

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

A report on the quality of education in

**Builth Wells High School
College Road
Builth Wells
Powys
LD2 3BW**

School number: 6664020

Date of inspection: 18 January 2010

by

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

The inspection of Builth Wells High School took place between 18/01/10 and 21/01/10. An independent team of inspectors, led by William Gwyn Thomas undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

Estyn's reports follow its guidance for the writing and editing of reports, which is available on the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk). The table below explains the terms that Estyn uses to indicate quantities. The table is for guidance only.

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Nearly all | with very few exceptions |
| Most | 90% or more |
| Many | 70% or more |
| A majority | over 60% |
| Half/around half | close to 50% |
| A minority | below 40% |
| Few | below 20% |
| Very few | less than 10% |

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Builth Wells High School is an 11-18 mixed, designated bilingual school maintained by Powys Unitary Authority (UA). There are currently 681 pupils on roll with 127 in the sixth form, compared with 653 at the time of the last inspection in May 2004 when there were 133 students in the sixth form.
- 2 The school is situated in the small town of Builth Wells. The school serves a very large catchment area of mid-Powys. Pupils come from areas that are neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. The pupils come predominantly from rural backgrounds.
- 3 Five point four per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals (FSM). This figure is below the UA average (8.7%) and well below the national average (16.3%).
- 4 Pupils of all abilities are received by the school. There are 14 pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 87 have been identified as needing some support. The percentage of compulsory age pupils on the SEN register is 12.7% compared with the national average of 20.9%. No one is disapplied from the National Curriculum (NC). Five pupils are "looked after" by the local authority and one pupil is dual registered.
- 5 About 3% of the pupils come from homes where the predominant language spoken is Welsh but 15% speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard. Ninety-six per cent of pupils come from homes where English is the predominant language. Three pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language.
- 6 The headteacher was appointed to the post in May 2001 and the composition of the senior leadership team (SLT) includes a deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher. After reorganisation of the SLT in September 2009, two senior managers (curriculum and pastoral) were incorporated into the team.

The school's priorities and targets

- 7 The school's mission statement is "to enable everyone to develop and achieve their potential and to become a lifelong learner". The school's aims are set out clearly in the school handbook and prospectus. The school's priority is to enable pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to achieve their full potential - academically, socially and personally - within the context of a designated bilingual comprehensive school.
- 8 The school's improvement and development report (SIDR) for 2008-2011 identifies areas for development that meet both the school's and national needs. The school has prepared a plan for 2008-2011 which identifies priorities for improvement in six of Estyn's seven key questions. These include raising standards further in all key stages, teaching and learning, curricular developments, acquisition of skills, governor support and consolidating strategic management.
- 9 The school also sets numerical targets for success at the end of key stage (KS) 3 and KS4. In 2010, 85% of pupils should reach at least level 5 in teachers'

assessments in all core subjects combined at the end of KS3 (Welsh first language 85% / English 85%, mathematics 96% and science 95%).

Performance in external examinations at the end of KS4

10 In 2010, the following percentages of 15 year old pupils targeted to achieve are:

| | |
|---|-------|
| Level 1 threshold (a volume of qualifications at level 1 equivalent to five General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades A*-G) | 93.2% |
| Level 2 threshold (a volume of qualifications at level 2 equivalent to five GCSE grades A*-C) | 68.6% |
| Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics (a volume of qualifications at level 2 equivalent to five GCSE grades A*-C including English or Welsh first language and mathematics) | 53.1% |
| Core subject indicator (CSI) English/Welsh first language, science and mathematics combined | 54.2% |
| Leaving full-time education without a recognised qualification | 0% |
| Average wider points' score (AWPS) | 457 |

Performance in external examinations at the end of year (Y) 12/13

11 In 2010, the following percentage of 17 year old students targeted to achieve is:

| | |
|---|------|
| Level 3 threshold (a volume of qualifications at level 3 equivalent to 2 Advanced (A) level grades A-E) | 100% |
| AWPS | 940 |

Summary

12 Builth Wells High School is a good school which provides outstanding support and guidance to its pupils. The learning experiences provided by the school are also of outstanding quality. Under the leadership of the headteacher and her leadership team the school is well placed to develop further. The inspection team agrees with five of the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

Table of grades awarded

| Key Question | Inspection grade |
|--|------------------|
| 1 How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| 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? | 1 |
| 5 How effective are leadership and strategic management? | 3 |
| 6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards? | 3 |
| 7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources? | 2 |

Standards

- 13 Results in tests, statutory assessments and performance in external examinations are good overall. Based on prior attainment, pupils' attainment is above what was expected in KS3 but below in KS4. In 2009, pupils' attainment levels in KS3 are well above local and national averages in most indicators. The performance of pupils in external examinations in KS4 placed the school above the national averages in the majority of indicators. Sixth-form results are good, and outstanding in English and Welsh second language.

| Grades awarded in the six subjects inspected | KS3 | KS4 | Sixth form |
|---|------------|------------|-------------------|
| English | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Welsh second language | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Science | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Information technology | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| History | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Art and design | 2 | 2 | 2 |

- 14 Standards in science in KS3 and history and information technology in KS4 have good features outweighing shortcomings. Standards in English and Welsh second language in the sixth form are outstanding. Where a subject has been awarded a grade 2, standards are good with no important shortcomings.
- 15 The overall grades for the standards of achievement observed in the six subjects inspected are good, as shown in the grid below:

| 77 lessons | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 3% | 69% | 28% | 0% | 0% |

- 16 Standards of pupils' key skill of improving their own learning in KS3 and KS4 and information and communications technology (ICT) skills in KS4 have good features outweighing shortcomings. The standard of pupils' other key skills is good.
- 17 The standards of sixth-form students' ICT and application of number skills are good. The standard in all other key skills is outstanding.
- 18 The standard of learners' bilingual skills and their communication skills through the medium of Welsh is good.
- 19 Nearly all pupils with SEN make outstanding progress in relation to their ability.
- 20 The school is an orderly community where nearly all learners are courteous and most have positive attitudes towards their work. Students' behaviour is exemplary in the sixth form. Nearly all pupils behave responsibly in KS3 and KS4.
- 21 Attendance levels have improved lately through more rigorous and effective monitoring procedures. Nearly all pupils are punctual to lessons.
- 22 Standards in learners' personal and social development are good overall and outstanding in the sixth form. The standard in learners' cultural, moral and spiritual development is good.

The quality of education and training

- 23 Teaching is good overall. Some outstanding practice was observed. The quality of teaching in the six subjects inspected in depth and in the other lessons observed is below the national average (76% grades 1 and 2) as reported in the 2008/09 annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (HMCI). These grades are shown in the following table:

| 97 lessons | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Whole-school | 9% | 63% | 24% | 4% | 0% |

- 24 Working relationships between pupils and teachers are good and provide a positive climate for learning. The school's achievement system promotes good learning habits with most pupils.
- 25 In the majority of lessons, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to provide a variety of interesting and challenging learning experiences. The pace of learning is good, pupils are well supported and key skills are applied well. In a few lessons, teaching is not effective. Pupils have fewer opportunities to make good progress.
- 26 Pupils' progress is effectively identified and monitored. Most pupils are well informed of their expected and current achievement levels. The quality of the improvement targets and marking is variable. Not all pupils are clear on how to improve. In a majority of subjects, teachers involve pupils in self-assessment and peer-assessment processes.
- 27 School reports are informative and provide clear records of progress. Targets for improvement are sometimes not direct enough.
- 28 The school provides outstanding learning experiences for its learners. The school's curriculum satisfies legal requirements for pupils of statutory school age. It offers a wide range of subject options to its pupils in KS4 and to students in the sixth form, including several through collaboration. The curriculum is accessible to all.
- 29 An outstanding range of extra-curricular activities enriches learners' personal, social, and moral development. Many pupils benefit from the wide range of cultural activities.
- 30 There are very effective curricular links which help pupils with transition from primary to secondary education. Transition arrangements from KS2 to KS3 are outstanding.
- 31 The provision for learners' personal and social development is good overall and outstanding in the sixth form. The provision for learners' spiritual, moral, and cultural development is good.
- 32 Partnerships with local and international organisations are outstanding. Businesses provide work-experience opportunities and outside speakers enhance the social and moral development of pupils in the school. The Careers service contributes outstandingly to the options' process in Y9 and Y11. Links with parents are strong with a high turn-out at all parents' evenings.
- 33 The provision of work-related education is good overall.

- 34 The opportunities for all learners to use their bilingual skills in the school are good.
- 35 The school's contribution to the Healthy Schools' initiative is good. Fitness has a high priority. The school contributes effectively to the well-being of its pupils. Physical activities are well supported. The school is constantly raising awareness of sustainability and global citizenship issues. This is an outstanding feature.
- 36 The way in which the school takes account of employers' needs is good. Learners' entrepreneurial skills are good in KS3 and outstanding in KS4 and the sixth form.
- 37 The quality of care, support and guidance to all pupils by members of staff, including members of the SLT, non-teaching staff and support services, is outstanding.
- 38 Good support is provided for pupils with SEN. The quality of provision and management of SEN are strengths of the school. Strong effective links with the primary partner schools ensure early identification of pupils with learning difficulties.
- 39 The school ensures that it meets the needs of most of its pupils very well. Support for some pupils in mainstream classes is insufficient.
- 40 The school's provision for equal opportunities is outstanding. No discrimination or unpleasant behaviour is tolerated. The school council is an exceptional body and contributes very well to life within the school.
- 41 Child protection procedures are well embedded.

Leadership and management

- 42 The leadership qualities of the headteacher and her SLT are good. The team works very well together and it is having a positive impact in moving the school forward. However, the effectiveness of the team is constrained by a lack of time and too many administrative duties are being undertaken.
- 43 The links between the SLT and the departments it manages are strengthening. There is very good leadership by some middle leaders. With others, there is insufficient rigour in the monitoring process. The target-setting procedures at departmental, whole-school and pupil levels are developing.
- 44 The governing body's role as critical friend is good. Governors are linked effectively to departments.
- 45 There are good features in the process of self-evaluation at SLT level and in a majority of departments. However, in a number of departments, self evaluation reports lack clarity and are too descriptive. At present, support members of staff are not fully involved in the self-evaluation process.
- 46 The current SIDR identifies appropriate priorities for improvement. In a majority of departments, improvement plans have clear strategies and success criteria to raise standards. In other departments, plans do not have clear strategies to bring about improvement.
- 47 The school has an appropriate number of well-qualified staff to deliver all aspects of the curriculum and the associated administrative functions. The

management and deployment of teaching and support staff ensure the delivery of an efficient and effective teaching and learning programme.

