

**Inspection under Section 163 of the  
Education Act 2002**

**St John's College  
College Green, Old St. Mellons, CF3 5YX**

**School Number: 6816004**

**Date of Inspection: May 2006**

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

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**BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL  
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE**

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

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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## Introduction

St John's College was inspected as part of a national programme for the inspection of independent schools under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

In addition, inspection reports identify good features and shortcomings, so that a school may improve the quality of education it offers and raise the standards its pupils achieve. The inspection of all independent schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of St John's College took place between 8 May 2006 and 12 May 2006. A team of inspectors from Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Training and Education in Wales, undertook the inspection. Estyn is a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales.

The team made its judgements having considered 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 report is written in accordance with Estyn's Common Inspection Framework (which is available at [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)).

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

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

## Year groups and key stages

Independent schools use a variety of systems for numbering year groups. This report, however, uses 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 and parents.

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.

St John's College has its own system for numbering age groups. For example, R12 (Rising 12) refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 12 during the academic year. For ease of understanding, the tables below include both the common system of numbering year groups and that used by St John's College.

Primary phase:

Year	Reception	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6
St John's	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11
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
St John's	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	Lower 6	Upper 6
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

Although independent schools are not required to follow the National Curriculum, we use these terms for convenience.

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

- 1 St John's College, Cardiff is a co-educational independent day school situated in the village of Old St Mellons on the eastern edge of Cardiff. The school, which has a grade II listed building at its heart, is set in landscaped grounds that form part of a conservation area.
- 2 St John's has a clearly established Catholic ethos and is the only 3-18 Catholic independent school serving the region. The school welcomes children from a wide range of backgrounds.
- 3 In 1987, the Order of De La Salle Brothers closed a small preparatory school of approximately 85 pupils that had existed since 1935. A newly-formed charitable trust created St John's College and the Board of Parent Trustees purchased the original site from the De La Salle Order to form a new school led by the present headteacher.
- 4 In 1996, with a pupil roll, which had grown to over 400, the school moved to its present site. At the present site, the school has established a flourishing sixth form and developed extensive modern facilities, including a large sports and concert hall and a new science block. The school has recently acquired thirteen acres of land at Began Road in Cardiff that have been developed as sports playing fields.
- 5 St John's College is organised into four sections. The infant section caters for nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The junior section is for pupils in Years 3-6 and the senior section for pupils in Years 7-11. There is also a sixth form for students in Years 12 and 13. The school has grown very significantly from the original 85 pupils to a current roll of 498 girls and boys, aged 3-18. Boys outnumber girls in the ratio of 3 to 2.
- 6 At the heart of the school is the choral foundation. St John's College is the choir school to the Cardiff Metropolitan Cathedral of St David in the city of Cardiff, to which it provides the boy and girl choristers and other musicians. The Archbishop of Cardiff, Metropolitan of the Catholic Province of Wales and Herefordshire, is patron of the school and the distinguished Welsh composer Alun Hoddinott is a patron of the choral foundation.
- 7 There are no specific admission tests for pupils. Pupils seeking admission usually spend a day or part of a day visiting the school. Admission is normally granted subject to mutual compatibility. Year 6 pupils are generally guaranteed entry into the senior section of the school. The school carries out benchmark tests after making an offer of admission.
- 8 The school's principal aim is to assist pupils to develop their full potential in every area of school life. In particular, the school encourages children to develop a kind and respectful attitude towards others. The school also aims to provide a strong moral and spiritual education based firmly on Catholic Christian principles. Pupils

are encouraged to strive for high academic standards and also to take full advantage of the broad range of extra-curricular activities offered, particularly in the areas of sport, music and drama.

- 9 Although the great majority of the pupils come from South Wales, the school has recently admitted children from other parts of Europe, the USA, and the Middle and Far East, notably from Korea. A few pupils come from Welsh speaking families. Overall, almost 20% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the school emphasises its desire to welcome the small number of overseas pupils for whom English is an additional language. There are 42 pupils with special educational needs on the school's register of pupils. One pupil has a statement of special education needs.
- 10 Lessons are in English. The school does not aim to make pupils bilingual in English and Welsh but provides opportunities for pupils to study Welsh in key stages 1-3.
- 11 The school commissioned an inspection by EPPC Severn Crossing Limited in 1999.

### **The school's priorities and targets**

- 12 The school's development plan lists a range of appropriate areas for development and improvement for each key stage. The school's current priorities are to:
- develop further the use of assessment to support pupils' learning;
  - embed the use of information communications technology (ICT) into the curriculum;
  - develop a more integrated and cohesive personal and social education programme; and
  - extend the use of investigative and mathematical problem-solving work in reception and Year 1 classes.
- 13 The school has plans for the development of new facilities including:
- a dining room;
  - an enlarged main library;
  - extended computer teaching facilities and specialist teaching rooms; and
  - a pavilion with changing and hospitality facilities at the playing fields.



## Summary

- 14 St John's College meets all but three of the regulatory requirements necessary to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003.
- 15 The school commissioned an inspection by EPPC Severn Crossing Limited in 1999. The school has made good progress in addressing that report's recommendations particularly in:
- implementing plans for extending the accommodation; and
  - developing the management role of all those with academic, pastoral and whole-school responsibilities.

### Tables of grades awarded

- 16 The inspection team judged the school's work as follows:

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?	1
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	1
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	2
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

### Standards of achievement

- 17 Overall, pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
22%	66%	12%	0%	0%

- 18 These standards of achievement exceed the targets, set by the Welsh Assembly Government for 2007 for maintained schools, that 65% of classes should achieve grade 2 or better and 98% of classes grade 3 or better.

### Standards for the under-fives

19 Standards for the under-fives are as follows:

Language, literacy and communication	Grade 1
Personal and social development	Grade 1
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2

20 Standards in each of the areas of learning for under-fives are at least good. There are outstanding features in the standards these children achieve in language, literacy and communication and in their personal and social development. Most children, in both the nursery and reception classes, exceed the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning in these particular areas by the time they are five years of age.

### Grades awarded for subjects inspected

21 The grades awarded in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	Sixth Form
English	2	2	2	2	1
Welsh second language	2	2	2	n/a	n/a
Mathematics	2	1	1	2	1
Science	2	1	1	n/a	n/a
Biology	n/a	n/a	2	2	1
Chemistry	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	1
Physics	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1
Information technology	n/a	2	2	1	n/a
Design and technology	2	2	2	2	2
Modern foreign languages	n/a	2	2	2	2
Geography	3	2	1	2	2
History	2	1	1	1	1
Art	2	1	2	2	2
Music	2	1	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2
Religious education	2	2	2	2	2
Economics	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1
Latin	n/a	n/a	2	1	2

22 Throughout the school, there are outstanding features in about a quarter of the subjects studied. As pupils move through the school, they achieve progressively higher standards. In key stage 4 and the sixth form combined, there are outstanding features in almost a half of the subjects studied.

- 23 Children in the early years, and pupils and students throughout the school, generally make very good progress in their learning. Pupils and students in key stage 4 and the sixth form display extensive knowledge and understanding that enable them to discuss and explain their work in detail. Pupils and students with different kinds of additional learning needs, including those learning English as an additional language (EAL), generally make good, and in some cases, very good, progress.
- 24 Throughout the school, pupils' and students' standards in listening, speaking and reading develop very well. All pupils write well. Pupils and students in key stages 3 and above write very well, frequently producing particularly well-structured and extended written work, using accurate language, in a wide range of contexts.
- 25 Pupils and students display good numeracy skills and, in key stages 3 and above, use information and communications technology (ICT) effectively to prepare, process and present information and to communicate ideas.
- 26 Throughout the school, pupils and students are highly motivated. They are courteous, behave extremely well, generally arrive punctually to each lesson and work diligently. As they progress through the school, they acquire good investigational and problem-solving skills and can work well independently.
- 27 Pupils and students work very well with others, for example in pairs or small groups, and show respect for each other, developing tolerant and open-minded attitudes.
- 28 Pupils gain high grades in their GCSE examinations. These results are in line with the highest attaining schools in Wales and represent very good achievement on the part of the pupils.
- 29 A level examination results are excellent. The school has been amongst the highest performing schools in England and Wales at A level for the last three years. Figures from the Welsh Joint Education Council (WJEC) indicate that, in the last two years, students' performance in A level examinations has been considerably better, in most subjects, than that predicted by their GCSE results.

### **The quality of education and training**

- 30 In the lessons observed, the inspection team judged the quality of teaching as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
20%	62%	18%	0%	0%

- 31 In the most effective lessons where there are outstanding features, the teaching:
- uses varied, imaginative and rigorous learning activities that stimulate pupils' interest and ensure they work at a fast pace and remain motivated and on task;
  - uses open-ended questioning very skilfully to probe understanding and develop thinking; and

- includes well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills through exploration and experiment.

