

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

**Ysgol Gyfun Y Strade
Heol Sandy
Llanelli
SA15 4DL**

School Number: 669 – 4052

Date of Inspection: October 2006

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and
Training in Wales**

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**Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru**

**Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales**



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- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ LEAs;
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Ysgol Gyfun Y Strade was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Ysgol Gyfun Y Strade took place between 16 and 20 October 2006. An independent team of inspectors, led by Ray Owen undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

"There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a standard inspection."

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

Nature of the school

- 1 Ysgol Y Strade is a Welsh-medium comprehensive community school which provides education for boys and girls aged 11 – 18. It was established as a Welsh-medium comprehensive school in 1977, following the reorganisation of secondary education in the Llanelli area. As part of this reorganisation, a tertiary college was established to provide post-16 education for the four English-medium schools in Llanelli, making Ysgol Y Strade the only school in the town which has a sixth form.
- 2 Ysgol Y Strade is located near to the coast, on the western outskirts of Llanelli. The buildings are a combination of old and new buildings. The school has grown gradually over the years and has 892 pupils in September 2006, of whom 135 are in the sixth form.
- 3 The school's catchment area stretches along the south-east coastline of Carmarthenshire, from Forest and Hendy in the east to Kidwelly in the west. About eleven primary schools feed Ysgol Y Strade and the majority of the pupils come from Llanelli and the surrounding villages, with a significant number coming from the disadvantaged wards in the east of the town. Over 10% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is lower than the national average.
- 4 The school accepts pupils from a full range of ability. Twenty seven pupils (about 3% of Year 7 – Year 11 pupils) have a statement of special educational needs (SEN). In addition, 118 pupils (about 13%) are on the school action stage of the Code of Practice for SEN. Currently no pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum and the curriculum has been modified for three pupils. Two pupils are cared for by the local authority.
- 5 English is the home language of about 85% of pupils but all the pupils can speak Welsh to first language standard, because they have attended primary schools in which they were taught in Welsh. The school teaches mainly in Welsh, but mathematics and science are also offered in English.

The school's priorities and targets

- 6 The school's main priorities for 2006 – 2010 are:
 - to maintain and raise pupils' standards of behaviour and attainment throughout the school;
 - to develop Welsh-medium courses in mathematics and science in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in sixth-form courses;
 - to promote the use of Welsh by pupils in informal situations;

- to produce and implement a strategy to improve key skills and to promote curricular links with primary schools and other institutions;
- to increase the use of information and communications technology across the curriculum and in the management and administration of the school; and
- to develop the procedure of conducting departmental self-evaluation and performance management with the emphasis on raising standards in the classroom.

7 The school's quantitative targets for 2006 – 2007 are:

Key stage 3

	Level 5 or above in the school
Welsh	77%
English	77%
Mathematics	80%
Science	75%
Core Subject Indicator	72%

Key stage 4

Attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* - C	70%
Attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* - G	97%
Core Subject Indicator	54%
% leaving without any qualification	0
% of unauthorised absences	0

8 The school was previously inspected during the summer term 1999.

Summary

- 9 Ysgol Gyfun Y Strade is a very good school with many outstanding features. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection (1999) in raising standards and improving the quality of education for all pupils. The grades awarded by the inspection team in the table below agree with the school's self-evaluation for Key Questions 1, 3, 4 and 6. In Key Questions 2, 5, and 7, the grades are one grade higher than those awarded by the school.

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	Sixth form
Welsh first language	2	1	1
English	2	2	1
Design and technology	2	1	2
Information technology	2	1	2
Music	2	2	2
Business studies	n/a	1	1

- 10 The following table shows the grades awarded for standards achieved by pupils in lessons in the six subjects that were inspected.

60 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	4%	81%	15%	0	0
Key stage 4	50%	50%	0%	0	0
Combined key stages 3 and 4	25%	67%	8%	0	0
Sixth form	25%	75%	0	0	0
Whole school	26%	69%	8%	0	0

- 11 Across the subjects that were inspected, pupils' standards have improved a great deal since the last inspection. When compared with pupils in similar schools, the attainment of pupils in key stage 3 is very high. In 2005, the percentage of pupils who gained level 5 in each of the four core subjects (Welsh, English, mathematics and science) was considerably higher than the corresponding percentages in three-quarters of other schools. Although a rather smaller percentage gained level 5 in 2006, the school's results still compare well with those of similar schools.
- 12 At key stage 4, the level of pupils' attainment across the core subjects is less consistent than in key stage 3. However, the percentage of pupils who gain five or more grades A* to C at GCSE still remains very high. The number of pupils who leave school each year without any qualification is much lower than the figures for Wales.
- 13 Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make very good progress. The vast majority follows GCSE courses and the percentage of SEN pupils who leave school with no qualification is also much lower than the figure for Wales.
- 14 In their A level examinations, students' level of attainment has shown a strong upward trend over the last eight years. The students make excellent progress in their learning and show a high level of commitment to their work.
- 15 Boys' attainment is generally lower than that of girls and reflects the picture across Wales.
- 16 All pupils and students gain a good level of proficiency in a range of key skills and their ability to work bilingually is outstanding. They:
 - listen well to their teachers and to each other;
 - can work independently and with others;
 - read and write well in both Welsh and English;
 - are confident in using mathematical ideas; and
 - can use a range of ICT programs.
- 17 In many lessons, pupils and learners make outstanding progress. They apply themselves diligently and regularly assess their own progress. Sixth-form students have good research skills and can analyse, evaluate and present information well.
- 18 Pupils behave very well. They show maturity in the way they deal with others and they are sensitive to issues of equal opportunity. They show respect for people who are different from themselves. Sixth-form students are highly mature and set an excellent example for younger pupils. Their attendance rates are outstanding.

The quality of education and training

- 19 The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons inspected.