- 48 Resources, including information technology across the school, are good. The accommodation provides a positive and stimulating environment for learning. The buildings and grounds are well maintained by the site managers.
- 49 Systems for the management and control of the budget are good. Staff development arrangements are well managed and make a significant contribution to improving the skills' levels of all staff.
- 50 The leadership of the headteacher and her SLT, the outstanding care and support for all pupils, the opportunities available through the extra-curricular programme and the effective management of resources ensure the school provides good value for money. The provision of sixth-form education is cost-effective.
- 51 The majority of key issues identified in the 2004 inspection report have been fully addressed. With others, work is in progress.

Recommendations

In order to achieve its objectives, the school should focus on the following priorities.

- *R1. Raise pupils' academic standards in KS4, especially in information technology and history. Continue to raise standards in science in KS3.
- *R2. Increase the management time of the SLT to enable members to:
- co-ordinate the whole-school initiatives of assessment for learning;
 - monitor rigorously and consistently the quality of the work of middle managers; and
 - share best practice to promote outstanding features across the curriculum.
- *R3. Develop the accountability of curriculum leaders in leading teams of staff, consistently monitoring and evaluating practice and planning for improvement.
- R4. Raise standards further by ensuring that assessment procedures are applied more consistently and effectively.
- R5. Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by addressing the inconsistencies currently in evidence within the school.

** The SIDR addresses several of these recommendations.*

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

52 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

KS3 and KS4

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 53 Results in teachers' assessments at the end of KS3 have been good in two of the last three years. In 2009, attainment had improved in all the core subjects and the CSI compared with the previous year. The school's results compare very well with those of similar schools in Wales. Nearly all the core subjects and the CSI were in the top quarter of results in comparison with those of similar schools in Wales.
- 54 Overall, attainment at KS3 was above what was expected in 2009, based on prior attainment, in the three core subjects individually and Welsh first language.
- 55 The percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or more in the CSI, Welsh first language, English, mathematics and science was above the local and national average in 2009. The school was below in some of these indicators compared with the family of nine schools.
- 56 Pupils' performance in external examinations in KS4 in 2009 in the majority of subjects is good. Results in these subjects compare well against local and national averages.
- 57 In comparison with 2008, the school's performance in several key indicators and in the core subject of science had declined in 2009. The decline in pupils' performance in science had a significant negative impact on the CSI, threshold level 1 and both threshold level 2 indicators in 2009. The school has performed well below the family averages in all key indicators in KS4.
- 58 The school's performance in 2009 resulted in:
- 93% of pupils achieving the level 1 threshold, above the national average;
 - 66% of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold, above the national average; and
 - 58% of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold including mathematics and English or Welsh first language, above the national average.
- 59 The school is placed in the top half of results for mathematics and Welsh first language, but in the bottom half for all other key indicators in comparison with those of similar schools in Wales.
- 60 About 23% of pupils gained the A*/A grades in the GCSE examinations in 2009 compared with the national average of 19.2%.
- 61 Attainment at KS4 in 2009 was below expectation, based on prior attainment at KS3.
- 62 In the end of KS3 assessments in 2009, in contrast to the national trends, boys outperformed girls in the CSI, mathematics and science. At KS4, girls outperformed boys in nearly all indicators.

Their progress in learning

63 Pupils' progress in nearly all lessons is good in KS3. Pupils' progress is not as good in KS4.

64 The following grades were awarded for standards of achievement at KS3 and KS4 in the 57 lessons observed in the six subjects inspected:

| | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| KS3 | 0% | 66% | 34% | 0% | 0% |
| KS4 | 0% | 55% | 45% | 0% | 0% |
| KS3+KS4 | 0% | 61% | 39% | 0% | 0% |

65 In 61% of the lessons, pupils achieve standards that have good features and no important shortcomings. All lessons have standards where good features outweigh shortcomings.

66 The inspection grades are below the grades awarded for standards in lessons for grades 1 and 2 (73%) in all secondary schools inspected in 2008/09. They are above the national 2010 "Vision into Action" target of 98% for standards to be graded 1, 2 or 3.

67 In KS3, standards in five of the subjects inspected have good features and no important shortcomings. Standards in science have good features outweighing shortcomings.

68 In KS4, standards are good in English, Welsh second language, science and art. Standards in history and information technology have good features outweighing shortcomings.

69 In KS3 and KS4, most key skills have standards which are at least good with no important shortcomings.

70 Many pupils have communication skills which are good in both languages and they listen well to their teachers. When given the opportunity, they use extended speech confidently. Reading skills are good and those with reading difficulties are supported. Written work is good, in terms of fluency and technical accuracy, relative to ability.

71 Pupils' bilingual skills are good. The Welsh language is used frequently throughout the school. Many pupils spoke to one another and to inspectors to good standards.

72 Nearly all pupils work well in pairs or larger groups. Standards during group activities are good and pupils are constantly on task.

73 Pupils' creative and problem-solving skills are good. There are high standards of work in design and technology and art. The quality of some of the work is outstanding. Good decision-making exercises of quality were observed in lessons.

74 Standards in the skill of improving one's own learning have good features outweighing shortcomings. Self-assessment processes are being developed. Many pupils in KS3 and KS4 understand what they are doing and how well they are progressing. However, they are unclear on what they need to do to improve and this is impacting on the standard of their work.

- 75 The standard of nearly all pupils' application of number skills is good. Nearly all pupils are confident in using number in a range of subjects across the curriculum.
- 76 The standard of all pupils' ICT skills is good in KS3. In KS4, good features outweigh shortcomings. Nearly all pupils use word-processing skills and simulation packages well in KS3.
- 77 All pupils with SEN make outstanding progress in relation to their ability. In KS3 and KS4, many pupils of low ability achieve well. However, some middle and lower ability boys do not achieve their potential.
- 78 In a few subjects in KS4, pupils make limited progress towards their targets.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

- 79 Nearly all pupils behave responsibly in KS3 and KS4. They are courteous, orderly and respectful and understand the high expectations which the school has of them in terms of their behaviour and attitudes.
- 80 The school is an orderly, caring and an inclusive community. During the last academic year, eight pupils were temporarily excluded, but no one permanently.
- 81 The attendance level for the three complete terms prior to the inspection was 91.2%. This is slightly above the all-Wales figure of 91% for 2008/09. It is marginally below the UA average of 91.8%. Pupils' attendance levels are not as good as they should be compared with similar schools with similar levels of FSM. Attendance levels were lower than expected when compared with similar schools over the last three years. Rigorous monitoring is addressing this issue effectively. Nearly all pupils are punctual to lessons.
- 82 The standard of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The Welsh cultural dimension is also a good feature.
- 83 In KS3 and KS4, pupils are prepared for participation in the workplace and the community to good standards.

Sixth form

Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 84 Overall, standards of attainment have been good over the last three years (2007-2009).
- 85 Results at A level are above those recorded in the previous inspection over the last three years. Students' successes at two A level grades A-C have been above local and national averages for two of the last three years.
- 86 The Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) results compare very favourably with national averages. When these successes are included, the school performs well in the sixth form.
- 87 In 2009, 100% of students achieved the level 3 threshold. These results are above the local average (97%) and well above the national average (96%).
- 88 In 2009, students' AWPS of 941 points was well above the local average (711) and national average (688). This was a very good feature. Girls outperformed boys in the AWPS in 2009.

- 89 In September 2009, 75% of Y11 pupils returned to the sixth form and some continued their studies in Further Education (FE). No 15 year old pupils left full-time education without a qualification. A majority of students leaving Y13 continued their studies in Higher Education (HE).

Their progress in learning

- 90 Most students make good progress during their period of study in the sixth form.
- 91 Standards were good with outstanding features in English and Welsh second language.
- 92 Standards in the other four subjects inspected had good features and no important shortcomings.
- 93 The following grades were awarded for standards of achievement in the six subjects inspected in the 20 lessons observed in the sixth form:

| | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sixth form | 3% | 69% | 28% | 0% | 0% |

- 94 Although the sample is small, these figures indicate that students achieve standards that have good features outweighing shortcomings in 100% of the lessons. The profile of grades awarded for standards in lessons inspected in the sixth form highlights that 72% of lessons were awarded grades 1 and 2. These grades are below those reported in HMCI's annual report for 2008/09.
- 95 All students gain qualifications in the six key skills. In four out of the six key skills, standards are outstanding. The standard of students' number and ICT skills is good.
- 96 Students' communication skills through the medium of Welsh are good and outstanding through the medium of English. Students' writing skills are stronger in English with evidence of accurate extended work available in files. Linguistic skills of high quality were also evident when discussions were held with members of the school council. Students' bilingual skills are good.
- 97 The standard of students' application of number skills is good. The work evidenced in files and the high success rate at level 2 gained by the WBQ students is strong.
- 98 The standard of students' ICT skills is good as is evidenced in their project work and class presentations. Students use their communication skills to improve the standard of their presentations when using PowerPoint to highlight aspects of their work. They work outstandingly in pairs or larger groups when delivering these presentations. Students work very well together when engaged in class-group work.
- 99 Most students have an understanding of their levels of achievement and what they have to do to improve.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

- 100 The standard of students' personal and social development is outstanding. The standard of their spiritual, moral and cultural development is good.
- 101 Students are developing good working habits. Many students organise their work well, without supervision in readiness for university life or the world of work.

They prepare to the best of their ability and use study facilities appropriately. Their attitude to learning is good.

- 102 All students accept responsibility and work well as groups to raise money for charity. Nearly all students have a strong social conscience.
- 103 All students are very good role models for younger pupils and for one another. Their leadership skills are very good. The relationships between senior and junior pupils are strong. Senior students support younger pupils. All students work effectively in the school's buddy scheme. Very good relationships exist amongst the students.
- 104 Students demonstrate very responsible behaviour and respect towards one another and towards all members of the school community. This is an outstanding feature.
- 105 Students listen carefully to the view of others. They are able to express their views openly and honestly.
- 106 The ability to work outstandingly both with one another and independently contributes significantly to students' outstanding problem-solving skills. These skills have prepared them very well for HE.
- 107 Attendance and punctuality to lessons are good.
- 108 Students gain much from their sixth-form experiences, in their academic, personal, social, moral and wider development.

The quality of education and training

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

109 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

KS3 and KS4

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

110 The table below shows the quality of teaching in the six subjects and other lessons observed at the school in KS3 and KS4:

| Quality of teaching | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Subjects inspected (57 lessons) | 7% | 60% | 28% | 5% | 0% |
| All KS3 and KS4 (72 lessons) | 7% | 64% | 24% | 6% | 0% |

- 111 The 71% of lessons judged to be grade 1 or 2 is below the national average reported in HMCI's annual report in 2008/09 where 76% of lessons were judged to be grades 1 and 2. In 24% of the lessons, good features outweigh shortcomings and in 6% there are good features but shortcomings in important areas. The school does not meet the "Vision into Action" secondary target for 2010, that the quality of teaching should be grade 2 or better in 80% of classes.
- 112 Although the size and nature of the sample are different, the proportion of teaching that has good or very good features has decreased since the last

inspection. This is evident at KS4. Variations in the quality of teaching were observed both within and between subjects.

