

# PONTYPRIDD HIGH SCHOOL



## SCHOOL REVIEW : MAY 2012

**Commissioned by the**

**Director of Education**

**Led by Stuart Tucker**



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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**  
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

## Standards and Teaching in Lessons

The review team evaluated standards and teaching in the classroom. This was achieved by observing lessons, reviewing the work of pupils and through discussions with groups of learners.

24 lessons were observed during the visit across Key Stages 3 and 4. In terms of the standards of pupils' work, 29% were judged excellent, 63% good, 4% adequate and 4% unsatisfactory. The standards observed were consistent across the two key stages.

In terms of the quality of teaching, of the 24 lessons observed 50% were judged excellent, 42% good, 8% adequate and 0% unsatisfactory.

These are very impressive statistics!

In most lessons, teachers plan well to ensure that learning is structured effectively. They use a wide range of strategies that successfully engage pupils' interest. They employ skilful questioning to encourage pupils to think more deeply and to develop their understanding. Working relationships between teachers and pupils are very good in nearly all lessons. In a majority of lessons, teachers adapt work suitably for pupils with additional needs. In a very few lessons, a lack of challenge, slow pace, and ineffective questioning mean that pupils do not make enough progress. Nearly all teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly. Most teachers provide pupils with specific feedback to help them to improve their work. They set appropriate targets for improvement and encourage pupils to devise their own learning goals. In lessons, teachers give good advice and guidance to pupils to help them to develop their skills and understanding.

Pupils feel safe and very well cared for in school. Almost all say that they have someone to talk to if they need help and nearly all mentioned the commitment of staff and rated the quality of their teachers as the most important factor in enjoying their school life. It is clear that pupils in Pontypridd High School are happy and enjoy their time in school.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are interested in their work and are keen to make progress. Pupils arrive punctually for lessons and behave very well in class and around the school. Pupils' attendance when compared with that of similar schools is as expected. Over the last 5 years, overall attendance has risen year on year. When the 'free school meals' measure is taken into account, the school is placed in the 3rd quartile, when compared to all schools in Wales. The school's attendance targets for the next 3 years are reasonable (without being over ambitious) and will, if achieved, ensure a continuous improvement over an eight year period.

The School Council is very well established and gives pupils a good opportunity to consider a range of suitable issues and to participate in decisions about aspects of school life. Council members have contributed to improvements in the school environment and have made genuine contributions to the development of whole school policies, plans and initiatives.

## **Leadership, line management, self evaluation and planning for improvement**

The headteacher and senior leadership team are clear about the priorities they wish the school to pursue and are committed to reducing the impact of the socio-economic influences that arise from the local community. There is clarity in the school's strategic direction and this has been communicated to the school as a whole. There is a school-wide consensus around the school's needs, its priorities and how these might be achieved.

The governing body (GB) has set up a Standards Committee that will give strategic oversight and provide critical friendship for the leadership team. This group have considerable school improvement experience and provides good support and impetus to the school based drive to improve standards.

The school is bringing into place a well considered restructure of TLR allowances. Central to this restructure is the formation of a Standards team whose remit is appropriately to support pupil progress from Y6 to Y11 and close the gap between the performance of vulnerable learners and other pupils. This structure has considerable potential to raise standards.

The school has recently introduced a schedule of departmental reviews where each department is reviewed over a two year cycle. These reviews appropriately involve a range of evidence gathering activities including lesson observation, book looks and gathering learner voice. Recommendations are left with departments at the end of the review. These recommendations are considered and an action plan is produced. Importantly, progress with the action plan is reviewed regularly in order to gauge progress.

The school has adopted a consistent format for the writing of self-evaluation reports at whole school and departmental levels that sensibly follows the three key questions of the new inspection framework. The self-evaluation reports scrutinised indicate a degree of consistency in how departments have responded to this requirement. In the best examples, the statements about strengths are evaluative and are supported by clear references to evidence. Departmental plans include a good mix of departmental priorities with whole school priorities.