32 The most common good features of teaching are:

- the high expectations of pupils of all abilities;
- a high level of mutual respect and trust between teachers and pupils, which leads to very positive attitudes to learning;
- well-planned lessons that provide continuity and progression in learning;
- the clear explanation of learning objectives; and
- the recapitulation of previous work to reinforce and test pupils' knowledge and understanding.

33 The most common shortcomings in the teaching are that:

- planning does not include enough opportunities for pupils to develop ICT skills across all subject areas; and
- there are not enough opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or participate in independent learning activities.

34 The quality of assessment is good. Throughout the school teachers:

- know the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' and students' work;
- effectively monitor the progress they are making; and
- mark work regularly and thoroughly, providing supportive and encouraging comments.

35 In many cases, teachers indicate clearly how pupils can improve their work.

36 Reports to parents identify the progress pupils have made and give a general indication of how pupils can improve. However, teachers are not always clear enough about how pupils can improve subject-based skills.

37 The curriculum promotes the school's Christian ethos and makes a particularly valuable contribution towards pupils' and students' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of nearly all pupils and students particularly well. Learning experiences enable pupils and students to reach very high standards of attainment in external examinations and, almost without exception, proceed to higher education institutions.

38 There is exceptional coherence and continuity in pupils' learning experiences as they progress from key stage 2 to key stage 3. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit

immensely from a blend of the subject-based approach associated with secondary studies and teaching styles that are appropriate to younger learners. The well-structured programme has a marked impact on standards and attitudes to learning and enables pupils to make a smooth and successful transition from the primary school to the secondary school.

- 39 The programme of extra-curricular activities extends pupils' and students' academic, sporting, social, and cultural interests well. There are extensive opportunities for pupils and students to take part in a wide range of enriching musical and choral activities that significantly affect their personal and social development and contribute greatly to the local community. The school's Cathedral choristers and the pupils who take part in the various musical ensembles achieve especially high standards.
- 40 Students in the sixth form receive helpful careers advice and very good guidance and support when they apply to university. In key stages 3 and 4, the school does not co-ordinate careers and personal and social education well enough.
- 41 Partly as a result of whole classes not being able to access internet facilities, there is too little emphasis, in any subject, on developing pupils' ICT skills effectively to research and present work.
- 42 Generally, the school provides good support, care and guidance for pupils and students. Teachers know their pupils very well because class groups are small.
- 43 Class teachers and form tutors give very good support to pupils. There are appropriate induction procedures for young children joining the nursery and reception classes and for new pupils joining Year 7.
- 44 The school provides well for pupils with additional learning needs. There are strong links with the Dyslexia Institute unit based at the school and effective procedures for monitoring and reviewing the progress of these pupils.
- 45 There are clear and effective arrangements that ensure a very low incidence of bullying and deal appropriately with any incidents that do occur. The school makes careful checks to ensure the suitability of all staff and adults who work with the children. However, staff have not received appropriate training in child protection and are not clear enough about the school's procedures.
- 46 There are some shortcomings in the way the school records pupils' attendance and follows up unaccounted first day absences.

### **Leadership and management**

- 47 The headteacher, well-supported by the senior leadership team, provides purposeful and very effective leadership. With the confidence and strong support of the school trustees, the team has shown clear vision and strategic direction, in planning for the development of the school and in setting challenging and realistic goals to raise standards of achievement and improve the quality of education.

- 48 The leadership has established an exceptional ethos and sense of purpose throughout the school. As a result, the whole staff is firmly committed to shared values and goals. There is an openness and willingness to recognise areas in which the school can improve.
- 49 Management structures and procedures are developing to ensure effective liaison and cohesion between all sections of the school. This is most apparent in the very effective liaison between the senior and junior sections of the school that ensures outstanding coherence and continuity in pupils' learning experiences.
- 50 The school effectively communicates its expectations through:
- well-devised policies and procedures;
  - the increasingly informative website; and
  - the work of curriculum development groups and subject co-ordinators' meetings.
- 51 The senior leadership team has initiated self-evaluation procedures that seek the views of trustees, parents, staff at all levels and, to some extent, the pupils. Self-evaluation is increasingly influencing the work of the school, for example, by identifying targets for inclusion in school and departmental development plans.
- 52 However, departmental development plans do not always include a clear indication of expected outcomes and how the school will measure success.
- 53 A programme of peer observations has identified some appropriate areas for whole-school and individual staff development. However, performance management procedures are not systematic and do not link closely enough to professional development.
- 54 The school has enough well-qualified and experienced staff to teach at all levels in the school and allow small and appropriate class sizes. The school uses subject specialist teachers in years 5 and 6 very well.
- 55 Learning resources are generally of good quality.
- 56 Accommodation throughout the school has many good features, including:
- the pleasant setting and well-maintained grounds and premises;
  - the extensive new facilities for science, art, design and technology and key stage 2 pupils that support effective teaching and learning; and
  - the spacious and well-equipped sports hall that enhances pupils' learning.
- 57 However, there are also several shortcomings in the quality of accommodation including:
- the lack of suitable common room facilities for staff and sixth form students;

- the absence of a canteen; and
- the under-developed senior library.

58 The school manages its financial resources very well, through prudent budgeting and allocation of resources, to meet the school's priorities and ensure value for money.

## **Compliance with the regulations for registration**

### **The quality of education provided by the school**

59 The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

60 The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

61 The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

62 Although the school meets most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that all staff are fully aware of the school's child protection procedures and, where appropriate, have been trained in line with the Welsh Office circular (52/95) 'Protecting Children from Abuse: the Role of the Education Service' (3.2b);
- ensure that it takes regard of National Assembly guidance on health and safety responsibilities and powers of schools (3.4); and
- record attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (3.9).

### **The suitability of proprietors and staff**

63 The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools**

64 The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **The provision of information**

65 The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **The manner in which complaints are to be handled**

66 The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.



## Recommendations

- 67 In order to improve the school, the staff and trustees need to:
- R1 take steps to comply fully with the standards for registration;
  - R2 encourage all teachers to adopt the most effective teaching strategies;
  - R3 extend the use of information communications technology (ICT) across all curriculum areas\*;
  - R4 co-ordinate more effectively the opportunities within the curriculum to support pupils' personal and social development (PSE)\*; and
  - R5 implement the plans for improving the quality of accommodation\*.
- 68 Since the school does not meet some of the standards required for registration, the National Assembly for Wales will require the trustees to submit an action plan within a specified period of time. This plan must set out the steps that the school will take to meet the standards, and the timescale within which it will complete each step.
- 69 Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what action the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents at the school.

\* These areas have already been identified in the school development plan

## Standards

### Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

70 In its self-evaluation report, the school judged this key question as Grade 1. The inspection team agrees with the judgement made by the school.

71 Overall, pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
22%	66%	12%	0%	0%

72 These standards of achievement exceed the targets set by the Welsh Assembly Government for 2007 for maintained schools by a considerable margin. In the sixth form, there are outstanding features in the standards students achieve in about 40% of lessons observed.

73 The grades awarded for standards in the areas of learning and subjects inspected appear in the earlier summary section of the report. Throughout the school, there are outstanding features in about a quarter of the subjects studied. As pupils move through the school, they achieve progressively higher standards. In key stage 4 and the sixth form combined, there are outstanding features in almost a half of the subjects studied.

74 Standards in each of the areas of learning for children aged under five are at least good. There are outstanding features in the standards these children achieve in language, literacy and communication and in their personal and social development. Most children, in both the nursery and reception classes, exceed the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning in these particular areas by the time they are five years of age.

75 Throughout the school, and particularly in key stage 4 and the sixth form, there are outstanding features. These include:

- pupils' and students' extensive understanding, and ability to discuss and explain their work in detail;
- the widespread progress that pupils and students make in learning, as they move through the school;
- the very high level of skills that pupils and students acquire during their GCSE and A level courses; and
- pupils' and students' outstanding skills in using composition software in music.

