

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Ysgol Gyfun Dyffryn Taf
North Road
Whitland
SA34 0BD**

School Number: 6694512

Date of Inspection: 24/09/07

by

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

The inspection of Ysgol Dyffryn Taf took place between 24/09/07 and 27/09/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Brian William Medhurst 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 nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a **short** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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A glossary of terms used in this report

Careers education and guidance	A planned programme to teach pupils about career opportunities and to provide each pupil with individual career guidance.
Core Subjects	English or Welsh, science and mathematics.
Core subject indicator	For key stage 3: The percentage of pupils gaining at least level 5 in each of the core subjects. For key stage 4: The percentage of pupils gaining grade 'C' or better in the GCSE examinations in each of the core subjects.
Key skills	Important common skills necessary for learning, such as communication skills, number skills, information and communication technology skills, and bilingual competence.
Learning Pathways	Developments in the curriculum for learners aged 14 to 19, which offer a range of courses and teaching methods appropriate for young people's varying needs. These courses may involve links with other schools, colleges and other providers.
Learning support assistants	Trained assistants, who work alongside qualified teachers in the classroom. They may work with an individual pupil or a group of pupils.
National Curriculum	The subjects, and subject content, that all maintained schools must provide for all pupils.
National Curriculum assessment	For secondary schools, this is the assessment of pupils at the end of key stage 3 in English or Welsh, science and mathematics. In key stage 4, this is provided through a range of approved qualifications, the most common of these being the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).
Public examinations	Nationally recognised examinations commonly taken at 16 years of age and 18 years of age (usually GCSE and Advanced level (A level)).
Pupils with additional learning needs	Pupils who, for a wide range of reasons, have been identified as needing additional or modified support to help them learn successfully.
Pupils with special educational needs	Those pupils, within the overall category of additional learning needs, who need specific support, which, for pupils with complex needs, may be recorded within a statement of special educational needs.
Similar schools	All those secondary schools in Wales that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. For this school that is between 10% and 15%.
Statutory requirements	All of those aspects of school provision that the Welsh Assembly Government requires schools to provide.

Vocational studies (courses)

Courses of study related to career or employment skills.

Work related education

Teaching pupils about the nature of life in the workplace.

Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Ysgol Dyffryn Taf is a voluntary controlled 11 – 18 mixed comprehensive school situated in the town of Whitland, in rural Carmarthenshire. There are 1069 pupils on roll, of whom 172 are in the sixth form. At the time of the previous inspection in October 2001, there were just 1024 pupils on roll, of whom 140 were in the sixth form.
- 2 The school is a naturally bilingual school with 6.5% of pupils speaking Welsh as the predominant language at home. All pupils study Welsh to the age of 16 at a level suited to each individual's ability and linguistic background. Welsh medium teaching is available in a number of subjects in key stage 3, with opportunities to take GCSEs in history, geography and/or religious studies through the medium of Welsh if there is sufficient demand.
- 3 Pupils come from a large number of partner primary schools covering an area in excess of 400 square miles, and a very large proportion arrive by bus each day. A large number of Pembrokeshire pupils are attracted to the school from Tavernspite, Narberth and Templeton. The school caters for pupils representing a full range of academic ability and socioeconomic background. Just over ten percent of pupils are registered as being entitled to free school meals, a figure below the national average. There are currently 126 pupils with special educational needs, including 43 who have statements of such needs.
- 4 Since the previous inspection, major building work has continued with the construction of a sports hall and a new science laboratory. There have also been many changes in the composition of the school's leadership team. The headteacher was appointed soon after the previous inspection and two assistant headteachers were appointed during the past year.

The school's priorities and targets

- 5 The school aims to promote the fulfilment of each pupil's potential in those areas in which the school can provide meaningful experiences: aesthetic and creative, spiritual and moral, linguistic, mathematical, scientific, physical and technological.
- 6 The School's motto is 'I Fynu Fo'r Nod' – 'Aim for the Highest'.
- 7 The school aims to develop:
 - the whole person within a supportive yet challenging environment;
 - in its pupils, awareness, understanding, sympathy and respect for one another, and for social and cultural diversity;
 - home school links, encouraging the joint participation of school and community in all aspects of educational development, which are of common concern;
 - pupils' power of self-motivation and self-discipline, encouraging a sense of personal responsibility for one's actions in the learning process and in one's community; and

- lively, enquiring minds, encouraging pupils to think for themselves and to question ideas, opinions and attitudes with rationality and integrity.

8 It also aims to:

- prepare pupils for life in a rapidly changing world, encouraging them to acquire skills and knowledge appropriate to their needs as members of society;
- enrich the experience of pupils, encouraging them to participate in a varied extracurricular dimension to school life;
- ensure that all staff are valued highly for their involvement in the life of the school and for their contributions to the education and well-being of their pupils;
- create a purposeful, caring and supportive environment based on mutual respect and openness, where pupils, parents, school governors, staff and all in the community can work harmoniously together and where there are equal opportunities for all; and
- promote the understanding that education is a lifelong process suited to different ages, aptitudes, abilities and interests.

9 In its three-year development plan to 2010, the school's main areas for development are:

- to maintain and improve pupils' standards of achievement;
- to further develop teaching, learning and assessment;
- to develop pupils' role in assessing their own work;
- to develop the school's curriculum in line with New Orders;
- to enhance the transition process from key stage 2 to key stage 3 so that pupils who enter Y7 have higher levels of skills and are better prepared for secondary education;
- to develop learners' key skills;
- to develop further self evaluation within every section of the school, so that each might take greater responsibility for its own continuous improvement;
- to review the curriculum for 14 –19 year olds in line with national developments;
- to develop an information and communication technology strategy that can meet the growing demands of online computerised testing;
- to formalise the development of 'Thinking Skills' in the key stage 3 curriculum;
- to improve the school's environment, resources and accommodation; and
- to further enhance accommodation for members of the community with disabilities to satisfy the requirements of the Disabilities Discrimination Act.

Summary

10 Ysgol Dyffryn Taf is a very good, successful and popular school with a number of outstanding features. It provides well for its pupils within a supportive and caring environment. Staff and pupils work together purposefully to realise the school's aims. The school has made considerable progress since the previous inspection and continues to seek ways of raising standards further.

Table of grades awarded

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

- 11 The grades in the above table agree with those awarded by the school in its self evaluation report.

Standards

Key stages 3 and 4

- 12 The outstanding features are:
- pupils' behaviour, motivation, and their personal, social, moral and wider development;
 - the very good progress that most pupils make, whatever their prior attainment;
 - the examination results that pupils achieve in their GCSE examinations, especially when they are compared with similar schools in Wales and with similar pupils across the United Kingdom;
 - the improvement in GCSE results since the previous inspection; and
 - the way in which the school provides open access to all aspects of learning, regardless of learners' backgrounds, disabilities and/or prior attainment.
- 13 Assessment results at the end of key stage 3 have improved considerably since the previous inspection. For instance, in English, mathematics and science, the proportion of pupils achieving level five or better has been greater than the national and Carmarthenshire averages over the past three years.
- 14 Results in GCSE examinations are also well above national and local averages in all aspects. When compared with those achieved in similar schools, they fare well, matching those achieved by the top quarter of such schools. Other data indicate that pupils at Ysgol Dyffryn Taf perform better than around 85% of pupils with similar prior attainment in other schools across the United Kingdom.

- 15 Whatever their prior attainment and/or their perceived abilities, all pupils make at least good progress between key stage 2 and key stage 4. Some make outstanding progress. Many pupils with additional learning needs achieve very well in their GCSE examinations.
- 16 Girls generally perform better than boys, but overall, the difference between girls' and boys' GCSE performances is usually less marked than is the case nationally.
- 17 Pupils communicate well in English and their bilingual competence is good. Most pupils also have good number skills, which they use well in many other subjects. Likewise, pupils' information and communication technology skills are well developed and are used to good effect across the curriculum. Pupils' research their projects, process and present information and communicate their ideas, well.
- 18 With very few exceptions, pupils make outstanding progress in the development of the wider key skills such as problem solving, innovation, creativity and working with others.
- 19 Pupils display outstandingly positive attitudes towards learning. The vast majority of them are well motivated and sustain their concentration throughout the school day and beyond.
- 20 Pupils' very good behaviour in class and around the school is an outstanding feature of life in Ysgol Dyffryn Taf.
- 21 School attendance consistently exceeds both national and unitary authority averages, and those achieved in similar schools by a significant margin.