- 113 Out of the six subjects inspected, the quality of teaching in a very few science lessons in both key stages has some good features, but shortcomings in important areas.
- 114 In almost all lessons, working relationships between pupils and their teachers are good and provide a secure climate for learning. The school's achievement system makes a considerable contribution, identifying and rewarding the development of good learning habits.
- 115 In many lessons, teachers provide a range of interesting tasks, activities and resources which motivate and challenge pupils to work in a variety of ways and make good progress in their learning. Pair and group work are used effectively, and many teachers skilfully use the school's considerable ICT to further develop pupils' learning skills.
- 116 Planning is thorough in many cases, and is based on strong subject knowledge and careful identification of pupils' needs. In these lessons, teachers ensure that learning intentions are clearly communicated, actively developed and progress reviewed by the pupils. Time is used productively and learning takes place at a suitable pace. Good questioning and well-informed explanations help pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding.
- 117 A few lessons lack appropriate pace and challenge. In a few cases teachers are too slow in dealing with any resulting misbehaviour, especially in KS4.
- 118 The significant proportions of pupils identified with low literacy skills within KS3 are also well supported. The limited number of learning support assistants (LSAs) is not always used effectively within mainstream classes.
- 119 More able and talented pupils are identified by departments, and placed on the school register. The school is developing strategies to ensure that all subjects provide sufficient challenge for these pupils within their lessons.
- 120 Bilingual teaching is good across the school.

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

- 121 Although there are a few inconsistencies, assessment practice has many good features.
- 122 Departments moderate pupils' work regularly and provide accurate assessments on progress and achievement at both key stages in almost all cases. Pupils are well informed of external examination success criteria.
- 123 Most teachers identify underachievement and learning difficulties promptly. There is good collaboration and communication with pastoral staff.
- 124 The school makes good use of prior attainment and predictive analysis to establish end-of-key-stage pupils' target levels and grades for the school's data base. The system effectively tracks pupils' progress, identifies underachievement and secures appropriate intervention. Development targets are provided for all pupils. These vary in quality and are insufficiently subject-specific in many cases.

- 125 Year 11 pupils receive mentoring of good quality to ensure they are progressing as expected. Rigorous mentoring arrangements for all pupils are being developed across the key stages.
- 126 Many departments use pupils' self and peer-assessment effectively to involve pupils in the assessment process and improve learning. In these departments, pupils have a good understanding of their achievement and devise beneficial subject-specific improvement targets. In other departments, pupils' use of peer and self-assessment is less well developed. The listening to learners' strategy provides an additional useful opportunity for pupils to discuss and reflect on their progress.
- 127 The quality of marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. The best examples help pupils understand clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In a significant minority of cases marking is not precise enough.
- 128 Key skills' development is identified within subject planning and incorporated effectively in many lessons. Systematic assessment and analysis of pupils' progress of good quality in key skills take place within the WBQ at KS4. It is developing in KS3.
- 129 The school's procedures meet NC, examination board and SEN Code of Practice requirements. Assessment judgements are accurate in almost all subjects as a result of internal moderation and external standardisation, and cross-phase collaboration with partner primary schools.
- 130 The quality of the arrangements for reporting pupils' progress to parents and carers is good. Reports provide helpful comments and give a comprehensive indication of pupils' achievements and progress.
- 131 Good opportunities for parental involvement are provided at the parents' meetings which are well attended. Parents' views are regularly canvassed at these meetings.

Sixth form

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

- 132 The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good overall.
- 133 The table below shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the six subjects and all lessons observed in the sixth form:

| Quality of teaching | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Six subjects (20 lessons) | 10% | 65% | 25% | 0% | 0% |
| All lessons (25 lessons) | 16% | 60% | 24% | 0% | 0% |

- 134 In the sixth form many of the positive features of teaching are similar to those identified elsewhere in the school.
- 135 Most teachers have well-informed expectations of their students and plan their lessons accordingly. They ensure that the work is carefully tailored to meet examination board requirements and that all students are purposefully engaged.
- 136 The WBQ is making a considerable impact in providing different activities and learning styles which challenge and support students in becoming more independent, confident and well-organised learners.

- 137 Teachers use questioning techniques confidently to build knowledge and understanding and to develop students' higher-order thinking and communication skills. In the best lessons, students are frequently required to critically reflect and justify their views.
- 138 Very good working relationships exist between teachers and students.
- 139 Teachers have very good subject knowledge and most lessons are well-planned and resourced to enable students to be actively engaged in a good range of activities that match their individual needs.
- 140 In a minority of lessons, overlong exposition by teachers, a narrow range of activity and didactic approaches limit opportunities for students to make appropriate progress. A minority of students are allowed to dominate discussion, resulting in many students becoming passive learners. The pace of learning in these lessons is slow and students are too dependent on their teachers.

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

- 141 The quality of assessment, recording and reporting of students' work is good. Most teachers have good knowledge of students' potential, and effectively use assessment to track and monitor progress against predictive data. In the best cases they mark students' work regularly, and provide clear oral and written subject-specific guidance to students on how they can improve.
- 142 In a minority of cases, marking is less useful in helping students understand how well they are doing and how to improve. Annotation of students' work is infrequent and too general to effectively support students' progress.
- 143 Peer and self-assessment approaches are used effectively in a number of subjects to further improve students' understanding of their work and its assessment, and to develop incisive next-step targets. A minority of teachers do not involve students in monitoring their own progress.
- 144 Students' performance is systematically checked and reviewed. The sixth-form pastoral team provides support and guidance of good quality. Students are well informed of their predicted grades and their progress is discussed regularly.
- 145 Parents and carers are provided with a comprehensive overview of progress through interim and annual reports and consultation meetings of good quality. The quality of subject-specific improvement targets is inconsistent.

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 |
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- 146 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
- 147 The outstanding features include the:
- wide curriculum offered at each key stage to meets learners' needs;
 - extensive range of activities, including out-of-hours and off-site provision;
 - numerous local and international partnerships;

- experiences and opportunities that promote education for sustainable development and global citizenship; and
- development of entrepreneurial and other skills needed to support economic development.

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

- 148 The curriculum offered is an outstanding feature and enables learners of all abilities to study a broad and balanced range of subjects and to gain qualifications in all the courses they follow. The curriculum allows for effective continuity and progression between years and key stages.
- 149 Effective and valuable transition arrangements are in place to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils from the numerous primary partner schools to Builth Wells High School. These arrangements involve curricular continuity.
- 150 At KS3, some pupils study German in addition to the French course followed by all, which is good practice in modern foreign languages. The curricular provision at KS4 and the sixth form is good with outstanding features. At KS4, there is a range of academic and vocational subjects that adhere to the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG's) 14-19 Learning Pathways' agenda. At KS4, the number of subjects (over 30) offered to pupils exceeds the statutory requirement for the UA, including vocational options. Effective links with Coleg Powys, Powys Training and other education providers extend the range of provision. This has broadened the academic and vocational provision for learners.
- 151 The use of video-conferencing facilities extends further sixth-form provision.
- 152 Numerous opportunities are available in the school for learners to broaden and enrich their experiences through a variety of extra-curricular activities, including out-of-hours and off-site learning. Many clubs and activities are arranged during the lunchtime or after school and are enhanced by those offered by the 5x60 officer.
- 153 Provision to develop learners' key and basic skills is good and this is enhanced by the learners' involvement in the WBQ. These skills also feature in departmental schemes of work and are part of the planning process. In Y7 there is a dedicated lesson for information technology whilst in Y8 and Y9 and KS4 a lesson is timetabled for key skills.
- 154 The personal and social education (PSE) programme meets statutory guidelines and is of good quality. This programme contributes effectively to pupils' social development. School assemblies and collective worship in tutor groups allow learners the opportunity to develop spiritually. Religious education, English and art contribute to this area. The moral development of pupils is good. Pupils help one another, are courteous to visitors and have supported many charities.
- 155 Valuable steps are taken to ensure the cultural development of pupils in many subjects by arranged visits, with pupils' involvement in the Urdd and the annual school eisteddfod.
- 156 Learning experiences are enriched by effective partnerships. This is an outstanding feature. The many links with various organisations in other countries contribute substantially to these partnerships.

157 These links help to provide work-experience opportunities and these are supported outstandingly by Careers Wales who have strong links with the school.

158 The curriculum meets all legal requirements and all qualifications available are nationally approved. Religious education is included in the curriculum for all pupils. The daily act of collective worship fulfils statutory requirements.

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

159 The provision of work-related education is good. It is enhanced by the PSE programme and the vocational courses studied by learners.

160 The learning experiences provided to promote learners' bilingual skills are good. Some lessons are provided through the medium of Welsh and assemblies are conducted bilingually. Several members of staff give of their time to study Welsh to improve their oral competence. The activities of the Urdd and the annual school Eisteddfod contribute well to this aspect. Pupils readily respond in Welsh when required and "Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig" is well provided for throughout the school.

161 All learners have opportunities to learn about social disadvantage and stereotyping, through the PSE programme. There is equality of access to all subjects for all learners. This is a good feature.

162 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship are well promoted within the school. These are outstanding features. There is an active eco committee. Arrangements are made to recycle paper, plastics and cans and rough books are produced from some of the waste paper for use by the sixth form. The school is working towards gaining the Green Flag status. The school environment has been improved by the planting of trees and bulbs within the school grounds. The eco-committee has established a link with a school in Colombia. A solar panel in the school is linked to a system that monitors the electricity generated.

163 The contributions from the school to take account of employers' needs have outstanding features. An Education-Business Partnership group exists and many of the opportunities available in the school are directly linked to the employment needs of the area. Some members of staff have experienced good work placements.

164 The development of entrepreneurial skills is an outstanding feature in KS4 and in the sixth form. Pupils have created a co-operative that buys fruit and vegetables from a local organic farmer. The products are then packaged and sold according to demand. Pupils in Y9 are involved in the Dynamo project. Pupils in KS4 and the sixth form are involved in enterprise projects as part of WBQ.

165 The education provided and the numerous opportunities available to learners reflect national priorities for lifelong learning and community regeneration. These are outstanding in the sixth form. The outstanding curricular provision provides learners with valuable experiences to become lifelong learners.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

166 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade. The outstanding features are the:

- school's partnerships with pupils and the exceptional school council;
- transition and induction programmes;
- very good support and guidance for all learners;
- recognition and respect for diversity through the extensive international partnerships; and
- success in ensuring equal treatment for disabled learners.

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

167 The school provides outstanding care, support and guidance to all its learners.

168 Relationships within the school are very good. The pastoral team provides support and guidance of good quality and there is good monitoring of individual pupils' progress through the Pathways' system and through the weekly pastoral meetings. Good information sharing enables staff to address quickly any concerns about pupils' work or behaviour.