Senior leaders understand the importance of monitoring the progress of improvement priorities through their regular line management meetings with middle leaders. A well-considered pattern of link meetings involving mainly the headteacher and the deputy headteacher with line-managed heads of department is in place. Curriculum leaders see these meetings as a source of support and as an opportunity to discuss issues that are of importance to the department. There is an agreed agenda for the meetings and useful actions are recorded as outcomes. These meetings are effective in providing support and challenge to the middle leadership group. There is a high level of consistency in the conduct and impact of these meetings over the year.

Departments receive good support through the provision of whole school data streams and discussions with their experienced senior link to produce their own analyses of departmental performance at key stage 3 and key stage 4. Many of their 'commentaries' are sharp, accurate and appropriately evaluative.

The school also schedules opportunities for particular groups to meet; these include regular Heads of Department meetings and the recently introduced and well attended 'Team Teach' sessions

Agendas for weekly SLT meetings are appropriately focused on standards and progress. Action points are agreed and documented. These meetings support the SLT in gathering evidence about progress with the school's key priorities. The SLT have given high priority this year to outcomes at KS4. There is a high profile set of strategies for raising attainment that are being vigorously pursued to support learners in Y11.

## **The use of data for track progress, self-evaluation and planning for improvement**

The school has in place a sound policy for assessment, recording and reporting. The leadership responsibility for data analysis and pupil tracking is clear and the work in this area is effective. Good work has been done to develop the data available to the SLT and middle leaders and there is increasing familiarity across the school with raw, value-added and comparative data.

Good work has been taken forward to develop an electronic database that records a wide range of important quantitative information about each pupil. A positive feature of this data and its use by staff, is a clear focus on the progress made by individual pupils. The system has the potential to make a significant contribution to securing more rapid improvement and to raising standards overall.

The provision of guidelines to support departments' scrutiny of data at KS3 and KS4, has brought greater consistency as to how data is analysed as part of departmental self-evaluation. Departments have produced written commentaries, many of which draw suitable conclusions. This analysis of data provides a good reference point for discussion about performance with the headteacher and deputy headteacher at the start of the autumn term.

Departments use data, based on CATS scores, to set targets for individual pupils and cohorts. In the best practice these targets are informed by a good understanding of the circumstances of each learner. Senior leaders work expertly with middle leaders to add an extra challenge, where appropriate, to the outcomes targeted. Nearly all pupils are aware of their targets and importantly, what they need to do to achieve their levels/grades.

Some departments, such as science, have their own very effective tracking system which ensures that no learners are left behind. The school derived data also supports the targeting of individuals and groups for interventions. This is currently more evident in Y9 and Y11 than in other year groups. The senior team link provides very good support and challenge for the target setting process and together with the newly recruited Standards Team should make an even more significant contribution to the school's focus on raising standards.

# ENGLISH DEPARTMENT REVIEW

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Good** – Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement

Pupils are mostly engaged in learning within lessons, with most maintaining an active part in lessons throughout the learning experience. All lessons were effectively structured to ensure that all learners made at least some progress, with most learners making very good progress. Pupil behaviour was exemplary: there is a clear sense that all pupils appreciate the importance of working hard and doing well in lessons.

Pupils are ready to make their opinions heard and readily participate in a range of oracy activities with confidence. They make valid and, often, highly pertinent contributions, though sometimes initial responses are brief. This is usually addressed by continued probing through apt teacher questioning. Pupils' written work is mostly good and, at times, excellent. Pupils were able to write in a range of styles and for a range of purposes, exhibiting good vocabulary choices and, for many, a clear sense of purpose and audience.

Some pupils exhibited strong analytical and evaluative reading skills. There were excellent levels of consistency in the use of reading response strategies: across ability and age range. This was an outstanding feature.

There have been steady and purposeful improvements in Key Stage 3 results. There are strong signs that intervention programmes, targeting specific learner groups and improved use of data will have a substantive impact in the short and medium term. Excellent work has been done in improving results for the current Year 11, who have a significantly lower grade expectation level than previous years, and for Year 9. There is an evident culture of pushing students to reach and go beyond their target, importantly evident in the early stages of Key Stage 3.