- 76 Throughout all key stages, pupils and students develop a good understanding of relevant concepts, techniques and skills in the subjects they study. In key stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form, the most able pupils and students produce work of very high quality in a number of subjects.
- 77 Pupils gain high grades in their GCSE examinations. Every year since 1999, hardly any pupils have failed to achieve at least five GCSE grades A\* to C. In 2005, about two-thirds of GCSE entries were at grades A\* or A. These results are in line with the highest attaining schools in Wales and represent very good achievement on the part of the pupils.
- 78 An outstanding feature is the results achieved at Advanced level. In every one of the last seven years the overall pass rate for grades A-E has been 98% or better (with 100% in five of these years). In 2005, 91% of the entries were grades A or B with 63% grade A. The school has been amongst the highest performing schools in England and Wales at A level for the last three years, and the percentage of A grades at A level has been more than double the all Wales average for the last four years. Figures from the Welsh Joint Education Council (WJEC) indicate that, in the last two years, students' performance in A level examinations has been considerably better, in most subjects, than that predicted by their GCSE results.
- 79 By the end of each key stage, pupils have made good progress to acquire the skills necessary to move to the next stage of learning. Almost all Year 11 students go on to appropriate post-16 courses at St John's or elsewhere. Last year, all upper sixth students obtained university places. A high proportion of students follow degree courses in engineering, medicine and science.
- 80 Throughout the school, pupils and students with different kinds of additional learning needs, including those learning English as an additional language, (EAL) make good progress.
- 81 In all key stages and the sixth form, the most common outstanding features are that pupils and students:
- speak with considerable confidence, using a wide range of vocabulary and displaying a very good grasp of subject-related terms;
  - listen very attentively to other pupils' views and opinions as well as teachers' exposition, questions and instructions; and
  - read a very wide range of texts and documents for information and for pleasure.
- 82 Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 develop good writing skills. An outstanding feature of key stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form is that pupils and students produce particularly well-structured and extended written work, using accurate language, in a wide range of contexts.

- 83 Throughout the school, pupils and students achieve good standards in many other areas. For example, they:
- ask thoughtful questions to extend their understanding;
  - have good investigational and problem-solving skills;
  - can work well independently;
  - develop good skills in handling data and using number;
  - recall and use knowledge that they have acquired in previous lessons; and
  - are clear about what to do to improve their own learning and performance.
- 84 In key stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form, most pupils and students use ICT tools effectively to prepare, process and present information and to communicate their ideas. The pupils display these skills well in specific information technology (IT) lessons and in some, but not all, other subjects. For example:
- in science and history, pupils use high-level ICT skills to give interesting presentations; and
  - in design technology, pupils use their ICT skills to produce coursework of a high standard.
- 85 Pupils and students display a number of outstanding personal, social and learning skills. For example, they:
- behave extremely well;
  - show very high levels of motivation and application;
  - work very well with others, for example in pairs or small groups;
  - persevere in and complete their tasks; and
  - show respect for each other, and develop tolerant and open-minded attitudes.
- 86 Attendance rates are good across the school. Pupils and students generally arrive punctually to lessons and settle down quickly to work.
- 87 However, in a minority of lessons or subjects, there are some shortcomings in the standards a few pupils and students achieve, when, for example, they:
- provide only short and incomplete answers to oral or written questions;
  - do not concentrate fully or take little part in discussions or group work;

- have not adequately developed their enquiry skills; and
- make too many written errors.

88 Occasionally, some sixth-form students rely too heavily on the teacher for support, rather than investigating or researching for themselves.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

89 In its self-evaluation report, the school judged this key question as Grade 2. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

90 In the lessons observed, the inspection team judged the quality of teaching as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
20%	62%	18%	0%	0%

91 In the sixth form, there are outstanding features in the quality of teaching in about one-third of the lessons observed.

92 In the most effective lessons where there are outstanding features, the teaching:

- uses varied, imaginative and rigorous learning activities that stimulate pupils' interest and ensure they work at a fast pace and remain motivated and on task;
- reflects high levels of subject knowledge and a good awareness of how best to apply to support pupils' learning;
- uses open-ended questioning very skilfully to probe understanding and develop thinking; and
- includes well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop independent thinking skills through exploration and experiment.

93 The most common good features are:

- the high expectations of pupils of all abilities;
- a high level of mutual respect and trust between teachers and pupils, which leads to very positive attitudes to learning;
- well-planned lessons that provide continuity and progression in learning;
- the clear explanation of learning objectives;
- the recapitulation of previous work to reinforce and test pupils' knowledge and understanding;

- the effective promotion of equality of opportunity that ensures that all pupils, including those with additional needs, have access to the whole curriculum; and
- the valuable support from support staff that helps ensure continuity of learning.

94 The most common shortcomings in the teaching are that:

- there are not enough opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or participate in independent learning activities;
- teachers' questions require short factual answers rather than more extended, reasoned responses;
- teachers do not adapt published materials to meet pupils' individual needs and interests; and
- planning does not include enough opportunities for pupils to develop ICT skills across all subject areas.

95 The quality of assessment is good. Throughout the school, teachers:

- use classroom exercises and regular assessment well to identify strengths and weaknesses and to monitor the progress pupils make;
- remind pupils of their personal targets and give appropriate support to pupils during lessons to achieve these targets;
- provide pupils with helpful feedback on their progress during lessons; and
- carefully track pupils' progress.

96 In the senior school, most teachers use subject progress grades and internal test and examination marks to help set challenging and realistic targets for pupils.

97 Throughout the school, teachers mark work regularly and thoroughly, providing supportive and encouraging comments, and ensure that written tasks are completed. In many cases, teachers indicate clearly how pupils can improve their work.

98 Teachers and form tutors consult with parents where there are concerns about pupils' progress.

99 Reports to parents identify the progress pupils have made and give a general indication of how pupils can improve. However, teachers are not always clear enough about how pupils can improve their subject-based skills.

**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**

100 In its self-evaluation report, the school judged this key question as Grade 1. The inspection team agrees with the judgement made by the school.

101 The outstanding features are:

- a curriculum that promotes the school's Christian ethos and makes a particularly valuable contribution towards pupils' and students' spiritual, moral and cultural development; and
- the wide range of musical and choral activities that significantly affects many pupils' and students' personal and social development and contributes greatly to the local community.

**Outstanding feature**

The school has established a curriculum that emphasises academic achievement, ensures exceptional coherence and continuity in pupils' experiences, particularly as they move from key stage 2 to key stage 3, and enables pupils to make outstanding progress.

In Years 5 and 6, teaching by subject specialists and strong curriculum links between key stages 2 and 3 in the majority of subject areas, through, for example, particularly well-planned schemes of work, contribute successfully to an 'accelerated learning' programme. As part of this programme, pupils:

- begin to study modern foreign languages in the primary school;
- commence key stage 3 courses, based on the National Curriculum, in Year 6; and
- start GCSE courses in Year 9.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit immensely from a blend of the subject-based approach associated with secondary studies and teaching styles that are appropriate to younger learners. The well-structured programme has a marked impact on standards and attitudes to learning and enables pupils to make a smooth and successful transition from the primary school to the secondary school.



### **Outstanding features**

Many pupils achieve very high standards of performance in a range of extra-curricular musical activities.

The junior girls' choir performs a good range of music confidently, accurately and with suitable expression. It regularly performs in Devotions in Cardiff Metropolitan Cathedral. Standards of singing in the junior boys' choir are excellent. They join the male choristers of the Cathedral Choir to perform in services during the week and at the major festivals of Christmas and at Easter in the Cathedral. In the service of Vespers, the choir performs outstandingly well in a range of music from different historical periods.

In addition, the school's Cathedral choristers frequently participate, as part of the Cathedral Choir, in BBC broadcasts, give regular concerts especially at St David's International Concert Hall, and annually perform at important charitable occasions as well as fulfilling a vital community, religious, civic and national function.

The school has provided several undergraduate choral scholar candidates for the world famous choirs at Magdalen College, Oxford and King's College, Cambridge.

Pupils also take part in a good range of instrumental ensembles, including the excellent college orchestra. The orchestra, which comprises some 35 pupils and two specialist instrumental staff, achieves extremely high standards of performance with the strings section playing particularly accurately and sensitively.

102 In addition to these outstanding features, the good features of the school's provision include:

- a good balance of activities in the nursery, giving children experiences across all learning areas;
- a curriculum that meets the needs and aspirations of nearly all pupils and students particularly well;
- learning experiences that enable pupils and students to achieve very high standards of attainment in external examinations and, almost without exception, proceed to higher education institutions;
- the arrangements for pupils to choose GCSE courses, which require pupils to study a broad core of compulsory subjects but allow a free choice of other subjects;
- well-planned and detailed schemes of work that ensure pupils progress smoothly as they move from one key stage to another;
- a range of extra-curricular activities, provided on a whole-school basis and within subject areas, that extend pupils' and students' academic, sporting, social, and cultural interests and skills;

- strong partnerships with the local community, including sixth-form students' voluntary work in Nazareth House and the valued support for the local shelter for the homeless;
- well-integrated arrangements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of infant and junior pupils;
- form periods in key stage 3, and a programme of visiting speakers in key stage 4, that contribute well to older pupils' personal and social education;
- valuable opportunities for Year 11 pupils and sixth-form students to consider possible careers and undertake and evaluate work experience;
- positive promotion of the national identity of the school within Wales and an introduction to the Welsh language, for example, pupils in Years 7 and 8 have begun to study the language this year;
- the increasing range of activities undertaken to develop pupils' awareness of sustainable development; and
- a wide range of projects to raise funds for charities and make pupils more aware of global citizenship issues, for example, through promoting Fairtrade.