101 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	36%	49%	16%	0	0
Key stage 4	58%	42%	0	0	0
Combined key stages 3 and 4	46%	46%	9%	0	0
Sixth-form	40%	45%	10%	5%	0
Whole school	45%	45%	9%	2%	0

- 20 The percentage of lessons at grade 1 and grade 2 is much higher than the average for other schools in Wales.
- 21 The quality of teaching has improved substantially since the last inspection. Its outstanding features include:
- the planning and delivery of lessons;
 - use of interactive whiteboards to aid learning;
 - providing the range of learning activities;
 - the probing questions that give pupils and students opportunities to give extended answers; and
 - the opportunities for pupils and students to develop their key skills.
- 22 Lessons are taught through the medium of Welsh. Teachers also ensure that pupils have a good grasp of specialist subject terminology in both English and Welsh.
- 23 Teachers and managers closely monitor pupils' progress and set realistic, yet challenging targets for pupils to achieve. Pupils have a very good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. The particularly good features of assessment include:
- quick and reliable assessment of pupils' effort and progress across all subjects;
 - assessments of pupils' progress linked to National Curriculum attainment levels;
 - analyses that make heads of departments aware of each pupil's attainment in relation to his or her potential;
 - timely information for parents so that they can work with the school to encourage their children to give of their best;
 - clear oral comments and advice on the quality of pupils' work in class and written comments on each unit of work; and

- guidance for pupils on how to assess their own progress and set their own targets.
- 24 However, there are a few shortcomings in the assessment procedures. The quality of marks and comments on some pupils' written work is not always of the best standard. Written reports to parents are not always clear, and whole-school targets for attainment are not sufficiently reflected in the targets that departments set for pupils.
- 25 The school's curriculum meets all statutory requirements. An outstanding feature is the breadth of provision in the sixth form. In addition to the wide range of A level and vocational courses taught at the school, students can access other courses through video conferencing. However, there is scope for the school to extend opportunities for pupils at key stage 3 to develop their information technology skills.
- 26 The school offers an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities that helps to develop pupils' personal and social skills. The provision for work-related education also has many outstanding features.
- 27 Welsh language and culture are at the centre of school life in an extensive and successful programme of activities for pupils. The school has also been very successful in promoting awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship.
- 28 The school has a caring and supportive ethos where staff and pupils work together as a team to support the school's motto: 'Nid da lle gellir gwell'.

Leadership and management

- 29 The leadership and management of the school have outstanding features. Managers know and understand the school's strengths and key areas for development. They have high expectations of standards and set challenging targets. Also, they provide opportunities, through the link management system, for all staff to contribute to the aims and values of the school and have initiated a process for remodelling the workforce that is respected by staff.
- 30 The process of self-evaluation fully complements performance management in a school that encourages open communication between pupils, staff and parents. Governors are very clear about how to support senior staff in implementing the school's development plan.
- 31 The governing body meets all its statutory and legal requirements.
- 32 The quality of self-evaluation is outstanding. The senior management team have a thorough knowledge of standards across the school and there is a strong sense of ownership of the self-evaluation process amongst all staff at the school. Parents and other stakeholders are also regularly consulted as part of the process.
- 33 The school makes very good use of staff, learning resources and accommodation.

- 34 All staff are well qualified, and teachers can deliver the curriculum through the medium of Welsh and English to meet the learning needs of all pupils. The number and quality of administrative and learning support staff also help to ensure that the school runs smoothly and effectively.
- 35 The condition of many of the school's buildings is generally good, and very efficient use is made of them. However, classroom space is limited in some curriculum areas, such as music, ICT, and art, with also limited facilities in PE and design and technology.

Recommendations

- R1 make sure that the quality of teaching, assessment and target setting throughout the school is as good as the best;
 - R2 make sure that the quality of written reports to parents is consistently good and informative;
 - R3 help all teachers to support pupils' key skills development in lessons; and
 - R4 continue to work with the local authority to improve the accommodation.
- 36 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

- 37 The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report.

Key stages 3 and 4

- 38 The standards that pupils achieve in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key stage 3	Key stage 4
Welsh	2	1
English	2	2
Design technology	2	1
Information technology	2	1
Music	2	2
Business studies	n/a	1

- 39 The following table shows the grades for the standards that pupils achieved in lessons in these six subjects. A high proportion was graded 1 or 2.

48 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	4%	81%	15%	0	0
Key stage 4	50%	50%	0%	0	0
Combined key stages 3 and 4	25%	67%	8%	0	0

- 40 Targets for the whole of Wales are that, by 2007, standards should be grade 3 or better in at least 98% of lessons and grade 2 or better in at least 65% of lessons. Overall, in the six subjects, pupils' achievement exceeds the first target and is substantially better than the second target. Across these subjects, pupils' standards have improved a great deal since the last inspection.

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 41 When compared with the attainment of pupils, either in similar schools (where between 10% and 15% of pupils are entitled to free school meals) or in Welsh-medium schools, the attainment of pupils in key stage 3 is outstandingly high. In 2005, the percentage of pupils who gained level 5 in each of the core subjects (Welsh, English, mathematics and science) was considerably higher than the corresponding percentages in three-quarters of the other schools. The percentage of pupils who contributed to the 'core subject indicator'¹ was also higher than the

¹ The core subject indicator in key stage 3 is the percentage of pupils who gain level 5 or better in the core subjects of Welsh or English, mathematics and science, and in key stage 4 is the percentage of pupils who gain at least grade C in each of these three subjects in GCSE examinations.

percentage in almost all other similar schools. These statements remain true for a comparison of pupils' attainment with that of pupils in the Welsh-medium schools throughout Wales.

