

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Goetre Junior School
Rowan Way, Gurnos Estate
Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 9PB**

School Number: 6752035

Date of Inspection: 27/04/09

by

**Michael T. Ridout
78730**

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Goetre Junior 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 Goetre Junior School took place between 27/04/09 and 30/04/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by Michael T. Ridout undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **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	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
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

Contents	Page
Context	1
Summary	2
Recommendations	6
Standards	7
Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?	7
The quality of education and training	9
Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	9
Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	12
Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	14
Leadership and management	18
Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	18
Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	19
Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	20
Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning	22
English	22
Mathematics	23
Information communications technology	24
History	25
Art and design	26
Music	27
School's response to the inspection	28
Appendices	29
1 Basic information about the school	29
2 School data and indicators	29
3 National Curriculum assessments results	30
4 Evidence base of the inspection	31
5 Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	32

Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Goetre Junior is a community school for boys and girls aged seven to eleven years. In total there are 212 pupils on roll, organised in nine classes. The local authority provides three learning resource base classes (LRB). These cater for a wide range of additional learning needs (ALN), including learners with complex special educational needs (SEN), and currently provides for 33 pupils from across the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil. The average class size excluding the LRBs is 29.8. Overall there are 11.6 teachers, including the head teacher and one part-time teacher. There are seven learning support assistants (LSA).
- 2 The school is on the edge of the Gurnos housing estate on the outskirts of Merthyr Tydfil. The majority of homes are local authority or social housing with a few owner occupied homes. The school describes the locality it serves as economically and socially disadvantaged. The area is a designated Communities First area.
- 3 Around 59 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is well above national and local averages. A small number is 'looked after' by the local authority. There are very few from ethnic minorities and for whom English is an additional language. No pupils come from homes where Welsh is the first language. English is the predominant language spoken and the school teaches Welsh as a second language.
- 4 Assessment data indicates that pupils' attainment on entry covers the full range and is below average overall. Subsequent assessments indicate that a significant number, around 68 per cent, have ALN. This is a much higher proportion to that found in most primary schools. Two pupils have a statement of SEN.
- 5 Since the last inspection in April 2003 the number on roll has declined with a reduction in the number of classes. The proportion of pupils with ALN has increased from 46 to 68 per cent. All classes are housed in the main school building, a number of demountable classrooms are used for school and community activities and others are redundant. In the main building some classrooms have been refurbished recently. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People, Investors in Families and Healthy Schools accreditation. Following the promotion of the head teacher to another post an acting head teacher was appointed in January 2009.

The school's priorities and targets

- 6 The school's motto is 'Giving our best to be our best!' Its work is guided by the following mission statement:

'Goetre Junior School is a caring community where every child and adult feels valued, respected and listened to. We promote a culture of continuous learning in all aspects of school life through teamwork, collaboration and shared responsibilities.'

- 7 The school development plan (SDP) for 2008 – 2009 identifies the following goals to:
- raise standards in reading, mathematics, information communication technology (ICT), music, Welsh second language, design technology and develop enquiry skills in science;
 - raise standards in teaching and learning;
 - develop the effective use of assessment for learning strategies;
 - improve provision for ALN;
 - strengthen links with the community;
 - develop a transition plan including a focus on achieving consistency in assessment;
 - develop and implement a management cycle, and
 - improve the physical environment.

Summary

- 8 Goetre Junior School provides a stimulating curriculum and is a caring and inclusive community. The acting head teacher skilfully ensures clear leadership and effective management. A renewed sense of purpose and educational direction is now established and this is beginning to resolve shortcomings in some aspects of provision and standards.

Table of grades awarded

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

- 9 The inspection team agrees with the school's self-evaluation in key question three and awards one grade lower in key questions one, two, four, five, six and seven.

Standards

- 10 In 2008 the results of the end of Key stage 2 (KS2) teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science were well below national figures and those for similar schools having more that 32 per cent free school meals.
- 11 Compared with 2003 the school's results have improved in English and science but the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science remains well below average. However, comparisons with the national picture should be treated with caution as around two thirds of learners have ALN.
- 12 In thirty-six lessons or parts of lessons observed, standards in the subjects inspected were judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	44%	47%	6%	-

- 13 These figures are comparable with the last inspection in 2003. They are below the figures published in Her Majesty's Chief Inspectors' (HMCI) Annual Report for 2007-2008 where standards in primary schools in Wales are reported to be Grade 2 in 84 per cent of lessons and Grade 1 in 12 per cent.
- 14 Standards in the six subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) inspected were judged as follows:

Subjects:	Key stage 2
English	Grade 2
Mathematics	Grade 3
Information communications technology	Grade 2
History	Grade 3
Art and design	Grade 2
Music	Grade 3

- 15 Since the last inspection standards have improved in English and declined in art and music.
- 16 Levels of achievement for many learners are hampered by their limited competence in the key skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing and numeracy. A majority make at least good progress from a low base, particularly in literacy and ICT.
- 17 Most learners develop bilingual skills well.
- 18 The few learners for whom English is an additional language are well integrated and make steady progress in communication skills.
- 19 The high proportion of pupils with ALN, including those with SEN, make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans (IEP). The progress of more able pupils is not always in line with their capabilities.
- 20 Behaviour is good overall and where lessons are interesting the majority demonstrate enthusiastic attitudes to learning. However, the development of pupils' independent learning skills is at an early stage of development.

- 21 Levels of attendance average 88 per cent for the last twelve months. This represents a decline since the last inspection. The annual rate remains well below the national average and figures for similar schools. A minority of pupils are regularly late and their arrival often causes disruption to lessons.
- 22 Learners progress well in their personal, social, moral and wider development. The vast majority are considerate, show respect for property and demonstrate increasing levels of self-confidence.
- 23 Learners have a good understanding of equal opportunities and show increasing respect for diversity within society. The school prepares them well for effective participation in the community but their awareness of the workplace is less well developed.

The quality of education and training

- 24 In thirty-six lessons or parts of lessons the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	55%	39%	3%	-

- 25 These figures represent a decline compared with the last inspection in 2003. They are well below the national picture as reported in HMCI's Annual Report 2007 – 2008, where the quality of teaching is reported to be Grade 2 or better in 83 per cent of lessons with 16 per cent having outstanding features.
- 26 All members of staff successfully establish good working relationships with pupils that foster learning well. In around half the lessons observed, teaching was effective with teachers setting high expectations, praising success and managing lessons so that learners understand what is expected of them.
- 27 In a minority of lessons, however, less rigour in guiding the learning results in a slower pace and a few mainly older boys become unsettled and lose direction in their studies.
- 28 Taken overall, a good range of teaching methods and organisational strategies is used, but in some cases the practical aids to learning that secure the active involvement of pupils and focus their thinking are not always used fully.
- 29 The frameworks used for lesson planning allow opportunity to evaluate pupils' learning, but the use made of assessments to adapt learning in line with their needs is not always well enough developed to ensure progress is maintained.
- 30 The school has recently put in place systematic procedures to track learners' achievements. This information is used increasingly well, for example, to focus additional support and to group learners for teaching.
- 31 Teachers are beginning to use a range of strategies to help ensure that learners understand how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. This is an area for development identified in the SDP.
- 32 The quality of end of year reports is good.