The sixth form

- 22 As with pupils in key stages 3 and 4, students in the sixth form are well motivated and their personal, social, moral and wider development is exemplary.
- 23 Success at A level expressed in terms of the proportion of students achieving 2 or more grades A to C is very close to the all Wales average figure, but below that achieved across Carmarthenshire as a whole. Nevertheless, for most students such success represents considerable achievement.
- 24 The school has made good progress over recent years in A level standards. In terms of success at 2 or more A levels at grades A to E, the school does well. For example, in 2006, for students who entered 2 or more A levels, the school achieved a 97% success rate. The corresponding local and national figures were 97% and 94%.
- 25 In 2006, girls outperformed boys in terms of all A level grades and the average points scored by a considerable margin.
- 26 Students listen respectfully to their teachers and peers. They put forward points of view and justify opinions with a growing confidence. Reading skills are also good. Writing is often well organised. Students adapt language, style and form to fit the purpose of their writing. Students' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. They apply these skills effectively in a number of situations.

Students make good use of information and communication technology to support their studies.

- 27 Their ability to work with others is outstanding in all subject areas. Students collaborate very effectively and maturely with each other and they display competent problem-solving and creative skills.
- 28 Students' ability to work independently and take the necessary measures to improve their own learning and performance is generally good with no important shortcomings.
- 29 Students contribute much to the life of the school by engaging in many and varied valuable activities. They are very good ambassadors for the school and role models for younger pupils.

The quality of education and training

- 30 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons observed during the inspection:

82 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	13	63	24	0	0
Key stage 4	24	36	40	0	0
Combined KS3/KS4	18	52	30	0	0
Sixth form	11	73	16	0	0
Whole school	16	57	27	0	0
<i>National figures for secondary schools 2005/2006</i>	17	52	26	5	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

Key stages 3 and 4

- 31 The figures in the table reflect the good quality of teaching prevalent in the school.
- 32 Pupils commented very positively about the high quality of teaching and care they receive within and beyond the curriculum.
- 33 The atmosphere in all classes is supportive and friendly as a result of the outstanding relationships that exist between teachers and pupils. In the best lessons, teachers set and communicate clear objectives for the lesson, use a range of challenging tasks and have high expectations of pupils.
- 34 Notwithstanding the many good features of teaching in the school, there are a few shortcomings.

- 35 Whole school assessment systems are rigorous and there is development of effective strategies in many departments, but not enough teachers involve pupils in self and peer assessment.
- 36 The school's curriculum meets learners' needs well and is flexible enough to provide many valuable opportunities for pupils' different interests and aspirations. Learning experiences develop basic and key skills well, with the school gaining the Basic Skills Quality Mark.
- 37 Most pupils' learning and social experiences are enriched by the outstanding arrangements for and variety of extracurricular activities. This feature of the school's provision has a most beneficial influence on standards achieved in the 'formal' curriculum.
- 38 Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good with outstanding features, but pupils' spiritual development, although good, has a few shortcomings.
- 39 Partnerships with parents, and other education providers and institutions enhance pupils' learning experiences and contribute significantly to their personal development.
- 40 Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is embedded effectively into schemes of work across the curriculum and the provision for the development of bilingual skills is good.
- 41 Work-related education, and careers education and guidance are good.
- 42 The school plans and manages its care arrangements very effectively. Staff knowledge of pupils and their families, and the support offered to them, are outstanding features of provision that help ensure that the school is a happy and caring community.
- 43 The school's very caring and inclusive ethos ensures that pupils are supported and challenged well to help them realise their full potential for success. Pupils with additional learning needs receive very good support and those with behavioural problems are offered outstanding assistance.

The sixth form

- 44 The good quality of teaching in the sixth form is exemplified by teachers' good subject knowledge that helps students to explore subjects in depth. Teachers encourage students to become more independent in their learning to prepare them for life beyond school, in higher education establishments or elsewhere. They also regularly share learning objectives with their students along with examination requirements and criteria for success.
- 45 The quality of assessment of monitoring is good. In day-to-day work, teachers identify strengths and weaknesses and indicate to students how improvements may be made. Monitoring of achievement and progress is ongoing and any cause of concern is referred via the head of sixth form to relevant tutors. The process of identifying underperformance is rigorous.

- 46 Students benefit from an appropriate range of courses, with added breadth achieved through the provision of enhancement activities and an outstanding range and quality of extracurricular activities. Students' involvement and success in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme are particularly strong.
- 47 Because of the school's location, it has experienced logistical problems in attempting to develop collaborative arrangements with other establishments to develop further the 14 – 19 Learning Pathways.
- 48 Close links with the local community, businesses and industry help students become more aware of the world of work.
- 49 Students receive very good pastoral support and guidance and they are thus helped to make informed choices about their future.

Leadership and management

- 50 The school is led and managed most effectively and efficiently. The headteacher provides dynamic leadership in all aspects of provision: financial and strategic planning, self evaluation, supporting staff and learners, and in promoting high standards of work and behaviour throughout the school.
- 51 Other members of the leadership team, all of whom share the headteacher's vision for the school, support him most ably and wholeheartedly. They are most effective as a team and as individuals within their own areas of responsibility.
- 52 Members of the highly supportive governing body have considerable experience and expertise, which they use most advantageously when taking leading roles in planning, monitoring and evaluating the school and its work.
- 53 Most members of middle management, both academic and pastoral, fulfil the requirements of their roles very well, but there is a small measure of inconsistency.
- 54 The school operates within a reflective culture and there are widespread, comprehensive and rigorous procedures for monitoring its performance. Priorities for development are clearly identified and clear targets for future success are set at all levels of management and in all areas of the school.
- 55 The sixth form is led and managed very well as an integral unit within the school as a whole. Students spoke most enthusiastically about their life in the sixth form, appreciating the good teaching and support that they receive in preparation for life beyond school.
- 56 Teaching and support staff are deployed to good effect. The provision made for continuing professional development to enhance the contribution that staff make to the school is outstanding.
- 57 Resources, including the accommodation, are good overall. The new sports hall provides an outstanding resource for the school and the wider community. There are, however, a number of areas that require urgent attention, especially the quality of the so-called "temporary accommodation".

58 The school's management of resources to achieve value for money is outstanding.

Progress since the previous inspection

59 The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues for action highlighted in the previous inspection report.

60 Improvements have been made in the school's accommodation overall and particularly so in science and physical education. Standards have been raised across the school following changes in the curriculum. The library provision has been improved to provide facilities for independent research and study. Statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form are now satisfied in both Y12 and Y13.

Recommendations

R1 Involve learners more effectively and consistently in assessment procedures, so that all departments match the best practice already present in the school.

R2 Notwithstanding logistical constraints of location, seek ways of improving the provision for the 14 – 19 Learning Pathways through collaborative arrangements with other providers.

R3 Improve the arrangements made for learners' spiritual development.

R4 Eradicate the few shortcomings in management of departments, with particular reference to those areas where self evaluation is not fully rigorous.

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

61 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self evaluation report.

Key stages 3 and 4

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

62 We evaluated pupils' performance in public examinations at the end of key stage 4, and in tests and by teacher assessment at the end of key stage 3. We compared pupils' attainment with the attainment of all pupils in Wales, Carmarthenshire and similar schools throughout Wales. In addition, we considered a comprehensive range of other information about pupils' attainment.

63 We took into account pupils' attainment in 2006 and previous years, along with the 2007 results, which are currently unconfirmed.

64 It must be noted that in 2006 there were optional national tests at the end of key stage 3. Not all schools used them. Pupils' attainments were measured by teachers' assessments.

65 We found that in key stage 3, over the past 3 years, results were good insofar as:

- in English, mathematics and science the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or better was above both the Welsh average and the Carmarthenshire figure;
- the proportion of pupils achieving the core subject indicator was well above national and local averages; and
- in many other subjects of the curriculum, teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment were above those achieved nationally and locally.

66 When pupils' key stage 3 performances in achieving level 5 or better in 2006 were compared with those achieved in other similar schools, we found that:

- in English and mathematics, pupils in Ysgol Dyffryn Taf did better than pupils in half of the other schools in the group;
- in science, pupils did better than those in one-quarter of the other; and
- in the core subject indicator the school did better than half of similar schools.

67 When compared with these similar schools in 2004 and 2005, outcomes were below average.

68 However, when pupils' 2006 key stage 3 attainment is compared with their prior attainment at key stage 2, outcomes are above average overall.