169 The school has a trained learning coach who provides individualised support and guidance for a number of pupils. The LSAs, the additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCO) and pastoral team ensure that pupils with SEN make good progress with their learning and social development through their individual educational plans (IEPs).

170 The school council is an outstanding feature of the school's partnerships. It is very active locally, nationally and internationally. A number of council members have been elected to the Powys Youth Forum, and the Young People's Parliament for Wales. The Council has taken part in WAG's consultations and debates. It has provided learners with many opportunities to develop their roles as active citizens. An initiative by council members has resulted in the setting up of a World School Council with links established across a number of different countries.

171 Advice and guidance of good quality are available for pupils making course choices. As well as informative booklets and evening presentations for pupils and parents, teachers, pastoral managers and learning coaches provide individual guidance for pupils. The school has excellent relationships with Careers Wales. Pupils with SEN receive very good support from a specialist careers' advisor.

172 The school provides exemplary transition and induction support for pupils. There are outstanding links with primary partner schools. Pastoral and subject teachers visit pupils in Y6 and provide information and taster subject lessons in modern foreign languages and gymnastics. There is a comprehensive transition week with a focus on well-being as well as art, music and design technology projects.

173 Pupils are well supported in Y9 and on transfer to the sixth form. Information and guidance support of good quality help pupils in making the right choices. The school has developed partnerships with local colleges and universities.

- 174 The school has a well-established and successful PSE programme. It also makes extensive use of specialist agencies. The SLT and pastoral managers regularly monitor pupils' progress and are well informed about individual needs.
- 175 The school uses the Pathways' system and monitors attendance and behaviour on a daily basis. Good records are kept. Where there are concerns, pastoral members of staff work closely with the education welfare service, parents and other agencies to address issues.
- 176 The school benefits from valuable links with local business. Pupils undertake a good range of work-experience activities and placements. This partnership enriches experiences for pupils undertaking vocational courses.
- 177 The school has achieved stage two of the Healthy Schools' initiative and is working towards the Green Flag status. Pupils are provided with a good variety of healthy foods in the Bwyty and engage in an extensive range of physical activities provided by the school's 5x60 officer.
- 178 There are good policies and effective procedures in place to safeguard pupils. All members of staff have received training in child protection issues. There is a well-trained first aider on site and appropriate systems are in place for recording incidents.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

- 179 The school makes good provision, overall, for pupils with SEN. Pupils make good progress with their learning. The majority gains qualifications in Entry and Foundation level GCSE courses. Others complete the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses through the Pen Maes outreach partnership. A number go on to study vocational courses at the local college, while others enter employment.
- 180 Good partnerships with primary partner schools and specialist services ensure that pupils' needs are identified early and that effective support is available. The school's ALNCO provides valuable support for pupils and staff. There are good systems for sharing information. Pupils' progress is carefully assessed and recorded, and the school's procedures meet the statutory requirements.
- 181 Pupils with SEN are fully included within mainstream classes. The additional support provided in class is very beneficial. However, support is not available in all classes due to staffing constraints.
- 182 The school has identified a significant number of pupils who, on entry to the school, need additional support to develop their literacy skills. Additional time and resources have been allocated through the school's literacy strategy. This has been successful in bringing about improvements in reading fluency, spelling and the presentation of written work.
- 183 There are well-trained LSAs. They provide regular one-to-one support for literacy through the "Catch Up" programme. Sixth-form students provide paired reading support sessions. Pupils who have severe literacy difficulties benefit from worthwhile after-school and lunch-time support sessions provided by a specialist teacher.
- 184 The school has well-established and effective policies and systems in place for rewarding and encouraging good behaviour. Pastoral support managers closely

monitor any incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils whose behaviour is causing concern are provided with the necessary support and guidance.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

- 185 The quality of provision for equal opportunities is outstanding. The school is a very inclusive one. Pupils from all backgrounds are encouraged and supported to achieve well. There is open access to courses and option choices. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Able pupils are entered for examinations early.
- 186 Effective policies are in place to promote gender and race equality. These issues are addressed successfully through the PSE, well-being programme and the religious education curriculum.
- 187 Good behaviour and tolerance are actively encouraged through the school's rewards system, assemblies and PSE programme. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated. Members of staff are effective in dealing with incidents and a number of pupils are involved in supporting one another through the peer-mentoring scheme.
- 188 There are very good access arrangements within the school. Disabled pupils and staff are well catered for. Adequate lifts, ramps and toilet facilities are in place. The school has a three-year Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan which meet all requirements.
- 189 Diversity is recognised in curricular activities and assemblies and through the school's extensive links and exchanges with a wide range of foreign countries. Sixth-form students carry out work-experience placements whilst in America. The school is very innovative and successful in addressing issues of diversity.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 190 The school awarded itself a grade 2 in its self-evaluation report. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower because good features outweigh shortcomings. These shortcomings relate to:
- insufficient time for members of the SLT to undertake their roles effectively;
 - inconsistent rigorous monitoring of staff and departments; and
 - ineffective target-setting processes.
- 191 The grade awarded for this key question (KQ) is one grade lower than that awarded to KQ1.
- 192 This is because the quality of monitoring standards has not been as effective as has the monitoring of resources in KQ7. Due to financial pressures, much more time has had to be devoted to monitoring resources, including the budget. Consequently, this resulted in KQ7 being awarded one grade higher than KQ5.

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

- 193 The school has successfully developed several national priorities and has extensive local and international partnerships which provide valuable work experience. These are outstanding features. The school strongly supports collaboration through the 14-19 Learning Pathways' agenda. The school has successfully delivered the Welsh WBQ in the sixth form and has introduced it in KS4.
- 194 The aims and expectations of the school are made clear to all. These aims and objectives are operational in the life of the school. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity for all.
- 195 The continuing professional development (CPD) for all members of staff is a good feature. The school ensures the professional development of teaching, administrative and technical staff according to individual and school needs. The outcomes of in-service training (INSET) are shared.
- 196 The school has a firmly-established system of performance management for teaching staff. The current system for other staff is very supportive but the process is has not been formalised fully. The programme for the induction of newly-qualified teachers (NQTs), and teachers new to the school is very well organised and managed.
- 197 The headteacher is very influential in promoting school values by example and she leads the school well. She is very well supported by her deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, and two senior managers. They maintain high standards by their presence around the school.
- 198 The effectiveness of the headteacher and members of the SLT to undertake all their responsibilities is constrained. These leaders have too many managerial and administrative responsibilities to undertake, including some high teaching commitments. Because of these constraints, some of the managerial roles of the SLT are not fully developed and there is insufficient rigour applied when assuring quality through their link responsibilities.
- 199 Some very good features of leadership and management at middle-management levels are evident, especially in English and design technology. In these departments there is a clear focus on teaching and learning, exemplified by detailed schemes of work, good target-setting practices and good programmes of quality assurance.
- 200 The role of some middle managers and their accountability are developing. Managers are aware of their responsibilities but some do not undertake their roles with sufficient rigour. In some departments, there is a lack of leadership, and there are shortcomings to be eliminated. There is insufficient rigour in monitoring, particularly in terms of the impact on standards achieved. Planning for improvement is also inadequate.
- 201 Targets for pupils' performance in subjects are set as part of the school's procedures. However, subject targets are not always sufficiently challenging. Neither are they sufficiently diagnostic. Pupils are aware of their targets, but in many cases they are not sufficiently clear on how to improve. The school's

target-setting and tracking procedures are currently being refined effectively to enable heads of year to have a clear overview of pupils' and students' progress.

How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

202 The governing body makes a good contribution to the leadership of the school.

203 It is a very able and experienced group that makes a substantial contribution to discussions and the leadership of the school. The two representatives from the school council contribute effectively to discussions.

204 The governing body has high expectations of the school. All members have a clear understanding of the school's main priorities through the effective working of the sub-committee structure. The chair of governors and chairs of the sub-committees are in regular discussion with the headteacher.

205 The governors clearly understand their roles and act as critical friends. They have direct links with departments. They are well informed on aspects of school performance.

206 Governors are involved well in the strategic management of the school. The quality of their strategic management and involvement in the evaluation processes are good features.

207 Governors regularly attend UA governor training sessions as well as internal training held by the SLT. The governing body has very productive links with officers from the UA.

208 The school prospectus contains all the required information.

209 All regulatory requirements are met.

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

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| Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings |
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210 The school awarded itself a grade 1 in its self-evaluation report. The grade awarded by the inspection team is two grades lower because no outstanding features were identified and important shortcomings were identified. These relate to:

- inconsistency in the quality of self-evaluation at departmental level and the lack of involvement of pastoral teams and support staff;
- inconsistencies in the effectiveness of planning for improvement in a number of departments; and
- the lack of progress made with some key issues and the standards of achievement in some subjects compared with the previous inspection.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

211 There are some good features in the process of self-evaluation. The school and the departmental self-evaluation reports are based on Estyn's Common Inspection Framework and are focused on academic progress. The process is well structured using evidence from a number of sources. However, some

departmental self-evaluation reports lack sufficient focus in identifying areas for improvement and supporting whole-school evaluation.

- 212 School evaluation, driven by the SLT, is well organised within an annual cycle. The process involves careful analysis of examination results, meetings with academic managers, reviews of subjects, observation of lessons and listening to learners. All information is thoroughly analysed at SLT level with strengths and weaknesses identified.
- 213 Although the comprehensive process at SLT level is successful in identifying issues for development, the heavy managerial, administrative and teaching loads of some members limit the effectiveness of these leaders to deal with some of the shortcomings. In the last review cycle, some important shortcomings were identified in some departments; these continue to remain in the first part of the present cycle.
- 214 Curriculum leaders are provided with a very comprehensive analysis of first-hand evidence relating to examination results, trends and comparison of the school's performance relative to similar schools in Wales. A majority of managers use this data and further evidence through lesson observations and book reviews to evaluate critically progress in their curricular area. In other departments, there is a lack of rigour in handling data and collecting further evidence, so that self-evaluation reports are descriptive in nature and lack depth in identifying strengths and shortcomings.
- 215 The school is successful in taking account of stakeholders' views. The school has a very strong partnership with many organisations in the area. These provide considerable support and advice to the school. Governors and employers regularly give feedback on events and activities linked to school initiatives and extra-curricular activities. Parents' views are regularly canvassed at parents' evenings.
- 216 The school council is very effective in bringing matters to the attention of the SLT. They have had considerable success in establishing links and visits to meet Ministers of WAG, establishing links with a number of countries and establishing a World School Council.
- 217 There are a number of strengths in the involvement of members of staff in self-evaluation arrangements. However, in some departments there is inconsistency in the understanding and implementation of the monitoring and self-evaluation processes. At present, support members of staff are not fully involved in the process of in-depth evaluation.
- 218 The judgements made by the school differ from those awarded by the inspection team in two of the seven key questions. These relate to the inconsistencies in leadership at middle management level and insufficient time for the SLT to carry out some of their monitoring duties.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

- 219 The SIDR is a comprehensive document which has identified appropriate improvement priorities for the three-year cycle 2008-11. School improvement priorities are identified by SLT arising from curricular self-evaluations in the seven key questions of the Estyn's Common Inspection Framework. Areas to improve, actions to bring about improvement, time-scales, resources needed

and costings are identified. However, the lack of success criteria and specific targets limit the focus of strategies to bring about improvement.