- 33 The school provides a wide range of relevant and stimulating curricular opportunities that cater well for the wide range of learners' needs. It builds particularly successfully on much that the community offers. The range of out of school visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities is a particular strength.
- 34 The strong focus on developing learners' basic skills in literacy is an effective feature but the provision to promote numeracy skills is less well developed. There is a good focus on developing the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT but these skills are not always developed fully.
- 35 The provision for learners' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Daily assemblies include an appropriate act of collective worship and fully comply with legal requirements.
- 36 The school promotes bilingual skills well and Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is well reflected in its life and work.
- 37 There are positive links with parents and effective partnerships with the local community, other schools and colleges.
- 38 The provision to promote education in sustainable development and global citizenship is at an early stage of development.
- 39 The school is strongly committed to tackling social disadvantage and ensuring equal opportunities. This is exemplified very well through its extremely effective collaboration with the People in Communities Project. This provision is an exemplar of excellent practice in tackling disadvantage and raising aspirations.
- 40 The school is successful in providing high quality pastoral support and guidance for learners through its well structured personal and social education programme. It plans and manages care arrangements well.
- 41 The monitoring of attendance and punctuality is not fully effective and is contrary to statutory requirements. The governing body (GB) has already set a target to improve attendance and the school works closely with the education welfare service to promote regular attendance.
- 42 The school monitors behaviour well but although procedures to monitor performance have been improved they are not yet sufficiently embedded in practice.
- 43 The school has clear arrangements to ensure learners' well-being when in its care. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken but some procedures to promote safety are not consistently implemented. A number of health and safety issues were discussed with the school during the inspection.
- 44 The overall quality of provision for pupils with ALN is good. The provision to promote language development is very good and has a positive impact in improving literacy skills across the school.
- 45 The school, in partnership with the local authority, provides three LRB classes for learners with a wide range of complex SEN. This provision caters well for pupils'

needs but the complex range of needs in one class presents the school with particular challenges.

- 46 The school provides additional support particularly well for learners whose behaviour impedes their progress and that of others. There is much very good practice and the overall provision is an exemplar.

Leadership and management

- 47 The acting head teacher is particularly successful in establishing a clear direction for the school's life and work. Whole school values, aims and objectives are clearly stated so that members of staff understand the purpose of initiatives and they convey a shared sense of purpose in their work.
- 48 There is clear evidence of the GB becoming more proactive in recent times. It has a strategic plan to improve provision. This plan resolves the issue of a substantial budget surplus. Furthermore, the GB has taken positive steps to ensure that it meets almost all of its statutory obligations.
- 49 A culture of self-evaluation is becoming established. The acting head teacher has refined the SDP with a clear focus on key targets but the school has yet to establish self-evaluation arrangements that are securely based on first hand evidence.
- 50 There is limited evidence to indicate measurable improvements in standards since the last inspection. Improvements are evident in the management structure and budget planning is clear, but shortcomings remain in planning and assessment procedures, promoting key skills and in recording absence.
- 51 The deployment of teaching and support staff is appropriate but currently there are not enough members of staff in relation to the number of pupils and the financial resources available. Large classes in the main school limit the effectiveness of learning.
- 52 The provision of learning resources is good and there is sufficient accommodation.
- 53 There are few established procedures to review resources and ensure value for money. Since the last inspection there is a trend of relatively low standards and limited evidence of educational improvements. However, taking into account recent improvements in educational leadership and the good response of pupils, the school provides sound value for money in a challenging local context.

Recommendations

- 54 The school, with the support of appropriate agencies should continue to implement the SDP and:
- R1 raise standards in mathematics, history and music and improve further levels of competence in using key skills;*
- R2 raise levels of attendance and improve punctuality;

- R3 build on good practice to improve the rigour of teaching, including the use of assessment in planning to meet fully the range of pupils' individual learning needs;*
- R4 continue to ensure the effectiveness of strategic management and formalise the contribution of the GB;
- R5 ensure statutory requirements are met for the recording of absence and ensure that health and safety issues drawn to governors' attention are resolved;
- R6 embed managerial procedures and establish rigorous self-evaluation arrangements that include focused monitoring and specific plans of action to promote further improvement.*

* Elements of recommendations one, three and six are identified in the SDP.

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving the 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 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 55 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question grade 2. This is because the school did not identify the variations in standards revealed in this inspection.
- 56 In 2008 the results of the end of KS2 teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science were well below national figures and those for similar schools having more that 32 per cent free school meals.
- 57 Compared with 2003 the school's results have improved in English and science but the proportion attaining the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science remains well below average. The overall trend in results is flat with fluctuations from year to year. Comparisons with the national picture should be treated with caution as around two thirds of learners have ALN.
- 58 Analysis of the school's results shows that overall girls perform better than boys.
- 59 In thirty-six lessons or parts of lessons observed, standards in areas of learning and subjects were judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	44%	47%	6%	-

60 These figures are comparable with the last inspection in 2003. They are below the figures published in HMCI's Annual Report for 2007-2008 where standards in primary schools in Wales are reported to be Grade 2 in 84 per cent of lessons and Grade 1 in 12 per cent.

61 Overall standards in the six subjects of the NC inspected were judged as follows:

Subjects:	Key stage 2
English	Grade 2
Mathematics	Grade 3
Information communications technology	Grade 2
History	Grade 3
Art and design	Grade 2
Music	Grade 3

62 Since the last inspection standards have improved in English and declined in art and music. In mathematics, ICT and history standards are comparable with those in 2003.

63 Levels of achievement for many pupils are hampered by limited competence in the key skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing and numeracy. A majority make at least good progress from a low base, particularly in literacy and ICT.

64 Most pupils develop bilingual skills well.

65 Learners achieve similar standards irrespective of their social, ethnic or linguistic background. Those 'looked after' by the local authority make good progress towards the educational and personal targets set for them.

66 The few learners for whom English is an additional language are well integrated and make steady progress in communication skills.

67 Overall, progress is variable as learners move through the school. In basic literacy skills progress is often very good but in numeracy the picture is mixed. Although new knowledge and skills are acquired from a wide range of experiences progress in the acquisition of subject skills is sometimes limited.

68 The high proportion of pupils with ALN, including those with SEN, make good and sometimes very good progress towards the targets set in their IEPs but the progress of more able pupils is not always in line with their capabilities.

69 Learners have a sound understanding of their tasks but overall their awareness of targets and assessment strategies as a means of helping them to understand how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve is at an early stage of development.

70 By the end of Y6 most pupils have built up their skills well and often from a low starting point. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education in their personal and wider development but around half have not developed sufficient competence in a range of learning skills to enable them to fulfil their potential.