## Quality of Teaching and Assessment

**Excellent** – Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice

The department is well resourced with significant improvements and innovations being integrated into recently revamped schemes of work. Resources are engaging and stimulating, especially in these newly revised areas. The department makes very good use of ICT resources and has embarked on a substantive organisation of shared resources.

The planning of lessons is excellent – all staff skilfully match strategy to the skills being developed and to the needs of the learners. All teachers consistently outline the aims of the lessons and re-visit these aims at the end of each session to verify the success in achieving them.

There was a very effective range of activities employed within lessons. These activities were effective in engaging students and pupils report that they enjoyed both the type and the variety of opportunities they experience in lessons. The consistency of the use of peer and self-assessment was excellent. The effectiveness of these reflections was very good.

All teachers were strongly aware of the targets for all their students and tracked their progress conscientiously. All pupils' books were marked up to date. Most teachers offered clear written advice enabling students to hit their targets. This was also evident in lesson observation and pupil voice.

## **THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Excellent** – Many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice

The department is very effectively led with an innovative and highly organised Head of Department. Clear purposeful department minutes reveal a strong focus on the school and department priorities. The Departmental Development Plan shows well-chosen strategic vision, based on focused analysis and evaluation of data and provision. It is evident that this plan is being acted upon and is having a strong impact on improving standards. Planning involves all members of the department and there is some highly effective delegation of responsibility. Self-evaluation is excellent, evidenced through the self-evaluation report, through a very comprehensive and analytical book review and focused pupil voice exercises.

## **MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT REVIEW**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN KEY STAGE 3**

**Good** – Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement

- Excellent or good standards of achievement are evident in all lessons observed and in all of the pupil portfolios viewed.
- The majority of pupils are developing an appropriate knowledge and understanding which is clearly matched to the Key Stage 3 Mathematics curriculum, and to the Skills Framework.
- Numeracy skills amongst pupils observed are commensurate with their mathematical ability.
- All pupils are able to recall prior learning, some to a greater extent than others, depending on their mathematical ability.
- More able pupils in Year 7 are able to calculate and interpret averages, comparing 2 sets of data. Less able pupils are able to calculate averages, with support. All pupils use a calculator efficiently.
- More able pupils in Year 8 are able to analyse line graphs and extract required information. Less able pupils can continue sequences of numbers, plot co-ordinates in all 4 quadrants and simplify expressions by collecting like terms.
- More able pupils in Year 9 can solve a variety of linear equations and inequalities (including those with unknowns on both sides) and use trial and improvement to solve quadratic equations.
- All pupils work collaboratively in pairs or groups when discussing key points in learning.
- The majority of pupils produce a set of very good quality written work. This work is most evident in their portfolios.
- In the four lessons observed, the standards of achievement are excellent in 1 lesson and good in 3 lessons. In the lesson judged as excellent, the clarity in the way pupils explained their ideas orally was impressive and the productive way in which they worked in pairs. In the same lesson, sampling of pupils' work was used to share success criteria, and as a discussion point

to aid effective self evaluation. In the lessons judged as good, pupils demonstrated good standards in literacy, using key words to summarise the lesson in writing.

- Overall, the quality of work in pupil portfolios is very good. Presentation of methods is clear, exemplar answers evident when required, and almost all answers, pupil, peer or teacher marked. Pupils are given an adequate number of practice questions to complete to consolidate learning, and helpful teacher corrections aid this. Pupils with SEN are provided with numerous opportunities for developing skills in basic numeracy, multiplication tables in particular, and their progress is monitored carefully. Key mathematical terms are listed in some pupil portfolios.
- Pupils show a good attitude towards their work, and take pride in it.
- Upon questioning, pupils were aware of the topics that needed further attention in order for them to improve.