- 220 Department improvement plans (DIPs) also follow the format of the seven key questions but are of variable quality. In a small majority of departments, improvement plans are detailed and have clear strategies and success criteria to raise standards. In other departments, plans are less focused and do not have clear strategies and quantifiable targets for improving standards.
- 221 The use of targets for improvement for individual pupils is developing well using the Pathways' programme. Progress managers and form tutors are developing effective strategies to identify underachievement and set up mentoring programmes to support individual pupils.
- 222 In the school and many DIPs, areas for improvement have been appropriately costed. Although the school has a substantial deficit in its budget, the headteacher and governors make every effort to fund the identified priorities.
- 223 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the way in which the school has made progress in addressing the key issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection and in maintaining or improving standards in the six subjects inspected in this inspection.
- 224 Good progress has been made in maintaining the school's positive features and ethos, raising the standard of information technology at KS3, raising standards in numeracy, improving accommodation and ensuring that all classes are provided with a daily act of collective worship. At SLT level and in a majority of departments there is good practice in observation, monitoring, self-evaluation and review procedures. However, in a number of departments there are still shortcomings. Improving standards in ICT across subjects of the curriculum at KS4 remains an area for development.
- 225 Of the six subjects inspected, only in information technology at KS3 and Welsh second language in the sixth form have standards of achievement improved. Standards of achievement are lower in science at KS3 and KS4, in English at KS4 and in history at both KS4 and in the sixth form when compared with the previous inspection.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 226 This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
- 227 This grade is one grade higher than the grade awarded to KQ5 because the monitoring of resources has been effective.

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

- 228 All members of staff have the appropriate qualifications, knowledge and expertise to deliver all aspects of the school's curriculum. Teachers rarely teach outside of their subject area. Those that do, are well supported.
- 229 The school has allocated and deployed resources for workforce remodelling effectively. The appointment of appropriate administrative staff has significantly

reduced the non-teaching commitments of staff. They make a valued contribution to the school's teaching and learning programmes. Technical support in information technology, design and technology and science is very good.

- 230 Effective help and encouragement to pupils with SEN are provided by LSAs. However, the LSAs' provision is insufficient to meet the demands of an increasing number of pupils with learning difficulties. The LSAs are not always fully involved in lesson planning to maximise learners' support.
- 231 Texts and resources across the school are good. The recent significant investment and developments in design and technology and information technology have had a positive impact on standards throughout the school. The provision of five computer suites, a dedicated networked teacher-station and a digital projector in each classroom have enhanced the quality of curricular delivery in all departments.
- 232 There is very good provision of resources to meet the needs of a wide range of learners with disabilities and SEN.
- 233 The library is well managed by the librarian. Learners have full access to its resources every break-time and lunch-time. The library makes a significant contribution to supporting learning and raising standards.
- 234 The overall quality of the accommodation provides a purposeful and stimulating learning environment. All teachers have their own bases. This contributes positively to the delivery of a purposeful and relevant teaching and learning programme. The management and maintenance of the school buildings and grounds are very good.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money?

- 235 The processes and procedures for the systematic management of the budget are in place. It is planned thoroughly taking into account the priorities identified in the development plans. Regular financial monitoring and reviews ensure that resources are deployed effectively. The internal auditor report confirms the positive financial management and good practice found in the school.
- 236 However, the school operates with a deficit budget. A recovery plan has been drawn up, agreed with the UA and accepted by the County Council. The school's staffing costs are well above national averages. Funding from the UA has been significantly reduced over the past few years. The school is actively working towards bringing expenditure within its delegated financial resources.
- 237 The professional development of staff is effectively identified and implemented by the well-managed appraisal and performance management systems. However, the professional management procedures for all LSAs, administrative and technical staff, although supportive, are not formal enough.
- 238 Newly-qualified teachers are very well supported and guided by an extensive programme of activities and mentoring. The school operates a very good programme of support and tuition for initial teacher training (ITT) students in partnership with a number of HE establishments.
- 239 The sixth form is self-financing and provides good value for money. Students contribute significantly to a range of school activities and are active within the community.

- 240 All members of staff, teaching and non-teaching have recently agreed and signed job descriptions. Most members of staff with additional responsibilities have the appropriate time to carry out their duties effectively. Every teacher is guaranteed 10% planning, preparation and assessment time. This is effectively used and monitored.
- 241 Criminal records bureau (CRB) checks have been completed for all staff working at the school.
- 242 The school provides good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

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

- 243 Examination results at GCSE in the last two years have been good. They have been above local and national averages for passes at grades A*-C. However, the performance of boys at GCSE is significantly below that of girls.
- 244 Examination results at A level in the last two years have been well above local and national averages for passes at grades A/B. In comparison with performance at GCSE, students achieve above expectation in A level English language and literature.

KS3

Good features

- 245 The majority of pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to one another. They respond to instructions appropriately. In class discussion, they often respond enthusiastically to questions and most can recall previous learning and can demonstrate a clear understanding of their work.
- 246 Most pupils work well in pairs and in small groups. Most remain focused and engaged with the task. Pupils use Standard English when presenting their ideas to the class and in explaining their work.
- 247 Pupils of all abilities read a range of challenging literary, non-literary and media texts including some which reflect the culture of Wales. Most pupils read aloud with accuracy and fluency.
- 248 At the beginning of some lessons, many pupils are able to read for pleasure, silently and with concentration.
- 249 Pupils with differing learning needs make good progress. They have very good skills of information retrieval.
- 250 All pupils understand the conventions of different genres. Pupils write in a range of forms and for a variety of purposes. Most can adapt tone and language to audience. Most respond well to targets given for written work by teachers. Pupils of all abilities are able to extend their writing.

Shortcomings

- 251 A minority of pupils across the ability range do not draft effectively with the result that errors of punctuation, spelling and grammar persist.
- 252 A few pupils, predominantly boys, do not listen attentively to one another and do not sustain focus and engagement with the task when working in pairs.
- 253 A significant number of boys in Y7 do not achieve as well as girls in response to texts and in writing.

KS4

Good features

- 254 Most pupils speak clearly, confidently and appropriately in a range of contexts. Many pupils work effectively in pairs or small groups. They listen intently to each other and to the teacher to develop ideas.
- 255 Most pupils show good understanding of a range of texts, some of them reflecting cultures different from their own. They successfully carry out a range of tasks which are constructed to deepen their understanding. They are able to support their comments with evidence from the texts and can analyse how writers use language and techniques to create effect.
- 256 Most pupils are able to develop their ideas in writing to produce extended pieces. They show awareness of appropriate style and form and in imaginative writing can use descriptive language and imagery consciously to have an impact on the reader.
- 257 Lower ability pupils make very good progress in writing and show good understanding of more challenging vocabulary in material related to their interests.

Shortcomings

- 258 A few pupils, predominantly boys, are slow to engage with tasks and do not sustain concentration.
- 259 A few pupils do not collaborate well in pairs and do not listen attentively to the teacher or to each other. They have difficulty in recalling previous work.
- 260 A few pupils do not redraft writing effectively to improve accuracy.

Sixth form

Outstanding features

- 261 The consistent achievement of students at grades A and B is an outstanding feature.
- 262 Students consistently prepare researched information or textual analysis of very high quality.

Good features

- 263 Most students express their ideas fluently and confidently in class discussion and when making PowerPoint presentations. They work effectively in pairs and in small groups to analyse texts with insight and in detail.

- 264 Most students demonstrate a good knowledge of a range of challenging literary and non-literary texts. Students are able to explore the presentation of theme in texts and can compare texts effectively.
- 265 Students use research skills to increase understanding of the historical and social backgrounds to texts. Students use a range of linguistic and literary terms accurately in the analysis of texts.
- 266 The imaginative and transactional writing of the most able students shows a sophisticated understanding of how to use techniques to create effect.

Shortcomings

- 267 There are no significant shortcomings.

Welsh second language

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

- 268 Examination results at GCSE in the last two years have been variable. They have been above and below local and national averages for passes at grades A*-C.
- 269 Examination results at A level in the last two years have been below local and national averages for passes at grades A/B.

KS3

Good features

- 270 Most learners listen well to their teacher and to their peers. The majority of pupils produce set tasks of good quality.
- 271 During revision sessions, many of the learners are enthusiastic and offer instantaneous answers on their individual white boards.
- 272 Most learners are able to ask a good range of questions in their pair and in small group work. Oral responses are usually accurate apart from mutations which are a little insecure.
- 273 Most learners have good recall of previous work and are constantly adding to their working vocabulary and extending their accurate use of language patterns
- 274 In Y7, learners' skill in reading aloud is developing well.
- 275 Learners recall a good range of vocabulary that they have learned through their previously completed projects.
- 276 When composing sentences, most pupils use a good range of verbs in the first and third person and in the past tense.
- 277 Most pupils in Y8 perform well in paired reading from prepared dialogues. They enunciate well and use expressions effectively.
- 278 Most pupils of lower ability and those with SEN make good progress.

Shortcomings

- 279 Some less able pupils are unable to complete their set tasks to good standards.

280 The progress of learning of some pupils is slow.

KS4

Good features

281 Many pupils speak with increasing fluency during class discussions.

282 The standard of oral and written work of many pupils is good.

283 Most pupils prepare profiles of good quality of famous contemporary performers in the fields of sport and music.

284 Pupils of lower ability have good oral skills.

Shortcomings

285 Some pupils are unable to grasp the concept of the nasal mutation.

286 A very few of boys produce work which is inconsistent in quality.

Sixth form

Outstanding features

287 In Y12, students are producing exceptional written work.

288 Students' study of the work of Hedd Wyn is progressing very well. They make very good comparisons of the changes that have transpired in society in the last century.

289 In Y13, the standard of written work is exceptional. The contents and messages of one of the set works 'Ar y cyrion' are explored in great depth. Perceptive opinions are expressed with great maturity.

290 The study of the drama 'Siwan' is detailed, including a comparison between the mediaeval political settings of the drama with the modern era.

291 All students made very good comparative observations when analysing the role (vis a vis freedom) of Siwan the princess and her maid Alis.