- 71 Learners generally have positive attitudes to lessons, show a good interest in their work and most maintain concentration well when their tasks are interesting. Most are well motivated and show enthusiasm and this has a positive effect on the standards they achieve and the quality of life in school.
- 72 Behaviour is good overall. Learners move around school in an orderly and courteous manner. They show appropriate respect to their peers and to adults and most listen and respond to instructions well.
- 73 Levels of attendance average 88 per cent for the last twelve months. This represents a decline of two percentage points since the time of the last inspection. The annual rate remains well below the national average and figures for similar schools having more than thirty-two percent free school meals.
- 74 There are very high levels of unauthorised absence at nearly eight per cent. Overall, the main cause of authorised absence is sickness and holidays being taken during term time, a practice discouraged by the school. A significant minority of pupils arrive late each day and their arrival causes disruption to lessons.
- 75 Boys and girls co-operate sensibly and demonstrate a good capacity to work together. They increasingly develop decision-making, problem solving and team working skills but the acquisition of the skills necessary for life long learning and for working with appropriate independence are insufficiently developed.
- 76 Learners progress well in their personal, social, moral and wider development. The vast majority are considerate of the needs of others, show respect for property and demonstrate increasing levels of self-confidence. They develop a clear understanding of right and wrong in the context of school life and older learners take an increasing degree of responsibility for their attitudes and behaviour.
- 77 Learners have a good understanding of equal opportunities, they recognise the need to treat everyone fairly and show increasing respect for diversity within society.
- 78 The school prepares learners well for effective participation in the local community. They are actively encouraged to be involved in numerous community activities both within and outside the school. Their awareness of the workplace is less well developed although they discuss the different work people do and the ways that some jobs help to look after and take care of the community.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 79 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question Grade 2. The inspection identified greater variation in teaching than the school.

80 In thirty-six lessons or parts of lessons the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	55%	39%	3%	-

- 81 These figures represent a decline compared with the last inspection in 2003. They are well below the national picture as reported in HMCI's Annual Report 2007 – 2008 where the quality of teaching is reported to be Grade 2 or better in 83 per cent of lessons with 16 per cent having outstanding features.
- 82 At the time of the inspection two experienced teachers were on leave, two were recently appointed and two had recently changed their role in the school. Furthermore, a small number of LSAs were also recently appointed.
- 83 Where teaching is most effective good subject knowledge and expertise combine with good management of learning activities to ensure that learners are involved and on task. These features, together with high expectations were particularly evident in some ICT lessons, for example. However, on occasions teaching is less effective when the pace and rigour of tasks is not sufficiently matched to learners' needs.
- 84 All members of staff successfully establish good working relationships with learners that foster learning well. This is especially evident in language support sessions and in the LRB classes. The contribution of LSAs to learning and teaching across the school is often good where they are clearly guided by the teacher.
- 85 In general members of staff have a good range of subject knowledge and through recent training are becoming familiar with current developments in primary practice, including skills based learning and promoting learners' thinking skills. However, it is taking a little time for strategies such as assessment for learning and problem solving to become established.
- 86 Members of staff successfully promote equality of opportunity and bilingual skills, but there is less consistency in developing the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in cross curricular contexts, for example in developing skills in history.
- 87 In general, lesson planning identifies clear objectives, but these are not always developed to match learners' needs or communicated sufficiently clearly so that they fully understand the purpose of their tasks. Good progress is evident in adapting planning in line with relevant study themes that include a range of subjects but opportunities for both independent learning and focused teaching are sometimes missed. Where the learning objective is clearly defined teaching is effective, but on occasions it is less successful in guiding learners to engage in a sufficient range of activities and in ensuring that they build up their skills. In some lessons, for example, skills in art and history were not developed fully.
- 88 In around half the lessons observed teaching was effective with teachers setting high expectations, praising success and managing lessons so that pupils understand what is expected of them. In a minority of lessons, however, less rigour in guiding the learning results in a slower pace and a few mainly older boys become unsettled and lose direction in their studies.

- 89 Taken overall a good range of teaching methods and organisational strategies is used, but in some cases the practical aids to learning that secure the active involvement of pupils and focus their thinking are not used. This is sometimes the case in teaching mathematics. Furthermore, the guidance provided for problem solving tasks is not always sufficiently precise.
- 90 The frameworks used for lesson planning allow opportunity to evaluate pupils' learning, but the use made of assessments to adapt learning in line with their prior knowledge and skills is not always well enough developed to ensure progress is maintained.
- 91 The school has recently put in place systematic procedures to track learners' achievements. The results of a range of tests, including detailed assessments on entry and the data from a range of standardised tests is carefully analysed and provides an accurate picture of individual learners' progress. This information is used increasingly well, for example, to focus additional support and to group learners for teaching.
- 92 The arrangements for end of key stage assessments and for assessing, recording and reporting learners' progress are in line with statutory requirements. Practice is better developed in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science than in foundation subjects and religious education. The school is working closely with the local cluster of schools to develop exemplar materials and ensure the effective moderation of end of key stage teacher assessments.
- 93 The school has begun to broaden the range of assessment strategies used. Progress is assessed across subjects each half-term using a framework of skills ladders and detailed evaluations. These arrangements provide a good basis to ensure that provision is closely matched to learners' needs.
- 94 Teachers are beginning to use a range of strategies to help ensure that learners understand how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. The school has identified this aspect of assessment as a target for further development.
- 95 Although practice lacks consistency, some good practice was observed in sharing the learning objectives, reminding learners of individual targets and encouraging them to become involved in assessing their own progress during lessons. The oral feedback provided for individuals is generally good, but, although marking identifies general points for improvement, there are few focused comments in relation to learning objectives.
- 96 Parents and carers are regularly and appropriately informed about their child's' overall progress, and have regular opportunities to discuss and agree future targets for improvement. The quality of end of year reports is good.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 97 The findings of the inspection team match the school's self-evaluation. The school provides a wide range of relevant and stimulating learning opportunities that cater well for the wide range of learners' needs. It builds particularly successfully on much that the community offers and enriches learning opportunities for all learners very well.
- 98 The school makes good provision to meet a wide range of learning needs and interests. It's clearly stated curricular aims are well reflected in its life and work so that all learners have good opportunities to achieve and reach their full potential.
- 99 The curriculum is broad and generally well balanced and meets statutory requirements. Appropriate subject policies and schemes of work provide a secure framework for long and medium term planning that is delivered through cross-curricular topics organised in half term units. These are carefully planned to ensure that all areas of learning are covered adequately and reflect well the school's good efforts to take account of the recently published skills based framework for the KS2 curriculum. However, progression in the development of learners' skills is not always adequately assured, particularly when adapting short term planning to match the range of learning needs in different classes.
- 100 The strong focus on developing learners' basic skills in literacy is an effective feature of provision. Well structured activities cater very well for the high proportion of learners with low prior attainment in literacy. The provision to promote basic skills in numeracy is less well developed.
- 101 The school has a good focus on the development of key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. There are examples of good provision, for example in using ICT, but, although opportunities for key skills development are identified in planning, these skills are not always developed fully.
- 102 The range of out of school visits, visitors and activities provided is a particular strength of the school. These contribute greatly to the enrichment of the curriculum, and contribute well to learners' personal and social development. Opportunities include field trips to Dolygaer and a good range of sports activities and team games. This provision is enhanced by a variety of lunchtime and after school clubs and a thriving after school club where children enjoy a wide range of activities including arts and crafts.
- 103 More able learners and those with particular talents are strongly encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities. Instrumental tuition for wind and string instruments is provided and there is an active choir that performs in local concerts. This successfully promotes self-confidence and esteem but such opportunities are limited in range.

