

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF
SCHOOL INSPECTIONS ACT, 1996**

ABBOT'S LANE INFANTS' SCHOOL

Abbot's Lane
Penyffordd
Flintshire, CH4 OHW

School Number: 664/2231

Date of Inspection: 7th – 9th June, 2004

MRS. EIRWEN GRIFFITHS

REGISTERED INSPECTOR: WO50/17562

9th July, 2004

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

A new nomenclature to describe pupils' progress through school was introduced in 1989. This system of numbering year-groups from the start of compulsory schooling to the age of eighteen is intended to ease communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local education authorities and to emphasise the importance of continuity.

The term "reception" is applied to the year-group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) who attain the age of five during the academic year. "Year 1" (Y1) is applied to the year-group of pupils who attain the age of six during the academic year and so on to Y13 – the year-group who attain the age of eighteen during the academic year.

	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Years	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum consists of Y1 and Y2; Key Stage 2 of Y3 to Y6; Key Stage 3 of Y7 to Y9; Key Stage 4 of Y10 and Y11 (which is the final year of compulsory education).

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The following five-point grading scale is used to represent the main judgments in the report:

1. **Very good** : many good features, some of them outstanding
2. **Good** : good features and no major shortcomings
3. **Satisfactory** : good features outweigh shortcomings
4. **Unsatisfactory** : some satisfactory work but shortcomings in important areas
5. **Poor** : many shortcomings.

CONTENTS

1.	CONTEXT	page
	The School and its Priorities	1
2.	MAIN FINDINGS	
	The Main Findings of the Report	2
3.	EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	
3.1	Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning	5
3.2	Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum	6
4.	ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL	
4.1	Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development	7
4.2	Behaviour and Attitudes	8
4.3	Attendance	9
5.	QUALITY OF EDUCATION	
5.1	Teaching	10
5.2	Assessment, Recording and Reporting	11
5.3	Curriculum	12
5.4	Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare	13
5.5	Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs	13
5.6	Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions	14
5.7	Partnership with Industry	15
6.	MANAGEMENT	
6.1.	Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement	16
6.2.	Leadership and Efficiency	17
6.3	Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources	18
7.	SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING	page

Standards Achieved by Pupils:

Provision for Children under Five	19
English	23
Mathematics	25
Science	26
Welsh (as a second language)	27
Design and Technology	28
Information Technology	29
History	29
Geography	30
Art	31
Music	32
Physical Education	33
Religious Education	33

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1	Progress since the last Inspection	34
8.2	Key Issues for Action	36

APPENDICES

A	Basic Information about the School	37
B	School Data and Indicators	38
C	Results of National Curriculum Assessments, 2002	39
D	The Evidence Base of the Inspection	40
E	Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team	41

1. CONTEXT

The School and its Priorities

Abbot's Lane Infants' School is situated in the village of Penyffordd some five miles to the south-east of Mold. It occupies an attractive, modern building on a pleasant, well-kept site.

Currently, the school has a total roll of 118 pupils aged three to seven years, including thirty-one part-time nursery pupils who attend on a mornings-only basis. Numbers have fallen slightly over the past four years.

In general terms, the school describes the area it serves as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged, although there is a substantial percentage of modern, owner-occupied houses. Free school meals are received by some 5% of pupils, a low figure compared with the average for Wales as a whole. Fifteen pupils have been identified as having some form of special educational need, although none is currently the subject of a formal statement. The annual intake covers the full ability range.

English is the sole or predominant home language for pupils, with just one child coming from a Welsh-speaking home. About 2% of pupils come from ethnic-minority families.

The main aims of the school are:

- to create a happy, caring and sharing ethos;
- to maintain a secure and stimulating environment in which both staff and pupils can work with confidence;
- to promote the acquisition of basic skills so that each pupil develops his or her own potential;
- to provide a curriculum which develops each child's social, emotional, intellectual, creative and physical ability.