103 Both boys and girls achieve considerable success in individual and team sports competitions. A number of pupils gain representative honours at the highest level.

104 There are some shortcomings. These include:

- the over-emphasis, in the reception class, on literacy and mathematics at the expense of pupils' creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world;
- the limited opportunities for pupils and students to develop their entrepreneurial skills;
- the lack of planning for pupils to develop ICT skills across all curriculum areas; and
- in key stages 3 and 4, too little co-ordination of careers and personal and social education.

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

<b>Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings</b>
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- 105 In its self-evaluation report, the school judged this key question as Grade 2. Whilst broadly agreeing with the content of the school's report, the inspection team has awarded a lower grade because, despite the mainly good features of the school's provision, the school has not recognised the significance of its not meeting some of the regulatory requirements.
- 106 Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and understand that they are expected to behave well. They know and respect the school's rules and procedures to ensure their progress and well-being.
- 107 The good features of the school's provision are:
- the very good quality support given to pupils by teachers;
  - opportunities to reward pupils regularly for their achievements with praise, certificates and merit awards;
  - the involvement of pupils in setting up a school council that enables pupils to have a degree of influence on the life of the school;
  - effective systems for communication between parents and the school;
  - appropriate induction procedures for young children joining the nursery and reception classes and for new pupils joining Year 7;
  - the helpful careers advice and very good guidance and support sixth-form students receive when they apply to university;
  - the careful checks that the school makes to ensure the suitability of all staff and adults who work with the children;
  - the provision for pupils with additional learning needs, including the strong links with the Dyslexia Institute unit based at the school;
  - procedures for supporting, monitoring and reviewing the progress of pupils with special educational needs;
  - detailed lesson planning and teaching that takes careful account of individual pupils' needs;
  - the clear and effective arrangements that ensure a very low incidence of bullying and deal appropriately with any incidents that do occur;
  - the recognition and consideration for disability, diversity and equal opportunities that are firmly embedded throughout the school; and

- the good quality after-school care provided for young pupils.

108 The health and safety committee meets regularly and is very aware of its responsibilities. The school has carried out an appropriate fire risk assessment. Arrangements for first aid are clear and enough staff have been trained to administer first aid.

109 Despite this positive picture of the school's provision, there are some shortcomings. These are that:

- staff have not received training in child protection and are not clear enough about the school's procedures;
- the school does not record pupils' attendance well enough and follow up all unaccounted first day absences promptly;
- no teacher has overall responsibility for co-ordinating an appropriate support programme for pupils learning English as an additional language and some teachers need more guidance on supporting these pupils; and
- there are a small number of health and safety issues that have been reported to the school.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 110 In its self-evaluation report, the school judged this key question as Grade 1. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school.
- 111 The outstanding features of leadership and strategic management are:
- the clear vision and foresight in the strategies and planning for the development of the school;
  - the exceptional ethos and sense of purpose throughout the school and the firm commitment of the whole staff to shared values and goals;
  - the purposeful and very effective leadership of the head and senior leadership team that has set challenging and realistic goals to raise standards of achievement and the quality of provision;
  - the particularly effective liaison between the senior and junior sections of the school; and
  - the astute financial management and allocation of resources to meet the school's priorities.
- 112 As a consequence of these features, the school has developed significantly and made considerable progress, especially in:
- increasing in the number of pupils at the school;
  - improving accommodation and resources; and
  - enabling pupils and students to achieve high standards and outstanding external examination results.
- 113 The good features of leadership and strategic management are:
- the developing management structures and procedures that ensure effective liaison and cohesion between all sections of the school;
  - the effective communication of the school's expectations through well-devised policies and procedures and the work of curriculum development groups and subject co-ordinators' meetings;

- the good communication with parents about school matters and issues related to their children, especially through the school's increasingly informative website;
- the quality of work of middle managers who, in most cases, provide positive leadership and set a clear sense of direction;
- the clear line-management responsibilities and monitoring systems that have contributed to improvements in the work of most teachers;
- the openness and willingness to recognise those areas in which the school can improve its provision; and
- the effective self-evaluation and development planning processes that clearly identify long and medium term goals.

114 The trustees appropriately delegate responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school to the headteacher and senior leadership team. The trustees show great commitment to the school and support and oversee the school's work. They do this particularly well through ensuring prudent financial and strategic management to develop and upgrade accommodation and resources.

115 The school has explicit aims and values that promote equality for all. Mutual respect and tolerance are evident in all areas of the school's operations.

116 There are a few shortcomings in the quality of leadership and strategic management in that:

- department development plans do not always include a clear indication of expected outcomes and how the school will measure success;
- performance management procedures are not systematic and do not link closely enough to professional development; and
- trustees are not directly involved in monitoring the work of the school.

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

<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
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117 In its self-evaluation report, the school judged this key question as Grade 2. The inspection team agrees with the judgement made by the school.

118 The school has made good progress in implementing a self evaluation process. The management team at the school has been proactive in, for example, commissioning audits of the quality of the school's provision and financial management and has acted on the advice given in reports from previous inspections.

119 In addition to the school self-evaluation report, there are useful self-evaluation reports for each section of the school and subject area.

120 The good features of the school's self-evaluation are the extent to which:

- it seeks the views of trustees, parents, staff at all levels, associated religious organisations and other partners in the community and, to some extent, the pupils;
- it uses first-hand evidence gathered from staff and other interested parties;
- it is an open and honest document, which is generally accurate, detailed, covers the whole range of the school's work and identifies strengths and areas for development;
- the findings of the inspection team match the judgements of the school in five of the seven key questions;
- senior managers, subject co-ordinators and heads of department are well-informed about all aspects of the school's work;
- peer observation procedures identify some appropriate areas for whole-school and individual staff development;
- it is increasingly influencing the work of the school, for example, by identifying targets for inclusion in school and departmental development plans; and
- it has led to improvements to certain aspects of the school's provision, for example, in the more detailed information the school has provided for parents and pupils on the school's website.

121 The school commissioned an independent inspection in 1999. The school has made good progress in addressing recommendations in the report, and particularly in:

- implementing plans for extending the accommodation; and
- developing the management role of all those with academic, pastoral and whole-school responsibilities.

122 There are a few shortcomings in the self-evaluation process. For example:

- the school does not acquire enough first-hand information from observation of lessons about the standards pupils achieve; and
- although the trustees have discussed the self-evaluation report, they do not take enough part in evaluating the quality of provision.

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

### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 123 In its self-evaluation report, the school judged this key question as Grade 1. The inspection team did not agree with the judgement made by the school because the team did not agree with the school about those features that it had considered to be outstanding.
- 124 The good features of staffing are that the school:
- has enough well-qualified and experienced staff to teach at all levels in the school and allow small and appropriate class sizes;
  - makes very good use of subject specialist teachers in years 5 and 6; and
  - employs several support staff who assist the school to run effectively and smoothly.
- 125 Learning resources are generally of good quality and include:
- interactive whiteboards in many classrooms to support learning;
  - a good range of textbooks and reference books;
  - a well-stocked library for pupils in the junior school; and
  - access to external sports facilities to enhance the physical education programme.
- 126 The good features of the school's accommodation are:
- the pleasant setting and well-maintained grounds and premises;
  - the large new extension that has significantly improved the quality of accommodation;
  - the extensive new facilities for science, art, design and technology and key stage 2 pupils that support effective teaching and learning;
  - the spacious and well-equipped sports hall that enhances pupils' learning;
  - the recently acquired playing fields; and
  - the attractive displays, in many areas of the school, of pupils' work and achievements that create a good learning environment.



127 There are shortcomings in the quality of accommodation and resources because of the lack of:

- a suitable outside grass play area for Early Years children;
- suitable common room facilities for staff and sixth-form students;
- a canteen; and
- toilet facilities at the games field.

128 In addition to this:

- classrooms in the older part of the building are small;
- IT accommodation and resources are not good enough; and
- the senior library is under-developed.

129 The school manages its financial resources very well. The school continually reviews its financial position to ensure value for money.

130 The good features of the school's financial management are that:

- the headteacher and bursar manage all aspects of the school's business astutely, planning prudently for future development through careful and accurate budgeting;
- spending priorities, including the recently approved buildings development programme, relate directly to clear criteria that reflect the school's overall objectives;
- the school allocates resources appropriately to ensure that all staff who request appropriate training receive it;
- departmental budgets ensure that there are generally good learning resources;
- considerable investment has improved the quality of accommodation and resources in line with the school's priorities for development; and
- the trustees scrutinise the school's financial affairs closely and effectively.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Under 5s

Language literacy and communication	Grade 1
Personal and social development	Grade 1
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge & understanding of the world	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2

### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

131 In both the nursery and reception classes, most children exceed the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning by the time they are five years of age in the learning areas of language, literacy and communication, and personal and social development.