- 42 In 2006, a rather smaller percentage of pupils gained level 5 in each of the core subjects. Pupils' attainment was better than in a half of similar schools, but not as good as in a quarter of them. The percentage of pupils who contributed to the core subject indicator, however, remained higher than that in over 75% of these schools.
- 43 In key stage 4, the level of pupils' attainment across the core subjects is less consistent than in key stage 3. In 2005 and 2006, the figures for the core subject indicator were higher than those in only just over a half of similar schools. However, the percentage of pupils who gained five or more grades A* to C remained outstandingly high. So, too, did the average number of points that pupils gained across all their examinations.
- 44 Another measure of pupils' level of success is the extent to which they have progressed from an earlier stage in their schooling. In 2005, pupils made greater progress than the average for Wales in almost every subject in the curriculum. This is an outstanding achievement.
- 45 Pupils with additional learning needs have good levels of attainment, relative to those of pupils in other schools. The vast majority of them follow GCSE courses. The percentage of pupils who leave school with no qualification (1%) is much lower than the figure for Wales (4%). Only 3% of pupils fail to gain at least one GCSE qualification at grades A* to G, compared with 7% throughout Wales.
- 46 In key stage 3, pupils' attainments have remained high and shown an upward trend over the past eight years. Attainment in key stage 4 has fluctuated from year to year but has been much higher than that of pupils throughout Wales in six of the last eight years. There is less of an upward trend in key stage 4 than in key stage 3. Results in science in key stage 4 have tended to show a downward trend.
- 47 Boys' attainment is generally lower than that of girls, particularly in Welsh and English. The difference between the levels of boys' and girls' attainment is similar to that in schools across Wales.
- 48 Pupils gain a good level of proficiency in a range of key skills. They listen well to their teachers and each other. They write well in both Welsh and English in a wide range of styles and for many different purposes. The writing of several pupils is marred, however, by a number of technical errors and careless mistakes. Pupils read a good range of texts and convey meaning effectively when they read aloud. Pupils' ability to work bilingually is outstanding. They use both Welsh and English competently and switch from one to the other with great ease.
- 49 Pupils have a good level of confidence in using mathematical ideas. In most contexts they can present and analyse data in graphical forms.

- 50 Pupils develop a good level of skill in using a range of ICT programs and apply their skills well to enhance and speed their learning. They use the internet well to research topics. However, they show only limited skill in using presentation software.

Pupils' progress in learning

- 51 In many of their lessons, pupils make outstanding progress. A large majority of pupils have learned to work independently. They apply themselves diligently to achieve the goals set for them at the start of a lesson and are self-critical. They also work very effectively in groups.
- 52 Pupils regularly assess their own progress. They have learned to analyse their own performance and can identify the aspects of each subject where they most need to improve the quality of their work.

The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills

- 53 In a high percentage of lessons, pupils work with commitment and enthusiasm. They ask thoughtful questions and answer their teachers' questions in some detail. Generally, pupils relish being faced with a problem and enjoy finding a solution to it. Most pupils take part enthusiastically in a range of extra-curricular activities.
- 54 Pupils behave very well. They show maturity in the way they deal with others and in their approach to a range of social, moral and spiritual issues. Pupils are sensitive to issues of equal opportunity and show respect for people who are different from themselves.
- 55 The great majority of pupils attend school regularly. Pupils' overall attendance rates are very good; they are higher than in over 75% of similar schools. Almost all pupils arrive at school on time and get to their lessons punctually.

Sixth form

- 56 The standards that students achieve in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Sixth form
Welsh	1
English	1
Design and technology	2
Information technology	2
Music	2
Business studies	1

- 57 The following table shows the grades for the standards that students achieved in lessons in these six subjects.

12 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth form	25%	75%	0	0	0

- 58 These figures represent an outstanding level of achievement. It is far in excess of the targets for the whole of Wales.
- 59 In their A level examinations, students' level of attainment has shown a strong upward trend over the last eight years. Over this time, the average score in examinations has been similar to the average for students across Wales. In 2006, however, the average score (23 points) was much higher than the average throughout Wales (20 points).
- 60 About 60 percent of pupils in Year 11 return to the sixth form. This is an appropriate figure, bearing in mind the range of courses offered by other local providers. The percentage of girls who return to the sixth form is much higher than that of boys, reflecting the higher level of attainment of girls in key stage 4.
- 61 Students make excellent progress in their learning and the great majority of them show a high level of commitment to their work. They have good research skills and can synthesise, analyse and evaluate information. Generally, students are making good progress towards achieving a qualification in communication skills.
- 62 Students work well towards the targets set for them and a high proportion of them progress to the further and higher education courses of their choice.
- 63 Students are highly mature and set an excellent example for younger pupils. They are committed to their work and strive hard to achieve the targets set for them. Their attendance rates are outstandingly high. They have good personal and social skills, are aware of many contemporary issues and open to new ideas. The range of activities in which they take part, including work experience, equips them well for lifelong learning and the world of work.

The quality of education and training

Key Question 2: How effective are teaching and assessment?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 64 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade higher than the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report. The quality of teaching has outstanding features in a high percentage of lessons. The school's assessment system also has outstanding features.

Key stages 3 and 4

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

- 65 The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons inspected in key stages 3 and 4.

81 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	36%	49%	16%	0	0
Key stage 4	58%	42%	0	0	0
Combined key stages 3 and 4	46%	46%	9%	0	0

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

- 66 The percentage of lessons graded 1, and the percentage graded 1 or 2, are both much higher than the corresponding percentages of lessons inspected in schools throughout Wales, as shown in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector for Education and Training in Wales. The quality of teaching has improved substantially since the last inspection.
- 67 There are aspects of many lessons that are outstanding. Quite frequently, a teacher describes, at the start of the lesson, what pupils will do, what knowledge and understanding they should gain, what skills they will use and develop, and the quality of work that will be expected. Throughout the lesson, the teacher keeps pupils aware of whether they are meeting these targets, particularly in the quality of their own work. An end-of-lesson recap checks both pupils' learning and promotes a self-assessment of the quality of pupils' work.
- 68 Other outstanding features include:
- thorough planning and skilful management of every aspect of lessons;
 - use of an interactive whiteboard, by teacher and pupils, to promote rapid progress and secure learning;
 - the variety of activities, that gives pupils opportunities to learn in different ways;

- engaging and lucid presentation of complex ideas;
- the probing questions and the skilful encouragement of reasoned answers; and
- structured opportunities for pupils to practise key skills of communication or number.

69 Lessons are taught through the medium of Welsh. Teachers also ensure that pupils have a good grasp of specialist subject terminology in both English and Welsh.

