their project work is having a positive effect on standards.

75. Pupils often show imagination in the ideas they have for writing and design work. They improvise well in Drama, produce original work in art and create their own compositions in music. In design and technology, the restricted nature of the projects at key stage 3 hinders pupils' creativity and ability to make real decisions about design issues.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

76. This grade is the same as the school's own evaluation.
77. In 2 lessons in every 3, the teaching is good with no important shortcomings; this greatly exceeds the national target of 50%. In more than 1 in 8 lessons there are outstanding features. The school is just below the target set by the Welsh Assembly Government for the proportion of lessons which are graded 3 and above.
78. Grades for the quality of teaching in all lessons observed in key stages 3 and 4 were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
13%	51%	28%	8%	0%

79. In key stage 4, a clear majority of lessons are good with no important shortcomings. More shortcomings are apparent in key stage 3.
80. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive with the teachers creating a supportive atmosphere which motivates pupils in the great majority of lessons.
81. Teachers generally have a good subject knowledge which informs their teaching. While the majority have put into practice a number of the teaching initiatives recently introduced by the school, this has not been the case with all teachers.
82. Lessons are well planned with the aim of the lessons and tasks clearly understood by the pupils as a result of clear explanation and demonstration by the teacher. Many teachers use effective short starter activities to help pupils recall prior learning and structure lessons well to develop and consolidate pupils' understanding.
83. In the most effective lessons, the pace is brisk and activities are varied with the pupils being given the responsibility to make decisions about their own learning. Teachers use a range of well chosen resources and stimulating activities to promote pupil learning in line with the school's emphasis on developing a variety

of teaching and learning strategies. In a minority of lessons, the pace is too slow with little to challenge pupils and advance their learning.

84. One notable area in which there is great variation across lessons is the way in which the needs of different ability pupils are addressed. In the best lessons, the learning activities are suited to the needs of individual pupils, ensuring that all pupils are suitably challenged and make progress irrespective of their ability. In other classes, there is not enough account taken of pupils' different abilities, whether they are taught in sets or mixed ability classes. In these instances, tasks are not sufficiently challenging and can be repetitive.
85. In some subjects there are good examples of probing questioning which allows pupils to explain ideas and develop their understanding and knowledge of the subject. Suitable support and intervention by teachers during lessons make pupils think for themselves and use and apply their knowledge.
86. Pupils are usually given the opportunity in lessons to practise their key skills, with conscious attention to literacy, numeracy and ICT; these opportunities do not always provide enough challenge for the more able.
87. Homework, which has been a focus for the school, is set on a fairly regular basis and generally supports the learning in the classroom. Homework, on occasions, lacks focus and purpose by not building on the lesson or making additional demands on learners.

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

88. Consistency of assessment, tracking and targeting pupils' progress have been issues for development within the school and real improvement is evident since the last inspection.
89. Good progress has been made in making assessment more regular and based on commonly understood criteria. The development of portfolios of pupils' work has helped in this though these do vary in usefulness across subjects.
90. Marking is mostly accurate with teachers offering supportive comments and noting how pupils can improve their work. Pupils find this helpful. With some exceptions, pupils are very aware of National Curriculum levels and examination criteria and how they are making progress against these criteria. There are inconsistencies in the accuracy of marking in design and technology and in the use of levels in religious education. Teachers are able to assess pupils' progress in English and Welsh in the different language skills.
91. In effective lessons, teachers give relevant and immediate feedback to pupils and pose questions which extend their learning. There are a few examples of regular self and peer assessment in use in some subjects. When pupil target setting is successful, pupils give a mature assessment of their progress; however; comments are usually too generalised.

92. Pupils are tracked throughout their school career with a range of relevant attainment information. The data manager is very effective in collating information about pupils' progress and this is properly shared with staff. The pupils are aware of their progress and are monitored on a regular basis, especially for underachievement.
93. Reports to parents are detailed and record subject attainment and progress in key skills. The teachers' comments are helpful and usually set specific targets for pupils but some teacher comments are worded in language that is too technical. Pupils' achievements in religious education at key stage 4 are not assessed in line with subject criteria, nor are they reported upon to parents and in this respect statutory requirements are not met.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

94. In its self-evaluation report, the school judged this key question to be grade 2. The inspection team judged this key question to be grade 3 because, although there are many good features, there are also several shortcomings in respect of meeting statutory requirements and planning for the learning needs of more able pupils.