#### Outstanding features

132 The outstanding features are that most children:

- listen attentively and speak very well;
- behave well, are polite, confident and independent; and
- work well either alone or in couples on set tasks.

133 A few children from the reception class and from the nursery class:

- read and comprehend books from the reading scheme; and
- freely write their own news.

134 Most children in the nursery class achieve good standards in mathematical development. The children count to 10 well in both English and Welsh.

135 Most children in reception have an appreciation of numbers up to and beyond 10. These children understand the sequence of numbers and can add one to and subtract one from a given number.

#### Good features

136 In all areas of learning, children under five have achieved many of the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five years old. For example, almost all children:

- know many sounds and recognise the letters associated with the sound;

- enjoy and handle books well and get pleasure from stories;
- recount and sequence events correctly;
- know a range of number rhymes;
- sort and count objects correctly to 10 and copy patterns accurately;
- identify which is more, longer or shorter;
- follow instructions well and convey short messages correctly;
- know about families and who their family members are;
- talk about the weather and places;
- are active and walk, run, climb and move with confidence;
- handle correctly small tools and equipment such as scissors, pencils and paintbrushes to achieve the results they want; and
- are beginning to express their ideas and explain how to carry out particular activities.

137 Most children can write their own names correctly and some can recognise and write the names of other children.

<b>English</b>
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**Key stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

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

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

**Sixth form - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**Outstanding features**

138 In the sixth form, students:

- sustain discussion, advocate and justify points of view with an excellent command of vocabulary;
- produce high quality analytical writing using syntax accurately; and
- demonstrate a deep knowledge and understanding of many texts.

### **Good features**

139 In key stages 1 and 2, most pupils:

- speak clearly and confidently in lessons, using an appropriate range of vocabulary, and contribute well to discussions asking relevant questions to clarify their understanding;
- listen carefully to questions and instructions, are interested in other pupils' views and opinions and respond effectively to them;
- progress well in using a range of methods and strategies to help them read, including letter sounds, word recognition and picture and contextual cues;
- improve their reading fluency and accuracy and can explain clearly how to find information, for example, older pupils can scan texts for key words; and
- progress quickly to write independently and develop well in using sentence structure and grammar.

140 In key stage 2, most pupils write capably about imaginary and factual events, use punctuation accurately, spell most words correctly and write neatly.

141 In key stages 3 and 4, most pupils:

- listen purposefully to opinions and explanations, and respond confidently to questions;
- speak clearly, contribute well to discussions using a wide vocabulary, and justify their opinions by reference to texts;
- read accurately, fluently and with good expression;
- understand and identify with characters, which helps them respond well to issues and themes from a wide range of texts; and
- write well in a range of forms, knowing how the purpose and audience influence their writing.

142 In key stage 4 and in the sixth form, most pupils and students have a thorough knowledge of language and can understand and interpret imagery in depth.

### **Shortcomings**

143 In key stage 1, older pupils' do not develop the ability to write extended pieces. Across the key stage, some pupils do not form letters that are regular and consistent in size.

- 144 In key stage 2, a minority of pupils do not take enough responsibility for checking their work for errors, such as spelling mistakes, or to ensure that the structure of their writing meets the requirements of the task.

### **Welsh second language**

**Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

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

#### **Good features**

- 145 In key stages 1 and 2, most pupils:

- achieve good standards, especially in the skills of speaking and listening;
- develop the skills of reading and writing well as they progress through the school;
- know and confidently use vocabulary relating to colours, numbers, days and months;
- ask and respond appropriately to simple questions about themselves, where they live and the weather; and
- complete tasks of a good standard appropriate to their age and ability.

- 146 In years 7 and 8, pupils:

- ask questions confidently, and give good short spoken answers to questions with good pronunciation and accent;
- understand the spoken language used by the teacher;
- know basic items of vocabulary and the language related to the topics studied; and
- in some cases, write good short pieces.

#### **Shortcomings**

- 147 In key stage 3, pupils:

- have a limited range of vocabulary;
- have not yet developed a sound knowledge of an appropriate range of structures; and
- do not produce enough extended writing.

## Mathematics

**Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**Key Stage 3 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

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

**Sixth Form - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### Outstanding features

148 In key stages 2 and 3, and in the sixth form, pupils and students learn mathematical skills and techniques very quickly.

149 Most pupils in key stage 2 achieve very high standards across a wide range of mathematics with many achieving particularly well in work in algebra and number.

150 Many pupils in key stage 3:

- have a very good understanding of the key principles that relate to skills and techniques; and
- display very good knowledge of mathematical vocabulary and use it well to explain their work, justify their ideas and describe approaches to problems.

151 In the sixth form, most students:

- recall very well work from a wide range of topics in pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics; and
- make very good progress in acquiring relevant knowledge, skills and understanding, and use these very well to solve problems, especially those from past examination papers.

### Good features

152 In key stages 1, 2, 3 and 4, most pupils:

- recall well knowledge and skills learned in previous lessons;
- make good progress in work in number, algebra, shape and space and data handling; and
- understand place value and use numbers confidently in written and mental calculations.

- 153 In key stages 1, 2 and 4, pupils use mathematical vocabulary well and share ideas confidently with others.
- 154 Key stage 4 pupils generally make very good progress in gaining the knowledge, skills and techniques needed for the GCSE examination.
- 155 The majority of pupils in key stage 4 have a sound understanding of the key ideas associated with this work.
- 156 In the sixth form, students:
- have well-developed skills in algebra and calculus and use these skills effectively in various contexts; and
  - reflect thoughtfully when they make mistakes in order to review and improve approaches to solving problems.

### **Shortcomings**

- 157 In key stage 3, a few pupils cannot explain some of the techniques they use regularly in their work.
- 158 In key stage 4, a significant minority of pupils do not understand enough about the key ideas that underpin techniques and many are not aware enough of the links between mathematics topics.
- 159 In the sixth form, students do not develop enough the ability to investigate or research aspects of the work for themselves.

<b>Science</b>
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**Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**Key Stage 3 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

- 160 In key stage 2, older pupils:
- complete work of a very high standard and show very good knowledge and understanding of scientific principles; and
  - plan and design their own investigations and explain the need for fair testing and multiple testing to improve reliability.

161 In key stage 3, almost all pupils;

- show great strength in scientific reasoning and weighing experimental evidence;
- demonstrate high levels of understanding when completing project work;
- apply their knowledge effectively in a wide range of new contexts; and
- make very good progress throughout the key stage.

### **Good features**

162 In both key stages 1 and 2, pupils:

- develop effective scientific enquiry and investigative skills;
- understand the concept of fair testing and are able to make reasoned predictions;
- develop good observational skills and use their senses well to explore and recognise differences and similarities in a range of materials;
- understand the concept of healthy lifestyles and the importance of exercise and can suggest ways of improving diets; and
- have good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of biological and physical science, for example, they:
  - understand basic life processes;
  - can explain certain physical processes; and
  - are able to distinguish between the properties of different materials.

163 In key stage 3, most pupils:

- have good knowledge of a large number of concepts, for example, aspects of light and sound and the periodic table;
- follow instructions accurately and carry out practical work carefully;
- predict outcomes of experiments accurately; and
- use basic scientific terminology with confidence.



## Biology

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

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

**Sixth form - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

164 In the sixth form, nearly all students:

- display a very strong command of biological vocabulary;
- give very accurate and detailed responses to a wide range of past paper examination questions that link a number of biological processes; and
- can extract and use information from a variety of sources with accuracy and maturity.

### **Good features**

165 In key stages 3 and 4, nearly all pupils:

- plan and carry out investigations successfully, taking appropriate account of the need for fair testing, accurate results and repeat readings; and
- use biological terminology accurately and appropriately.

166 In key stage 3, most pupils:

- recall previous learning well;
- have a good understanding of biological facts such as the levels of organisation in living things and the manner in which they interact; and
- apply their knowledge well in a range of different areas such as explaining the function of the major human organ systems.

167 In key stage 4, most pupils can:

- provide detailed explanations of biological processes, describing clearly relevant sequential steps;
- provide detailed accounts of biological structures; and
- explain cause and effect relationships, such as the cause and symptoms of genetic diseases.

168 In the sixth form, nearly all students:

- describe clearly detailed physiological and biochemical processes, for example, in the functioning of the nerve; and
- show good understanding of systems such as the stages of the nitrogen cycle.

### **Shortcomings**

169 In key stages 3 and 4, a small minority of pupils do not:

- develop more extended responses to questions; and
- define key terms accurately.