Shortcomings

292 There are no significant shortcomings.

| |
|----------------|
| Science |
|----------------|

Key stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

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

293 Examination results at GCSE in the last two years have been variable. In 2008 results were above local and national averages for passes at grades A*-C. However, in 2009 there was a significant fall in the percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-C and these results are lower than local but higher than national averages. These results are lower than those to be expected from pupils of similar ability.

294 Examination results at A level in the last two years have been variable for passes at grades A/B.

KS3

Good features

295 Pupils of all abilities have an appropriate understanding of aspects of the NC in science. They are familiar with electrical circuits and radiation. Many more able pupils have a good knowledge of the chemical reactions of acids.

296 Nearly all pupils keep good records of their work and communicate their understanding of science well using text, tables and graphs. Many can extract scientific information from text books and incorporate it into their notes. Pupils use scientific terms accurately, both orally and in writing.

297 All pupils, including pupils with SEN, carry out experimental work carefully by following their teachers' instructions. They make appropriate observations and record them, usually in tables. More able pupils can make predictions about unfamiliar situations and plan experiments to test them. They can also carry out calculations to manipulate their data.

Shortcomings

298 Many pupils of lower and middle ability often have a superficial understanding of the work in hand.

299 Others have an insecure recall of previous work and cannot apply their understanding to unfamiliar situations.

300 A few pupils have difficulties performing calculations on scientific data. A few pupils spell some scientific terms incorrectly.

KS4

Good features

301 Most pupils have a good understanding of the work they need for their GCSE examinations. Most pupils can recall and explain previous work, for example, many of the more able have a thorough understanding of circuit electricity and genetics. Many less able pupils understand the causes of heart disease. Overall, pupils' understanding is at least in line with ability.

302 All pupils carry out practical work effectively by following their teachers' instructions. They make good observations or measurements and record them in tables. They plot good graphs to present their results. The more able pupils can plan good investigations and draw reasoned conclusions from their results.

303 Nearly all pupils make good records of their work and use scientific terms accurately, both orally and in writing. They can extract scientific information from a range of written sources. The more able can use their knowledge to explain unfamiliar situations.

Shortcomings

304 A few pupils have gaps in their understanding and cannot, for example, make good use of genetic terminology or identify the reasons for experimental error.

305 A few pupils of lower ability produce only a very basic account of their work and these are sometimes incomplete. Others do not carry out investigations to the required standard.

Sixth form

Good features

- 306 Nearly all students have mastered their current work and have a thorough understanding of the knowledge they need for their A level courses. They can recall and apply details of previous work with ease. Students have good familiarity with a range of chemical and biological topics such as radioactive decay and the structure and function of the gut.
- 307 Nearly all students are very familiar with complex scientific terminology and use it well. They plot good graphs to illustrate their data.
- 308 All students have good experimental planning skills and are fully aware of safety precautions and risk assessments. They take care to control variables and repeat measurements to secure reliability and accuracy. They use complex apparatus correctly and with care.
- 309 All students carry out practical work well. They make accurate observations and record their data carefully. Nearly all can draw appropriate conclusions from their experimental data. Most can also identify possible causes of experimental error and suggest ways to minimise it.

Shortcomings

- 310 A few students do not have a full appreciation of the different degrees of accuracy of laboratory measurement equipment.
- 311 A few students make errors in recalling details of their work.

| |
|-------------------------------|
| Information technology |
|-------------------------------|

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

Key stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

- 312 Examination results at GCSE in the last two years have been below local and national averages for passes at grades A*-C. These results do not reflect pupils' abilities.
- 313 Examination results at A level in the last two years have been variable for passes at grades A/B.
- 314 The number of students involved in 2009 is too few to make any meaningful comparison.

KS3

Good features

- 315 Most pupils have good practical computing skills. Their confidence and competence skills in handling a range of software, including accessing the internet, are good. Most pupils are able to research and use information without having to ask for much help from their teachers.
- 316 Almost all pupils make good progress in understanding a broad range of communication techniques and can make informed choices about when and where it is appropriate to exploit ICT to support their tasks.

317 The most able have a very good understanding of the theoretical aspects of their tasks and are able to explain and discuss their work well.

318 Most pupils have developed good skills in producing a PowerPoint presentation and can use the many functions of the software effectively to communicate information in an imaginative way.

319 Pupils with SEN make good progress and produce work of a standard in line with their ability.

Shortcomings

320 A very few pupils lack confidence. These pupils produce the simplest and most basic solution to the problems set by their teacher.

321 Too many pupils lack higher-order computing-skills, such as the use of "goal seek" and "what if" scenarios when interpreting data.

KS4

Good features

322 Most pupils' practical computing skills are adequate. They can readily select and use a range of software packages that best fits the required task.

323 The more able pupils have good skills and can access and use appropriate internet sites to develop a PowerPoint presentation effectively.

324 The more able pupils plan their work well and show good problem-solving and evaluation skills. They have a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of their tasks and can explain and discuss their work using appropriate technical vocabulary.

325 Pupils with SEN make appropriate progress and achieve their potential.

Shortcomings

326 Too many pupils are unable to undertake basic computer tasks of good quality.

327 A few pupils tend to produce the simplest solution to the task set and do not readily research and plan their projects diligently. Too many pupils are not discriminating enough in the choice of materials they select for their presentations.

328 Too many pupils have insufficient depth of knowledge in relation to basic database-structures and functions. They do not possess the higher-order computing skills normally associated with their age and capability.

329 In the production of a data-capture form, too many pupils do not give sufficient consideration to user requirements.

Sixth form

Good features

330 Most students research their projects well. They analyse and interpret the information effectively and use it well to present their ideas, including a good PowerPoint presentation.

331 Most students apply their computing skills well in researching and developing a basic web site.

- 332 The standard of work in most students' project files is good.
- 333 Students are developing a good understanding of a range of search engines to obtain the best and most relevant results.
- 334 Students make good progress in their knowledge of the theory relating to computer applications and systems.

Shortcomings

- 335 A very few students have only an adequate understanding of the basic concepts of web designs.
- 336 A very few students are over-cautious in their approaches to web research and tend to focus within comfort zones and do not readily experiment with complex systems.

History

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

Key stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

- 337 Examination results at GCSE in the last two years have been below local and national averages for passes at grades A*-C.
- 338 Examination results at A level in the last two years have been above local and national averages for passes at grades A/B. These results represent very good achievement for these students.

KS3

Good features

- 339 Many pupils of average and above average ability have a sound knowledge of the topics covered and a good understanding of people and events. Relative to their ability, pupils are secure in their recall of the topics, which have been studied.
- 340 Nearly all pupils acquire and successfully develop a range of historical skills. They use subject-specific vocabulary accurately, with understanding and in the right context.
- 341 From Y7, most pupils develop a good sense of chronology. They use and construct timelines and can place events in the appropriate historical period.
- 342 Nearly all pupils develop investigative approaches to examining people and events in history. Pupils of above average ability are able to plan an historical investigation, select relevant material and organise their arguments logically.
- 343 Most pupils are able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources. They extract information effectively from pictorial and documentary sources.
- 344 Most pupils demonstrate a growing awareness of historical interpretations. In their work on Henry VII and Elizabeth I, they understand that people view events and historical figures in different ways. More able pupils are able to offer valid explanations for these interpretations.
- 345 Pupils of all abilities organise and present their learning in a variety of styles and formats. They use conventions and language appropriate to the format chosen.

Shortcomings

346 The work of many pupils of average and below average ability is incomplete and contains inaccurate spellings of historical terms.

KS4

Good features

347 Nearly all pupils build on the range of skills acquired in KS3 and make progress in their learning. The written work of more able pupils is of a high quality.

348 In their study of race relations in the USA in the twentieth century, most pupils can identify the factors which bring about change and identify areas of continuity.

349 Many pupils show an increasing maturity in their understanding of conflicting historical interpretations of events.

350 Most pupils investigate historical questions effectively and can extract evidence from a variety of sources.

Shortcomings

351 About a half of the pupils make too brief and infrequent contributions to class discussion and are unable to display and develop their knowledge and understanding.

352 A minority of pupils experience difficulty in analysing sources of evidence.

353 A minority of pupils write in insufficient depth and detail to meet examination requirements.

354 Examination results have been below the local and national averages for several years.

Sixth form

Good features

355 Students produce written work of a very good standard. They write with fluency and demonstrate the ability to develop and sustain an argument.

356 Nearly all students make good progress in developing their skills of investigation and analysis. They demonstrate a sound understanding of historical concepts and use their background knowledge to make informed judgements.

357 Most students have a good knowledge of historical debates and can successfully synthesise the views of historians.

358 Students continue to develop the ability to evaluate the reliability and usefulness of a range of primary and secondary sources. They demonstrate skill in cross referencing, make inferences and identify omissions. They make accurate assessments of the relative importance of evidence to their line of enquiry.

Shortcomings

359 A few students do not make an adequate contribution to general class discussion.

360 When working in pairs, a very few students do not make sufficiently detailed notes and therefore have an incomplete record of key learning points.

| |
|------------|
| Art |
|------------|

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

361 In the most recent GCSE examination, both boys and girls achieved above the local and national averages at grades A*-C. Pupils generally achieve to, or above expectation.

362 In the most recent A level examinations, boys' results were well below the local and national average at grades A/B. Girls' results were above the national average but below the local average at grades A/B.

KS3

Good features

363 The majority of pupils make good progress in acquiring the essential craft skills and knowledge.

364 All pupils make steady progress in becoming aware of a range of different artists and their work.

365 Colour is generally well understood and observational-drawing skills are well established.

366 Nearly all pupils use computers as a creative and research tool to a better than average standard, particularly in their manipulation of images.

367 Most pupils are beginning to develop visual judgement and express personal opinions on what they see.

368 Pupils who elect to follow their art programme through the medium of Welsh achieve very good standards. Pupils with SEN, and the more able, make good progress. The small numbers of ethnic minority pupils are among the higher achievers.

Shortcomings

369 Some pupils' standard of work is only adequate.

370 The standard of some pupils' work is limited by over-reliance on texts found on the internet.

KS4

Good features

371 Pupils make very rapid progress. A significant number of pupils in Y10 achieve standards commensurate with the higher grades expected by the end of Y11.

372 Pupils' personal creative development is of a good standard.

373 More able boys demonstrate very high standards of creative computer-generated animation and digital-photo manipulation. More able girls show particularly creative outcomes in their sketchbooks.

374 Observational drawing skills are strong across both genders. Nearly all pupils demonstrate imaginative large-scale three-dimensional responses in their creative land-art projects.

375 Most pupils enrich their work via influences from both local and world-wide cultures. Most pupils use annotation effectively to support their practical work.

376 Pupils with SEN make good progress.

Shortcomings

377 Some pupils are too descriptive or factual in their writing. They do not express personal opinions or judgements on the artists they are studying.

Sixth form

Good features

378 Students are well established as independent creative artists. Their creativity is rich and varied because it is developed mainly from primary observation and problem-solving experimentation.