### **QUALITY OF TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT IN KEY STAGE 3**

- In almost all lessons, teacher exposition is clear and well-structured; teachers use ICT effectively to clarify their explanations.
- All teachers have good subject knowledge and have a sound understanding of the requirements of the Key Stage 3 Mathematics curriculum.
- All lessons:
  - are activity-based and provide very good opportunities for pupils to apply prior knowledge in new and engaging contexts;
  - allow pupils to use skills in oral and written communication, in pairs or in groups;
  - benefit from a range of excellent quality, innovative and engaging resources.
  - In one lesson, LSAs provide enthusiastic and valuable support.
- All teachers:
  - plan effectively; teachers' plans are detailed, follow a consistent format across the department and include activities matched to the types of learning required from pupils;
  - ask good questions that have the potential to stimulate pupils to think; in the majority of cases, the teacher asks enough questions to involve all pupils in providing answers and this helps the teachers to target their support for pupils more effectively.
- In all lessons, the teacher controls pupil activities effectively, challenging pupils immediately should they not maintain concentration and effort.
- In all lessons:
  - pupils were on task immediately on entry through the completion of relevant starter activities;
  - learning objectives are shared and discussed with pupils, and in most lessons key words highlighted;
  - pupils' understanding is consolidated during an effective plenary;
  - relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent and this helps the teacher use praise effectively to maintain the pace of learning;
- Key Stage 3 Challenge Tasks are being developed across the department to develop skills in problem solving and to incorporate opportunities for kinaesthetic learning.
- Opportunities for developing literacy skills are built into all lessons, through reading pieces of writing connected to the lesson objectives, inclusion of worded questions and writing comments to evaluate learning for example.
- In all lessons observed, it was clear that a thorough assessment had been done when planning, of pupils' prior knowledge.

- Cross curricular links were made in some lessons.
- A buddy system is organised for small groups of Year 7 pupils, where they are withdrawn from lessons for short periods to work on a one to one basis with Year 12 pupils to further develop numeracy skills. Baseline and final testing is used to gauge progress.
- Word walls are displayed in most Maths class rooms.

## Assessment of and for learning

**Excellent** – Many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice

- Pupils' portfolios are carefully marked and marking/comment focuses on the development of pupils' understanding of key concepts. In the majority of cases, pupils are set subject specific targets for improvement regularly, and thorough teacher corrections address misconceptions. Pupils are referred to the 'My Maths' website in some cases for further practice on challenging topics. Any unfinished work is highlighted where necessary.
- Praise is used effectively, in the monitoring of pupils' class work.
- In some cases, teachers make reference to the extent to which the pupil has met a previously set target.
- Teachers generally ask good quality questions and observe pupils closely as they work individually, in pairs and in groups.
- Thorough assessment of prior learning had taken place in all cases, during lesson planning.
- In a majority of lessons, pupils compare their own progress against the learning objectives well, giving coherent comments on their understanding orally or in writing.
- End of unit 'Traffic Light' assessment sheets are used to promote self evaluation, and in most portfolios there is evidence of pupils and teachers using a traffic light system to evaluate their learning at the end of each lesson.
- In some portfolios, a data summary sheet was seen for pupils, providing them with their previous year results in Mathematics, together with their current end of year target levels and spaces for them to record assessment results and targets throughout the year.
- End of unit tests were seen in all portfolios, which had been teacher marked thoroughly.
- Opportunities for peer assessment were built into all lessons, as all tasks were centred on pair or group work. All pupils were confident to do this, although some were more inclined to correct each other's answers than others.
- Departmental spreadsheets are used to record assessment results by all teachers and contain CATs predictive data, free school meals information and residual figures. All teachers attached a data profile to their lesson plan, confirming that this assessment data had been used to inform planning.
- Level descriptors in the form of 'Where are we now?' displays are present in most class rooms to make the levelling process transparent to pupils.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN KEY STAGE 4 (GCSE)

**Good** - Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement

- Excellent or good standards of achievement are evident in all lessons observed and in all of the pupil portfolios viewed.
- The majority of pupils are developing an appropriate knowledge and understanding which is clearly matched to GCSE specifications.