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

95. The school provides a curriculum that meets the broad needs of its pupils. The curriculum is well designed to give continuity of learning between years and key stages. The pupils can also gain a range of appropriate qualifications at key stage 4.
96. The provision for religious education at key stage 4 is inadequate. The lack of time for the subject prevents full coverage of the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and so statutory requirements are not fully met.
97. The key stage 3 statutory programme of study in design and technology is not being fully covered. There is also a lack of coherence to planning at key stage 3 which results in pupils being given limited opportunities to progress at the rate they should across the different areas of the subject. This is particularly the case with project work in resistant materials where design skills are given insufficient attention.
98. The arrangements for the separate class of pupils with special needs in year 7 are appropriate. These allow for them to have a good level of support as they settle into the school. Pupils of lower ability are generally well catered for with good support and work that is pitched at a level suited to their abilities. Frequently, the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in the work they are given.

99. The curriculum at key stage 4 is appropriate and pupils can choose from a range of suitable courses. Although there is some constraint within the options, this does not prevent pupils selecting a broad and appropriate range of subjects to study.
100. Different but relevant provision is made for a small number of disaffected pupils who either follow full-time courses in other locations or are on part time release courses with outside providers. Monitoring of the quality of this provision shows that it suits the needs of the pupils involved and enhances their educational experience. Most gain a qualification at the end of the course. The Skills for Working Life option is well suited to the needs of those pupils following this course and they are motivated by and enjoy the experience.
101. There has been a significant commitment to improving key skills in the school and good progress has been made. The school has yet to embed fully the active development of these skills across the whole curriculum.
102. All year 9 pupils have the opportunity to enter for a qualification in the key skills of communication, ICT and application of number and this helps to motivate pupils to raise their standards. Nearly three-quarters of pupils in the year group achieved the qualification in 2005. The school has recently been awarded the Basic Skills Agency's Secondary Quality Mark.
103. Provision for the National Curriculum common requirements is good in some subjects and less so in others. With few exceptions, the school does not cater well for pupils' spiritual development. Multi-cultural understanding and Y Cwricwlwm Cymraeg are promoted through a number of subjects and whole school activities.
104. The personal and social education (PSE) programme covers a good range of appropriate topics. Many outside agencies, including the police, make an effective contribution to PSE.
105. There is a very good variety of clubs and activities during lunch-time and after school. These offer pupils the opportunity to improve their performance in subjects and to develop additional skills and broaden their interests. These enrichment activities also make a positive contribution to pupils' moral and social development.
106. Curriculum links with the associate primary schools and further education college are very good and enhance pupils' learning. There are also good links with initial teacher training institutions. Parental support for the school, beyond that related directly to their own children, is limited; the school has made efforts to engage parents more in the education on offer and a suitable home-school agreement is in place.

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

107. All pupils in year 10 undertake relevant work experience placements through a productive partnership with Careers Wales. Links with business are beneficial to the pupils and these are varied and imaginative e.g. in the service and tourism sectors, to compensate for the demise of traditional industry in the area. Pupils are helped to understand the world of work through a good variety of events and activities e.g. local employers help with developing pupils' interview skills.
108. The development of bilingualism has not yet embedded itself into the school's ethos though provision for both English and Welsh is secure in both key stage 3 and 4. Some subjects incorporate opportunities to develop an understanding of the culture and nature of Wales.
109. The school promotes equality of entitlement for individual pupils in its provision.
110. There have been attempts to raise awareness of sustainability issues through some of the work pupils undertake in class and a small recycling project. The effect on pupils' attitudes in this respect is limited. There are activities within the PSE and enrichment programmes that develop an awareness of, and capability in, entrepreneurship.
111. The work of the school in forming a Community Development Trust is in its early stages but holds real potential to contribute to the regeneration of the area.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

112. In its self-evaluation report, the school judged this key question as grade 1. The inspection team judged this key question to be grade 2 because, while there are many good and some very good features, there are some shortcomings and insufficient evidence of outstanding features.

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

113. The school is a caring community, where pupils are well known to staff and treated as individuals. The organisation of the school's care and support for pupils, through the faculties, works well. In addition, the PWSO provides outstanding care and support for pupils, making effective links with other support agencies.
114. Faculties gather detailed knowledge of pupils' pastoral and academic development and this is well used in supporting pupils. The rewards and consequences for good and bad behaviour are well understood. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very positive throughout the school.