- 104 The provision for learners' personal development is good. Positive emphasis is given to promoting spiritual development. Learners are encouraged to reflect on issues such as being different, friendship and handling changes, through lessons in personal and social education (PSE). Daily whole school assemblies that include an appropriate act of collective worship fully comply with legal requirements. Learners take an active part in assemblies; they sing, listen to stories, take pride in their achievements and show both a sense of occasion and reverence as they reflect on issues of importance to them. The quality and ethos of collective worship is very good.
- 105 The promotion of learners' moral and social development is effective. The adults in the school provide positive role models and the school's clear framework of expectations for behaviour enables most learners to develop a clear understanding of right and wrong. A good range of opportunities is provided to promote social skills both within and outside of school. In particular learners show consideration for the needs of others through their support for a number of charities.
- 106 Learners' cultural development is enriched successfully through educational visits and through subjects including science, art, music, geography, history and religious education. The school has many visitors, for example, pupils take part in art and percussion workshops, they learn about African drumming and a visiting Welsh harpist provides experience of Welsh folk music.
- 107 There are positive links with parents and effective partnerships with the local community, other schools and colleges. A few parents contribute to educational activities and visitors from the community, including local clergy, police and fire officers enrich learning well. Established partnerships with the local cluster of schools facilitate the sharing of professional expertise and good practice and the school has a successful partnership with an initial teacher training university. The school also provides placements for students undertaking vocational training and work experience opportunities for pupils from the comprehensive school.
- 108 Although there is no formalised approach in providing opportunities for work related education learners have a few opportunities to learn about the different kinds of jobs people do, for example through working with crafts people and listening to visitors from the community.
- 109 The provision to promote education in sustainable development and global citizenship is at an early stage of development. A number of initiatives including gardening and composting are established and further developments are planned. The members of one of the LRB classes are the eco committee and they undertake jobs as energy monitors and promote for example, paper recycling, regular litter picks and the school participates in the Keep Wales Tidy Campaign.
- 110 A few opportunities are provided to promote learners' entrepreneurial skills, for example through running the break time fruit shop and selling Fair-trade produce and other items during fund raising activities. However, the promotion of early business skills is not an established feature of the curriculum.
- 111 The school promotes bilingual skills well and the curriculum reflects well both the language and culture of Wales. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is well reflected in the life

and work of the school. An annual eisteddfod promotes the traditions, poetry and songs of the country and visits to The Museum of Welsh Life and to Cardiff and Caerphilly Castles ensure that learners find out about Welsh heroes.

- 112 The school is strongly committed to tackling social disadvantage, stereotyping and ensuring equal opportunities. This is exemplified very well through its extremely effective collaboration with the People in Communities Project and national charities such as Barnardos.
- 113 A wide range of social and learning opportunities is provided for parents, carers and their children. This extends to workshops and club opportunities for children and accredited courses for adults. The 'wrap around' care, including a popular breakfast club and the high quality of after school activities makes a huge contribution to learners' personal development. This provision is an exemplar of excellent practice in tackling disadvantage and raising aspirations.
- 114 Positive emphasis is placed on national priorities for lifelong learning and community regeneration throughout the life and work of the school. The importance of setting regular homework is increasingly emphasised as learners progress through the school and parents are encouraged to support their children's studies through a home-school diary. Older learners are positively encouraged to become involved with community-based activities for example children in Y6 have achieved a certificate in First Aid.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 115 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question Grade 1. The inspection did not identify sufficient outstanding features to match the higher grade although it confirms a number of very strong features and commends the recent steps taken to improve the effectiveness of its procedures to promote learners' well-being.
- 116 The school plans and manages care arrangements well. All members of staff work together effectively to ensure that learners feel safe, valued and cared for. The school has a positive ethos with a calm, purposeful atmosphere that is reflected in good quality working relationships between learners and staff.
- 117 There is effective liaison with social services and both health and education professionals, including the educational psychologist. This ensures that learners with ALN, including those 'looked after' by the local authority, learning English as an additional language and those with SEN who attend the LRBs, are well supported.
- 118 The school works hard to establish a good working partnership with parents and carers. It welcomes informal daily contacts with them and provides two formal opportunities annually to discuss their child's progress. Monthly newsletters inform them clearly of the dates for school events and of their children's achievements in school activities.

- 119 In their responses to a pre-inspection questionnaire nearly all parents expressed positive views about the school but a few indicated concerns regarding behaviour, the extent to which they are encouraged to play an active part in school life and the limited provision of information about what is taught.
- 120 The school takes account of parents' and other partners' views through informal contacts and feedback from parent governors. In the case of seeking learners' views the school has recently re-established a school council but this is not yet established.
- 121 In collaboration with the adjoining infant school well considered induction arrangements are implemented through an appropriate transition plan. There are opportunities for new pupils to visit and take part in activities. Parents are also invited into the school and provided with a good range of information.
- 122 The school is successful in providing high quality support and guidance for learners through a well structured programme of personal and social education. This provision is well integrated into the curriculum, it includes circle time sessions and promotes awareness of keeping safe, substance misuse, health education and well-being. A number of professionals, including the police and school nurse, enhance this programme well.
- 123 Attendance registers are not fully completed. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality is not fully effective and is contrary to statutory requirements. The school takes inadequate account of the Welsh Assembly (WAG) Circular 3/99 that sets out the requirements for recording absence. Registers are not always fully completed by the close of registration.
- 124 The school has recently identified high levels of absence and the poor punctuality of a significant minority of learners as important issues. A joint action plan has been agreed with the infant school but procedures to follow up lateness or unexplained absence immediately have yet to be implemented. The GB has set a target to improve attendance, good attendance is praised and rewarded and the school works closely with the education welfare service. It receives daily visits from the assigned officer and during the inspection punctuality was being closely monitored.
- 125 Parents are advised that their children are expected to attend regularly and arrive punctually. Whilst some children whose attendance level has been a cause for concern have made a significant improvement, overall, levels of absence, including unauthorised absence, remain high.
- 126 During the twelve months prior to the inspection appropriate procedures were implemented in a case of three temporary exclusions.
- 127 The school monitors behaviour well through the consistent implementation of behaviour and anti-bullying policies so that for the most part learners adhere to the rules they have helped develop. The procedures to monitor performance have recently been improved but they are not yet sufficiently embedded in practice.
- 128 The provision to promote learners' healthy development is good. The school's involvement in the Healthy Schools' initiative is well established. It participates in active schools activities and 'heart start', cycle and circuit training to improve fitness.