70 Teachers deploy learning-support assistants well so that the pupils they support take a full part in lessons.

71 The few lessons graded at 3 generally did not have enough pace, challenge, variety or stimulation to encourage pupils to give of their best.

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

72 The school has addressed the shortcomings identified in assessment in the previous inspection report. Pupils know how well they are progressing and what they must do to move on to the next level of achievement. Assessment procedures meet statutory requirements.

73 Teachers and managers closely monitor pupils' progress, detect underachievement and help and encourage pupils to improve their work. The range and manageability of the procedures and the rigour with which they are implemented across the school add up to an outstandingly effective system of assessment and monitoring.

74 The good features of the system include:

- a straightforward policy that sets out the underlying principles and objectives of assessment;
- the clear description of a few effective and manageable procedures;
- a quick and reliable assessment of pupils' effort and progress across all subjects;
- assessment of pupils' progress linked to National Curriculum attainment levels;
- a simple analysis of pupils' attainment data that gives a reliable measure of their potential;
- analyses that make heads of departments aware of each pupil's attainment in relation to his or her potential;
- timely information for parents so that they can work with the school to encourage their children to give of their best;
- rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress, particularly of those whose performance is on the borderline of giving them enhanced opportunities for post-16 study;

- clear oral comments and advice on the quality of pupils' work in class and written comments on each unit of work; and
- guidance for pupils on how to assess their own progress and set their own targets.

- 75 These features work effectively. They are an important part of the school's drive to improve pupils' attainment.
- 76 The procedures have some shortcomings. The quality of marks and comments on pupils' written work is not always of the best standard. Written reports to parents are not always clear. While reports in several subjects identify precisely how well pupils are doing and set them targets for improvement, others rely too heavily on a bank of comments that do not give an adequate account of the pupil's attainment. Whole-school targets for attainment are not sufficiently reflected in the targets that departments set for the pupils they teach.

The sixth form

- 77 The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons inspected in the sixth-form.

20 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
The sixth-form	40%	45%	10%	5%	0

- 78 Most lessons are stimulating and rewarding for students. Many offer students a good level of challenge because teachers present parts of them as problems for students to grapple with. There is often rigorous questioning to motivate students to think deeply about ideas. Many lessons also offer good opportunities for students to develop a range of skills, particularly those of oral and written communication. There are simple yet highly effective systems to assess and monitor students' progress. Their estimated grades are quickly calculated at the start of Year 12 and these stand as targets throughout their course. Their progress is regularly measured against these targets. Students meet the head of sixth form to discuss their progress and set targets for the next period of work.
- 79 Students have a thorough understanding of how well they are working and of the quality of work that is expected of them. Parents are regularly made aware of how well students are coping with their sixth-form work. Meetings are readily convened if teachers or parents have concerns that they wish to discuss.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 80 The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report.

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

- 81 The curriculum:
- meets pupils' learning needs and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996;
 - provides an appropriate breadth, balance and progression of study;
 - meets legal requirements and provides personal and social education (PSE), work-related education (WRE) and careers education and guidance in accordance with Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) guidelines;
 - provides equality of opportunity and access for all pupils and students;
 - includes Spanish as a second foreign language in key stage 4; and
 - provides key stage 4 programmes for pupils of different aptitudes.
- 82 An outstanding feature of the curriculum is the breadth of provision in the sixth form. In addition to a wide range of A level and vocational courses taught at the school, students can access A level law through a video-conferencing facility and three other subjects in partnership with two other Welsh-medium schools. The school is also trialling components of the Welsh Bacalaureate qualification.
- 83 There are many good features in the provision of key skills. Key skills are identified in the schemes of work for all subjects and have a strong focus in the PSE and WRE programmes. The cross-curricular week has a particular focus on key skills. However key skills are not fully embedded in all curriculum areas. There is not enough provision of information technology in the key stage 3 programme, for instance.
- 84 An outstanding range of extra-curricular activities broadens pupils' experiences and promotes their personal and social development. The activities involve a large number of pupils and students. There are opportunities for pupils to:
- represent the school in a wide range of sporting activities, with many pupils gaining county and national honours;
 - take part in musical activities, have peripatetic music lessons, join choirs and orchestras and take part in school productions and Eisteddfodau;
 - visit both local and national theatres, historical sites, business organisations and field visits; and
 - experience a range of visits abroad for curricular and social activities.

- 85 There are a number of good and outstanding features in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The outstanding features are that pupils and students:
- respect one another, the staff and the environment;
 - have a clear sense of right and wrong;
 - show care and thoughtfulness towards others by raising substantial amounts of money for charities;
 - mix very well socially and work together naturally across the age range; and
 - are friendly, polite and ready to help each other and visitors to the school.
- 86 The good features are that pupils:
- are given opportunities to develop an understanding of beliefs and values in assemblies, religious education and a number of subjects including PSE;
 - are aware of sensitive matters such as prejudice, racism, and the rights of the individual; and
 - are aware of other cultures and that of their own country.
- 87 There are strong partnerships with parents, the local community, partner primary schools, employers and Careers Wales, and other education providers, including initial teacher training colleges.

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

- 88 Provision for WRE has many outstanding features which include:
- a comprehensive programme of activities mapped out in the PSE programme;
 - the 'Tregwaith' day in Year 9;
 - the cross-curricular week with a strong focus on work-related activities; and
 - the high quality work experience for pupils in Year 10 and students in Year 12.
- 89 Throughout the WRE programme there is a clear emphasis on the needs of employers. Many employers and governors enrich the experiences of learners through input into careers lessons, enterprise and entrepreneurial activities and mock-interview sessions.
- 90 Pupils and students have many opportunities to develop enterprise and entrepreneurial skills. These include the Menter Iaith and Menter Celtaidd initiatives, Engineering Project Wales and the Dynamo Project input into careers lessons.