115. The school has an open door policy for parents to contact the school to discuss any issue of concern. Pupils' planners include information on behaviour, punctuality, attendance and homework, but they are not used consistently well to strengthen home-school links.
116. Particularly good arrangements are in place and the transition of pupils from their primary school to the secondary school is a smooth one. The school makes effective use of detailed information on each pupil to ensure that individual needs are met. Senior prefects are actively involved in visiting primary schools and play an effective role in induction days.
117. The PSE programme, which is delivered by form tutors, covers a good range of appropriate topics. Many outside agencies, including the police, make an effective contribution to PSE. The tutorial period is structured to meet registration and collective worship requirements but the majority of time is not used productively.
118. Pupils receive good information to allow them to make their option choices and they value the support given to them by the school and the careers adviser. The school also offers good advice to year 11 pupils on future subject choices and careers so that pupils make informed decisions about their futures. The transfer to further education is helped considerably by particularly good arrangements with the local college.
119. The school's system for monitoring attendance is most thorough and year co-ordinators work well with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and attendance support officer. The ways in which punctuality, behaviour and performance are tracked are good and are continuing to develop.
120. The school has well documented child protection procedures. The PWSO co-ordinates first aid effectively throughout the school. There have been health initiatives in the school but these have not been promoted and sustained sufficiently to affect significantly pupils' attitudes to more healthy lifestyles.
121. The School Council is led by the senior prefect team, but only consists of pupils from year 9 upwards. Links are made with younger pupils, but the pupils' voice is not sufficiently strong.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

122. Pupils with additional learning needs are identified at an early stage and given good support. The Learning Support Assistant (LSA) provides effective support to the pupils in the special class in year 7, and pupils with SEN in years 8, 9 and 10 receive generally good support from Faculty Support Assistants (FSAs) when well briefed.
123. The school meets the statutory requirements of the SEN Code of Practice. Pupils have good quality individual or group education plans (IEPs) which have measurable targets and clear criteria for success and development. Targets are closely monitored and regularly reviewed.

124. Effective additional learning support is targeted to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy. Records show that pupils are making good progress and are gaining confidence in their own ability.

125. Exclusion rates have been falling over the past two years due to a more consistent application of the school referral process by all members of staff.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

126. Both boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum and other school activities.

127. The school deals effectively with incidents of inappropriate behaviour towards others. Any incident of oppressive behaviour is taken seriously, monitored and recorded. A clear anti-bullying policy and procedures are in place and understood by pupils. The introduction of a "bully box" allows pupils to notify staff of the relatively rare incidents of bullying and this is valued by the younger pupils in particular.

128. The school's equal opportunities' policy meets requirements with regard to race equality.

129. The school has produced a comprehensive accessibility plan to cater for those with disabilities; this has yet to be implemented.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

130. This grade is the same as the school's own evaluation.

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

131. The good progress made by the school, particularly over the last two years, reflects the clear focus on raising standards by the senior management team. The strengths of the team are underpinned by a very strong commitment to the best interests of the pupils and a close knowledge of the community. There is a commitment to giving all pupils the chance to succeed and the school meets statutory requirements in respect of collective worship, disability and looked after children.

132. The headteacher leads by example in having a close knowledge of individual pupils and a positive influence on the school's ethos. Staff understand and support the direction of the school as it seeks to improve the quality of teaching and meet the different learning needs of the pupils.

133. While the heads of faculty give a clear lead on matters relating to the care and support of pupils, the leadership on curriculum and learning and teaching issues is not wholly effective in some of the faculties. This results in subject heads taking more responsibility, which is effective in a number of cases but also leads to some inconsistencies in the application of policy e.g. on approaches to teaching and self-evaluation.

134. The school's management is taking proper account of a number of Welsh Assembly Government's priorities, such as the need to provide a more flexible curriculum in the 14+ age group, and much effective work is undertaken with different partners to this end. The initiative to establish a Community Development Trust is a good example of how the school is working to make the school more relevant to the local community. The national priority of promoting sustainability does not have a high profile.

135. Historically, challenging targets have been set to help raise standards and while these have not always been met, they have given clear signals about the rising expectations of the headteacher and SMT and results have been improving. As the attainment levels of pupils entering the school are improving, this is not always reflected in the challenge of future targets set by the school. The target-setting process itself draws properly on a detailed knowledge of pupils.