- 129 The school has clear and well-documented arrangements to promote learners' well being when in its care. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken and documented. However, it was evident during the inspection that some procedures to promote safety, for example, in physical education lessons are not consistently implemented. A number of health and safety issues were discussed with the school.
- 130 Good procedures are in place to meet the needs of learners who are unwell or who have suffered an injury whilst in school. Appropriate records are maintained and most members of staff are trained in basic emergency first aid but at the time of the inspection the school had not appointed designated personnel qualified in first aid. Furthermore, no members of staff have received training in restraint.
- 131 The school has effective child protection arrangements. The procedures are in line with local and national guidance with designated personnel including a nominated governor. All members of staff have received appropriate training and are aware of the signs of possible abuse and of the procedures they must follow. The GB has agreed relevant complaint and appeal procedures.
- 132 The overall quality of provision for pupils with ALN is good. The school has well established and effective systems in place to diagnose individual learning needs. The SEN co-ordinator works closely with the infant school to ensure continuity of provision, for learners receiving support in KS1 and with class teachers to identify those who require additional support at any stage in KS2.
- 133 A range of diagnostic assessments is used to good effect and a suitably detailed register of learning needs is maintained. The procedures are in line with the Code of Practice and pupils are provided with detailed IEPs. The arrangements for pupils with a statement of SEN are appropriate. The provision is in line with need and arrangements for annual reviews are systematically implemented.
- 134 Parents and their children are encouraged to be involved in drawing up the targets set in IEPs and parents are advised about how they can support their child's learning. Progress is recorded by members of staff through identifying the subject skills achieved in individual records and through half termly assessments. Parents are kept informed about progress through regular meetings with the staff, where future targets are discussed.
- 135 The provision to promote language development is very good and has a positive impact in improving literacy skills. A support teacher works effectively with small groups and individuals to provide support for class work and intensive programmes for those with specific literacy difficulties. Most teaching and support staff are trained to implement specialist literacy programmes including phonic and reading programmes.
- 136 The school, in partnership with the local authority, provides three specialist learning resource base classes for learners with a wide range of complex SEN. Two well resourced classes cater for learners with a range of speech and language, and emotional and behavioural needs. A stimulating learning environment with a good balance between challenge and support caters well for their needs through carefully tailored individual learning programmes implemented well by skilled teachers and support staff.

- 137 A further class is provided for a small number of disaffected learners with severe social, emotional and behavioural problems. The complex range of needs in this class presents the school with particular challenges. It has sought external advice in managing the class and the teacher and team of support staff are very patient in promoting positive attitudes and encouraging an interest in learning. However, the significant amount of time that senior members of school staff spend in counselling and supporting individuals from this class places a very high level of demand on the school's resources.
- 138 The school provides additional support particularly well for learners whose behaviour impedes their progress and that of others. There is much very good practice and the overall provision is an exemplar of good practice. The school is successful in managing those who present challenging behaviour from time to time; it provides an inclusive setting, implements appropriate individual behaviour programmes consistently and this enables many learners to improve their behaviour and find success in learning.
- 139 The quality of provision for equal opportunities is good. Learners have equal access to all school activities and the school works hard to take appropriate account of differing social, educational, ethnic or linguistic backgrounds. A positive emphasis is placed, for example, on tackling the underachievement of boys compared with girls in literacy skills. Furthermore, members of staff are proactive through the PSE programme in challenging gender stereotypes in learners' choices and opinions.
- 140 The school has effective measures to manage occasional instances of oppressive behaviour such as bullying. It receives good quality support from the behaviour support team and through implementing a range of behaviour management strategies, including assertive discipline; it is successful in promoting good overall behaviour across the school. In discussions pupils indicate that they are very aware of how any incidents of bullying should be dealt with and express confidence in the staff to deal fairly with such incidents.
- 141 The school has undertaken a disability access audit and recently established a disability equality scheme. However, the design of the building restricts access to those with physical disabilities.
- 142 The school has recently put in place suitable policies to promote race equality, eliminate all forms of discrimination and harassment including bullying and to promote awareness of diversity. It is now preparing appropriate plans of action in these areas. However, in its everyday practice it successfully promotes both awareness of and respect for diversity through assemblies and cross-curricular topics. For example, visitors from different ethnic groups help to further learners' awareness of cultural diversity within society.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 143 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question Grade 2. In a short time the acting head teacher and the GB have put in place well considered strategic plans to improve further the quality of education in the school but these require time to impact fully.
- 144 The acting head teacher is particularly successful in establishing a clear direction for the school's life and work. Whole school values, aims and objectives are clearly stated so that members of staff understand the purpose of initiatives and, as a result, they convey a shared sense of purpose in their work. The recently revised management structure, although at an early stage of development, is becoming effective in this regard.
- 145 A revised senior management structure, including two assistant heads, has recently been established. Posts for teaching and learning responsibilities are in place and all teachers contribute to subject leadership. However, the current structure has not had sufficient time to become established and the school already plans to review further the distribution of key responsibilities in order to improve their effectiveness.
- 146 The school's mission and aims reflect a strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities and this is well reflected in its practice. A good example is the focus on raising boys' achievement in oracy, reading and writing skills.
- 147 Good emphasis is placed on national and local priorities. This is evident in the development of transition programmes between schools and in line with national guidance a review of curricular planning is underway. In the local context the strong focus on tackling disadvantage and raising learners' aspirations is very good.
- 148 The school has limited success in setting and meeting end of key stage targets for attainment and also, in previous years, in meeting the goals set in the SDP. However, there is increasing evidence of good progress towards current targets to raise standards in literacy and improve both the use of assessment and arrangements for transition.
- 149 Appropriate arrangements, in line with statutory requirements, are in place for the performance management of teachers. The acting head teacher takes appropriate account of the information gathered through professional development discussions and observations of current practice to promote further improvements.
- 150 The GB is strongly supportive of the school but their role in setting the school's strategic direction is at an early stage of development. The chair of governors is readily available to discuss school issues and to provide support for the acting head teacher. The role of governors in monitoring the quality of provision is a focus for improvement identified in the SDP.