- 69 In key stage 4, over the past three years, pupils did extraordinarily well in the GCSE examinations. For example:
- the proportions of pupils achieving 5 or more grades A* to C, 5 or more grades A* to G and the core subject indicator were better than national and local figures;
 - pupils' average GCSE points score was well above the local figure and the national average; and
 - success at achieving 1 or more grades A* to G was better than that achieved in Carmarthenshire or Wales as a whole.
- 70 In comparison with the other similar schools, the school achieved very well over the past two years. For example, in terms of:
- the proportions of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C and 5 or more GCSE grades A* to G Ysgol Dyffryn Taf performed better than three-quarters of other schools in both years;
 - the average GCSE points score, the school was in the top quarter of schools in 2005 and in better than half of the other schools in 2006; and
 - the core subject indicator, the school performed better than three-quarters of the others in 2006, but in 2005, better than only a quarter of them.
- 71 One outstanding feature of attainment at key stage 4 is the fact that the school's performance in the GCSE examinations has improved more steeply in recent years than national and local improvements.
- 72 The school works closely with Durham University in determining the ability and/or attainment profile(s) of its pupils at various stages of development. In doing so, the school is able to determine how well it performs in relation to schools across Wales and England with pupils of similar capabilities. Such comparisons indicate that the school is regularly performing within the top 10% to 15% of this group of schools. This is an outstanding feature.
- 73 Within individual subject areas, examination success is outstanding. Such is the case most noticeably in design and technology, and French, where results are exceptionally well above those achieved nationally and locally.
- 74 Predictions of pupils' performance based upon a wide range of indicators and the information mentioned above, indicate that the school would normally expect between 50% and 55% of pupils to achieve 5 GCSE grades A* to C. The fact that the school consistently achieves in excess of 65% (and in 2007 – 70%) is an outstanding feature.
- 75 Over the past 3 years, the difference between girls' and boys' GCSE performances has been less than the national variation. In 2006, there was only a small difference in the performance of boys compared with that of girls in the core subject indicator.
- 76 Almost all of the school's performance targets at GCSE have been exceeded for the past few years.
- 77 Actual 2006 GCSE figures and comparisons with Carmarthenshire and all-Wales data can be found in Appendix 3 at the end of this report.

- 78 The school is rightly proud of its success in the GCSE examinations, as there have been several measurable improvements over time, but it is not complacent, it continues to seek for ways to raise standards even further.
- 79 Because of the good provision made for them, pupils with additional learning needs generally achieve very well across the curriculum. Pupils with low reading scores on entry achieve much better GCSE results than would normally be predicted by these low scores. The GCSE results for 5 or more GCSE grades A* to G indicate success for these pupils and others across the cohort. Looked after children do well.
- 80 The school is an outstandingly inclusive establishment and it provides open access to all aspects of learning, regardless of pupils' backgrounds, disabilities and/or prior attainment. New admissions to the school from other cultures settle quickly and succeed well.
- 81 The school has qualified for the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Pupils needing to improve their basic skills are identified and they receive extra support. The improved achievement by these pupils has been most obvious.
- 82 Pupils usually listen with respect and attention to teachers and to one another. All pupils, including those with additional learning needs recall information read by teachers and respond promptly to instructions. Pupils willingly respond to questions in class and usually contribute well to class discussions. Girls are usually more responsive than boys. Pupils collaborate well in pairs and small groups. They focus on tasks, pose questions, put forward views, justify opinions and summarise group findings clearly and confidently. Pupils use Standard English when required, demonstrating that most can adapt tone and language to audience. There is generally good understanding of subject vocabulary. There are often very good standards demonstrated when pupils are engaged in formal presentations to the class and tutor group.
- 83 Pupils' reading skills are good. Most read aloud with accuracy and fluency. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in morning literacy sessions. Most read a wide range of texts with good understanding. Pupils in key stage 3 read for pleasure. Pupils display competent skills of research. All skim and scan texts to locate information and most interpret what has been read with competence.
- 84 Writing skills are good. All pupils write in a range of forms and for a variety of purposes and audiences. Pupils extend their writing when it is required and organisation is usually good. In some subjects, they plan, draft and proof read their work to improve. In key stage 4 in particular, many use computers effectively to help the drafting process. Presentation of written work is good and skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally in line with abilities.
- 85 The numerical skills of pupils overall in both key stage 3 and key stage 4 have good features and no important shortcomings. In both key stages there is evidence of good and very good standards especially with the higher attaining pupils. Those with special educational needs are identified and receive good support. Y7 pupils identified as needing support in numeracy are paired with Y11 pupils at registration to receive extra tuition on three mornings a week. This is an effective strategy. Across

the curriculum a small number of pupils lack confidence in applying their numerical knowledge in varying situations.

- 86 Pupils' bilingual skills are well developed. Welsh second language pupils achieve good standards at the end of key stage 4. First language pupils make progress over the two key stages. Advanced learners are encouraged to join the first language class to provide a sufficient challenge for them, and they do well there.
- 87 Pupils' information and communication technology skills are good and used well in most subjects. Pupils' research well for various projects, process and present information, and communicate their ideas well. In science, most pupils measure and analyse data and present their results with good skills. In design and technology, almost all pupils use computer aided design and manufacturing equipment well and produce innovative product outcomes through the programming of sophisticated computerised machinery.
- 88 With very few exceptions, pupils make very good progress in their wider key skills.
- 89 Pupils' problem solving skills are outstanding in several subjects and particularly so in design and technology, music and science. In resistant materials, pupils consistently produce ingenious award winning, innovative solutions to design challenges set by national industrial organisations. Pupils persevere keenly in their attempts to solve a range of open-ended tasks throughout design and technology. In science, they formulate well-reasoned solutions to the problems set them and demonstrate good analytical and evaluative skills.
- 90 Creative skills are well developed in most subjects. Pupils present their ideas well, with outstanding work seen in many folios of pupils' work in key stage 4 textiles. Pupils' creative skills in general show high levels of flair and originality.
- 91 The ability to work with others is universally outstanding across all subjects. Pupils co-operate very sensibly and productively when working in pairs and in small groups. They readily engage in meaningful debate and show consideration and respect of each other's views.
- 92 Pupils often respond well to feedback on their work and take appropriate steps to review and advance their own performance. However, this level of independent learning is not a feature that is very strong in every lesson.

Pupils' progress in learning

- 93 Analyses of data supplied by the Welsh Assembly Government reveal that when matching the school's key stage 3 results in 2006 to the pupils' prior attainment at the end of key stage 2, there is good value added for English, mathematics, science and the core subject indicator. In other words, pupils at Ysgol Dyffryn Taf make at least good progress between key stage 2 and key stage 3 in these core subjects.
- 94 Analyses also reveal that when GCSE results in 2006 are matched to the pupils' prior attainment at key stages 2 and 3, they reveal significant value added for 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C, 5 or more GCSE grades A* to G, the average GCSE points

score and the core subject indicator. Such information highlights the fact that many pupils make outstanding progress between key stages 2 and 3, and key stage 4.

- 95 Outcomes suggest that pupils have added significantly to their knowledge and skills during their passage through all key stages. The vast majority of pupils fulfil their potential and move on to the next stage of learning.
- 96 The school provides a comprehensive bank of data to help teachers set targets for pupils during review sessions. In general, teachers set very challenging aspirational targets. As highlighted above, when assessment information compares entry with the 'end product', it is evident that most pupils make at least good progress.
- 97 Pupils with additional learning needs generally make very good progress. They benefit well from integration into mainstream classes with appropriate support and other suitable arrangements made for them.
- 98 Pupils work productively, often enjoying their work and they appreciate the progress they make.

The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills

- 99 The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills is good with outstanding features.
- 100 Almost all pupils have a positive attitude to their learning. They are well motivated and want to succeed. Pupils understand and respect the values and expectations promoted by the school. They abide by the Code of Conduct and respond positively to the merit system to reward good work and effort.
- 101 In many subjects, pupils engage in research. They work diligently in lessons and make effective use of their time, but in both key stages there is, occasionally, insufficient development of independent approaches to learning in lessons.
- 102 There is outstanding progress in personal, social and moral development. Experiences gained in a wide range of well attended extracurricular activities contribute to the development of maturity and confidence. Pupils also engage in charitable work and adopt roles such as school councillors. Almost all pupils show a very good understanding of issues of equal opportunities and are sensitive to issues of diversity in society. Pupils with disabilities are well integrated and their needs are understood. Many pupils react with kindness and understanding to pupils with problems. They are sensitive and eager to help.
- 103 Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Pupils have open access to the rooms throughout the day and treat the buildings, furniture and resources with great respect. They are friendly and polite and willingly interact with visitors. They are very respectful and courteous to teachers and work exceptionally well with one another in a relaxed and supportive way.
- 104 Average attendance in key stages 3 and 4 has been consistently between 91% and 92% for the last five years and unauthorised absence is very low. These figures comfortably exceed national and local authority averages and those for similar schools. They are, however, below the national target, which has been raised to 94%.

Most absence is for medical reasons, but holiday taken in term time and parentally condoned truancy make a noticeable contribution at certain times of year.

- 105 Except when there is difficulty with school transport, pupils are punctual to school and generally also to lessons.
- 106 The values and attitudes encouraged by the school, coupled with the good opportunities for pupils to learn about the community and workplace, prepare pupils effectively for life after school.