- 91 Welsh language and culture are at the centre of school life. An extensive programme of activities promotes pupils' appreciation of the language and culture. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is very effectively embedded into schemes of work in all subjects, at each key stage.
- 92 The school has been very successful in promoting the awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. Through the success of a number of initiatives within school and in the community, the school has gained the Green Flag award on three occasions. The Eco-day for all learners and the study of citizenship issues in the PSHE programme enrich the quality of this area of the curriculum. Overall, the school has planned a curriculum that reflects most of the Welsh Assembly Government priorities. The curriculum provides a broad range of experiences, some of which are outstanding, and lays a sound foundation for lifelong learning.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 93 The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report.

The quality of care support and guidance for learners

- 94 Ysgol y Strade has a warm, caring and supportive ethos where staff and pupils work closely together. Pupils and students turn readily to their teachers for help and advice. There are several outstanding features in the way learners are cared for, guided and supported. These include the:
- careful planning and management of care arrangements and support services;
 - strong relationships between the school, the parents and the community;
 - excellent guidance given to pupils to make appropriate subject choices in Years 9 and 11;
 - excellent use of the 'Llyfr Cyswllt' ('contact book') to facilitate effective communication between the school and the home;
 - a comprehensive careers guidance programme beginning in Year 7;
 - way in which the school acts on the views of learners and parents; and
 - very strong links with the feeder primary schools.
- 95 Teulu'r Strade was established to build strong relationships with the feeder primary schools. There are many opportunities for the primary pupils to familiarise themselves with their new school through social and academic activities. The mentoring system, whereby Year 7 pupils are supported by Year 10 pupils, is highly valued by parents and pupils. Curriculum link units in the core subjects and PSE contribute to continuation and progression in Year 7.

- 96 The school has:
- clear processes to monitor pupils' punctuality, attendance and behaviour;
 - prompt and effective measures to deal with bullying;
 - a wide ranging PSE programme, which is carefully structured, delivered effectively and valued by the pupils;
 - a school council which feeds into future planning, and
 - a well-established pastoral system which emphasises personal and academic development.
- 97 Pupils are supported effectively and sensitively by the teachers. The pastoral staff monitor individual progress, identify underachievement early and this leads to immediate remedial action. The rigorous monitoring procedures are a strength of the school. These procedures include:
- a well documented policy and procedures for child protection which are fully understood by all the staff;
 - arrangements to contribute to the well-being of learners;
 - the promotion of the 'Healthy School'; and
 - ensuring that all pupils study Welsh as a first language, thereby enabling them to take a full and active part in the local community.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

- 98 The quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs is an outstanding feature. Pupils respond positively to support in mainstream classes and to the encouragement, challenge and praise they are given when taught individually in groups, and in the learning support centre. The ethos of the centre is purposeful and supportive and this helps promote pupils' self-esteem and enables them to cope well in mainstream activities.
- 99 There are good arrangements for pupils with special education needs (SEN) who are offered access to the full curriculum. Currently, no pupils at key stage 3 are disapplied from the National Curriculum. The identification and assessment of pupils with SEN are thorough and result from the very good liaison between the school and its feeder primary schools. The school works hard to include all pupils in its activities.
- 100 Pupils who have statements of SEN are supported well by individual education plans. Their short term targets are regularly reviewed and give all teachers valuable information about the specific nature of each child's difficulty. The overall school SEN co-ordinator (SENCo) provides very good direction and meets regularly with departmental SEN co-ordinators to share information on individual needs and classroom strategies. Learning Support Assistants work very effectively with pupils

with SEN. Also, the behavioural support team provides very good support and guidance in the behaviour management of individual pupils. The school has gained the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and has responded appropriately to the requirements of the Disability Act.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

101 Provision for equal opportunities is good with some outstanding features. The school creates a climate where there is no discrimination or unfair practice and ensures fair play for all pupils. The outstanding features include:

- a supportive working ethos that contributes to pupils being free of any discrimination;
- prompt responses by staff to any matters of inequality or unfairness;
- positive promotion of equal opportunities and equality of access in all aspects of school life;
- appropriate modifications whereby pupils with disabilities have full access to the curriculum and to extra-curricular activities;
- active promotion of tolerance for and appreciation of all cultures, in PSE lessons, morning services, and extra-curricular activities;
- open access to all areas of the curriculum; and
- challenging stereotypes, for example by successfully encouraging girls to follow engineering courses and participate in football and rugby matches, and boys to follow food courses.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

102 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade higher than the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report. The quality of leadership and management has many outstanding features. These are listed below.

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

103 The leadership provided by the headteacher, and the senior management team, has some outstanding features. These include:

- creating an ethos in the school that encourages open communication between pupils, staff and parents;
- communicating clearly the aims, values, and high expectations of the school to pupils, staff, parents, governors and other partners;
- providing opportunities, through the link management system, for all staff to contribute to the aims and values of the school;
- initiating a process for remodelling the workforce that is respected by staff;
- establishing a process of school self-evaluation that fully complements performance management;
- having detailed knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and key areas for development; and
- having high expectations of standards, and setting challenging targets.

104 Senior managers carry out their responsibilities to a high standard. Their job descriptions have recently been revised to emphasise standards and performance management. Performance management is viewed by staff as a constructive part of self-evaluation and professional development and all teachers regard lesson observations as being essential to the process.

105 The vast majority of subject departments are very well managed. Heads of department are up-to-date with developments in their subjects. They receive guidance and support from the link senior manager in formal meetings as well as on a day to day basis. There is also a link governor for all departments and this contact is valued by departments. Heads of department are well aware of examination data sources and refer to these to set rigorous targets for individual pupils.

- 106 Equal opportunity underpins leadership and management practice and is evidenced in the work of all staff. In the organisation of classes, the curriculum, and pupils' out of school hours experiences, no opportunities are denied to individuals or groups of pupils.
- 107 The Welsh Assembly Government's priorities are reflected in the school's development planning. An example is the school's trialling components of the Welsh Baccalaureate. There are also excellent links with feeder primary schools.
- 108 The school works closely, and effectively, with a range of other education and training providers. The school is a key member of the local 14 – 19 Network and has established close links with Coleg Sir Gâr and other Welsh-medium schools to enhance the academic and vocational curricula. The school also makes very good use of the services provided by Careers Wales and of learning coaches to support individual pupils.