Priorities in the school development plan for the 2002-2004 include:

- the development of key skills in each subject area;
- the establishment of more effective assessment procedures in the foundation subjects;
- the raising of standards of teaching and learning in mathematics, and design and technology;
- the promotion of healthy eating in personal, social and health education;
- improvements in collective worship.

No changes have been made to the type or age-range of the school during the past five years. The present headteacher has been in post since September, 2001.

The school was last inspected in July, 1998.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The Main Findings of the Report

This is a warm, happy, welcoming school, which is making good progress overall under its current headteacher.

Educational Standards Achieved by Pupils

- During the inspection, standards of educational achievement were satisfactory or better in approximately 95% of the lessons seen, including 46% where they were good and 5% where they were very good.
- Educational provision for children under five years of age successfully promotes the desirable outcomes for learning and is of good quality overall. Standards achieved in the six areas of learning are currently the following:

Area of Learning	Nursery	Reception
Language, Literacy and Communication Skills	Good	Good
Personal and Social Development	Good	Good
Mathematical Development	Satisfactory	Good
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Good	Good
Physical Development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Creative Development	Satisfactory	Very Good

- Standards achieved by pupils at Key Stage 1 are shown below:

Subject	KS1
English	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory
Welsh (as a second language)	Very Good
Design and Technology	Good
Information Technology	Good
History	Good
Geography	Good
Art	Very Good
Music	Good
Physical Education	No Judgment
Religious Education	Good

- Good standards are also achieved in some aspects of science and in reading in English.
- No overall judgment can be given about standards in physical education, as dance was the only aspect of the subject observed during the inspection. Standards in this area of work are also good overall.
- National Curriculum assessment conducted by teachers last summer showed that, at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected norm of Level 2 or

above was well above the national average for Wales in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. The percentage achieving the higher grade of Level 3 was considerably above the national average in science, slightly above the average in reading, and slightly below the average in mathematics. No pupils achieved Level 3 in either speaking and listening or writing.

- Altogether, the percentage of pupils achieving at least Level 2 in mathematics, science and English was considerably above the average both for the area and for Wales as a whole.
- No consistent differences were observed between the performance of boys and girls, although the percentage of girls achieving Level 3 in reading and mathematics was much higher than boys.
- Judged by children's levels of attainment on entering the school, progress is satisfactory overall and good in some instances.
- In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils achieve satisfactory standards overall in speaking, listening and reading, and good standards in number, and information and communications technology. Skills in writing across the curriculum are underdeveloped. Standards in this area are currently unsatisfactory overall.

Ethos of the School

- Very good provision overall is made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Standards of behaviour are satisfactory overall, although there is often some restlessness during lessons at Key Stage 1.
- Good rates are achieved for attendance and punctuality.

Quality of Education

- During the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in approximately 95% of the lessons observed, including 37% where it was good and 7% where it was very good. Teaching was unsatisfactory in some 5% of lessons.
- Teaching at nursery and reception level has improved since the last inspection and now fully accords with the *Desirable Outcomes for Learning*.
- Some particularly good teaching takes place in Welsh, with continuous use of the language throughout the school day. Standards in music are also enhanced by a visiting teacher.
- In the small percentage of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, too much tolerance is sometimes shown of calling out, inattentiveness and interruptions to discussions, with an adverse effect on the quality of speaking and listening in particular.