- 151 There is clear evidence of the GB becoming more proactive in recent times. It has established and begun to implement a strategic plan to improve provision and also taken positive steps to ensure that statutory requirements are met. In this regard a number of policies and procedures to ensure learners' well-being have been updated but the school still falls short in its duty to record absence.
- 152 Governors have yet to formalise their contribution in reviewing the school's work and at present the priorities in the SDP are not always sufficiently precise to enable the GB to assess value for money.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 153 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question Grade 2. The inspection team found shortcomings in the rigour of self-evaluation and the effectiveness of planning for improvement over time.
- 154 The acting head teacher and some senior members of staff are well informed about the school's performance in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. A range of performance information, including comparative data, teachers' plans and records and pupils' work, are reviewed and analysed. This process helps to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- 155 The school has yet to establish securely rigorous self-evaluation arrangements that are based on first hand evidence of standards. Although the self-evaluation report is comprehensive and takes account of the views of members of staff and governors, the evidence to support some of the judgements is limited. The inspection team agrees with the self-evaluation report in key question three and awards one grade lower in key questions one, two, four, five, six and seven.
- 156 The school seeks the views of stakeholders informally, for example there are discussions with community groups, but it is too reliant on informal means to acquire the views of staff and parents. A school council is becoming established and this provides the basis of a good forum to seek learners' views.
- 157 A culture of self-evaluation is becoming established. The acting head teacher has refined the SDP with a clear focus on key targets. This is improving the effectiveness of the plan in developing greater understanding of school improvement issues among members of staff and promoting their involvement in self-evaluation arrangements.
- 158 Appropriate subject action plans are formulated and some elements are included in the SDP. However, the link between these plans and the SDP is not always clear. Although some SDP priorities are appropriately focused on pupils' progress, they seldom embody sufficiently precise and measurable targets.
- 159 The current head teacher, with the support of governors, ensures that key priorities for improvement are supported well through the adequate allocation of resources.

160 There is limited evidence to indicate measurable improvements in standards since the last inspection, for example standards have improved in English and ICT but in art and music they have declined. Recent improvements are evident in the management structure and budget planning is clear, but shortcomings remain in planning and assessment procedures, promoting key skills and in recording absence.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 161 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question Grade 2. The inspection identified shortcomings in the use made of available financial resources over time despite the current good work to improve the school's effectiveness.
- 162 The teachers, together with the positive contribution of LSA, provide a good range of experience and expertise that matches well the demands of the curriculum, but there are not enough staff in relation to the number of pupils and the financial resources available. This results in an average class size of almost thirty in the main school and this limits the effectiveness of learning.
- 163 Resources for workforce remodelling are utilised effectively so that teachers undertake a range of planning, preparation and assessment tasks during the equivalent of ten per cent of the teaching week. The teaching provided for their classes during this time makes a positive contribution to raising standards. In addition support staff help to reduce the burden of administration and senior teachers receive an additional allocation of time to enable them to complete managerial tasks.
- 164 The provision of learning resources is good overall and in most cases these are easily accessible and used effectively. This is especially evident in English and language support sessions but the use made of resources to promote investigative learning in mathematics and science is not as well developed.
- 165 Overall there is sufficient accommodation that provides a good setting for effective teaching and learning but the upstairs classrooms are not easily accessible to anyone with impaired mobility. Furthermore, there are no disabled toilet facilities. Good use is made of spare classrooms to provide a computer suite, music room and library as well as a base for community activities. The internal accommodation, including a large hall, is enhanced by attractive displays of work that celebrate learners' achievements and contribute to a positive atmosphere.
- 166 The school site is extensive and provides ample playground and playing field space. There are plans to develop the garden areas to provide additional learning space adjacent to the downstairs classrooms. A team of ancillary, support and administrative staff ensure that the school is clean and safe and that daily routines run smoothly.
- 167 The acting head teacher has adjusted provision well to ensure that it matches learners' needs as closely as possible, but there are shortcomings in the use of financial resources over time. This reduces the school's effectiveness.

- 168 The deployment of available teaching and support staff is generally efficient and effective. In particular the management of both teachers and support staff new to the school over the last term is good but there is only limited evidence to show the effectiveness of arrangements to promote the professional development of all members of staff in the longer term.
- 169 The acting head teacher, together with the GB, have agreed and are implementing a well considered financial plan for the medium term to ensure that financial resources are matched closely to the priorities identified in the SDP. This strategic plan resolves the issue of a substantial budget surplus accrued by the school in past years and recent expenditure, for example, on resources for mathematics is already having a positive impact.
- 170 There are few established procedures to review resources and ensure value for money. An external auditors' report in February 2009 identified a range of shortcomings in administrative procedures. An action plan has been implemented and the most important issues have been addressed effectively. The school demonstrates good progress in improving its procedures, including ensuring greater rigour in financial planning and review by the GB.
- 171 Since the last inspection there is a trend of relatively low standards and limited evidence of educational improvements. However, taking into account recent improvements in educational leadership and the good response of pupils, the school provides sound value for money in a challenging local context.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

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

Good features

- 172 A majority of pupils in Y3 and Y4 make good progress in speaking and listening skills, for example when questioning a Celtic 'visitor'. They demonstrate increasing confidence in reading aloud and through a 'brainstorming' activity a few understand that using headings to record facts and ideas is an effective method to organise information; some see the similarity with the use of headings in a contents page.
- 173 In Y5 and Y6, most pupils maintain good progress in speaking and listening skills. They discuss ideas confidently in small groups and a few structure information clearly when reporting back to the whole class; a majority of older ones extend their knowledge of vocabulary well, identifying common word prefixes and discover that words of opposite meaning are often created by adding a prefix.
- 174 A minority of pupils in Y3 and Y4 confidently identify a variety of sources of information to research a topic. When reading they successfully use strategies such as skimming and scanning to identify key words, and a few identify the verbs and adjectives they use in their written work.
- 175 A majority of pupils in Y5 and Y6 read accurately, fluently and with appropriate expression; they show a clear understanding of what they read when researching the Celts, for example. They speak clearly and with increasing confidence and when discussing information a majority distinguish between fact and opinion.
- 176 In Y3 and Y4, a majority of pupils successfully write their own legends based on Welsh folk tales. They plan and structure their work appropriately and create extended imaginative stories. Their handwriting is clear and neat and a few redraft their work using ICT to present it.
- 177 A majority of pupils in Y5 and Y6 write in a variety of forms for different audiences. Their extended writing often shows good spelling, punctuation and handwriting. They confidently use a variety of texts and the internet to research topics; they know how to use an index and a glossary to find out the meanings of words. They develop skills such as note taking well to record their findings.
- 178 Previous work indicates that appropriate to age a majority of pupils write imaginative stories in a variety of styles. They structure their writing well, use appropriate punctuation and spelling is increasingly accurate. They describe story settings and characters well and know, for example, how to structure factual writing about visits to places of historical interest. Most pupils in Y6 have appropriate handwriting and presentation skills.