- Numeracy skills amongst pupils observed are commensurate with their mathematical ability.
- All pupils are able to recall prior learning, some to a greater extent than others, depending on their mathematical ability.
- More able pupils in Year 10 can use tree diagrams and sample spaces to list outcomes of an experiment and can use the OR and AND rules for mutually exclusive and independent events to calculate resulting probabilities.
- Less able Year 11 pupils can solve one step and two step linear equations, substitute into expressions, simplify expressions by collecting like terms and expand brackets.
- All pupils work collaboratively in pairs or groups when discussing key points in learning.
- The majority of pupils produce a set of very good quality written work. This work is most evident in their portfolios.
- In the two lessons observed, the standards of achievement are excellent in 1 lesson and good in 1 lesson. In the lesson judged as excellent, the way in which learning was pupil led and the way in which pupils self and peer assessed their work was impressive. In the lesson judged as good, pupils demonstrated good standards in literacy, interpreting written instructions correctly.
- Overall, the quality of work in pupil portfolios is very good. Presentation of methods is clear, exemplar answers evident when required, and almost all answers, pupil, peer or teacher marked. Pupils are given the adequate number of practice questions to complete to consolidate learning, and helpful teacher corrections aid this. Regular exam style questions are attempted and key mathematical terms are listed in some pupil portfolios.
- Pupils show a good attitude towards their work, and take pride in it.
- Pupils are aware of their target grades.
- In some cases, there is evidence of pupils self evaluating their learning at the end of a lesson and at the end of a unit of work.
- An early entry strategy is being trialled with Year 11 pupils. Following January 2012 exams, 40% of pupils have achieved between an A\* and C grade, 91% have achieved between an A\* and G grade. The CATs predictive data for this cohort show that these results are above what can reasonably be expected based on their ability. A small group of pupils are now being entered for the higher tier, and others who have missed the C grade so far, for a resit in June 2012. For those pupils who have achieved the C grade, and for whom the higher tier would be too challenging, an extra qualification is offered; Microsoft Office Specialist. Following the sitting of these exams, pupils are re-set accordingly. The fact that a number of pupils have finished their Maths lessons and are now studying for the extra qualification has led to smaller classes. Lower ability pupils are following a modular scheme. Most suitable learning pathways of pupils have obviously been considered here.
- Year 11 target groups are identified and provided with extra Maths support during registration sessions.

## **QUALITY OF TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT IN KEY STAGE 4 (GCSE)**

- The quality of teaching was excellent in both lessons observed.
- Teacher exposition is always clear and is suitably enhanced by their use of ICT.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent in all cases.
- All lessons:
  - are activity-based and provide very good opportunities for pupils to apply prior knowledge in new and engaging contexts;
  - allow pupils to use skills in oral and written communication, in pairs or in groups;
  - benefit from a range of excellent quality, innovative and engaging resources.

- In one lesson, LSAs provide enthusiastic and valuable support.
- All teachers:
  - plan effectively; teachers' plans are detailed, follow a consistent format across the department and include activities matched to the types of learning required from pupils;
  - ask good questions that have the potential to stimulate pupils to think; in the majority of cases, the teacher asks enough questions to involve all pupils in providing answers and this helps the teachers to target their support for pupils more effectively.
- In all lessons, the teacher controls pupil activities effectively, challenging pupils should they not maintain concentration and effort.
- In all lessons:
  - pupils were on task immediately on entry through the completion of relevant starter activities;
  - learning objectives are shared and discussed with pupils, and in most lessons key words highlighted;
  - pupils' understanding is consolidated during an effective plenary;
  - relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent and this helps the teacher use praise effectively to maintain the pace of learning;
- Opportunities for developing literacy skills were built into both lessons, through reading pieces of writing connected to the lesson objectives and discussion of key mathematical terms.
- In all lessons observed, it was clear that a thorough assessment had been done when planning of pupils' prior knowledge.
- Revision notes in the form of 'Flyers' support pupils in the revision process for external exams.
- To make work more relevant to pupils, the plan of the GCSE course is shared with them, and included in their portfolios.
- The department are beginning to compile and use a bank of resources designed to develop pupils' ability to answer functional skills type questions.