379 Students' sketchbook-work is consistently good. Students regularly support their artwork with informative annotation. Their presentation consistently shows imagination and flair.

380 Boys demonstrate high standards of drawing. More able girls make very rapid progress and achieve well above average standards of observational pastel drawing. Colour is often used with some sophistication.

381 Students use their detailed knowledge of different artists to enrich their own creativity. They express knowledge and critical judgement in their extended writings about art. They show a good knowledge of historical and contemporary art from their visits to galleries.

Shortcomings

382 A few students rely too much on found photographic images when researching a theme.

School's response to the inspection

The school wishes to thank the Registered Inspector and his team for a professional inspection of Builth Wells High School. The governing body, SLT and the staff agree that Builth Wells High School is a good school which provides outstanding support and guidance to its pupils. The school is an orderly community where nearly all learners are courteous and most have positive attitudes towards their work. Students' behaviour is exemplary in the sixth form and very good working relationships exist between teachers and students.

The learning experiences provided by the school are also of outstanding quality. The support for equal opportunities is outstanding and the quality of provision and management of pupils with SEN are strengths of the school. The school council is an outstanding feature and it is very active locally, nationally and internationally.

The school's curriculum is an outstanding feature. It offers a wide range of subject options to its pupils from the ages 14-19, including several through collaboration.

The Inspection team judged teaching as good overall and some outstanding practice was observed. The school wishes to impress upon Estyn that the school judged the quality of Teaching as good or outstanding in 90% of all of the subjects in its self-evaluation plan. Results in tests, statutory assessments and performance in external examinations are good overall

The school confirms that it provides an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities that enrich learners' personal, social, moral and bilingual development and that all pupils have the opportunity to experience many diverse and global cultural activities through its global dimension and Eco-Schools strategy.

We commend the Inspection team for its support in judging the quality of care, support and guidance given to all pupils by members of staff, including members of the SLT, non-teaching staff and support services, as outstanding.

The school agrees that the SLT works very well together and has a positive impact in moving the school forward and that the effectiveness of the team is constrained by a lack of time and this is a firm target in the SDIP. Also, rigour in the monitoring process at the middle management level is a central component of the school's SDIP.

The school appreciates the governing body's role as critical friend and that there are good features in the process of self-evaluation at SLT level and the school recognises the need to further embed this more at middle management level.

The school's commitment to employing well-qualified staff to deliver all aspects of the curriculum is a very strong feature as are resources, especially information technology and the accommodation provides a positive and stimulating environment for learning.

The school agrees with the findings of the Inspection team that it gives sound financial management within a difficult fiscal climate.

The school is pleased to confirm that leadership of the headteacher and her SLT, the outstanding care and support for all pupils, the opportunities available through the extra-curricular programme and the effective management of resources ensure the school provides good value for money.

The school agrees that the majority of key issues identified in the 2004 inspection report have been fully addressed and fully accepts all recommendations set by the Inspection team, many of which are included in the school's SDIP.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Name of school | Builth Wells High School |
| School type | Secondary |
| Age range of pupils | 11-18 |
| Address of school | College Road Builth Wells Powys |
| Postcode | LD2 3BW |
| Telephone number | 01982 553292 |
| Headteacher | Shan Davies |
| Date of appointment | 1 st May 2001 |
| Chair of governors | Kurt Steyer |
| Reporting inspector | W Gwyn Thomas |
| Dates of inspection | 18-21 January 2010 |

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

| Year group | Y7 | Y8 | Y9 | Y10 | Y11 | Y12 | Y13 | Total |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Number of pupils | 105 | 105 | 112 | 114 | 118 | 69 | 58 | 681 |

| Total number of teachers | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
| | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time equivalent (fte) |
| Number of teachers | 41 | 11 | 47.1 |

| Staffing information | |
|--|----------|
| Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes) | 14.5 : 1 |
| Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes | 8 : 1 |
| Average teaching group size | 18.8 |
| Overall contact ratio (percentage) | 77% |

| Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection | | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------|
| | Y7 | Y8 | Y9 | Y10 | Y11 | Y12 | Y13 | Whole school |
| Term 1 | 93.0 | 90.8 | 91.2 | 84.0 | 84.2 | 82.3 | 66.5 | 87.6 |
| Term 2 | 92.2 | 91.3 | 91.5 | 88.0 | 96.9 | 76.0 | 84.1 | 90.1 |
| Term 3 | 94.1 | 93.9 | 92.0 | 93.7 | 92.0 | 92.9 | 87.1 | 92.6 |

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals | 5.4% |
| Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection | 8 Temporary |

Appendix 3

This report uses data for 2009 for LEA and Wales comparative information

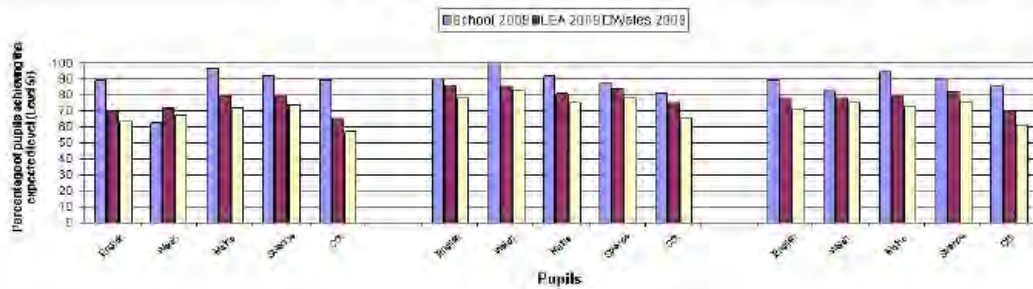
BUILTH WELLS HIGH SCHOOL
 Powys

LEA/School no: 666/4020

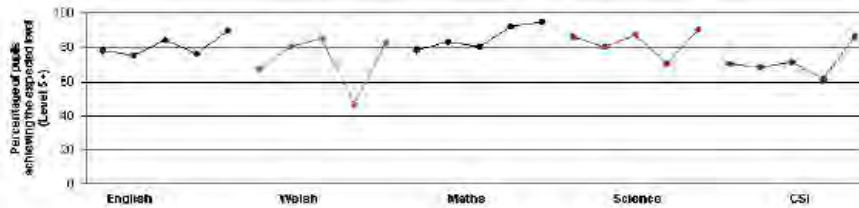
School comparative information: National Curriculum Assessments 2009 with benchmarking Key Stage 3

Percentage of boys, girls, and pupils achieving at least the expected level (Level 5+):

| | Boys | | | Girls | | | Pupils | | |
|---------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|------------|
| | School 2009 | LEA 2009 | Wales 2009 | School 2009 | LEA 2009 | Wales 2009 | School 2009 | LEA 2009 | Wales 2009 |
| English | 89 | 70 | 63 | 90 | 86 | 78 | 89 | 79 | 71 |
| Welsh | 63 | 72 | 67 | 100 | 86 | 83 | 82 | 79 | 75 |
| Maths | 97 | 79 | 72 | 92 | 81 | 75 | 95 | 80 | 73 |
| Science | 92 | 80 | 74 | 88 | 84 | 78 | 90 | 82 | 76 |
| CSI | 89 | 65 | 57 | 82 | 75 | 66 | 86 | 70 | 61 |



School Performance over time (2005 - 2009)



Contextual Information

Benchmarked against schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

School's results shown in greyed boxes. Column headings refer to...

- Quartile 1 School is in the top 25 per cent.
- Quartile 2 School is in the top 50 per cent but not the top 25 per cent.
- Quartile 3 School is in the bottom 50 per cent but not the bottom 25 per cent.
- Quartile 4 School is in the bottom 25 per cent.

Free School Meal Group:

Less than 10 percent eligible for FSM

| | Quartile 4 | Lower Quartile Boundary | Quartile 3 | Median Boundary | Quartile 2 | Upper Quartile Boundary | Quartile 1 |
|---------|------------|-------------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|
| English | | 78 | | 82 | | 89 | 89 |
| Welsh | | 72 | | 79 | 82 | 89 | 89 |
| Maths | | 79 | | 83 | | 88 | 95 |
| Science | | 83 | | 87 | | 90 | 90 |
| CSI | | 69 | | 76 | | 90 | 86 |

Notes:

1. Figures for Welsh refer to attainment in Welsh first language only.
2. CSI = Core Subject Indicator. To achieve the CSI a pupil must achieve at least the expected level 5 in both Mathematics and Science and either English or Welsh first language.
3. If there were no pupils eligible for assessment in a subject for a particular year the graph will discontinue and show a gap for that year.

This report uses data for 2009 for LEA and Wales comparative information

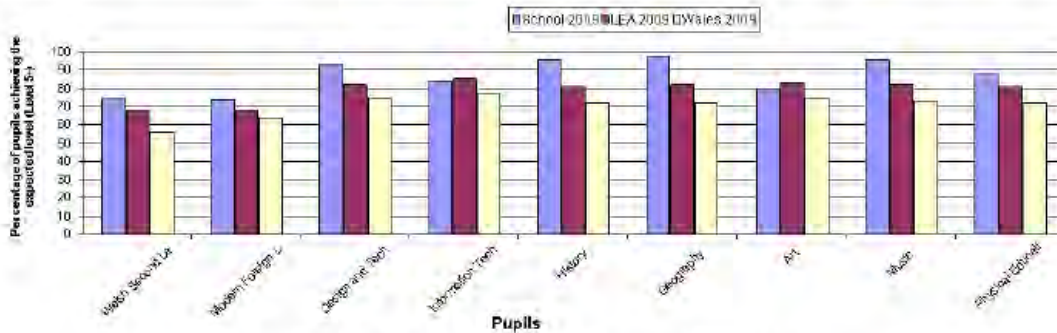
BUILT WELLS HIGH SCHOOL
 Powys

LEA/School no: 666/4020

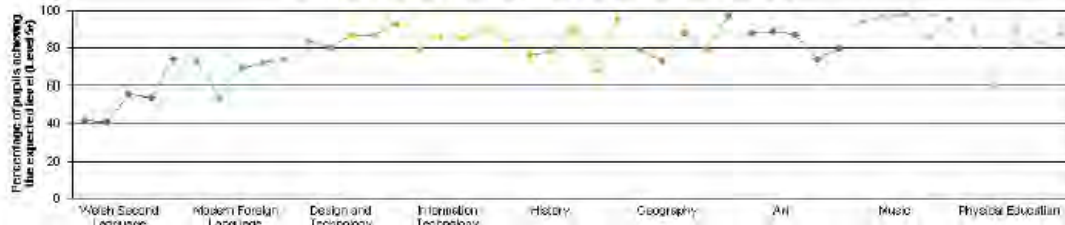
School comparative information: National Curriculum Assessments 2009 with benchmarking
Key Stage 3

Percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 5+)

| | Boys | | | Girls | | | Pupils | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|------------|
| | School 2009 | LEA 2009 | Wales 2009 | School 2009 | LEA 2009 | Wales 2009 | School 2009 | LEA 2009 | Wales 2009 |
| Welsh Second Language | 72 | 58 | 46 | 78 | 79 | 66 | 74 | 68 | 56 |
| Modern Foreign Language | 65 | 58 | 55 | 66 | 77 | 73 | 74 | 68 | 64 |
| Design and Technology | 89 | 76 | 68 | 98 | 89 | 83 | 93 | 82 | 75 |
| Information Technology | 82 | 80 | 72 | 88 | 91 | 83 | 84 | 85 | 77 |
| History | 97 | 77 | 66 | 94 | 85 | 76 | 96 | 81 | 72 |
| Geography | 98 | 78 | 67 | 96 | 87 | 77 | 97 | 82 | 72 |
| Art | 68 | 75 | 66 | 96 | 91 | 85 | 80 | 83 | 75 |
| Music | 98 | 74 | 66 | 92 | 90 | 81 | 96 | 82 | 73 |
| Physical Education | 89 | 80 | 72 | 86 | 83 | 72 | 88 | 81 | 72 |



School Performance over time (2005 - 2009)



Contextual Information

Benchmarked against schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

School's results shown in greyed boxes. Column headings refer to...