136. Communication across the school is good but there are inconsistencies within faculties. While there are suitable arrangements documented for monitoring the performance of teams and individuals, they are not consistently put into practice.

137. The statutory performance management system meets requirements and has been effective in identifying a range of staff development needs. The initiative to improve the quality of teaching has been well resourced and has had a beneficial effect in a number of areas. There is no appraisal system for support staff.

The extent to which governors meet their responsibilities

138. The governing body is involved in helping to set the direction of the school and contributed to the five year planning for 2003 to 2008. Governors have a sound understanding of their role and are generally well informed about issues in the school. The information governors receive helps them to arrive at appropriate decisions.

139. Governors have not sufficiently challenged senior managers about curriculum provision in the school and it is in this area that not all statutory requirements are met. Their monitoring of the budget and financial controls are particularly good.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

140. In its self-evaluation report, the school judged this key question to be a grade 2. The findings of the inspection team judged it as a grade 3 because of a number of shortcomings in the consistency and rigour with which self-evaluation is being carried out.

How effectively the provider's performance is monitored and evaluated

141. The school has improved its use of data considerably and the review of examination performance, led by the headteacher, is a thorough process. The knowledge gained from the results in different subjects is properly used to tackle issues of underperformance.

142. The school's framework for monitoring and self-evaluation sets out an appropriate process but this has yet to be implemented with any consistency. Self-evaluation does cover a number of aspects of school provision but is not sufficiently comprehensive.

143. In the last two years, two reviews have been carried out focusing on assessment and the quality of teaching and learning and these have resulted in useful action points which have led to improvements. Not all subjects have been included in this programme as yet.

144. Clear criteria are provided for judging the quality of teaching and this has helped to focus the school on one of its key priorities. The review process does not require or provide criteria for judging standards being achieved by pupils in lessons. The good practice in some subjects, such as mathematics, takes a

systematic approach to the review of pupils' work, evaluation of classroom practice and tracking of progress with the development plan. In most subjects, however, these processes are informal with limited recording of findings. Where judgements are made and recorded they are, in a number of cases, overly generous and so do not always lead to sharply focused points for action. Managers have not been sufficiently rigorous in monitoring action plans following reviews.

145. The views of pupils and parents are sought on specific issues and this has helped to shape policy in certain areas e.g. uniform. Staff are involved in decision-making processes in school.

146. Overall, the inspection team's findings agreed with the school's on 3 out of the 7 key questions and were a grade lower on the other four.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

147. Review processes have led the school to focus on two areas in its planning: (1) raising standards of achievement through concentrating on the quality of teaching and learning and (2) improving the learning environment. These are relevant to the school's needs and reflect the school's and LEA's priorities.

148. The 5 year strategic plan gives a good overview of the general direction the school intends to take. The structure of the school plan is sound. A strength of the plan is the common format followed from school level through to faculty and subject levels. A shortcoming is the omission of any longer term planning for the development of the curriculum.

149. The annual plan provides more operational detail and is reviewed twice yearly. This plan gives a broad outline of action to be taken at whole school, faculty and subject levels and the responsibilities for implementing the plan are clearly set out. The success criteria by which to evaluate its effectiveness are not well defined.

150. Good progress has been made on most of the issues identified in the last inspection, in particular with regard to the quality of teaching, key skills, assessment, attendance and improving results in external tests and examinations.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

151. In its self-evaluation report, the school judged this key question as a grade 1. The inspection team judged this key question to be grade 2 because, while there are many good features, there are some shortcomings and insufficient evidence of outstanding features.

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

152. The school has enough well qualified and experienced staff to teach most aspects and subjects of the curriculum in key stages 3 and 4. A limited amount of teaching by non-specialists in Welsh and mathematics does affect standards. The pupil teacher ratio is slightly better than the national average. Teachers new to the profession are well supported and properly monitored.
153. Classroom assistants are not always efficiently deployed but, when well briefed, they provide good support to pupils. Technician support in design and technology, science and information technology is good. Other support staff make sure that the everyday life of the school runs smoothly.
154. In most areas of the curriculum, pupils, including those with SEN, have access to a good range of appropriate learning resources. Departmental capitation is fairly distributed and priorities for funding are linked to the priorities found in subject development plans and the school development plan. ICT equipment and resources have improved and are generally sufficient and well used. Access to suites of computers can be limited because of timetabled information technology lessons. The computers in design and technology are not adequate to run all the software available.
155. Particularly good use is made of resources outside of school to enrich the curriculum; these include mathematics visits to Techniquet and visits to different parts of the world as part of the Leisure and Tourism course. Pupils benefit in PSE from visits by outside agencies.
156. In general, accommodation is good and fit for purpose. For most subjects the classrooms provide a stimulating learning environment with very good displays of pupils' work and other relevant materials. Teachers make good use of the classroom learning environment. Sports facilities are good.
157. The school is clean and well maintained with little graffiti or vandalism. The school has implemented a planned programme of upgrades to the facilities and has regard to improvements needed on health and safety grounds.
158. The Library Resource Centre is under-used, except when it is staffed for a 2½ hour session in the middle of the day. The range, quality and quantity of books have been improved and are sufficient for the size of the school.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money