- Satisfactory procedures overall are in place for assessment, recording and reporting, with some good work at nursery and reception level.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and fully complies with statutory requirements. Nursery and reception children are given a very good range of interesting experiences, which fully accord with the *Desirable Outcomes for Learning*, whilst pupils at Key Stage 1 pupils receive a broad range of experiences in the National Curriculum and religious education. Appropriate challenges, however, are not always set for higher-achieving pupils.
- All pupils have equal opportunities and full access to all parts of the curriculum.
- Visits within the locality help to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, and make an important contribution to the quality of learning.
- A before- and after-school club, organised by the school and led by qualified staff, offers suitable opportunities for drama, art and play sessions amongst other activities.
- Good provision is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils. Teachers display good awareness of pupils' physical and emotional needs. Strong feelings of trust give pupils confidence to share their day-to-day problems or concerns.
- The school has a clear vision for the education of pupils with special educational needs, which it pursues for the benefit of all. Pupils in all classes receive appropriate support. Work is effectively differentiated and matched to individual needs and abilities. Progress is good overall.
- A very good partnership has been established with parents, the community, and other schools and institutions. Good links have also been forged with commerce and industry.

Management

- Good procedures are being established to enable the school to evaluate its own work and to plan for improvement.
- Leadership and efficiency are good overall. The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose and is effecting changes where necessary. Targets in the school development plan are conscientiously pursued.
- Significant benefits have been gained from discussing management issues and observing good practice in other schools.
- Subject co-ordinators have been given clearly-defined responsibilities and allocated some non-teaching time for classroom visits. Much good work has been undertaken in enhancing policies, planning, assessment, resources and portfolios of work, with clear evidence of a number of improvements.

- Regular staff meetings and in-service training enable curriculum development to be undertaken.
- Strong support is received from the governing body, which takes a keen interest in all aspects of the life and work of the school. Good attention has been paid to visiting classes and becoming familiar with the curriculum.
- Statutory duties are well performed. Expenditure is appropriately monitored and controlled, with appropriate emphasis on value for money.
- Day-to-day administration is smooth and effective.
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall. The school has an adequate number of staff for the present number of pupils on roll.
- Due care is taken to ensure that the buildings and grounds are clean and tidy.

Progress since the Last Inspection

- Good progress overall has been made in dealing with the key issues identified during the last inspection, although there are still some areas requiring further attention.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Standards of educational achievement were satisfactory or better in approximately 95% of the lessons seen during the inspection, including 46% where they were good and 5% where they were very good. Standards were unsatisfactory in some 5% of lessons.

- Nursery children achieve satisfactory standards overall in mathematical development; physical development; and creative development; and good standards in language, literacy and communication skills; personal and social development; and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Standards at reception level are satisfactory overall in physical development; good in language, literacy and communication skills; personal and social development; mathematical development; and knowledge and understanding of the world; and very good in creative development.
- At Key Stage 1, standards are satisfactory overall in English, mathematics and science; good in design and technology; information technology, history, geography, music and religious education; and very good in Welsh and art.
- Good standards are also achieved in some aspects of science and in reading in English.

- No overall judgment can be given about standards in physical education, as dance was the only aspect of the subject observed during the inspection. Standards in this area of work are also good overall.
- National Curriculum assessment conducted by teachers last summer showed that, at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected norm of Level 2 or above was well above the national average for Wales in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. The percentage achieving the higher grade of Level 3 was considerably above the national average in science, slightly above the average in reading, and slightly below the average in mathematics. No pupils achieved Level 3 in either speaking and listening or writing.
- Altogether, the percentage of pupils achieving at least Level 2 in mathematics, science and English was considerably above the average both for the area and for Wales as a whole.
- No consistent differences were observed between the performance of boys and girls, although the percentage of girls achieving Level 3 in reading and mathematics was much higher than boys.
- Judged by children's levels of attainment on entering the school, progress is satisfactory overall and good in some instances.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils achieve satisfactory standards overall in speaking, listening and reading, and good standards in number, and information and communications technology. Skills in writing across the curriculum are underdeveloped. Standards in this area are currently unsatisfactory overall.