170 In key stage 4, a minority of pupils do not plan an experiment appropriately because they do not understand the purpose of the process.

171 In the sixth form, a few students do not deepen their understanding through discussion and the sharing of ideas.

## **Chemistry**

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

**Sixth form - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

172 In the sixth form, nearly all students:

- carry out chemical analysis experiments with great care and precision;
- apply a wide range of knowledge of the chemistry of inorganic compounds, when identifying unknown substances; and
- draw on their understanding of a wide range of topics to answer A level questions with a high degree of accuracy.

### **Good features**

173 In key stage 4 and in the sixth form, most pupils and students:

- handle data from practical work well and carry out the necessary calculations successfully;
- use increasingly more complex chemical terminology with confidence and maturity; and

- make significant progress, within lessons and over longer periods of time.

174 In key stage 4, many pupils:

- carry out investigations very thoroughly and precisely;
- apply their knowledge to new areas of work;
- explain clearly chemical concepts, such as rates of reactions, and predict the effects of changes of temperature on the speed of a reaction;
- understand how error occurs during practical work and plan accordingly to eliminate such errors; and
- use their knowledge and understanding, for example, of the formation of ions and resulting ionic chemical bonding, to answer GCSE examination questions in detail.

175 In the sixth form, most students:

- understand the mechanisms of reactions in organic chemistry;
- can build up complex ideas from first principles;
- define and explain the different formulae and structures of organic molecules; and
- are beginning to understand how to measure the acidity of solutions.

### **Shortcomings**

176 In key stage 4, a minority of pupils:

- are unclear as to how to balance chemical equations; and
- do not use measuring equipment accurately during practical work.

<b>Physics</b>
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**Key Stage 4 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**Sixth form - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

177 In key stage 4 and the sixth form, nearly all pupils and students:

- analyse past paper examination questions very precisely and use their detailed knowledge and understanding to give accurate and well constructed answers; and

- carry out complex investigations with great precision and thoroughly evaluate procedures and results in order to refine skills.

178 In key stage 4, nearly all lower ability pupils can describe the structure of the solar system in detail and use physics terminology with great fluency.

### **Good features**

179 In key stage 4 and the sixth form, most pupils and students use:

- appropriate physics terminology well; and
- physical units accurately and consistently.

180 In key stage 4, many pupils:

- understand similarities and differences between physical phenomena such as different forms of wave motion;
- calculate energy changes and explain the relationship between different forms of energy and work;
- extract and use quite complex information from data tables; and
- produce balanced and reasoned arguments on the social implications of scientific developments, such as nuclear energy.

181 In the sixth form, most students:

- explain in detail, and apply their knowledge of, a wide range of concepts such as radioactive decay and half life;
- derive complex formulae from first principles; and
- demonstrate good knowledge and applications of physics laws and rules.

## Information technology

**Key Stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

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

**Key stage 4 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

182 In key stage 4, almost all pupils:

- access the network and load and use a broad range of computer software with confidence and skill;
- work effectively independently, when selecting and using the most appropriate software for a particular task; and
- have a very clear knowledge and understanding of business processes and principles.

### **Good features**

183 In key stage 2, pupils:

- use the computer keyboard and mouse confidently and effectively through a range of programs;
- are able to use applications such as word art skilfully;
- use the internet and CD-ROMs well to research, explore topics and retrieve information;
- manage emails effectively and file and retrieve work competently; and
- use a range of information and communications technology hardware and software confidently.

184 Some key stage 2 pupils display relatively advanced skills, for example, importing pictures and sound into PowerPoint programmes to create multimedia presentations.

185 In both key stages 3 and 4, most pupils:

- combine the most appropriate text and images confidently and competently;
- use correct information technology terms;
- create interesting and informative presentations using more complex facilities very well in presentation software;

- consider carefully the effect and impact of their work on an audience;
- identify the most efficient solutions to the problems that they are attempting to solve; and
- create databases independently and successfully search their data, using queries and sorts on two or more fields.

### **Shortcomings**

- 186 Key stage 3 pupils are not selective and discriminating enough, when importing information from the internet.

<b>Design and technology</b>
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**Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

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

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

**Sixth Form - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

### **Good features**

- 187 In key stage 1, most pupils:

- use tools such as scissors, glue and paint brushes competently; and
- construct a simple vehicle and use simple mechanisms such as wheels appropriately.

- 188 A few more able pupils create and construct innovative designs that include, for example, a windscreen.

- 189 In key stage 2, the majority of pupils:

- understand the concept of creating a design board and refining their ideas before making an item;
- describe some features of African art; and
- work from examples to create geometric designs for a clay pot effectively.

- 190 In key stage 3, the majority of pupils:

- understand and apply design processes well in their work;

- discuss their work confidently, justify their design decision and evaluate their solutions;
- use a range of graphical communication techniques, when presenting design ideas;
- know and understand the rules for working in the design technology workshop; and
- use tools effectively and have sound craft skills.

191 In key stage 3, lower ability pupils and those with additional learning needs make good progress.

192 In key stage 4, almost all pupils are able to:

- research and investigate their designs well, using a range of sources, including the internet;
- modify and refine their designs appropriately to match product specifications;
- use modelling skills to evaluate and develop design solutions;
- use computer aided design software well to produce complex and innovative designs;
- use a range of graphical communication techniques well, when presenting ideas;
- produce imaginative and creative graphics products;
- evaluate critically their finished outcome by testing against initial design specifications in order to identify improvements; and
- produce practical work of a good standard.

193 The majority of sixth-form students:

- have a clear understanding of the design process;
- have a good knowledge and understanding of three-dimensional design;
- apply good graphical communication skills, when using computer aided design software to develop well-structured design folders of a high standard; and
- have good theoretical understanding of materials and manufacturing processes.

## Shortcomings

194 Key stage 3 pupils do not always:

- use a broad enough range of sketches and annotations to explain design ideas; and
- make clear how they modified and developed their product to arrive at their final design solution.

195 In key stage 4 and the sixth form, pupils and students do not have a good understanding of control technology.

<b>Modern foreign languages</b>
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**Key Stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

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

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

**Sixth Form - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

### Good features

196 In key stages 2 and 3, pupils listen with concentration.

197 In key stage 2, pupils:

- recall a good range of basic vocabulary;
- understand simple spoken and written French; and
- recognise and answer accurately simple questions, for example, about their family or where they live.

198 In key stage 3, pupils:

- understand clearly what they hear and read in the foreign language;
- give good short spoken answers to questions;
- develop a good understanding of the grammar of the language; and
- write accurate sentences about topics and to practice structures.

199 By Year 9, some pupils produce good short written compositions.



200 In key stage 4, pupils extend and develop their knowledge and skills to do well in the GCSE examinations.

201 The more able linguists in key stage 4:

- speak well with a good accent;
- understand detail, when dealing with extended oral and written passages;
- write good letters or short essays; and
- achieve a good understanding of grammar.

202 In the sixth form, many students:

- speak with increasing fluency, often with a very good accent and pronunciation;
- understand difficult written passages, and develop the ability to absorb the language that they encounter in order to reuse it later;
- develop extensive grammatical knowledge; and
- find ways of working out the meaning of difficult texts by, for example, inferring meaning from other words or languages.

203 By Year 13, these students write increasingly fluent and accurate essays.

### **Shortcomings**

204 In key stages 2, 3 and 4, some pupils do not:

- extend spoken answers enough; or
- learn basic rules of pronunciation well enough to pronounce common words correctly.

205 In key stages 3 and 4, pupils do not write at length often enough. They:

- do not always understand enough detail in what they hear;
- do not learn to reuse or adapt language that they read or hear; and
- sometimes make basic errors, when writing.

206 In the sixth form, some students:

- do not cope well with spontaneous spoken language and are reluctant or unable to talk at length; and
- make some basic grammatical errors in essays.

## Geography

**Key Stage 1 - Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 3 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

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

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

### **Outstanding features**

207 Most pupils in key stage 3:

- have a very well-developed and in-depth knowledge and understanding of a broad range of geographical patterns and processes; and
- provide very detailed and accurate explanations of how human and physical features were formed and, where appropriate, set out well-supported opinions and conclusions.

### **Good features**

208 Key stage 1 pupils:

- develop an awareness of weather and appreciate some of the problems that the weather can cause;
- understand the concept of plans and maps and how to locate a place on a map;
- know about different places and describe some features of town and country in simple terms; and
- know the location of their homes and the school.

209 Key stage 2 pupils:

- have a good knowledge of the major physical and human features in both the local area and further afield;
- know about weather conditions and some of the effects they can have on people and the landscape;
- locate places accurately on a map and interpret maps well to help understand an area or environment;

- know how different features of the environment, such as rivers, oceans, deserts, forests and coastlines develop and change; and
- record and interpret their findings appropriately in writing, pictorial and graphical forms.