- 179 Across the key stage pupils with ALN make good and sometimes very good progress in developing language skills; this is particularly evident in reading where beginning from a low starting point in Y3 the acquisition of skills is often notable. For example, a small group develop oracy and writing skills well when selecting suitable nouns, verbs and adjectives to write descriptive sentences about the Celts.
- 180 Pupils with SEN in Y3 and Y4 develop phonic skills effectively through a variety of mediums; they demonstrate increasing confidence, fluency and enjoyment when reading aloud. A small group form lower case letters correctly, for example, when making labels for their class display about the Celts. They know how to write a sentence through underwriting and with support a majority present their work clearly and neatly.
- 181 In Y5 and Y6, pupils with SEN, develop literacy and vocabulary skills effectively, for example, when researching a glossary for word meanings. Most use an index and a few work independently; they listen well and express their opinions with confidence.
- 182 Pupils with complex SEN make good progress in reading. For example, they write well structured letters and develop an increasing understanding of how to use conjunctions. A few display good handwriting skills and all use ICT well to improve their language skills.

Shortcomings

- 183 There are no important shortcomings in achievement but the writing skills of a significant minority of pupils are underdeveloped for their age.

Mathematics

Key stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Good features

- 184 A few pupils in Y3 and Y4 use their knowledge of the three, four and five times tables well to answer mathematical questions. They use strategies such as counting in fours and their knowledge of number bonds to regroup numbers in order to work out answers mentally. Others recognise odd and even numbers and a majority count in twos, fives and tens to 100.
- 185 In Y3 and Y4, a few pupils understand the terms tally and frequency and competently use the data in a frequency table to draw a bar graph. Their knowledge of the names and properties of a range of two and three dimensional shapes is good.
- 186 In Y5 and Y6, a majority show good mental skills when calculating a half, a quarter or one third of numbers to a thousand. A minority develop a range of written and mental strategies to calculate area and a few explain the formula to calculate the area of a rectangle or a square.
- 187 A few pupils in Y5 and Y6 read fractions, understand what they represent and use terms such as denominator and numerator correctly. They name and identify some

properties of two and three dimensional shapes and a few predict which shapes will roll.

- 188 Previous work indicates that by the end of KS2, the majority of pupils acquire appropriate skills in computation and a suitable understanding of number relationships and methods of calculation. They have opportunities to develop skills in measurement, explore concepts such as symmetry, find out about shape and angles and to apply mathematical formulae.
- 189 Younger pupils with SEN increase their understanding of number patterns and relationships and name three dimensional shapes including cube, cuboid, pyramid and sphere.
- 190 Older pupils with SEN successfully order number to 70 and demonstrate increasing skills in using a tally chart and representing data in a bar graph.

Shortcomings

- 191 Around half of pupils do not have quick and accurate recall of number bonds and multiplication facts. They lack sufficient competence in a range of strategies for mental calculations and are not confident in explaining their methods of working.
- 192 A significant minority of pupils do not develop a secure understanding of appropriate mathematical concepts. This limits their ability to use and apply mathematical skills to solve everyday problems.

Information communications technology
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Key stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
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Good features

- 193 In Y3 and Y4 a majority of pupils demonstrate good control and navigation skills when accessing a range of programs. For example, they apply a good range of data handling skills when using a spreadsheet. They confidently enter and modify information to create a graph and nearly all print, save and retrieve their work independently.
- 194 Many pupils in Y5 and Y6 identify a number of search engines and access them independently. They confidently use hyperlinks to gather information and most complete a recording sheet appropriately.
- 195 Across KS2 pupils with ALN, including many with SEN, use a range of ICT programs with confidence and most demonstrate good skills in using program tools and following on screen prompts. Many have well developed mouse control skills.
- 196 Older pupils with complex SEN confidently access their e-mail account and download their lesson task. They manipulate data and a few work independently to create and store graphs. They give clear explanations of the ICT processes involved.

197 Previous work indicates that, appropriate to age, many pupils use graphics programs to good effect. They use word processing to redraft and improve the presentation of their work well. Older ones skilfully manipulate text and produce a multimedia presentation. They import pictures and information; combine text and graphics and use program tools effectively to change settings and formulate their presentation.

Shortcomings

198 There are no important shortcomings in communicating and handling information but pupils' skills in modelling are less well developed.

History

Key stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

- 199 In Y3 and Y4 a majority of pupils acquire a good knowledge of life in Celtic times. They know the features of a roundhouse, describe the materials used in its construction and show a sound understanding of domestic life. A few make simple comparisons with present day houses and home life, observing for example, that the Celts had no electricity and seldom washed.
- 200 In Y5 and Y6 most pupils build well on a visit to St Fagans when investigating Celtic artefacts. They name items ranging from jewellery to tools, describe their uses and identify the materials used to make them. A few begin to understand that the study of artefacts enables us to find out about the past.
- 201 Older pupils in Y6 have a good understanding of everyday life in Celtic times and a majority distinguish between fact and opinion when considering a range of historical evidence.
- 202 Previous work indicates that pupils in Y3 and Y4 acquire a sound knowledge of evacuees and leaders, including Churchill, during the Second World War. In Y5 and Y6 pupils know that the Allies joined forces to fight the Nazis and they recall the impact of the blitz and rationing. Pupils identify castles in Wales and some know the story of the Welsh Princes. A few begin to sequence historical events.

Shortcomings

- 203 Many pupils have a limited understanding of important historical events and of the chronology of key periods. They seldom study historical topics in sufficient depth, their enquiry skills are underdeveloped and few produce well researched written, illustrated and oral accounts.
- 204 A majority of pupils make insufficient use of historical sources and artefacts. Their skills in investigating primary and secondary evidence and recognising that sources can be interpreted in different ways is insufficiently developed.

Art and design

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

Good features

- 205 In Y3 and Y4 most pupils show good skills when completing designs for a Celtic brooch. They skilfully make a prototype and confidently experiment with a range of materials. Their products are well finished and decorated to create a good representation of their designs and the artefacts they researched. Their skills in painting, moulding and drawing are good and many thoughtfully evaluate the effectiveness of the materials used.
- 206 In Y5 and Y6 pupils develop good skills in three dimensional work. For example, around half skilfully prepare and coil clay to form a pot effectively.
- 207 Most pupils in Y5 and Y6 acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of weaving. They begin to use terms including warp and weft and develop their skills well through weaving with coloured paper strips and with wool using simple wood or card frames. Most quickly master basic weaving techniques and their finished pieces are attractive.
- 208 Younger pupils with SEN are enthralled when working with a craftsman. They learn about spinning and weaving and experience carding and spinning wool before developing their practical skills in producing a piece of weaving.
- 209 Pupils' sketchbooks, together with displays and photographs of previous work, indicate good standards in the development of observational drawing skills and the effective use of chalk, charcoal and pastels to create interesting tones and textures. The skilful use of watercolour to convey the character of buildings is particularly evident and skills in drawing, collage and painting are used very effectively to represent historical scenes, for example.
- 210 Pupils have opportunities to learn about the techniques used by established artists, for example, Vincent van Gogh and benefit from workshops that enable them to work with local artists in two and three dimensions. This has a positive impact on the development of artistic techniques and creative skills with a wide range of media.