159. The school manages its finances very well. Spending is closely monitored and regular budget reports are scrutinised by governors. The use of reserves to balance the budget for 2005-06 has left a small amount for contingencies. An external audit of the accounts identifies good practice in financial affairs and the minor recommendations in the most recent report are being addressed.

160. Spending priorities, including those in respect of staff's continuous professional development (CPD), are linked to the school's priorities for development. The distribution of capitation to departments is equitable and the system of departments bidding for funding is effective.
161. The school has a number of surplus places which allows each teacher to have her or his own teaching space but does leave some spare capacity in certain areas. The school has no plans to reduce this capacity.
162. Deployment of staff is generally efficient. Good use is made of the EWO and the school's Attendance Support Officer. Time given to liaison work with primary schools is well spent.
163. There is a coherent CPD programme in place. Staff's training needs are carefully identified through the school's performance management programme. The school makes good use of the limited funding available to finance these activities. The school has invested time and money to develop a wider range of teaching and learning strategies. Training provided by external providers is formally evaluated but the evaluation of in-house training is not sufficiently rigorous.
164. Statutory requirements for workforce remodelling are being met. Staff have been fully informed and consulted on the implementation of the reforms.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Mathematics

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

Good features

165. Good progress is made across the key stage and pupils apply knowledge well in new or unfamiliar situations.
166. Pupils have good basic numeracy and calculation skills. They understand the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages and higher ability pupils can apply this knowledge in more advanced work.
167. Understanding of algebra is good. Pupils also understand a wide range of topics dealing with shape and space and can calculate angles, area and perimeters.
168. Good progress is made in work on handling data and the basic concepts of probability are understood by the majority of pupils.

Shortcomings

169. A minority of pupils do not understand the vocabulary of likelihood unless it is closely related to their experience.
170. In project work, some pupils use graphs that are inappropriate or incorrectly labelled.

Key stage 4 – Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

171. GCSE coursework is of a high standard and good progress is made through the key stage.
172. Numeracy and calculation skills are good. Pupils of middle and higher ability apply these skills successfully to problems in everyday life.
173. Pupils have a good understanding of algebra.
174. The majority of pupils can successfully calculate area and volume and the most able have a good understanding of more difficult topics in shape and space. Skills in handling data are sound.

Shortcomings

175. A minority of pupils do not understand concepts relating to work which requires them to approximate values.

Design and technology

Key stage 3 – Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

176. Pupils engage with a range of materials and processes and demonstrate good practical skills. They work confidently and safely producing accurate work and products that are generally well assembled.
177. There is good understanding of different materials and their properties in most areas of the subject and pupils can discuss their work using the correct terminology.
178. Pupils enjoy their work and stay on task throughout lessons. They show interest during most lessons and acquire new knowledge and skills.
179. They demonstrate good ICT skills to research and to enhance the presentation of their work. This ability adds considerably to the quality of their work.
180. Work in food and textiles, in particular, is of a good standard. Pupils undertake research which is well focused and, through engaging genuinely in the decision-making process, they produce good design ideas. Folders are well structured and neatly presented.

Shortcomings

181. Standards of achievement are being constrained due to the National Curriculum programme of study not being fully covered. Progress is also affected by limitations in other aspects of planning.
182. Standards in pupils' design skills are limited in the area of graphics and design.
183. Pupils' computer-aided design (CAD) work does not show sufficient range and quality. Pupils' use of software is not well developed and the applications of both computer aided design and computer aided manufacture (CAM) are often confined to basic surface decoration.