210 Key stage 3 and 4 pupils and sixth-form students:

- recall geographical terms and the content of completed work quickly and correctly;
- have a secure knowledge and understanding of the locations and features of the places studied;
- understand how places change and how people affect the environment;
- acquire and use a suitable range of geographical skills and techniques, including ordnance survey mapping skills;
- describe physical and human features accurately and understand how they were formed;
- use geographical information well to help analyse geographical patterns and processes; and
- have a firm understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship.

211 Key stage 4 pupils and sixth-form students:

- conduct well-organised and detailed fieldwork investigations that collect, analyse and present information effectively; and
- relate the findings from their investigations appropriately to geographical theories and ideas.

### **Shortcomings**

- 212 Key stage 1 pupils do not transfer their knowledge from one situation to another. For example, they describe movement around a plan or sketch map but cannot give clear directions around the school.
- 213 Key stage 3 and 4 pupils and sixth form students do not develop appropriate enquiry skills.
- 214 A few pupils in key stage 3 do not have a clear enough understanding of some geographical processes.

## History

**Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**Key Stage 3 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**Key Stage 4 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**Sixth Form - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

215 Older pupils in key stage 2 ask questions that show depth in their understanding and a desire to know more.

216 In key stages 3, 4 and the sixth form, pupils and students are making very good progress in acquiring essential historical skills. Pupils and students:

- have a detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of key events, personalities and issues and apply this very well to questions and investigations;
- analyse and evaluate very effectively a range of sources, identifying key messages and making accurate judgements about reliability and utility;
- display a well-developed appreciation of the different ways in which people interpret historical issues and events; and
- communicate historical facts, theories and ideas very well in a variety of formats.

217 Most key stage 4 pupils and sixth-form students:

- present arguments in a logical, reasoned and well-structured manner; and
- use their knowledge and understanding of the period to construct high level responses to examination questions.

218 In the sixth form:

- students synthesise information across a range of themes, to analyse trends and movements over a period of time; and
- most students have a very secure appreciation of the nature and significance of historical interpretations, recognising and explaining why interpretations may change over time.

## **Good features**

219 In key stage 1, pupils:

- have a firm sense of the past and appreciate that it is different from the present; and
- use pictures and photographs well to identify significant differences between life today and in the past.

220 Most key stage 1 pupils record their ideas and interpretations well.

221 In key stage 2, most pupils:

- display wide, general historical knowledge;
- are well-informed about previous topics;
- identify key people from history and explain very clearly why they were important; and
- examine evidence carefully and make useful judgements on both primary and secondary sources.

222 In key stages 3, 4 and the sixth form, pupils and students:

- have a good chronological awareness and appreciation of the nature of change over time;
- demonstrate a good understanding of motivation and causation; and
- make reasoned judgements about issues and events based on an understanding of the period.

223 The more able of these pupils draw clear links with earlier learning and recognise factors that contribute to historical developments

<b>Art</b>
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**Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

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

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

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

**Outstanding features**

224 In key stage 2, most pupils:

- interpret the style of specific art movements, such as pointillism, and describe very well the technique used by the artists;
- express their views about the work of other artists very well; and
- evaluate each other's work perceptively and make constructive suggestions about how to improve.

**Good features**

225 In all key stages, and in the sixth form, pupils and students:

- work with confidence, using a range of media;
- record images effectively from direct observation, particularly of natural forms;
- mix and apply colours effectively; and
- are aware of particular methods and techniques of other artists from different cultures.

226 In key stages 3 and 4, pupils:

- develop shapes and forms as designs for work in other two-dimensional and three-dimensional media;
- make creative use of lettering within graphic design projects; and
- use key art vocabulary well, when discussing and evaluating their work.

227 In key stage 4, pupils:

- make well-considered annotations on work sheets and in sketchbooks;

- experiment with a wide range of materials and media, including the creative use of ICT to manipulate images and research the work of other artists; and
- make use of the local environment as a stimulus to develop their investigations.

228 In the sixth form, students:

- enhance their work through their well-developed knowledge and understanding of the methods and techniques of other artists, including Welsh artists;
- present their work well, ensuring that their ideas are communicated effectively; and
- provide constructive oral evaluations of their work.

## **Music**

**Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**Key Stage 3 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**Key Stage 4 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**Sixth Form - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

229 In key stage 2, most Year 6 pupils:

- keep a regular pulse accurately and improvise musically interesting rhythms in groups and individually;
- create, through improvisation on electronic keyboards, convincing and varied melodies based on a simple repeated pattern; and
- appraise accurately and sensitively their own compositions and others by contemporary composers such as Steve Reich and Karlheinz Stockhausen.

230 In key stage 3, most Year 9 pupils read and perform accurately and sensitively music that they have not seen previously. A few pupils in Year 9 achieve excellent standards of instrumental performance.

231 In key stage 4, most pupils:

- perform on musical instruments to an excellent standard;

- use ICT applications to compose musically interesting pieces in a range of styles; and
- appraise a range of music in different styles very accurately by, for example, listening carefully to discern subtle details in music.

232 In the sixth form, all students:

- achieve very high standards in performance as soloists and in ensemble playing; and
- demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding of technical and expressive aspects of a wide range of music, as well as those pieces set in the syllabus.

233 An outstanding feature in most classes, in key stage 2 and above, is the very good standard which most pupils achieve in incidental singing, which they use effectively to extend their general musicianship.

### **Good features**

234 In key stage 1, most pupils:

- identify a rising or falling scale accurately;
- clap and play instruments in time to a steady beat and sustain the rhythm well;
- use appropriate dynamics to improve their playing; and
- sing well and in tune.

235 In key stage 2, pupils' standards of composing, playing and appraising are good.

236 Most key stage 2 pupils:

- have good rhythm skills; and
- appraise excerpts of recorded music well and identify significant features appropriately.

237 All pupils in Year 4 make good progress in weekly group lessons with specialist teachers in violin, recorder and percussion.

238 In keys stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form, most pupils:

- achieve at least good standards in singing and playing musical instruments;
- compose interesting and varied pieces of music; and
- listen attentively and focus their listening well on the elements of music.



<b>Physical education</b>
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**Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

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

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

**Sixth Form - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Good features**

239 In all key stages, pupils:

- of all ages work well on their own, and are particularly good at helping and supporting each other in pairs, small groups and teams;
- know and understand the short and longer term effects and benefits of exercise on the body, and can describe how exercise and fitness are essential to a healthy lifestyle;
- remember clearly what they have learned previously and make good progress during lessons and throughout their time in the school; and
- sustain practice effectively to improve their performance.

240 In key stage 1, all pupils:

- acquire and refine new throwing, catching and striking skills;
- follow the rules of simple games well; and
- work effectively to improve their balance skills.

241 Most pupils in key stage 1 swim well and the most able demonstrate a range of strokes and good breathing technique.

242 In key stage 2, many pupils:

- understand the importance of warming up, stretching and cooling down properly;
- understand and are careful to obey safety rules and procedures in athletics activities; and
- identify what constitutes good quality in performances that they observe.

243 In key stage 3, many pupils:

- lead their peers in warm-up and stretching exercises that are appropriate to the activity;
- plan thoughtfully before and during performance with an understanding of the technical demands of both games and athletics activities;
- understand and perform effectively the correct way to throw a ball, adapted javelin, discus or shot in order to achieve good flight, distance and direction;
- are able to catch a cricket ball thrown to them at different speeds and over different distances, and direct a ball into a space away from a fielder; and
- coach their peers skilfully, identifying and describing accurately what they should do to improve performance.

244 Key stage 4 pupils:

- know how to devise a relevant, safe and effective personal fitness programme, and work hard to improve their fitness levels; and
- understand the different competition rules for both a ladder and a knock-out tournament in badminton and squash.

245 In GCSE examination classes, pupils use ICT very well to research, produce and present project work of a high quality.

246 More able pupils in key stages 3 and 4 transfer their skills from practice to a competition very effectively.

247 Sixth-form AS level students:

- analyse, present and discuss issues relating to the place of sport in society well; and
- display a sound understanding of the concepts involved in exercise physiology.

### **Shortcomings**

248 A minority of less able pupils has some difficulty in performing skills under the pressure of a game or a competition.

<b>Religious education and religious studies</b>
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**Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

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

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

**Sixth Form - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Good features**

249 In key stages 1 and 2, most pupils:

- know the teachings and beliefs of the Catholic tradition of Christianity;
- are very familiar with the life and actions of Jesus and Mary;
- have a secure knowledge of the use of symbols in the Christian church and use religious terms correctly; and
- develop a clear personal sense of morality in relation to themselves and others.