How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

- 109 The local community is well represented on the governing body. Governors represent a good balance of experiences from the world of education and work.
- 110 Governors are very clear about how to support the headteacher and senior staff in implementing the school's development plan. Procedures for contributing to pupils' well-being are established and matters of concern are dealt with directly or referred to the local authority. The governing body has worked closely with the headteacher in monitoring the process of workforce remodelling. The chair and other governors with key responsibilities on sub-committees hold regular discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle managers about strategic priorities. The outstanding features include, governors':
- inputs into the self-evaluation process, as link governors with departments;
 - knowledge of examination data;
 - direct contribution to setting targets at department and school levels; and
 - knowledge of department and school development plans.

- 111 The Governing Body has appropriate procedures in place to meet its statutory and legal requirements.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 112 The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

- 113 Self-evaluation is an integral part of the school's development planning process and is owned by all staff. The outstanding features include:
- the thorough knowledge that the headteacher, senior staff and middle managers have of pupil standards and the quality of teaching and learning across the school;
 - a comprehensive, analytic and honest self-evaluation report that links directly to the school development plan (SDP); and
 - well-established, rigorous, self-evaluation procedures that lead to effective setting of quantitative and qualitative school improvement targets.
- 114 There are also many good features. Staff develop the skills and competencies required to be fully involved in the school's self-evaluation arrangements, and have benefited from the school's 'coaching' systems. Most departmental action plans are fully costed and linked to measurable outcomes. The school's pupil-tracking system is thorough and has had a direct impact on standards. Pupils' progress is carefully examined and monitored. The school's arrangements for collecting pupils' and parents' views, on a range of relevant issues, are effective and they respond promptly to any issues raised, in the same way that they respond to recommendations from the school council. There is a systematic approach towards staff training and development. Staff at all levels are aware of their developmental needs and how they link into the school's improvement priorities.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

- 115 The school has made very good progress in addressing the key issues identified in the previous report. Standards have risen in the subjects that were judged to be only satisfactory. Standards in key skills have improved significantly. Lessons are now better differentiated to meet the learning needs of all pupils and teachers make more effective use of assessment for learning. However, some issues relating to unsuitable accommodation for a small number of subjects, including music, ICT, art, and PE still need attention.
- 116 The SDP clearly identifies the development priorities and relevant success criteria. It also includes a set of challenging, quantitative targets for pupil performance in assessment and examination results for 2007. These targets are the result of a rigorous data analysis. Departmental development plans are part of the SDP and address the school's priorities as well as specific subject needs. The development plans provide the focus for regular meetings between heads of departments and their link senior manager.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

117 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade higher than the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report. There are outstanding features in the way leaders and managers make use of resources.

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

118 There are very effective procedures in place to identify staff development needs. The self-evaluation and performance management processes provide leaders and managers with information that enables the school to target resources effectively and efficiently. The school has a comprehensive directory of providers of staff development courses, including the local education authority and independent training providers. Managers have a very good knowledge of the opportunities provided through the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) for teachers to develop their professional skills.

119 The outstanding features include:

- well-qualified, experienced staff who can deliver all curricular areas in English and Welsh and meet the learning needs of all pupils and students;
- enough support and administrative staff to ensure that the school runs smoothly and efficiently; and
- very effective procedures and practices for the management and development of all staff that are consistently and fairly implemented.

120 There are also many good features. Professional relationships are based on respect and trust between leaders, managers and their staff. Priority is given to maintaining high staffing levels to ensure that teaching groups are small. Support staff and learning assistants co-operate and support teachers effectively. There is generally suitable and safe accommodation for the number of staff and pupils on roll and disabled access is good. The condition of many of the school's buildings and campus is generally good. Pupils make good use of the school library and of the stimulating learning environments in many classrooms and corridors. A good range of learning resources are available in most subjects in English and Welsh that matches the needs and interests of the pupils.

121 Some shortcomings still remain from the last inspection. The teaching areas for music, art and ICT are small and there are limited facilities and resources for design and technology and PE.

How efficient are resources managed in order to ensure value for money

122 The school uses its finances and resources very effectively and provides very good value for money. There are clear, fair, arrangements and procedures for budget

allocations to departments. The quality assurance of these procedures is rigorous and cost effective. There is regular budget monitoring and careful management of resources, at all levels, including the governing body's finance committee.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Welsh (first language)

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

Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Post 16: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

123 In key stage 4:

- pupils' attainment and examination results have been above LEA and Wales averages for the past five years; and
- pupils exchange ideas in pairs, small groups and as a whole class naturally and with complete confidence. They express opinions and defend points of view in a perceptive manner.

124 In the sixth form:

- students' oral skills are confident and very mature; and
- the most able students can analyse challenging works.

Good features

125 In key stage 3:

- standards of listening across the whole range of ability are good and most pupils contribute enthusiastically and confidently in their oral work;
- pupils read aloud with increasing fluency and respond to what they read with understanding and appreciation; and
- pupils' written work is wide-ranging, polished and accurately presented.

126 In key stage 4:

- pupils' confidence to discuss and to write about various subjects and literary texts develops very well;
- pupils read a variety of literary and non-literary texts across the whole range of ability; and

- they respond confidently to reading and produce written answers in a variety of forms to respond to the needs of their audience.

127 In the sixth form, students:

- analyse literary works thoroughly and provide extended views orally and in writing;
- undertake background reading when studying literary texts and compare them with the works of other authors and poets;
- produce mature creative work in different forms and language registers including some well-crafted and imaginative work;
- respond analytically with effective use of appropriate literary terminology when discussing literature; and
- develop their literary talent as they analyse various texts, and sub-texts, and weave appropriate quotations into the structure of their discussions and written work.

Shortcomings

128 A minority of pupils in key stage 3 use incorrect oral language structures and this is also reflected in their written work which includes basic spelling and mutation errors.