- Quartile 1 School is in the top 25 per cent. Free School Meal Group
- Quartile 2 School is in the top 50 per cent but not the top 25 per cent. Less than 10 percent eligible for FSM
- Quartile 3 School is in the bottom 50 per cent but not the bottom 25 per cent.
- Quartile 4 School is in the bottom 25 per cent.

| | Quartile 4 | Lower Quartile Boundary | Quartile 3 | Median Boundary | Quartile 2 | Upper Quartile Boundary | Quartile 1 |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Welsh Second Language | | 63 | | 66 | 74 | 80 | |
| Modern Foreign Language | | 57 | | 75 | | 84 | |
| Design and Technology | | 90 | | 88 | | 94 | |
| Information Technology | | 84 | | 89 | | 93 | |
| History | | 79 | | 87 | | 91 | 96 |
| Geography | | 80 | | 85 | | 86 | 97 |
| Art | | 81 | | 87 | | 92 | |
| Music | | 79 | | 84 | | 85 | 96 |
| Physical Education | | 78 | | 83 | | 88 | 98 |

Notes:

- 1. If there were no pupils eligible for assessment in a subject for a particular year the graph will discontinue and show a gap for that year.

Pupils aged 15

Number of pupils aged 15 who were on roll in January 2009 : 125

Percentage of pupils aged 15 who :

| | entered at least one qualification | achieved the Level 1 threshold | achieved the Level 2 threshold | achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics | Core Subject Indicator (2) | Average wider points score per pupil |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| School 2008/09 | 98 | 93 | 66 | 58 | 57 | 378 |
| LEA Area 2008/09 | 99 | 93 | 71 | 60 | 60 | 426 |
| Wales 2008/09 | 99 | 88 | 61 | 47 | 46 | 379 |
| School 07/08/09 | 99 | 93 | 70 | .. | 60 | 376 |
| School 06/07/08 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 63 | 382 |

Number of boys aged 15 who were on roll in January 2009 : 70

Percentage of boys aged 15 who :

| | entered at least one qualification | achieved the Level 1 threshold | achieved the Level 2 threshold | achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics | Core Subject Indicator (2) | Average wider points score per pupil |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| School 2008/09 | 100 | 93 | 57 | 50 | 51 | 357 |
| LEA Area 2008/09 | 98 | 91 | 65 | 53 | 53 | 398 |
| Wales 2008/09 | 98 | 86 | 55 | 43 | 43 | 357 |
| School 07/08/09 | 99 | 91 | 64 | .. | 54 | 353 |
| School 06/07/08 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 52 | 345 |

Number of girls aged 15 who were on roll in January 2009 : 55

Percentage of girls aged 15 who :

| | entered at least one qualification | achieved the Level 1 threshold | achieved the Level 2 threshold | achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics | Core Subject Indicator (2) | Average wider points score per pupil |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| School 2008/09 | 96 | 93 | 76 | 69 | 64 | 404 |
| LEA Area 2008/09 | 99 | 95 | 77 | 68 | 68 | 455 |
| Wales 2008/09 | 99 | 91 | 66 | 51 | 50 | 401 |
| School 07/08/09 | 98 | 95 | 78 | .. | 68 | 404 |
| School 06/07/08 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 74 | 423 |

BUILTH WELLS HIGH SCHOOL

SSSP

Summary of Secondary School Performance (1)

LEA/School No. 666/4020

Pupils aged 15

| | Percentage of pupils aged 15 who : | | Percentage of boys aged 15 who : | | Percentage of girls aged 15 who : | |
|------------------|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| | achieved one or more ELQ (3) only | Left full time education without a qualification (4) | achieved one or more ELQ (3) only | Left full time education without a qualification (4) | achieved one or more ELQ (3) only | Left full time education without a qualification (4) |
| School 2008/09 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| LEA Area 2008/09 | 1 | 0.1 | 2 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.3 |
| Wales 2008/09 | 2 | 0.9 | 3 | 1.0 | 1 | 0.8 |
| School 07/08/09 | 0 | .. | 0 | .. | 0 | .. |
| School 06/07/08 | 0 | .. | 0 | .. | 0 | .. |

Pupils aged 17

| | Number of pupils aged 17 who were on roll in January 2009 : 36 | | Number of boys aged 17 who were on roll in January 2009 : 16 | | Number of girls aged 17 who were on roll in January 2009 : 20 | |
|------------------|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| | Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold | Average wider points score for pupils aged 17 | Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold | Average wider points score for pupils aged 17 | Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold | Average wider points score for pupils aged 17 |
| School 2008/09 | 100 | 941 | 100 | 905 | 100 | 970 |
| LEA Area 2008/09 | 97 | 711 | 95 | 700 | 98 | 720 |
| Wales 2008/09 | 96 | 688 | 95 | 656 | 97 | 715 |
| School 07/08/09 | .. | 852 | .. | 789 | .. | 901 |
| School 06/07/08 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |

BUILTH WELLS HIGH SCHOOL
School Type: Comprehensive 11-18
Linguistic Delivery: Bilingual

LEA/School No. 666/4020

Number of SEN Unit/Special Classes: 0

Number of Pupils on Roll in NCY 11: 124

Percentage of compulsory school age pupils eligible for FSM 2008/09: 4.7

Percentage of compulsory school age pupils eligible for FSM 07/08/09: 5.4

Percentage of compulsory school age pupils on SEN register: 10.9

Percentage of 15 year old pupils on SEN register: 12.2

Level of Welsh Bacallaureate Offered:

| | Advanced for Post-16 Pupils | Intermediate for post-16 Pupils | Pilot Foundation for post-16 Pupils | Pilot Intermediate for pre-16 Pupils | Pilot Foundation for pre-16 Pupils |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Welsh Bacallaureate Offered: Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes |

**Key Stage 4 free school meal benchmarking data for Builth Wells High School (6664020)
 (summary data)**

| Free school meals (FSM) benchmarking group (a) | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|---|------|------|------|
| Up to and including 10% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM | 6.8% | 4.7% | 5.4% |
| Over 10% and up to and including 15% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM | | | |
| Over 15% and up to and including 20% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM | | | |
| Over 20% and up to and including 30% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM | | | |
| Over 30% of pupils of statutory school age eligible for FSM | | | |

Source: Pupil Level Annual Schools' Census (PLASC)

(a) From 2009, a three-year average of these data is used to determine the free school meal benchmarking group for the school, and so these data are presented as a three-year average from that point (i.e. by taking the data for the current year, and also the two years prior in deriving the figure).

Summary of positions within the relevant FSM benchmarking group for each achievement (a)

| Subject | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|--|------|------|------|
| Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and Maths | . | 2 | 3 |
| Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the level 2 threshold | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the level 1 threshold | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the Core Subject Indicator | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Average wider points score across all subjects | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Percentage of 15 year olds achieving a level 2 qualification in English | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Percentage of entrants achieving a level 2 qualification in Welsh as First Language (b) | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Percentage of 15 year olds achieving a level 2 qualification in Mathematics | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Percentage of 15 year olds achieving a level 2 qualification in Science | 1 | 1 | 4 |

Absence data (a):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of half-day sessions missed due to absence | 1 | 1 | ~ |
|---|---|---|---|

Sources: Pupil Examination Performance Information and Pupil Level Annual Schools' Census (PLASC)

- (a) A rating of 1 means that school's position is within the highest 25% of schools in the relevant benchmarking group.
 A rating of 2 means that school's position is within the highest 50%, but not the highest 25% of schools in the relevant benchmarking group.
 A rating of 3 means that school's position is within the lowest 50%, but not the lowest 25% of schools in the relevant benchmarking group.
 A rating of 4 means that school's position is within the lowest 25% of schools in the relevant benchmarking group.
 This system applies to both subject performance and absence. A rating of 1 indicates above average performance and also above average absence within the relevant benchmarking group, while a rating of 4 indicates below average levels of each indicator.
- (b) For Welsh as First Language, the position is determined with reference to ALL relevant schools rather than just those in the benchmarking group.

The symbol "." means that data are not applicable.

The symbol "~" means that data are not available until late 2009.

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Inspectors spent a total of 40 days in the school and were joined by the school's deputy headteacher as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 97 lessons;
- registrations and assemblies; and
- some extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:

- staff, parents and governors before the inspection;
- senior managers, middle managers, teachers, support assistants and administrative staff;
- groups of pupils representing each year group;
- representatives of the school council; and
- business and other school partners.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- 42 replies to the parents' questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- samples of pupils' reports; and
- a range of pupils' work.

After the inspection, inspectors held meetings with departments, senior managers and governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

| Team member | Responsibilities |
|-----------------------|--|
| William Gwyn Thomas | Rgl KQ1 and KQ5, context, summary recommendations, appendix. |
| Gwynoro Jones | Lay Inspector. Contributing to all key questions. |
| Andrew Herdman | KQ2 |
| Peredur Francis | KQ3 |
| Gillian Unwin | KQ4 |
| Glyn Davies | KQ6 and contributing to science. |
| Huw Llewelyn | KQ7 |
| Lesley Ruth Wilkinson | English |
| David Hughes | Science |
| Dafydd Treharne | Welsh second language |
| Eric Forster | Art and design |
| Gareth Barker | History |
| Keith Hopkins | Information technology |
| Emyr W Roberts | Support. Contributing to all meetings and key questions. |
| Llinos John | Peer assessor. Contributing to all meetings and key questions. |
| Colin Rees | Nominee. Contributing to all meetings. |

Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.

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