250 In key stage 3 and key stage 4 GCSE examination classes, pupils:

- understand and explain fully the distinctive features of a Catholic Christian community and how its members worship and celebrate their faith;
- appreciate the relevance of key Christian teachings and apply them to present day situations and circumstances;
- expand their knowledge of religious terms and symbols; and
- relate moral and religious issues very well to their own lives.

251 In key stage 4, pupils in GCSE examination classes show an increasing awareness and understanding of how Catholic principles influence action and lifestyle.

252 Sixth-form AS level students:

- develop a secure knowledge and understanding of Buddhist origin and traditions and have a clear insight into the way this belief influences people's lifestyle and actions;
- analyse and evaluate religious and philosophical concepts with increasing confidence and effectiveness; and

- have a good command of religious vocabulary and use key terms and language effectively orally and in writing.

### **Shortcomings**

- 253 In key stages 1 and 2, pupils do not know enough about the beliefs and practices of people outside the Catholic Church.
- 254 In key stages 1, 2 and 3, many pupils do not reflect well enough, when exploring their own response to religious belief and practice.
- 255 In the sixth form, a small number of students do not evaluate religious issues critically.

<b>Economics</b>
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### **Key Stage 4 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Sixth form - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

#### **Outstanding features**

- 256 Key stage 4 pupils and sixth-form students:
- have a very detailed and comprehensive understanding of key economic theories and concepts, for example, the concept of elasticity;
  - apply their knowledge and understanding very effectively to a wide range of case studies, for example, when studying the impact of foreign aid and investment on economic development; and
  - provide thorough, well-considered and high-level explanations of economic concepts and issues.

#### **Good features**

- 257 Key stage 4 pupils and sixth-form students use:
- economic terms confidently and appropriately; and
  - economic data accurately and precisely to support their work.

<b>Latin</b>
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**Key Stage 3 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 4 - Grade 1: Good with some outstanding features**

**Sixth Form - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Outstanding features**

258 In key stage 4, most pupils have a very good understanding of short texts that contain complex sentences, and translate these accurately into English to convey nuance as well as meaning.

**Good features**

259 In key stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form, many pupils and students use their prior knowledge, and apply analytical skills, effectively to deduce the meaning of complex sentences.

260 In key stage 3, many pupils:

- understand the meaning of a good range of Latin words and, in many cases, the relationship of these words to other languages, such as English, French and Spanish;
- translate Latin sentences accurately;
- adopt the appropriate ending to nouns to show the role of the word in the sentence; and
- use the correct word order when constructing simple Latin sentences.

261 A few older key stage 3 pupils compose original stories in Latin.

262 In key stage 4, most pupils:

- understand very well the different parts of verbs and the grouping of verbs; and
- understand and translate present, perfect and imperfect tenses accurately to convey their various meaning.

263 Sixth-form students:

- translate classical Latin texts, such as Virgil, accurately into good English;
- understand how classical authors choose words, construct sentences and order paragraphs to engage the reader; and
- have a good understanding of the historical and political background to the texts they study.

## **School's response to the inspection**

The trustees, headteacher, senior leadership team, teachers and support staff warmly welcome the report of the Estyn inspection team. The report clearly articulates all that has been achieved since our last inspection. This much-valued exercise was approached in a most positive and constructive manner by our staff, trustees, parents and pupils.

The inspection team recognised that we had correctly identified the exceptional quality of the wide-ranging strengths in so many areas of our work, in particular the quality of the achievements of our pupils, staff and leaders, and the excellence of our curriculum provision of which the ultimate outcome is our superb record in public examination results. The exceptional quality of the school's ethos and shared values, reflected in the unity of purpose amongst all of our staff, and especially the manner in which pupils conduct themselves, were subjects of particular comment.

Areas for further development already identified by the school, and receiving current attention in the Development Plan, were also confirmed, and the developmental approach adopted by the school was recognised as appropriate. Future development planning will continue to reflect these priorities and will include sharing best practice ever more widely. Staff and trustees have already addressed a small number of identified health and safety issues.

The care and support systems we have in place and which underpin our curricular provision were recognised as highly effective. In addition, every member of the teaching, support, administrative, visiting peripatetic and temporary staff, cleaning and maintenance staff as well as the trustees of the school has a recorded full written Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Clearance. In this, we adopt a rigorous approach and the Head of Pastoral Care is the College's named officer under the terms of our Child Protection Policy, which covers the lives of our children outside and inside school. Before the inspection, the College had been in negotiation with the Children's Commissioner's Office and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) for a substantial period and, as a result, appropriate training was implemented within three days of the completion of the inspection. Further ongoing training is now broadening out to other staff.

We would like to congratulate all concerned on the excellence of the inspection team's findings: staff, pupils, parents, all our support staff and those responsible for the school's strategic leadership and long term exceptional achievement and development.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	St John's College
School type	Independent
Age-range of pupils	3-18
Address of school	College Green Old St. Mellons Cardiff
Postcode	CF3 5YX
Telephone number	02920 778936

Headteacher	Dr David Neville
Date of appointment	September 1987
Chair of trustees	Mr John Charles Rees QC
Lead inspector	John F Thomas HMI
Dates of inspection	8-12 May 2006

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	8.6	14	16	17	23	22	20	42	163

Number of pupils in each year group								
Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	59	52	38	69	45	35	37	335

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	32	25	46.7

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	10.6 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	5 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	n/a
Average primary class size, excluding nursery and special classes	19.1
Average secondary teaching group size (Years 7 – 11)	14.0
Average secondary teaching group size (Sixth form)	12.0
Teacher (fte): class ratio in infant section	1 : 1
Overall contact ratio (percentage) in key stages 2, 3 and 4 and the sixth form	72%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Y1-Y6
Term 1	90	94	94
Term 2	86	97	96
Term 3	97.5	93	96



Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Spring 2005	96	96.5	92.5	91	92.5	96	95.5	94.3
Summer 2005	95.5	95	86	86.5	77.5	97	95	90.4
Autumn 2005	91.8	96.5	96.5	92	88.5	96.5	95	93.8

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0
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## Appendix 3

### Public Examination Results:

#### For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ

Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2005	50
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	65

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2005:	School	Cardiff Unitary Authority	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	98	86	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	98	50	52
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	98	83	85
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	90	36	38
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	100	97	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	100	73	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	100	92	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	0	8	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	3	3

<b>For pupils aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>	
Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2005	31
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2005	30
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2005	1

	School	Cardiff Unitary Authority	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	100	67	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	100	93	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	32	21	20

## Appendix 4

### **Evidence base of the inspection**

Twenty one inspectors, including a peer assessor and the school nominee, spent a total of 65 inspector days at the school.

These inspectors visited:

- 243 lessons or part lessons; and
- a cross-section of assemblies, acts of collective worship, tutorial sessions and extra-curricular activities.

Members of the team had meetings with:

- the headteacher, trustees, parents and staff before the week of the inspection;
- members of the senior leadership team and a wide range of teachers, technical, medical and support staff; and
- groups of pupils and students representing each key stage.

The team also considered:

- documents provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation reports;
- a selection of pupils' work from across the age and ability range;
- 69 responses to a parental questionnaire; and
- several letters from parents of pupils or former pupils, and from organisations with which the school has links.

The inspection team held post-inspection meetings with staff, the senior leadership team and the trustees.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
John Thomas HMI Lead Inspector	Secondary phase co-ordinator Key Question 5 History
Rosemary Lait HMI	Primary phase coordinator Key Question 4 Art, Design & technology, history, music and physical education
Steffan James HMI	Key Question 1 Modern foreign languages and Welsh second language
Brenda Meredith HMI	Key Question 2 Early years, geography and information technology
Martin Holmes Additional Inspector	Key Question 3 Chemistry and physics
Terry Williams Additional Inspector	Key Question 6 Mathematics, science and Welsh second language
Colin Rees Additional Inspector	Key Question 7 English
Nerys Cossey Additional Inspector	Religious education and religious studies
Pru Davis-James HMI	Physical education Key Question 4
Margaret Griffith-Williams Additional Inspector	Design and technology
Keith Hopkins Additional Inspector	Information technology
Farrukh Khan HMI	English as an additional language Key Question 4
Penny Lewis HMI	Latin
Alan Lowndes HMI	Mathematics
Dr Mark Matthews Additional Inspector	Biology
Ray Owen HMI	Art
Robert Swain HMI	Music Key Question 4
Nigel Vaughan HMI	Geography and economics
Wendy Young HMI	English and religious education

Edwina Jones Headteacher, Ffynone House	Peer assessor
Bernard Neville Assistant Head	School nominee

### **Acknowledgement**

The inspection team express their thanks to the headteacher, trustees, staff and pupils of St John's College, Cardiff for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.