Key stage 4 – Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

184. Pupils use a range of tools, equipment and manufacturing processes with confidence. They also have a clear understanding of design features and how the properties of materials can affect decisions about design.
185. They can explain the construction methods they are using and are aware of difficulties they might encounter and their possible solutions. Pupils can explain

what they are doing and how they intend to proceed. Products are of a good standard.

186. Pupils' analysis of products and their research work in food technology are particularly well focused and of a good standard.

187. ICT is used very effectively to enhance presentation. CAD is used to good effect for graphic design in the graphic products course. The quality of design folders is generally good across the different subject areas but is particularly good in food, textiles and graphics. In these areas they are well structured with well-considered and imaginative layouts.

Shortcomings

188. The use of CAD is limited or, in some cases, lacking in resistant materials and textiles.

189. Work in some folders lacks individuality or imagination. The early research work carried out does not always link with subsequent design work.

Modern foreign languages

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

Good features

190. Pupils show a willingness to learn and try hard to speak French and German using word displays or pictures as prompts to help them; when these supports are used effectively, the pupils can produce longer sentences.

191. Most pupils listen attentively to their teacher and each other and respond well to questions. They understand the French and German heard in class as well as specific details from taped recordings.

192. Pupils co-operate well to find out answers to language problems and work together to discuss the accuracy of their work. Most pupils can work independently and use dictionaries or wordlists to help their understanding.

193. Writing skills progress well from labelling and short sentences to simple paragraphs about the current topic.

194. Pupils make appropriate progress in French throughout the key stage. Learners build on this knowledge to make rapid progress in the introductory German course in year 9. By the end of the key stage, more able pupils can use past, present and future tenses in their French writing tasks and can see patterns in language.

Shortcomings

195. Few pupils speak at length with a good accent and intonation.

196. Some pupils of average ability do not take sufficient care with some writing tasks and fail to review critically what they have written.

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

Good features

197. More able pupils can offer opinions on different issues and give simple reasons for them.

198. In their oral work, year 10 pupils in German can use the future tense accurately.

199. Year 11 French pupils can understand and use the main points from quite complex phrases e.g. when talking about the environment. They read challenging texts, including some selected from the internet, and use a range of strategies to understand unfamiliar words.

200. Able pupils can produce written letters or essays that show a sound grasp of structure and tenses, using dictionaries effectively to support and extend their writing.

Shortcomings

201. Some pupils rely too much on previous written work to support them when undertaking speaking or writing tasks.

202. Pupils of average ability are reluctant to take the initiative in conversation and skilful questioning and rephrasing are needed to elicit fuller spoken responses from them.

Geography

Key stage 3 - Grade 2: good with no significant shortcomings

Good features

203. Pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the location, features and character of a range of different places, including Wales. They have a good command of geographical vocabulary.

204. They have a very good understanding of physical processes, such as those associated with earthquakes and the water cycle, and can explain their effects on peoples' lives.

205. Mapping skills are good with the best examples of map making in years 7 and 8; pupils can construct a range of maps and diagrams for different purposes.

206. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of population distribution and growth and they are confident in explaining the factors which affect economic development in different parts of the world.

Shortcomings

207. While pupils on fieldwork are able to collect and record basic information in order to identify simple patterns and processes, their use of fieldwork equipment is not sufficiently sophisticated to analyse more complex patterns.

208. Pupils lack confidence in framing their own questions to improve their investigation work.

Key stage 4 - Grade 2: good with no significant shortcomings

Good features

209. Pupils are able to identify a wide range of features associated with river and glacial landscapes and they have a good understanding of the processes involved in the development of different landforms.

210. Understanding of key concepts is good and pupils readily make the links between different ideas e.g. when studying ecosystems, pupils can explain how human activity affects the savannah ecosystem and how rainforest plants have adapted to their environment.

211. Pupils have a good knowledge of sustainable development matters. The effects of population growth, migration and tourism are well understood and pupils have a good grasp of the way that developed and developing economies can adversely affect the environment and the dilemmas this poses.

212. They select and construct a wide range of maps and graphs and this ability is best demonstrated in coursework assignments.

Shortcomings

213. Knowledge of particular examples of river and glacial landforms is limited.

214. The skills to use a database in order to investigate geographical patterns are not well developed.

215. Drawing of sketch maps and sketch sections is less secure than other mapping skills.

Religious education (including religious studies)

Key stage 3 Religious education – Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

216. By the end of the key stage, most pupils demonstrate a fair knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of the religions studied and can make some connections between them. Progress is made across the key stage, but particularly in year 9.