Shortcomings

- 211 There are no important shortcomings in achievement but not all pupils develop and refine their artistic skills fully in relevant contexts and investigate the work of established artists sufficiently.

Music

Key stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

- 212 When learning a Welsh lullaby most pupils in Y3 and Y4 confidently accompany their singing with a steady clapped beat; they respond to the dynamics of the song appropriately. They follow a graphic score well and sing together in tune. A few are confident in playing a four beat ostinato on the drum; most follow the conductor and perform together well.
- 213 Other pupils in Y5 and Y6 perform a 'Mr. Noah rap' using appropriate rhythmic patterns. They are confident in keeping a steady beat using body percussion to accompany their singing. A majority read and interpret a simple music score; working in groups they play a variety of animal rhythms well. They perform together well, keeping a steady beat when playing a selection of untuned percussion instruments.
- 214 Younger pupils with SEN listen with enjoyment to others performing, they sustain a steady beat and maintain a simple rhythmic pattern using body percussion to accompany their singing. They begin to use untuned percussion instruments with increasing success.
- 215 Older pupils with SEN are becoming familiar with musical terms, for example, drone. They demonstrate increasing skills when playing tuned and untuned percussion instruments in a controlled manner. They keep a steady beat when accompanying their singing; they learn songs quickly and sing together tunefully. Most listen carefully to clapped rhythmic patterns and confidently respond by repeating the patterns using body percussion.
- 216 A few pupils achieve good standards in choral singing when taking part in the choir and a small number achieve well in instrumental playing. When performing in assembly, for example, these pupils display enjoyment and pride in their success. This has a positive impact on overall standards in music.

Shortcomings

- 217 Pupils' skills in performing with expression and sensitivity are at an early stage of development and their skills in playing instruments are limited.
- 218 Overall, most pupils' skills in composing, performing and appraising are underdeveloped.

School's response to the inspection

The inspection findings recognise that, we have maintained a high standard since our last inspection in ICT and improved standards in English. We are pleased that the inspectors found that behaviour, pupils' attitudes to their learning, the interest they show in their work and their ability to sustain concentration are good features. In addition, the care and support systems we have in place and that underpin our curricular provision are also recognised as good features. The skill and dedication of teachers and the care and talent of support staff are duly acknowledged. Most importantly, the inspection report makes clear the elements that make our school what it is. In particular it acknowledges our links with the People in Community Multi Agency Family Project and confirms that we are achieving our aim to make our school a happy and secure place in which pupils grow in confidence and independence.

An action plan will be put in place to address the recommendations in the report. Improving our curriculum planning for key skills, the use of assessment in planning to meet fully the range of pupils' individual learning needs and tightening up some school procedures, especially attendance and punctuality, are aspects that we believe we can confidently address.

Where it is possible to do so, staff and governors will address the recommendations before the end of the school year. Raising pupils' standards of achievement in mathematics will be a major priority for us. In addition, we will provide more opportunities for staff to improve their knowledge and skills in music so that they can help pupils achieve higher standards in this subject. Pleasingly, inspectors identified many elements and procedures in the school that will help us to address shortcomings by sharing good practice more widely.

A copy of the school's action plan in response to the inspection recommendations will be sent to all parents. The governors' annual report to parents will report on the progress we are making on the inspection recommendations.

On behalf of the school I take this opportunity to thank Mr Michael Ridout, the registered inspector, and the inspection team for the thorough, professional and courteous manner in which the inspection was undertaken.

Catherine Heptinstall
Acting Head Teacher

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Goetre Junior School
School type	Junior
Age-range of pupils	7 – 11 years
Address of school	Rowan Way Gurnos Estate Merthyr Tydfil
Postcode	CF47 9PB
Telephone number	01685 722161

Acting Head teacher	Mrs. Catherine Heptinstall
Date of appointment	5 th January 2009
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr. Raymond Adler
Registered inspector	Mr. Michael T. Ridout
Dates of inspection	27 th - 30 th April 2009

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	-	-	-	-	49	61	58	44	212

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	11	1	11.6

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	20.8 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	n/a
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	3.3 : 1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	29.8
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.28 : 1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection	
Term	Whole school
Spring 2008	89
Summer 2008	88
Autumn 2008	87

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	59
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	1

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2008						Number of pupils in Y6:	50				
Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	N	W	1	2	3	4	5	
English	Teacher assessment	School	-	-	-	-	22	28	34	16	
		National	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.6	3.1	15.6	51.3	28.5	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	-	-	-	-	20	36	38	6	
		National	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.6	2.7	14.7	51.4	29.9	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	-	-	-	-	10	38	28	24	
		National	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.5	1.8	11.4	53.9	31.7	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment		
In the school	40.0	In Wales
		75.5

D represents pupils who have been disapplied under sections 364 - 367 of the Education Act, or pupils for whom teachers were unable to provide an assessment.

N represents pupils not awarded a level for reasons other than disapplication.

W represents pupils who are 'working towards' level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for level 1.

N.B. The general expectation is that the majority of 11 year olds will attain level 4.

These results include figures for some pupils with SEN. The school's result, excluding pupils with SEN, for those attaining at least the expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science is 50 per cent.

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Three inspectors, together with the school's nominee and a peer assessor appointed by Estyn, spent the equivalent of nine inspector days in the school and met as a team before the inspection.

These inspectors visited:

- thirty- six lessons or part lessons, across areas of learning and NC subjects;
- registrations, assemblies and acts of collective worship and a range of extra-curricular activities;
- the timetables during the inspection included relatively few lessons in some foundation subjects. As a consequence subject judgements take account of standards in previous work and evidence drawn from discussions.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- staff, governors and parents before the inspection;
- the acting head teacher, teachers, support and administrative staff;
- groups of pupils representing each year group;
- the school council and eco committee; and
- representatives of organisations associated with the school.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- seventeen responses to a parents' questionnaire, of which 92 per cent were positive;
- documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- a wide range of pupils' past and current work; and
- samples of pupils' reports.

After the inspection, the team held meetings with the acting head teacher, the staff and governors. A representative of the LEA attended the meetings with governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr. Michael T. Ridout Registered Inspector	Context Summary Recommendations Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve? Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment? Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management? Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources? Mathematics; history and art and design.
Mrs. Gillian Unwin Team inspector	Assessment aspect of KQ2. Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community? Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards? English; information communications technology and music.
Ms. Liz Halls Lay inspector	Aspects of Key Questions: 1, 3, 4 and 7.
Mrs. Pat Newton Peer Assessor	Observing lessons and taking part in discussions.
Mrs. Catherine Heptinstall Acting Head teacher and nominee	Liaison with inspectors, contributions to team discussions and the school's response.

Acknowledgement:

The inspectors wish to thank the governing body, staff, parents and pupils of the school for their co-operation, assistance and courtesy before and during the inspection.

The Contractor for this inspection was:

Baker-Phillips Educational Communications Ltd. Oaks Lea, Higher Knolton, Overton, Wrexham. LL13 0LF