- Children under five years of age are given regular opportunities to develop literacy, number and information-technology skills across the six areas of learning. Steady progress is made at this level.
- At Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils listen satisfactorily and show clear understanding of the content of lessons. A significant minority, however, call out during lessons and fail to pay proper attention. The school recognises the need for improvement in this area and is making increasing use of equipment such as language stations to improve concentration.
- Speaking skills are developing appropriately, with most pupils expressing themselves clearly and making use of full sentences. Full advantage, however, is not always taken of opportunities to introduce subject-related vocabulary.
- Pupils in both year groups are making good progress in mastering the mechanics of reading but do not apply their skills to maximum effect to gain information in subjects across the curriculum.

- Most pupils record their work in a variety of forms but make insufficient use of writing skills, particularly in subjects such as history and religious education. Skills in independent writing are generally underdeveloped.
- Numerical skills are effectively applied to work in other subjects. Pupils undertake surveys in science, design technology and mathematics, and present data in tables, bar charts and Venn diagrams. Older pupils understand and use grid references to locate places on maps, and are able to write simple programmes to move a robotic toy along a chosen route. In history, pupils create and use quite sophisticated time-lines, involving large intervals of time.
- Skills in information and communications technology are well employed in other subjects. Pupils make wide use of computers to reinforce and extend their learning. The school has a suitable range of software that enables pupils to make freehand drawings and to insert graphics and text. Good use is also made of information technology to record data and help pupils develop an early understanding of statistical analysis. Pupils with special educational needs make effective use of basic literacy programmes. Growing use is made of an interactive whiteboard to promote learning across the curriculum.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Very good provision overall is made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

- Assemblies are predominantly Christian in character and are pleasant, meaningful, family occasions in which music plays an important role.
- Time is allowed for quiet reflection during assemblies, circle times and daily prayers.
- Values taught in assemblies are generally reflected in the life of the school, with pupils showing concern for others and regularly raising funds for good causes. Care is also shown for the environment and living creatures.
- Strong emphasis is placed on social development from the nursery stage onwards. Pupils work and play harmoniously together and co-operate well with each other when divided into groups or pairs.
- Very good attention is paid to the *cwricwlwm Cymreig*, with the school exuding an appropriate Welsh ethos. Constant use is made of the Welsh language throughout the school day.
- Pupils are encouraged to show initiative and take on responsibilities, particularly as the *helpwr heddiw* or members of the school council. Duties are performed with care

and pride.

- Very good cultural awareness is promoted through the curriculum as a whole. Visits to places of interest in history, geography and science, coupled with studies in art, music and religious education, provide a good insight into the heritage and culture of Wales.
- Sound emphasis is also placed on helping pupils to develop a suitable understanding of other faiths and cultures. Celebrations take place of festivals such as Divali and the Chinese New Year, with visitors helping to increase awareness of different customs and practices. Work in geography gives pupils an insight into how people live in other parts of the world, whilst attractive displays prompt interest and discussion in subjects such as religious education.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Standards of behaviour are satisfactory overall, although there is often some restlessness during lessons at Key Stage 1.

- The school has a clear code of conduct dealing with all aspects of the daily life of pupils and a set of “golden rules” stressing the importance of courtesy, respect and consideration for others.
- Children under five years of age are fully engaged in a range of interesting activities and generally display good levels of behaviour.
- Playtimes are friendly social occasions, with children of different ages and both sexes playing harmoniously with each other in a well-supervised, stimulating environment.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 respond exceptionally well to the visiting specialist music teacher and soon becoming enthusiastically involved in the lesson.
- A number of pupils, however, often become restless during other lessons and fail to sustain concentration for the whole of the period. Lesson introductions and plenary sessions are frequently marred by pupils calling out and failing to listen to the contributions of others.
- Effective measures are in place to prevent unacceptable conduct such as sexism, bullying or racism. No such incidents were observed at any time during the inspection.

4.3 Attendance

Good rates are achieved for attendance and punctuality.

- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and, last term, exceeded 96% for

the school as a whole.