The sixth form

Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 107 The school operates an open entry policy for its sixth form. Many students who achieve GCSE grades C or better, in excess of expectations based upon prior attainment, return to school to follow AS and A level courses. They generally succeed well and obtain A level grades, but fewer of these grades are in the A to C range. This then has an effect on the overall proportion of students achieving success at these higher grades and the average score per candidate.
- 108 This is reflected in the 2006 A level results, where the proportion of students achieving 2 or more A level grades A to C was 67%, compared with the all Wales figure of 68% and the unitary authority's of 75%. The corresponding average points scores were 19, 20 and 21 respectively. Overall, though, these results were well matched to the expectations of success.
- 109 In terms of success at 2 or more A levels at grades A to E, the school does well. For example, in 2006, for students who entered 2 or more A levels, the school achieved a 97% success rate. The corresponding local and national figures were 97% and 94%.
- 110 Good progress has been made over recent years in A level standards. For example, the proportion of students entering two or more A levels has risen from 88% of the year group in 2003 to 96% in 2006. Over the same period, the school's average points score has risen from 16 to 19, the unitary authority's from 20 to 21 while the all Wales figure remained at 20.
- 111 In 2006, girls outperformed boys in terms of all A level grades and the average points scored by a considerable margin.
- 112 Students listen respectfully to their teachers and peers. They put forward points of view and justify opinions with a growing confidence. Students develop well their use and understanding of subject vocabulary. In many subjects there are good standards of discussion. Collaboration in pairs and groups is good. Students present information to an audience with a growing confidence and use of appropriate tone and language.
- 113 Reading skills are also good. Students respond with understanding to a range of challenging texts. There is good progress in the development of critical analysis by students in Y13.
- 114 Writing is often well organised. Students adapt language, style and form to fit the purpose of their writing. The development of ideas and arguments is in line with

abilities. Students include relevant quotations to support ideas and opinions when required. Those of middle to lower abilities do not adequately proof read so that errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar often remain.

- 115 Students' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. They apply these skills effectively in a number of situations in various subject areas across the curriculum.
- 116 Students make good use of information and communication technology to support their studies. They have good access to computers and they independently use a wide range of appropriate applications in their work.
- 117 Their ability to work with others is outstanding in all subject areas. Students collaborate very effectively and maturely with each other.
- 118 Students display competent problem-solving and creative skills. Particularly good examples are evident in design and technology, art and music where ideas, solutions and written and practical outcomes demonstrate high levels of reasoning and innovation.
- 119 Students' ability to work independently and take the necessary measures to improve their own learning and performance is generally good with no important shortcomings.

Students' progress in learning

- 120 The Welsh Examinations Database provides detailed analyses of students' performances in a range of examinations. Such information shows that, when the school's 2006 A level results are matched to the same students' achievements at GCSE, they reveal considerable 'value-added' in over half the subjects studied. In other words, the majority of A level students at Ysgol Dyffryn Taf make good progress between GCSE and A level.
- 121 Many teachers work hard to help students become accomplished independent learners, to prepare them for learning beyond school. Students successfully perform a wide range of challenging tasks, working independently or with others, as appropriate. They undertake investigative and research projects often with considerable success.
- 122 Year on year, around 50% of Y11 students remain in Ysgol Dyffryn Taf for their sixth form careers and a few students join from other schools. In 2006, 60% remained – the best figure of the last 4 years. Completion rates are very good, with around 96% of Y12 students completing that year's studies. A similar proportion of Y12 students continue into Y13 to complete their studies and many of these proceed to higher or further education after leaving school.

The development of students' personal, social and learning skills

- 123 The development of students' personal, social and learning skills is good with outstanding features.

- 124 Very good progress is made in the development of students' personal, social and learning skills. Initially in Y12, students sometimes display a lack of confidence in lessons but by Y13, they behave with confidence and exceptional maturity. In lessons, nearly all students show very positive attitudes to learning and there is an outstanding willingness to engage in tasks. They are courteous and extremely respectful to teachers and to one another.
- 125 Students contribute much to the life of the school by engaging in extracurricular activities, in charitable work, voluntary community work, responsibility in the school and in the school council. They are valued mentors of younger pupils. They give time to help and support others, and display an outstanding degree of responsibility. Students are very good ambassadors for the school and models for younger pupils.
- 126 There are many good opportunities for students to learn about the community and workplace, and to be prepared effectively for life after school.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 127 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self evaluation report. It does not agree with the grade we awarded for key question 1 because even where teaching and assessment do not have outstanding features or there are minor shortcomings, pupils are so well motivated and so keen to succeed that they achieve well and produce very high standards of work.

Key stages 3 and 4

- 128 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons observed during the inspection:

63 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	13	63	24	0	0
Key stage 4	24	36	40	0	0
Combined KS3/KS4	18	52	30	0	0
<i>National figures for Y7 to Y13 (2005/2006)</i>	17	52	26	5	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

How well teaching and training meets learners' needs and the curricular or course requirements

- 129 The grades awarded for the quality of teaching compare well with the national profile that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector reported in her annual report for 2005/06.
- 130 There has been a significant improvement in the percentage of lessons awarded the equivalent of grade 1 since the previous inspection. At that time, the figure was 7%; we judged 18% of lessons to have good and outstanding features.
- 131 The atmosphere in all classes is supportive and friendly as a result of the very good, constructive relationships that exist between teachers and pupils. Teachers know their pupils well and they are always willing to give guidance and praise to all pupils, regardless of gender, race or disability.
- 132 Teachers' subject knowledge is good across the school and they are familiar with new developments in their chosen spheres of study. Very few teachers teach outside their main area of expertise and in these cases they are given good support.
- 133 In the lessons that have outstanding features, teachers set clear objectives for the lesson, use a range of challenging tasks and have high expectations of pupils.

- 134 In many lessons, teachers have a dynamic approach with enormous enthusiasm for their subject. They ask probing questions, encourage pupils to work independently and use very effective strategies in plenary sessions.
- 135 In lessons that have good features and no important shortcomings, elements of the above outstanding features were observed. Other good features include:
- well-planned and well-prepared individual lessons and sequences of lessons;
 - the use of a good range of teaching techniques that include effective use of the interactive white boards in the school;
 - ensuring pupils' active participation in order to develop their thinking and practical skills; and
 - effective feedback and support, which motivate pupils' well.
- 136 Pupils with additional learning needs are taught well and there is effective collaboration between teachers and classroom assistants.
- 137 The school meets pupils' linguistic needs well, especially in key stage 3. Pupils whose first language is Welsh have the opportunity to use their mother tongue in other areas of the curriculum as they study the humanities, personal and social education, and drama through the medium of Welsh.
- 138 Most teachers monitor and review pupils' progress systematically and employ a good range of support procedures to help pupils gain success. In most subjects, pupils are aware of the appropriate targets that they are set.
- 139 Notwithstanding the many good features highlighted above, there are, however, one or two shortcomings that occur in a few lessons such as:
- limited teaching techniques with pupils receiving knowledge passively for a significant part of the lesson; and
 - limited opportunities for pupils to interact and discuss their work in order to enrich their understanding.

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

- 140 The leadership team has devised and implemented an appropriate whole school policy to inform departmental practice, based on 'Assessment for Learning.' In addition, there is a comprehensive policy for monitoring and evaluation.
- 141 Whole school assessment systems are rigorous and there is development of effective strategies in many departments. In design and technology, English and information technology in particular, there are examples of very good practice. Assessment is good in key stage 4, but inconsistencies of practice are evident in day-to-day assessment of pupils' work in key stage 3.
- 142 For example, not all teachers:
- explain the assessment criteria to pupils and give them models of successful day-to-day work;

- write comments on day-to-day work which identify how far pupils have met the criteria and how they might improve; and
 - involve pupils in self and peer assessment so that they fully understand the criteria, their own strengths and areas where they need to improve.
- 143 The monitoring of practice is well planned, rigorous and leads to whole school development planning. As a result of self evaluation processes, members of the leadership team are aware of good practice. They also acknowledge the need to extend these to all curricular areas, to ensure greater consistency, particularly in key stage 3.
- 144 The school's database is very comprehensive and used well. Standardised tests and teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 2, provide baseline data from which predictions are made of pupils' end of key stage achievements in all subjects. All data is available using teachers' laptop computers to readily access the Assessment Manager. Departments also keep other useful and manageable records.
- 145 All subject teachers are required to summarise pupils' achievements twice a year. Results of these assessments are used to update the school's database. Subject teachers monitor the progress of each pupil, identify underperformance and take appropriate action. Heads of school, form tutors and learning mentors also access the data and compare pupils' current achievements in all subjects against those predicted. There is effective identification of underachievement and a range of strategies is employed to bring about improvement. These meet pupils' needs well.
- 146 Heads of department monitor practice to ensure that assessments are accurate and fair. Departments meet twice a year to monitor marking and to ensure that there is standardisation and consistency. In many departments, there is emphasis on end of unit testing when work is awarded levels for pupils in key stage 3 and GCSE grades for pupils in key stage 4. This process is effective, but there is less emphasis on the monitoring of day-to-day marking in a few departments. Members of the leadership team also monitor books, and heads of school as well as heads of department, monitor homework.
- 147 Organisation of assessment events is good. Members of the leadership team arrange an annual meeting of parents of each pupil in each year group. They also organise the annual review process and the preparation of review reports and a full report for parents of each pupil. Both reports give comprehensive information on progress and represent outstanding practice. Full reports include baseline data, predicted data, current attainment, effort grades and attendance levels. They also include targets for improvements. In addition, form tutors usefully summarise achievements including a review of personal and social skills and pupils' involvement in extracurricular activities. In key stage 3, the statutory requirements for assessing and reporting on the National Curriculum are satisfied.
- 148 Heads of department analyse results of external examinations and set challenging yet realistic targets for improvement in discussion with the leadership team. Annual target setting and self evaluation inform future planning and priorities. In addition, heads of department ensure that the requirements of examination boards are satisfied and those of the Code of Practice are met.