217. Pupils can generally recall previous work. They understand the importance of key religious figures to believers, such as the importance of Abraham in Judaism, and have some understanding of symbol in religion.

218. The best standards occur when pupils ask questions of meaning and relate religious and moral issues to their own experiences. This is evident in year 7 with pupils relating their work in Christianity to their own experiences of christening ceremonies. Skills of empathy and evaluation are developing and some pupils are able to write at length and with accuracy, especially in year 9.

219. Pupils regularly learn key words and are able to use religious terms in context. When given the opportunity, they communicate well in pairs and small groups to enhance their understanding of religious concepts.

Shortcomings

220. On occasions, there is confusion about which beliefs and practices relate to which religion.

221. Some pupils are unable to make connections between religious content and their own experience.

222. More able pupils do not make sufficient progress.

Key stage 4 Religious education and Religious Studies

Grade 4: some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

Good features

223. In the GCSE Religious Studies course, standards are good with no important shortcomings. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of work covered and can identify similarities and differences between the two religions that they study. Pupils are motivated to learn and progress well in developing evaluation skills. They ask serious questions of meaning and are prepared to argue their viewpoint and support their answers with evidence. Pupils can use religious terms with accuracy and in context. Their written work is mostly good and coursework is accurate and generally well presented.

224. In the statutory religious education course, pupils have a very basic understanding of religious concepts. They are able to state their own viewpoints on a moral issue and some are able to make connections between religious beliefs and moral issues when prompted. Where pupils have opportunities to express their own views in more depth, some progress in their learning is made.

Shortcomings

225. In the GCSE Religious Studies course, some pupils are unable to link ideas and appreciate both similarity and difference within the faith tradition they are studying.

226. In the statutory religious education course, standards are depressed and progress is slow mainly due to the inadequate time allocation for the subject. Pupils' basic knowledge about religious belief and practice is insufficient for them to explore topics in any depth. They have some awareness of the contemporary issues covered in the course but little knowledge or understanding of religious perspectives on those issues. Pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of subject specific terminology are weak. The skills needed to evaluate an issue and develop a reasoned argument are under-developed. Written work is brief.

Drama

Key stage 4 – Grade 1: good with outstanding features

Good and outstanding features

227. In both year groups, pupils discuss and analyse their work to reach a very good understanding of their own performance and that of others and this process significantly improves the overall quality of the group's work. Their abilities to work together creatively in these activities and to conceive, explore and reflect on dramatic outcomes are outstanding features.

228. Pupils use space well, having a good awareness of the significance of sightlines and stage positions when considering a performance in front of an audience.

229. Year 10 pupils consider carefully their roles in scripted pieces and make good use of their vocal and physical skills to create and perform in character. They demonstrate a very good understanding of the need to interact sympathetically with each other in rehearsal to give prominence to different characters or dramatic moments.

230. In year 11, improvisation is used effectively to explore character and most pupils have a good awareness of posture, tone and expression when acting. They understand how to blend different elements, such as action and music, effectively when devising theatrical work for their GCSE course.

231. Pupils achieve good standards in their written work when required to display knowledge of lighting and set design and can comment appropriately on their effect in production. They are able to describe in notes how they would approach the playing of particular parts or scenes and how a character might be developed in performance.

Shortcomings

232. There are no significant shortcomings.

School's response to the inspection

This inspection report identifies the many good and very good features of the school. It clearly indicates that the school has made good progress in raising the achievements of pupils and improving the learning environment. These are the two key objectives of our School Development Plan.

The most important aspect of any school is how well the pupils achieve. Learners' achievements were judged to be grade 1 and 2 in 60% of the lessons inspected. Outstanding achievement was found in more than one in six lessons. This is a significant improvement on the previous inspection and exceeds current Welsh Assembly targets.

We are, therefore, rightly proud of the achievements of our pupils as evidenced in the WAG benchmark data for 2005. We have worked particularly hard to improve pupils' key skills and basic skills for learning. Our good work has seen us achieve the Basic Skills Quality Mark and a Welsh Secondary Schools Association National Award. We are particularly pleased that all year 9 pupils have the opportunity to gain a Key Skills qualification at Level 1.

High standards of attainment are almost always the result of good quality teaching. In two out of every three lessons, inspectors found the teaching was good with no important shortcomings and in more than one in eight lessons there were outstanding features. Again this greatly exceeds the national targets and endorses our drive to introduce a wider range of teaching and learning activities at the school.