## Assessment of and for learning

**Excellent** – Many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice

- Pupils' portfolios are carefully marked and marking/comment focuses on the development of pupils' understanding of key concepts. In the majority of cases, pupils are set subject specific targets for improvement regularly, and thorough teacher corrections address misconceptions. Any unfinished work is highlighted where necessary.
- Praise is used effectively, in the monitoring of pupils' class work.
- Teachers generally ask good quality questions and observe pupils closely as they work individually, in pairs and in groups.
- Thorough assessment of prior learning had taken place in all cases, during lesson planning.
- Opportunities for peer assessment were built into all lessons, as all tasks were centred on pair or group work. All pupils were confident to do this, although some were more inclined to correct each other's answers than others.
- Departmental spreadsheets are used to record assessment results by all teachers and contain CATs predictive data, free school meals information and residual figures. All teachers attached a data profile to their lesson plan, confirming that this assessment data had been used to inform planning.

- Marking of past paper questions is thorough and careful teacher corrections address misconceptions.
- All teachers use observations to check pupils' understanding during group work. The teachers use information gained in these ways to direct support effectively to where it is most needed.

## Outcome of pupil interviews

- All pupils were able to identify the topics they are currently working on.
- All pupils identified a common lesson structure used in Mathematics lessons, comprising of a starter task (usually recapping on prior learning), teacher led examples, practice exercises and a self evaluation, usually using traffic lights at the end of the lesson. Year 10 pupils stated that completion of past paper questions formed a large part of their lessons also.
- All pupils felt that the activities completed in lessons were varied.
- All pupils stated that the majority of work that they complete is done in pairs.
- All bar two pupils questioned felt that they were challenged in Mathematics lessons.
- All pupils were confident to state that all teachers offered their time outside of lessons to support their learning.
- All pupils stated that they completed a formal assessment at the end of each unit.
- Year 10 pupils explained that past papers were collected and monitored on regular basis.
- Pupils confirmed that feedback was given by teachers in bullet points or in a 2 stars and a wish format.
- All pupils felt that Mathematics was important and could think of examples of where they used Mathematics in other subjects. Year 10 pupils could also identify skills such as communication and ICT that they develop during their Maths lessons.

## THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Excellent** – Many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice

The major strength of the department lies in the ethos of sharing at its core. It seems that resources, strategies and ideas are exchanged daily as a matter of course and this is promoted by and exemplified in the actions of the head of department.

- in both key stages:
  - strong leadership has resulted in consistent lesson planning and format of lessons and embedding of certain initiatives for raising attainment, such as traffic light pupil self assessment;
  - leaders provide a clear vision and strategic direction, good practices have been put in place, effectively supported by good quality schemes of work;
  - leaders work effectively with staff to provide guidance and training;
  - leaders intervene to address issues identified through departmental self-evaluation.
- In key stages 3 and 4, leaders have rigorous procedures in place for target setting and monitoring pupils' progress towards. Through the analysis of residual figures during performance management and informal meetings throughout the academic year, staff are accountable for the results of their classes and success of their pupils in achieving targets.
- Through the requirement to input assessment results into SIMs teachers are encouraged to analyse assessment data and use this to inform planning.