The sixth form

149 The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in the sixth form lessons observed during the inspection:

19 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Post 16	11	73	16	0	0
<i>National figures for Y7 to Y13 (2005/2006)</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>0</i>

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

How well teaching and training meets learners' needs and the curricular or course requirements

150 As in key stages 3 and 4, the high quality of relationships between teachers and students is particularly noticeable in the sixth form. Students commented on this feature during interviews with them.

151 Many of the good and outstanding features are similar to those observed by inspectors in lessons in key stages 3 and 4.

152 The additional features of the good and outstanding teaching are:

- open questioning as a tool to measure students' understanding and depth of knowledge;
- good opportunities for students to work independently and improve their own learning; and
- complex subject concepts being explained clearly.

153 The shortcomings indicated above, for key stages 3 and 4, are also evident in the sixth form, but to a lesser extent.

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

154 In the sixth form, the assessment, recording and reporting of students' work is good with no important shortcomings.

155 In day-to-day work, teachers identify strengths and weaknesses and indicate to students how improvements may be made. Students are aware of the criteria for success and the requirements of examination boards.

156 Records are comprehensive, useful and accessible. Standardised tests and GCSE grades provide baseline data from which predictions in AS level examinations are made. A formal review of progress and attainment is undertaken twice for students in Y12. Subject teachers award grades for attainment, effort and the completion of assignments, and targets for improvement are negotiated with students so that predicted grades may be either met or exceeded. Reviews are sent to parents and trial AS examinations are held. Parents in Y13 receive two full reports. The first includes results of AS examinations, as well as predictions for results in A2

examinations and written comments by subject teachers. The second report gives results of trial examinations and informs parents and students of progress and targets. The quality of information sent to parents is outstanding.

- 157 The head of school uses data to identify underachievement. A formal monitoring review of progress is done twice a year and action is taken including liaison with parents, subject teachers and mentoring of students. Monitoring is ongoing and any cause of concern is referred to the tutors. The process of identifying underperformance is rigorous and based upon firm evidence.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 158 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self evaluation report.

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

- 159 The school's curriculum offers balance, breadth, flexibility, cohesion and progression by:
- offering a broad range of courses, including some vocational and alternative curricular options in key stage 4;
 - meeting the needs of sixth form students particularly well with a good range of AS and A-level courses, some of which are vocational;
 - providing personal, social and health education, work-related education, and careers education and guidance in accordance with national guidelines; and
 - providing equality of opportunity for all learners including access to opportunities to obtain appropriate qualifications.
- 160 Learning experiences develop learners' basic and key skills well. Many schemes of work identify good opportunities for pupils to improve their communication, information and communication technology and wider key skills, such as problem solving and working with others. In the sixth form, there is a strong focus on key skills in lessons, with students being able to gain accreditation.
- 161 Most pupils' and students' learning and social experiences are enriched by the varied extracurricular activities offered by the school. The programmes for sporting activities and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme are particular strengths with many pupils gaining success. Learners also benefit from a wide range of opportunities through clubs, school productions, visits to theatres and museums, field trips, inter-house events and many visits abroad. This is an outstanding feature of the school's provision that has a most beneficial influence on standards achieved in the 'formal' curriculum.

- 162 Pupils' and students' spiritual development has good features that outweigh shortcomings. Pupils' spiritual awareness is successfully developed in subjects such as religious education, art, music and English and in group assemblies. However, there has been no audit to identify each subject's contribution and in a small number of tutor groups there is insufficient time for pupils to pause in worship and to reflect on the theme(s) being considered.
- 163 Pupils' and students' moral, social and cultural development is good with outstanding features. They are mature, self-disciplined and adopt values such as honesty and a sense of fair play. They undertake responsibilities across a range of school and extracurricular activities. Learners show outstanding respect to each other, adults and the environment.
- 164 Learners are developing a very good awareness of other cultures; they respect diversity and other people's lifestyles. They help and show concern for others by raising money for local and national charities and good causes. Extracurricular activities successfully widen their knowledge and understanding of other cultures.
- 165 Partnerships with parents, and other education providers and institutions not only enhance pupils' learning experiences, but also contribute significantly to their personal development. All the appropriate expected links with parents, community, schools and colleges are established; there are no shortcomings and several good features. These are:
- the quality of information provided for parents, especially with regard to GCSE and sixth form option choices, where constructive guidance is also given on potential career pathways;
 - the efficient use of the pupil planners for communication between parent, teacher and pupil in key stage 3;
 - the extent of interaction with the community through links with sports and leisure groups, charity work, Duke of Edinburgh scheme and employers' support for work-related education; and
 - the strong links with other education providers. These ensure that transition from the very large number of primary schools that link with the school is made easy and pupils are made aware of opportunities available post 16.
- 166 Since the previous inspection, as the school has ensured that every member of the sixth form has religious education lessons it has, therefore, eliminated this legal shortcoming. The school now complies fully with statutory requirements.

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

- 167 Work-related education is good.
- 168 In key stage 3, exploration of the world of work begins in Y8 with the worthwhile Tregwaith Scheme and is strengthened through Y9 with Careers Days, discussions with a career adviser and participation in the Dynamo Project. When they leave this key stage, pupils have a good understanding of the relevance of their education to future employment.

- 169 In key stage 4 and the sixth form, an effective programme of Industry Days, Careers and Higher Education Conventions, and opportunities to meet and interact with local employers, including visits to the workplace, is available to all pupils.
- 170 All members of Y10 and Y13 undertake appropriate and beneficial work experience. They enjoy and gain from the challenge of finding their own placements and about 90% achieve this; the remainder find places with help from Careers Wales. Governors and the local Rotary Club provide good support in the provision of mentoring and mock interviews.
- 171 Provision for the development of bilingual skills is good. There is a Welsh first language class in each key stage 3 and key stage 4 year group. In key stage 3, the class studies history, geography, personal, social and health education, and drama through the medium of Welsh. This arrangement carries forward to key stage 4 only if there is sufficient demand. Advanced learners are encouraged to join this Welsh medium group. All second language pupils follow the full GCSE Welsh course in key stage 4. Newcomers are supported well to develop their skills in Welsh. Both Welsh first and second language courses are available in the sixth form.
- 172 A wide range of extracurricular activities is available for all pupils to develop their bilingual skills and to appreciate the culture of Wales. School assemblies are bilingual.
- 173 A recent audit identifies that Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is embedded effectively into schemes of work across the curriculum.
- 174 There are a number of good features in the promotion of pupils' and students' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. These include:
- policy statements for sustainable development and global citizenship;
 - input in the personal, social and health education programme and detailed coverage in geography, science, and design and technology programmes of study;
 - the work of the Eco-committee in organising some recycling initiatives and gaining the Bronze Schools Eco-Award; and
 - school projects linking with schools in a number of countries.
- 175 There is a close and effective partnership with Careers Wales and particularly useful input from governors who have extensive knowledge of the local community. These successfully ensure the school maintains a good and current awareness of the needs of employers.
- 176 Entrepreneurial and other business skills are developed well. Learners throughout the school have opportunities to meet and listen to entrepreneurs through the Dynamo Project. They can also take part in enterprise/challenge activities in Celtic Enterprise or through the strong and successful involvement of the design and technology department in many such schemes.
- 177 Overall, managers have planned a curriculum that is addressing national priorities for lifelong learning. However, there are a few shortcomings, caused by logistical problems, in structuring 14 – 19 Learning Pathways.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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178 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self evaluation report.

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

179 The school plans and manages its care arrangements very effectively. Staff knowledge of pupils and their families, and the support offered to them, are outstanding features of provision that help ensure that the school is a happy and caring community.

180 Pupils and parents confirm that the induction programme for new pupils is outstanding and the relationship with primary schools is very good. The extra support given to new pupils by Y10 pupils and by sixth form students, together with the two week basic skills course during the summer holidays ensure that new pupils settle down quickly.

181 Information is shared with the parents through various school brochures and very good use is made of the pupils' home/school pupil planner. This further reinforces the relationship between the school and the home.

182 The heads of lower school, middle school and the sixth form fulfil their duties effectively as they monitor the progress, wellbeing and behaviour of the learners in their care. An outstanding feature of the school is the willingness of staff to offer support and opportunities for learners outside school hours. A particularly good example of this is the support given to the high number of learners who are successful in gaining the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, including the Gold Award.

183 The School Council actively contributes in a positive manner to the life of the school. Members show their maturity when identifying items and projects on which to spend the funds allocated to them.