Business studies

Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Post 16: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

129 In key stage 4 and in the sixth form:

- the results achieved in external examinations over the last four years have been well above the LEA and Wales averages;
- most pupils and students complete coursework assignments to a very high standard; and
- pupils and students carry out very detailed independent research, analyse data systematically, and write critical evaluations to support their findings.

Good features

130 In key stage 4 and in the sixth-form:

- many pupils and students have a good understanding of business terminology, and apply a range of business principles to a cross-section of tasks;
- many pupils in Year 10 are developing a good understanding of the key factors when the location of a business is considered;
- many pupils in Year 11 have a good understanding of the ways of evaluating the effectiveness of a business;
- pupils are able to analyse business information, calculate different costs and identify trends which indicate whether the business is successful;
- most students in Year 12 have a good understanding of the structure of different business organisations and how they are funded and managed;
- students identify many of the advantages and disadvantages of setting up different types of businesses, their liability and accountability; and
- many students in Year 13 have a good understanding of the importance of market research and the strengths and weaknesses of different sampling methods.

English

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

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

Post 16: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

131 In the sixth form, students:

- make very good progress and a significant number attain full marks in AS examinations;
- collaborate purposefully in preparation for oral and written work and articulate their opinions confidently in group feedback;
- use ICT competently to research contextual background to literature and share findings effectively with their peers; and
- produce very good notes for essays, showing thorough preparation and appropriate textual reference.

132 In key stages 3 and 4, pupils listen attentively to their teacher and to each other.

Good features

133 In key stages 3 and 4, pupils:

- are good at talking in groups to plan their work;
- participate enthusiastically in kinaesthetic methods to help them learn punctuation and sentence construction;
- interact confidently in group work, particularly in key stage 4, and express their ideas fluently and with conviction about characters and themes in set texts;
- have good skimming and scanning skills in reading non-fiction, and show enthusiasm for independent reading and complete personal reading records effectively;
- write appropriately for a range of purposes and many can use computers well to enhance the layout and presentation of non-narrative writing;
- are good at using activities such as graphs and sequencing to help prepare for their writing;
- are able to produce extended writing in narrative and non-fiction genres and generally show an appropriate command of standard English in their writing; and
- know how to redraft their work effectively at all ability levels.

Shortcomings

134 In key stages 3 and 4:

- boys achieve less well than girls;
- a few pupils are not always able to extend their oral responses in sufficient detail; and
- a few pupils do not respond to the current techniques for correcting spelling errors.

Design and technology

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

Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Post 16: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Outstanding features

135 In key stage 4, pupils:

- make extensive use of ICT to research, design and present projects;
- know and understand the design-and-making skills in food technology; and
- can use Welsh technical terminology fluently when discussing or explaining their work.

Good features

136 In key stage 3, pupils:

- apply design processes in their project work, research and produce appropriate design specifications, and understand the link between design specifications and evaluations;
- plan well for the making stage of their work and have a good understanding of making processes in a wide range of materials so that the quality of their finished products in food technology and textiles is often exceptional;
- make good use of computers for design and use two-dimensional design software and computer aided manufacturing equipment well, particularly in textiles; and
- make good progress when they have additional learning needs and achieve to their potential.

137 In key stage 4, pupils:

- use the design process to guide their project work, undertake research that is relevant and well directed, and links design specifications to evaluation;
- plan their work thoroughly and show good problem-solving skills;
- use ICT design packages effectively to enhance the research, design and presentation of their work;

- have knowledge and understanding of a range of materials, and different processes and techniques are well developed; and
- produce GCSE project work that is often very innovative, especially in food technology.

138 In the sixth form, students:

- use the design process to guide the development of their chosen products;
- effectively research, analyse and evaluate both commercial products and their own work;
- produce innovative projects with good planning and methodology;
- make effective use is of ICT for a variety of purposes including computer aided design and manufacture; and
- have a good theoretical understanding of design and technology.

Shortcomings

139 In key stage 3, pupils do not make enough use of mechanisms and electronic control in their projects.

140 In key stage 3 and in the sixth form, pupils' and students' developmental drawing skills, particularly in sketchbooks, are weaker than the other elements of designing.

Information technology

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

Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Post 16: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Outstanding features

141 In key stage 4, a significant number of pupils:

- have well developed practical computing skills;
- produce high quality coursework; and
- use Welsh technical vocabulary fluently when discussing or explaining their work.

Good features

142 In key stage 3, pupils:

- demonstrate good levels of confidence and competence in handling the computer;
- have a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of their tasks and are able to explain and discuss their work using an appropriate level of technical vocabulary;
- communicate information and use word processing and desktop publishing applications well;
- make use of information obtained from a variety of sources including the internet; and
- can create a database and set up queries to search their data.

143 In key stage 4, pupils:

- understand the basic concepts of computing and can identify and explain the specific advantages of various software packages;
- plan their work thoroughly and show good problem-solving and evaluation skills;
- have a good knowledge and understanding of computer systems including the range of input devices for human interaction and data capture; and
- have a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of their tasks and can explain and discuss their work using an appropriate technical vocabulary.

144 In the sixth form, students:

- display a good level of practical competence and computer skills in using complex systems that emulate real applications in the outside world;
- identify realistic problems, collect a wide range of data, test their validity and evaluate their solutions;
- discuss the concepts of the subject with understanding, confidence and technical accuracy; and
- have a good understanding of a programming language and can write codes to create data entry forms for sub-routines that enable a programme to carry out additional tasks.

Shortcomings

- 145 In key stage 3 pupils do not make enough use of the more complex facilities of some software, especially presentation software.
- 146 In the sixth form, a small minority of students are over-reliant on their teacher for some basic tasks.

Music

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

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

Post 16: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 147 In key stage 3:
- pupils sing in unison and two parts confidently and enthusiastically, with very sensitive expression and style;
 - some of the instrumental performances are of a high standard;
 - pupils compose simple pieces in response to a variety of stimuli;
 - Year 8 and Year 9 pupils' improvised compositions are very effective; and
 - the majority of pupils are able to recognise technical musical elements when appraising music.
- 148 In key stage 4:
- pupils of all abilities perform confidently with firm rhythm and intonation;
 - the most able show an excellent awareness of style and expression;
 - the quality of the Year 11 vocal ensemble is very high;
 - some pupils' compositions show good and effective use of instruments and voices and are successful in their phrasing, and the development of musical ideas; and
 - most pupils can recognise the main features of a wide range of styles and traditions and justify their views by focussing on the musical aspects.