- A very useful survey of pupils' opinions was carried out online, gathering information such as whether pupils find lessons interesting, whether they are encouraged to ask questions and are able to work well independently.
- Every member of the Mathematics department has been observed at least twice in this academic year and judgements made on progress and teaching in each case. An overall analysis of these outcomes has also been completed. Judgements made are consistent with those made in this review.
- The DDP follows the format set at a whole school level and contains necessary details on how planning priorities can be met, such as organising a Year 10 gender split to improve KS4 performance and devising KS3 Challenge tasks to improve teaching and learning. Success criteria are succinct and quantitative where necessary.
- Formal department meetings are rarely organised and minuted as the department work closely together and communicate effectively on a day to day basis. Minutes that are produced demonstrate that discussion takes place regarding results, target setting, the DDP and SEF.
- Year 9 and 10 book reviews were carried out by the head of department in October 2011, and issues highlighted such as the consistent use of traffic light assessment sheets and limited opportunities evident for the development of skills. Encouragement for teachers to improve the clarity of their comments detailing how pupils are to improve was also made. Comments in this context are consistent with the findings of this review.
- Meetings between the head of department and SMT link have taken place on 3 occasions, in this academic year. Discussions have taken place relating to the Departmental Development Plan and Self Evaluation Form. Minutes have been written detailing progress against planning priorities from the DDP. Progress reviews include comparisons to quantitative targets/success criteria, together with justifications and descriptions of strategies being used in the department. Accountability is evident through the process of making judgements (1 – Excellent to 4 – Unsatisfactory) against each of the planning priorities.
- Effective delegation is taking place, with staff taking ownership for writing challenge tasks and assessments.

## Review of the 'Clubhouse' Literacy Program

**Good** - Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement, though there are excellent prospects for progress.

The school has devised a well organised literacy programme which encompasses specifically identified skills and a range of teaching strategies to address those skills across the curriculum. This programme is to be staged across 3-4 terms and has been effectively delivered to date. There is strong evidence of the strategies being used by a growing number of departments and a good level of recognition of the strategies by pupils, both in lessons and as part of the pupil voice exercises who reported a wider range of subjects using some of the strategies than the first literacy evaluation undertaken earlier this year. Wisely, the school has decided to adjust the pace of rolling out the training to ensure that strategies are fully embedded, and to give the greatest focus on the writing strategies.

Literacy intervention programmes operating through the 'Skills Room' are an excellent feature. This is strongly targeted, employs a wide range of engaging strategies and is producing excellent improvement in reading ages. The cooperation of Humanities departments in releasing pupils

needing extra literacy support indicates a strong level of togetherness in tackling this issue. This sense of unity and purpose was also strongly evidence in the creative and whole-hearted use of literacy strategies observed in non-English lessons. The school has carefully planned the return from the intervention and makes excellent use of Pupil Voice and teacher judgement to monitor the needs of students returning from the intervention programme.

The school is undertaking an exciting project with Primary feeders which, though in its infancy, has the potential to have significant impact on the teaching strategies, pupil experiences and strategic cooperation of both primary and secondary centres.

The initiatives have been lead with distinction by the Literacy Co-ordinator and the Head of English. Their management and planning is an excellent feature of this provision.

## **Multi-Agency Partnership Forum**

This multi-agency group meets on a weekly basis and involves the Police, Attendance and Well Being Officer, Youth Coach, B.T.F.T. Key Worker, Behaviour Support Officer, and a representative of the 'People and Work Unit' (an independent action research charity). The group is chaired by an Assistant Headteacher from the school.

The group liaises on case studies involving individual or groups of students. It is also involved in designing, implementing and evaluating community based projects.

This is an excellent example of highly effective multi-agency co-operation. Individuals work well together and the forum is an integral part of whole school life. There is clear evidence of positive outcomes, both in the work done with individual youngsters and also in the various programmes developed.

If this was an Estyn inspection, I suggest that the work of this group might be considered 'Sector Leading'.

## **'Teachmeet' – An Example of a Professional Learning Community**

This is a forum where all staff meet twice a term to share new teaching strategies. They are organised and chaired by teaching staff outside of the leadership team. All contributors do so on a voluntary basis, presenting either a new strategy or providing feedback on their classroom experience of trialling the strategies of previous contributors.

The meeting observed was an outstanding example of a PLC. A range of high quality contributions delivered in a very supportive professional environment. The very positive atmosphere at the meeting, reflected the ethos and culture amongst staff that was encountered throughout the review.

Once again, if this was an Estyn inspection, I suggest that this professional learning community might be considered 'Sector Leading'.