184 The school provides good and unbiased information about the opportunities available, to help pupils select courses that are personally appropriate at key stage 4 and on entry to the sixth form. Modules within the personal, social and health education programme, and tutorial periods reinforce the guidance effectively.

185 Careers Wales staff make good inputs to the pupils' careers programme. This provision successfully enables learners to prepare themselves confidently for the world of work.

186 The school's procedures for monitoring attendance, punctuality and behaviour are good. The school works in close co-operation with the two Education Welfare Officers and the County Youth Worker to provide guidance for those who require help and support.

- 187 Procedures for monitoring pupils' and students' performance are good. The heads of each key stage and the sixth form track learners' performances effectively, noting any underachievement. Knowledge of the learners plays an important part in identifying problems that might affect their progress.
- 188 The school has produced and implemented an effective whole school policy for healthy lifestyles, following closely the guidelines produced in the document 'Developing a Whole School Food and Fitness Policy'.
- 189 Learners commented most positively about the healthy menus available in the canteen and the wide range of curricular and extracurricular physical activities accessible to them. The comments also indicated a mature awareness of the need for healthy eating and regular exercise.
- 190 A number of subjects across the curriculum contribute well to highlighting the importance of healthy activities in daily routines.
- 191 The school has detailed procedures to ensure pupils' and students' health and safety and follows the County Health and Safety Policy. Appropriate risk assessments are taken in respect of activities that take place beyond the bounds of the school.
- 192 There is a relevant Child Protection Policy that incorporates County procedures. In line with requirements, a designated senior member of staff and a member of the governing body have been selected to be responsible for this.

The quality of the provision for additional learning needs

- 193 The school provides good provision for pupils with additional learning needs. The transition arrangements from primary schools are high quality, enabling the school to recognise early those pupils who require extra support with their learning.
- 194 The school's response to the Code of Practice is good. Statements of Special Educational Needs are reviewed effectively. Parents and external agencies take a practical role in the process.
- 195 Good Individual Education Plans are prepared for each pupil and are shared with all members of staff and parents or carers. Targets set reflect the pupils' identified educational needs, but sometimes the targets set are not sufficiently specific. The use of information and communication technology to distribute the programmes to all staff is useful and is an effective way for departments to respond on progress made in their subjects for the purpose of the pupils' annual reviews.
- 196 The wide provision for developing pupils' literacy and mathematical skills during morning assembly on four mornings a week has outstanding features. Work is very well matched to pupils' educational needs. An appropriate variety of tasks and materials keep pupils' interest and records show that the vast majority of pupils made outstanding progress. Effective use is made of sixth form students to support pupils' reading skills.

- 197 An enthusiastic team of learning support assistants provides outstanding support for pupils with a range of additional needs. They provide effective support and educational guidance to individuals and groups of pupils. Their work is very well co-ordinated by a senior assistant.
- 198 Pupils withdrawn from mainstream lessons make good progress in their literacy and numeracy skills. Work set is well matched to their individual educational targets. These pupils also make good progress in their communication and personal and social skills and develop into confident learners.
- 199 At the end of key stage 4, all pupils who have statements of special educational needs gain accreditation in their GCSE examinations. Additionally, some also gain accreditation in vocational courses.
- 200 Arrangements and support for pupils with behavioural difficulties have outstanding features. Meaningful links with the unitary authority's behavioural team and a unitary authority behavioural unit ensure that permanent exclusions are rare. There were no permanent exclusions during the previous twelve months. The pastoral support enables the pupils successfully to complete their education.
- 201 The special educational needs resource room is well organised, although at times it can become less effective.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

- 202 The school's policy for equal opportunities is extremely effective in its application. All learners have equal access to very good learning opportunities.
- 203 The pastoral system and the school's tradition encourage all the pupils to have high expectations in their work and leisure activities. The school frequently celebrates the its pupils' successes.
- 204 A minority of pupils who come from Welsh speaking homes are given the opportunity to follow part of their curriculum through the medium of Welsh.
- 205 The school monitors and compares the results of boys and girls. Every subject option is available to both boys and girls at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. The school challenges stereotyping effectively, in advising pupils on subject choices.
- 206 Every pupil is given sensitive and effective support should problems arise in school, at home or in the community. The school has an outstanding working relationship with a wide range of external local and national agencies. Currently, there are seven pupils in the care of the local authority. The school has procedures to provide them with the necessary support and guidance. They are also included in the school's two week summer holiday programme.
- 207 The few pupils from minority ethnic groups have been integrated naturally. The personal, social and health education programme, together with subjects including religious education, history and English, promote racial and social equality. Extracurricular activities also make a valuable contribution. The school has procedures that would deal very firmly with any racial incident.

- 208 There is a climate, where no unpleasantness of any sort will be tolerated, that ensures fair play for every learner. Pupils interviewed are confident that the school would respond immediately to any case of injustice or discrimination.
- 209 The few disabled youngsters in the school are able to reach all parts of the school, but there is room to improve 'direct route access'. Nevertheless, they have access to the full curriculum and provision of very good support.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

210 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self evaluation report. The grade does not agree with that given for key question 1, because although there are many very good features of leadership and management in the school, there is still room for improvement in a few areas in consistency of practice.

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

211 The school has clear aims and objectives that are shared with all staff, pupils, parents and the governing body. The school's expectations about learning and behaviour are made clear in a comprehensive list of policies covering a wide range of issues. The successful implementation of these policies can be seen clearly in the high standards achieved in the school and the very good ethos that permeates all areas of provision.

212 The headteacher is extremely successful in 'leading from the front'. His personal involvement in so many aspects of provision, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, is exceptional. His successful leadership has been recognised beyond the school insofar as he was recently recognised as 'Runner-up with Distinction' in the secondary schools leadership category of the Annual Teaching Awards (Wales). He was nominated for an award by the head boy and head girl, and sponsored by the Royal Air Force. The headteacher has also completed a leadership course for headteachers. His work as a school leader has gained praise from external advisers for performance management.

213 Other members of the school's leadership team support the headteacher most effectively, working together closely and harmoniously. All work well and to good effect within their line management structures. There are clearly defined job descriptions for all members with annual targets to be achieved.

214 The framework of meetings and activities constructed annually by the school allows middle and senior managers to effectively discuss and agree the development of policies and initiatives. These discussions rightly focus upon the needs of pupils and give direction to the school's success in raising standards. Through these meetings and termly whole staff meetings all members of staff have a voice in all aspects of school life.

215 Communication on a day-to-day basis is particularly strong and ensures that the school runs very smoothly.

216 Senior staff also work closely with pastoral heads to monitor and improve pupils' behaviour, attendance, attitude to work and progress. There has been a significant change of culture in accepting that this role is primarily about learning and how to

achieve it. The monitoring of achievement is now effectively embedded in the pastoral structure.

- 217 The school places a strong emphasis on the personal development of every pupil, their appreciation of others and the connection with the local community. This is one of the many strengths of the school.
- 218 All learners are treated equally and disabled learners can access the full curriculum. The school has identified areas for improvement and has carried out modifications to buildings to improve access. The school has an appropriate policy dealing with equal opportunities and racial equality and meets statutory requirements in relation to disability and looked-after children, who receive personalised, caring support.
- 219 The school structures work within the direction provided by the Welsh Assembly Government. Areas of development and new initiatives are appropriately synchronised within the school development plan.
- 220 Performance management arrangements are implemented effectively throughout the school, with all appropriate personnel fulfilling their role to good effect. The setting and agreeing of realistic performance targets is a central successful feature in the process of raising standards.
- 221 The school is rightly proud of its arrangements for learners' transition between phases of education. Links with partner primary schools are very effective in ensuring that Y7 pupils settle quickly into new routines. Learners are supported and guided well when making choices about courses of study in key stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- 222 Basic skills awareness is highlighted and identification of and strategies for dealing with concerns are manageable and effective.
- 223 The school has been successful in implementing a healthy lifestyles policy. Learners are well aware of the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise. The school does much to ensure that facilities exist for all to eat well and to be involved in a wide range of enjoyable physical activities.
- 224 The school collaborates well with other providers, especially through partnerships and formal agreements. The school is aware of the need to further strengthen partnerships to extend the option menu for students to meet the demands of 14-19 Learning Pathways. Logistical issues and long term financial implications continue to raise concerns.
- 225 Targets to encourage pupils to achieve higher standards are an area of strength and an example of good practice. Every pupil is set realistically challenging targets determined from detailed baseline data.
- 226 The headteacher conducts annual performance meetings with middle managers to discuss performance, set targets for performance and standards, and to set an improvement agenda for the year.