The report makes it clear that Llangatwg is a caring community where pupils are well known to staff and treated as individuals. This is another key aim of the school. The very positive relationships between pupils and teachers are noted and it is pleasing to read that the great majority of pupils are judged to be well motivated, well mannered and considerate of others.

The five recommendations contained in the report will be helpful in moving the school further forward. Improving teaching and learning, providing greater challenges to more able pupils and bringing greater consistency to self-evaluation are already addressed in our School Development Plan and Self-Evaluation Report.

These planned actions will now be strengthened and together with steps to raise standards in Religious Education in key stage 4 and Design and Technology in key stage 3 will form the basis of a new Action Plan. This plan, which has to be completed within 45 working days of receiving this report, will be circulated to all parents of the school.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Llangatwg Comprehensive School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	11-16 years
Address of school	Main Road, Cadoxton, Neath.
Postcode	SA10 8DB
Telephone number	01639 634700

Headteacher	Mr. R. Skilton
Date of appointment	September 1991
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Councillor D. W. Davies/ Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Reporting inspector	Trevor Guy
Dates of inspection	27 th February – 3 rd March 2006

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	128	147	166	208	173	N/A	N/A	822

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	48	5	50.8

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	16.2:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	n/a
Average teaching group size	22.5
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	72%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	90.8	88.8	89.6	87.0	84.8	N/A	N/A	88.1
Term 2	90.1	87.5	86.4	85.1	92.8	N/A	N/A	88.0
Term 3	92.9	92	89.8	90.2	90.2	N/A	N/A	90.9

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	21%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	36

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of Key Stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2005															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 208															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	20	45	24	7	0	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	2	8	21	34	24	9	0	0
	Test	School	0	4	0	0	0	0	5	22	38	26	6	0	0
		National	0	4	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	20	33	23	10	n/a	n/a
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	17	22	30	27	0	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	1	7	19	26	32	14	0	0
	Test	School	0	2.5	1	0	0	0	2.5	14	17	38	25	0	0
		National	0	5	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	17	20	36	15	n/a	n/a
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	18	37	30	10	0	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	0	6	20	33	27	12	0	0
	Test	School	0	3	0	0	0	0	4	19	37	29	8	0	0
		National	0	4	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	17	33	28	13	n/a	n/a

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	67.8	In the school	61
In Wales	58.3	In Wales	57.4

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2005	184
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	37

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2005:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	90	89	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	48	57	52
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	87	88	85
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	35	43	38
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	99	98	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	78	83	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	96	95	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	4	5	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	2	2	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	-	-	-
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	-	-	-

UA Unitary Authority

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Twelve inspectors spent a total of 47 days at the school.

Before the inspection, inspectors considered a range of documentation provided by the school and held discussions with:

- the headteacher, senior management team, staff, governing body and parents.

During the inspection week, inspectors visited 86 lessons in total including:

- lessons in the six subjects inspected;
- lessons taught by all other teachers at the school;
- tutorials, registration, assemblies and extra-curricular activities.

Discussions were also held with:

- members of the senior management team;
- a selection of middle managers;
- teaching and non-teaching staff;
- the Chairman of the Governing Body and members of the finance committee;
- groups of pupils from each year group;
- the School Council;
- representatives from associate primary schools, the local tertiary college, the LEA and community organisations.

The team also considered:

- work in all subjects from a sample of pupils;
- samples of work in each subject inspected;
- documentation provided by the school during the inspection week;
- responses to the questionnaire sent to parents.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Trevor Guy (Registered Inspector)	Key Questions: 1, 5 and 6
Anne Robertson (Lay Inspector)	Key Question 7
Robert Cater	Key Questions: 1 (ICT) and 3; Design and technology
Vicky Thomas	Key Questions: 1 (wider key skills) and 7; Religious education
Sue Allerston	Key Question 4
Mererid Morgan	Key Questions: 1 (literacy) and 2
Michael Jones	Key Question 1 (numeracy); Mathematics
Richard Knowles	Geography
David Trace	Modern foreign languages
Gregory Owens	Drama
Graham Edwards	Design and technology
Gareth Williams	Nominee

Contractor: ESIS
Ty Dysgu
Cefn Coed
Parc Nantgarw
Treforest.
CF15 7QQ

The inspection team is grateful to the pupils of the school, all the staff, parents, governors and other members of the school community for their welcome and co-operation during the inspection process.