149 In the sixth form:

- individual and ensemble performances are of a high standard and show a firm control of instrumental or vocal technique, a mature understanding of period and style, and a high level of commitment;
- students' compositions reflect their personal taste and the best of are complete and successful musical works which show a good understanding of the balance of form and structure, a clear development of musical ideas and interesting harmony language, and a wide selection of voices and instruments;
- students appraise a wide range of music intelligently; and
- students have a deep understanding of style and form, and discuss and justify their points of view. Their best essays are thoroughly researched and express a valid and meaningful opinion.

Shortcomings

150 In key stages 3 and 4:

- some pupils' answers, when they appraise their own music and the music of other pupils, are short and superficial and do not concentrate sufficiently on musical aspects; and
- the progress of a minority of key stage 3 pupils in composing tasks is slow and these pupils show a lack of interest in music.

School's response to the inspection

The school is proud and pleased with the main finding of the report, namely that Ysgol y Strade is a very good school which has many outstanding features.

The fact that Estyn's inspection team awarded the school grade 1 for each of the seven key questions, and judged that standards in the six subjects that were inspected were either good or very good in every key stage, is evidence of the numerous outstanding features which exist across the whole school.

Over recent years, the school has worked strenuously to raise standards in the classroom. The fact that 90% - 95% of the lessons that were observed, were judged to be grade 1 or grade 2, is evidence of the school's significant improvement in this area.

The results attained by our pupils in external examinations are very good and it is acknowledged in the report that all pupils in the school are making outstanding progress. The school endeavours to respond to the needs of every individual and the care provided by the school to pupils has been acknowledged as a particularly strong area.

The report consistently praises the positive attitudes of our pupils towards their education and the development of their skills in a variety of contexts. We are also delighted with the positive comments about the behaviour and courtesy of our pupils and their contribution to activities both in the school and the local area.

The report notes that the school has made very good progress in dealing with the key issues arising from the previous inspection. The recommendations contained in this report will be included in a post-inspection action plan and will form part of the School Development Plan. The constructive comments contained in the report will further assist us to strengthen our efforts in raising standards to an even higher level in the future.

The hard work of all staff, the leadership given by the governing body, and the support of parents and the community are recognised, all of which contribute so much to the success of our pupils.

The thorough and detailed work of the inspection team during its visit to Ysgol Y Strade is also appreciated, together with their courtesy and professionalism at all times.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Gyfun Y Strade
School type	Secondary
Age-range of pupils	11 to 18
Address of school	Heol Sandy, Llanelli
Postcode	SA15 4DL
Telephone number	01554 745100

Headteacher	Mr Geraint Roberts
Date of appointment	September 1997
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Peter Dutton
Reporting inspector	Mr Ray Owen
Dates of inspection	16 – 20 October 2006

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	166	150	124	160	157	67	67	892

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	52	8	56.8

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	15.7: 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	20.5
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	77%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	95	94	93	93	94	93	99	94.5
Term 2	92	92	92	95	92	98	98	93.3
Term 3	94	93	93	93	99	99	99	95.0

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	10.5%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	20

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of Key Stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2006															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 162															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	14	39	24	18	0	0
		National				0	0	2	7	22	36	24	8	0	
	Test	School	1	2	2	0	0	0	2	20	35	20	17	0	0
		National	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	18	35	33	10	0	0
		National				1	0	1	5	20	37	27	8	0	
	Test	School	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	15	37	32	9	0	0
		National	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	1	0	0	0	0	1	4	16	21	34	23	0	0
		National				0	0	1	7	18	25	30	16	1	
	Test	School	2	0	2	1	0	0	1	17	20	33	23	0	0
		National	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Science	Teacher assessment	School	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	11	40	34	11	0	0
		National				0	0	1	6	19	34	28	12	0	
	Test	School	2	0	2	0	0	1	2	12	39	28	14	0	0
		National	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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	74%	In the school	72%
In Wales	58%	In Wales	-

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	143
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	49

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	95	88	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	60	57	53
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	98	87	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	45	43	39
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	2	2	3
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	88	80	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	99	94	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	1	5	4
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	2	2	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	3	-	-
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	3	-	-

For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2006	78
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2006	72
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2006	6

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	85	75	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	100	97	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	23	21	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	0	-	-
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	0	-	-

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Eleven inspectors, including the school's nominee, spent the equivalent of 38 days in the school and met as a team before the inspection. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the English subject inspector was at the school for only two days.

The inspectors visited:

- 101 lessons or part lessons, including 60 in the six subjects that were inspected; and
- a cross-section of registration or tutorial periods, acts of collective worship, and extra curricular activities.

Members of the team had meetings with:

- the senior management team, governing body, parents and staff, before the inspection began;
- members of the senior management team and a wide range of teachers, support and administrative staff during the week; and
- groups of pupils and students representing each key stage and the sixth form.

The team also considered:

- a selection of pupils' work, ensuring an appropriate range in terms of age and ability;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school both before and during the inspection;
- responses to parents' questionnaires (490 returned); and
- comments from a wide range of pupils about the school.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Ray Owen HMI	Reporting inspector Key Question 5
Glyn Davies	Key Question 3 Business Studies
Zac Davies	Key Questions 6 and 7
Ian Garth Higginbotham	Key Questions 1 and 2
Keith Hopkins	Design and Technology Information Technology
Gillian Jones	Welsh First Language
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector Contributions to Key Questions 4 and 7
David Beaumont Morgan	Contribution to Key Question 4
Penny Stead	English
Hefina Thomas	School nominee
Susan Lloyd Williams	Key Question 4 Music

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, staff and pupils of Ysgol Y Strade for their co-operation at all stages during the inspection.