- 227 There is a rich and diverse programme of continuing professional development provided through the school. Detailed consideration is given to whole school needs, department requirements and individual needs. External funding and other grants are used well to maximise opportunities. The use of serving members of staff to lead in whole school training session initiatives is very successful.
- 228 Excellent provision exists to support and monitor newly qualified teachers and arrangements for the induction of new teachers are also well established.
- 229 The school organised an 'Aspiring Leaders' course as a pilot in partnership with the unitary authority and Trinity College, Carmarthen. Because of its success, the course has now been extended and offered to all within the authority.
- 230 The leadership team regularly uses the 'Good Practice and Challenge Framework' of the unitary authority as a starting point for the self evaluation of the school. Outcomes and comments from the Standards and Quality department of the authority confirm the team's positive views of the school.
- 231 Within this framework of good and very good practice, there are, however, one or two shortcomings. These may be summarised as follows:
- 232 Senior leaders encourage dissemination of good practice, but this is not always carried out consistently well across all departments and curricular areas.
- 233 Most departments are led and managed very well, but shortcomings in one or two departments detract from the overall good model.

How well governors meet their responsibilities

- 234 The governors have a thorough knowledge of their school and their roles in its management. They also have a deep awareness and understanding of the community that the school serves. They are thus able to contribute very positively to strategic planning.
- 235 Their involvement in the monitoring of the quality of provision is outstanding. Detailed reports from the leadership team ensure that governors are very well informed on the school's procedures and performance. They constructively integrate this information into their good understanding of regional and national trends in education, and with the needs of their community. There is particularly incisive use of link governors that ensures management decisions are effective and inclusive of all facets of school.
- 236 Governors are successful in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.
- 237 The governing body provides a strong sense of identity and direction for the school and these are clearly set out in the prospectus and the annual report to parents.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

238 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self evaluation report.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

239 The school has well-established rigorous methods for measuring its effectiveness. Information is gathered from a range of sources such as:

- assessment data;
- observation of teaching and learning;
- discussions with teachers and learners regarding their performance against targets and expectations;
- collaborative reviews involving external assessors; and
- analysis of secondary sources such as pupils' work and teachers' marking.

240 The school employs a very large range of data that gives senior managers a detailed and clear view of standards achieved, and the potential of pupils and departments. The departmental review system is a critical cornerstone in the evaluation process.

241 Performance information is shared with every member of staff, and it is rightly deemed an important aspect of raising standards. Targets are set in every aspect of the school's provision, and most subject leaders and heads of school respond well to this challenge.

242 Subject leaders generally express performance within their areas of responsibility in terms of the progress made over time and by using a range of nationally available comparable information. Thus they are able to analyse departmental performance with considerable accuracy.

243 Every manager takes part in the self evaluation process and every member of staff has an opportunity to respond to the drafted evaluation report. This is an important aspect of raising standards

244 Departmental and individual skills of interpreting data have improved considerably as a result of in-service training, presentations and coaching by the members of the leadership team. Such improvement is a major factor in the good quality of evaluation in the school. There is, however, room for improvement in one or two departments.

245 In most departments, managers observe lessons and focus on issues that can lead to improvement. Pupil-based data is analysed well to identify shortcomings in teaching and learning procedures, or in the quality and application of departmental policies, such as assessment or marking, in order to tackle underachievement.

- 246 Learners are consulted at regular intervals and their views on curricular matters are expressed through form tutors, heads of school and through various attitudinal and perception surveys. Parental surveys are also used to gain further information. This is good practice.
- 247 The school often uses external agencies to assist in evaluating its provision. For example, regular meetings are held between members of the leadership team and the unitary authority link adviser. These meetings involve detailed evaluation of all aspects of the school's performance. The discussions also help compare the school development plan with the county's education strategic plan.
- 248 Governors, through their knowledge of the school, voice their opinions following their visits to the school and this also gives direction to planning and expenditure. This is another example of the good breadth of activities involved in the school's evaluation systems.
- 249 The school operates an effective line management structure within which there are clear expectations and responsibilities. The processes are well established as part of the life of the school. Performance is analysed in detail and the school development plan, departmental plans and performance management targets reflect this. Teaching and learning responsibilities carry clear expectations and responsibilities for subject leaders and their departments, which are rigorously reviewed.
- 250 Groups of support and ancillary staff have similar structures and expectations.
- 251 The following items give some indication of the breadth and rigour of the school's procedures: Teaching and learning are monitored twice yearly. Departmental reviews are completed annually. Formal reviews of information and communication technology across the curriculum, form assemblies and key skills have been completed in 2006/07 along with an exercise in whole school self evaluation. During the past 5 years, within the school, external agencies have formally evaluated basic skills; history, mathematics, physical education, special educational needs, careers related education and the use of interactive whiteboards.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

- 252 The school's self evaluation and performance management systems provide a positive foundation for school, departmental and individual development plans. The information from the various forms of self evaluation feeds the process of agreeing the development plan. The school development plan has a clear focus on themes that promote school improvement and resources are well matched to its development priorities. Department development plans dovetail their priorities into those identified in the school development plan, so that there is a good measure of cohesion overall.
- 253 The school development plan is suitably costed and reflects the agreed priorities within the constraints of a formula led budget. Difficulties arise when data about budgets and grants available are not confirmed in a timescale that can impact positively on the planning cycle.
- 254 As mentioned above, the school has encouraged a system of succession management wherein training programmes have been supporting 'Aspiring Leaders'

– a scheme that centres on improving standards and developing management and leadership skills. This is beneficial for the school.

- 255 Departmental funding with regard to capitation is distributed according to an equitable formula and most departments budget well within given resources. Departments can also bid for additional monies for new courses or additional resources in accordance with school or departmental priorities.
- 256 The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues for action highlighted in the previous inspection report.
- 257 Improvements have been made in the school's accommodation overall and particularly so in science and physical education. A new sports hall was built in November 2005 and a new physics laboratory in September 2006. Additionally, a new information and communication technology facility was provided in September 2006.
- 258 Standards have been raised across the school following changes in the curriculum, such as setting in mathematics from 2003, introducing more effective groupings in key stage 4, changes in the modern foreign languages provision in key stage 3 and provision for pupils to study two languages in key stage 4. Challenging projects are set for those learners who are gifted and talented within and across year groups.
- 259 The library provision has been improved to provide facilities for independent research and study. Investment in information and communication technology facilities has had a major impact and new staff have been appointed.
- 260 An audiovisual pupil support room was introduced in 2004.
- 261 Statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form are now satisfied in both Y12 and Y13.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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- 262 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self evaluation report.

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

- 263 Overall, the staffing of the school has good features and no important shortcomings. The number of staff is sufficient for the school to run effectively and efficiently. The experience profile shows that about 19% of the teachers have 25 or more years experience and 36% with 10 years or less, including two newly qualified teachers.
- 264 All teaching staff are appropriately qualified and trained to meet all aspects, subjects, and the wider needs of the curriculum. The 23 learning support assistants provide

very good help and encouragement to the number of learners with learning and behavioural problems. They work effectively with all subject teachers and with the coordinator for special needs.

- 265 The school employs two other teachers to develop literacy, and sport and physical education in partner primary schools. This is an outstanding feature.
- 266 The bursar and administrative staff ensure that the office, reception, reprographic area and the library run competently and the caretaker is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the site and contributes well to the daily routines of the school.
- 267 Four cover assistants look after classes for absent staff, otherwise they are deployed beneficially to support others.
- 268 Technician support in science, information and communication technology, and design and technology is very good overall. At present, however, there is only limited support in food technology.
- 269 The quality and quantity of learning resources for key stage 3 and key stage 4 have good features and no important shortcomings. There is a good supply of a wide range of textbooks and the school produces a creative range of subject materials in house.
- 270 Provision of information and communication technology equipment is a good feature. There are 5 main information and communication technology rooms, with other computers and computer suites in classrooms around the school, providing ample access.
- 271 There are 27 interactive whiteboards that are used to enhance teaching in most subject areas. They are mainly used very effectively to augment the quality of teaching in lessons. However, on a few occasions their use is limited.
- 272 Each member of the teaching staff has a laptop computer that is used to record attendance and for a wide range of record keeping activities. Teachers use these well to enhance their teaching.
- 273 In design and technology, the computer aided design and manufacturing equipment enables learners to experience a wide and valuable range of opportunities. They produce work of high quality, which is often beyond the course requirements. This is an outstanding feature.
- 274 There is very good use of resources out of school to enrich the curriculum. These include visits to museums, art galleries, theatres and beyond the United Kingdom. A wide range of visiting speakers enhances pupils' learning experiences. The high numbers of learners achieving Duke of Edinburgh Awards is an outstanding feature.
- 275 The library, although small in size, is a very active Information Resource Centre. It is organised and managed very well by the librarian. Overall, the quality and variety of the book stock of reference books and fiction is very good. The stock includes an increasing number of Welsh language books.

- 276 At breaktimes, lunchtimes and after school, pupils use the library well by independent learning and research. Subject departments also book and make good, effective use of the library during lessons, with the English and Welsh departments being the main users. In the summer term, pupils from partner primary schools visit the library for induction sessions. This is a very good feature.
- 277 A suite of 10 computers in the library, allows pupils to improve the presentation of their work and to use the Internet for research.
- 278 For the sixth form, there is a good range and supply of textbooks and equipment. When they have no taught classes, students use the library facilities well for independent learning and research.
- 279 The accommodation has good features and no important shortcomings. It is sufficient for the numbers currently on roll and meets the pastoral and academic needs of the curriculum.
- 280 Most rooms are fit for purpose and large enough to cater well for class sizes. Colourful and attractive displays in most classrooms and corridors provide an effective learning environment. These are good features.
- 281 Physical education facilities, including a sports hall, a separate gymnasium, an extensive fitness suite and well-maintained playing fields are excellent. The school's management of the out of school hours use of these facilities by clubs in the community has enabled learners to receive high quality coaching and training, and is an outstanding feature.
- 282 Overall the school, despite the extreme varying ages of the buildings, is well maintained and decorated, and generally has a clean fresh appearance, which is an outstanding feature in the circumstances.
- 283 The school grounds and buildings are kept clean and litter free.
- 284 The main shortcoming in accommodation is the poor quality and exterior appearance of the so called "temporary accommodation" and the high costs of essential maintenance.
- 285 The school is aware of the need for one more science laboratory, the difficulties posed by the close proximity of the modern foreign language and music rooms, and the inadequate size of the canteen. Although these are shortcomings, the school makes every effort to minimise any possible effect on learning.
- 286 Accommodation for the sixth form is sufficient for both the academic and pastoral needs of the curriculum. Students have their own small study room with a suite of ten computers and this is well used. However, other work areas with limited access are the library, empty classrooms and the canteen. This provision restricts the opportunity for students to undertake independent learning or research on the Internet and/or to improve the presentation of their work.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money?

- 287 Overall, the school's management of resources to achieve value for money is outstanding.
- 288 The deployment and management of nearly all staff are very good and make efficient and effective use of their time, expertise and experience.
- 289 An outstanding feature is the development of teaching staff. Training is linked to the professional development of staff in line with performance management, the school development plan and the needs of departments and individuals. It is very well coordinated and courses attended by staff are carefully evaluated and used to benefit the school. The presence of the four cover assistants enables the school to have a full high quality training programme.
- 290 The school has combined with Trinity College, Carmarthen and the unitary authority to provide an 'Aspiring Leaders Course'. Initially the school piloted the course, which now carries certification.
- 291 Another very good feature is that the school is recognised as a centre of excellence for training teachers in the use of interactive whiteboards. Three teachers are qualified to train groups, and do so in house and with groups of teachers from partner primary schools.
- 292 The programmes and support for newly qualified teachers, for the extended professional development of recently qualified teachers, and for initial teacher training students are thorough and comprehensive.
- 293 The school has implemented its strategy for the workload agreement. It has made appropriate provision in the timetable for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment.
- 294 The headteacher, after consulting all interested bodies, has implemented the school's structure for the new teaching and learning responsibilities.
- 295 The financial management of the school is exemplary. The headteacher, the bursar and the governing body's sub-committee for finance effectively and efficiently manage the available budget. The school conscientiously pursues all grants and sponsorship that are available.
- 296 The finance sub-committee meets regularly and it receives detailed up-to-date reports from the headteacher. Financial decisions are well focused on the curricular needs and the educational priorities identified in the school development plan.
- 297 The initial capitation for subject areas is provided via a very good transparent formula-based distribution system. In addition, in January, heads of department bid for extra funds to implement curricular changes and initiatives.
- 298 The finance officer is responsible for the competent day-to-day running of the school's finances. The headteacher and subject leaders are provided with immediate breakdowns and current balances. School spending is closely and carefully monitored.

- 299 The minor recommendations of the recent auditors' report are being addressed.
- 300 The school reviews and uses its resources and finances very prudently, effectively and competently.
- 301 The value for money produced by the school is outstanding due mainly to the improved level of pupils' and students' achievements, the exceptional provision of care and support for learners, and the high quality of management led by the headteacher and his leadership team. Other exemplary features include the following:
- the excellent personal, social and learning skills of learners,
 - the excellent, wide ranging, planned development of staff;
 - the first-rate use of resources out of school to enrich the curriculum including the Duke of Edinburgh awards; and
 - the very good state of decoration of the main building.

School's response to the inspection

The headteacher, staff and governors are pleased to report that the findings from the Estyn inspection have endorsed the school's own self evaluation report which had been prepared prior to the inspection. The many outstanding features of the school have been recognised and clearly demonstrate the professional and positive manner with which the teaching and support staff discharge their duties in providing pupils with a wide range of opportunities to achieve excellent standards in all aspects of school life.

We are pleased that the inspectors recognise the impact that the culture of the school has had on examination results, which were described as having outstanding features. The report also recognises the positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents in creating such a productive learning environment.

The recommendations for improvement noted in the report are the foundation for creating strategies included in the School Improvement Plan and, in due course, will lead to further improvements. The governors' annual report to parents will report on the progress we are making on these recommendations.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Dyffryn Taf
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11 – 18
Address of school	North Road, Whitland Carmarthenshire
Postcode	SA34 0BD
Telephone number	01994 242100

Headteacher	Mr D R Newsome
Date of appointment	January 2002
Chair of governors / Appropriate authority	Mr R Elward
Reporting inspector	Mr Brian W Medhurst
Dates of inspection	24 th – 27 th September 2007

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	176	177	192	187	165	111	61	1069

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	61	05	61.5

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17.4 : 1
Average teaching group size	23.4
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	74

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	91.5	91.1	90.1	90.5	89.2	89.3	85.4	90.1
Term 2	94.0	93.4	90.9	92.1	89.9	92.6	88.8	91.9
Term 3	91.7	88.9	90.4	89.0	96.6	83.1	93.8	90.9

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	11
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	16

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2006

Total number of pupils in Y9: 187

Percentage of pupils at each level

			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	1.1	0	0	0	3.9	21.5	47.5	21.0	5.0	0	0
		National	0	0	1.0	0	0	2	8.0	21.0	35.0	24.0	8.0	0	0
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	5.7	0	0	0	14.3	34.3	45.7	0	0	0	0
		National	0	0	1.0	0	0	1.0	4.0	19.0	35.0	30.0	10.0	0	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	1.7	0	0	1.1	6.6	12.2	26.5	44.2	7.7	0	0
		National	0	0	1.0	0	0	1.0	6.0	18.0	24.0	32.0	15.0	0	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	1.7	0	0	0	3.3	19.9	36.5	32.6	6.1	0	0
		National	0	0	1.0	0	0	0	6.0	19.0	33.0	27.0	12.0	0	0

- D Pupils excepted 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	64.6	In the school	n/a
In Wales	56.0	In Wales	n/a

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 2006	180
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	48

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	97	88	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	69	58	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	97	87	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	49	43	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	98	97	98
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	89	80	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	98	94	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	2	6	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	2	3

For pupils aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2006	87
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2006	75
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2006	8

Report by Brian William Medhurst
Ysgol Dyffryn Taf, 24/09/07

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	67	75	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	97	97	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	19	21	20

UA Unitary Authority

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Eleven inspectors (including the school's nominee) spent the equivalent of 36.5 days at the school.

82 lessons were observed, covering all areas of the curriculum.

Inspectors attended assemblies, tutorial sessions, registrations, and observed a range of extracurricular activities.

Inspectors held many discussions with the headteacher, members of the school's leadership team, heads of faculty, staff with whole-school responsibilities, and members of support staff.

The registered inspector and a colleague inspector met with the governing body prior to the inspection week and they reported the main findings to them following the inspection.

Work across the curriculum, from representative pupils from each year group, was examined. Pupils' work was also scrutinised elsewhere and during lesson observations.

Inspectors held formal discussions with groups of learners selected from Y7 to Y13. They also talked with many learners informally.

Prior to the inspection, the registered inspector met the staff.

Fifteen parents/carers of pupils attended the pre-inspection meeting. Ninety-three replies to the questionnaire were received and analysed. A few parents also wrote to the registered inspector.

Comprehensive documentation, including the school's self evaluation report, was scrutinised before, during and after the inspection period in school.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities
Mr Brian W Medhurst Registered Inspector	Key Questions 1, 5, 6.
Dr Michael H L Snow Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4, 5.
Mr Glyn Davies	Key Question 3; Contribution to Key Question 2; Sixth form co-ordination.
Mrs Lynne Bithell	Contribution to Key Questions 1, 2, 3.
Mr Heddwyn Evans	Key Question 4; Contribution to Key Question 3.
Mr Alan Edwards	Key Question 7; Contribution to Key Question 1.
Mrs Mary Crandon	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3.
Mr Keith Hopkins	Contribution to Key Question 1.
Mrs Anne Newman	Support role.
Mr Martin Holmes	Support role.
Mr Geoffrey Davies	School's nominee.

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Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, staff and pupils of Ysgol Dyffryn Taf for their courtesy and co-operation during the inspection.