- Unauthorised absence is minimal and reflects the strong emphasis the school places on this aspect.
- Registration fully complies with the requirements of Circular No. 3/99 of the Welsh Assembly Government.
- The headteacher examines class details at the end of each month and makes effective use of the data to evaluate group and individual trends.
- A written policy has been drawn up on attendance, setting out a clear strategy for achieving success. Most parents have a sound knowledge of its requirements and have been very supportive in ensuring that its objectives are met.
- Good co-operation is received from parents in informing the school as soon as possible if their child is to be absent. Reasons are then carefully recorded.
- A minority of parents find it necessary to take their children on holidays during term time.
- Punctuality at the start of the day is good, with only the exceptional child arriving after the commencement of lessons. Systematic arrangements ensure that lessons start promptly, enabling maximum use to be made of the time available for teaching.
- Good support is received from the education social worker based at the nearby Castell Alun High School. Assistance is promptly provided, whenever requested.
- No exclusions have been recorded during the current school year.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

During the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in approximately 95% of the lessons observed, including 37% where it was good and 7% where it was very good. Teaching was unsatisfactory in some 5% of lessons.

- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good in all classes, with pupils showing appropriate confidence in asking staff when they need help with their work.
- Good attention is paid to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers generally show a sound knowledge of the subjects they teach.
- Teaching at nursery and reception level has improved since the last inspection and now fully accords with the *Desirable Outcomes for Learning*.

- Much time is given to planning, which contains appropriate detail and takes full account of schemes of work.
- Effective use is made of resources to interest and motivate pupils and to extend understanding. Visits to places of interest also make a significant contribution to the quality of learning.
- Some particularly good teaching takes place in Welsh, with continuous use of the language throughout the school day.
- Standards of achievement in music are enhanced by the expertise of a visiting teacher.
- Classroom support assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, as do voluntary helpers in many areas of the curriculum, especially reading.
- Good efforts are generally made to match work to pupils' needs and abilities, and to ensure that tasks are interesting and meaningful, although insufficient challenge is given to more-able pupils, who do not always achieve their full potential.
- In the small percentage of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, too much tolerance is sometimes shown of calling out, inattentiveness and interruptions to discussions, with an adverse effect on the quality of speaking and listening in particular.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Overall, satisfactory procedures are in place for assessment, recording and reporting.

- A good baseline profile is drawn up of each child's attainments on entry to the school. Information gained in this way is well used to match work to children's needs and abilities and to guide future teaching and learning.
- Analysis of a similar profile at reception stage indicates that children make good progress during their early years in the school.
- At Key Stage 1, teachers make good use of assessment weeks to ascertain the progress of each pupil and to inform parents of the next steps to be taken in mathematics and English. Reports are detailed and informative.
- Satisfactory use is made of assessment data to track the progress of individual pupils throughout the school. Information is generally well used in the planning of work but, as the same tests are employed in all cases, insufficient evidence is obtained to set appropriate challenges for higher-achieving pupils.
- National Curriculum assessment results are analysed at the end of the key stage, but the information gathered does not always provide sufficient data for improvement in the subjects concerned. The percentage of pupils obtaining Level 3 in National Curriculum assessment is significantly below the targets set by the school.
- School portfolios of work generally provide satisfactory benchmarks for teachers in the assessment of standards. Samples of work are assessed and categorised according to the various levels of the National Curriculum.
- Procedures to identify the special educational needs of pupils are generally accurate and consistent.
- The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark and uses the assessment incorporated within the award to focus on pupils whose progress requires monitoring.
- Teachers discuss work with pupils and often make helpful suggestions for improvement. Marking is satisfactory overall.
- Work retained in books does not cover all aspects of the National Curriculum and the syllabus for religious education. Insufficient information is available for co-ordinators to undertake a proper analysis of progress and to make secure judgments about standards in their individual subjects.
- Plenary sessions at Key Stage 1 are generally good and enable pupils and teachers to measure what has been learned during a lesson. Good attention is given to self-evaluation by pupils, which is encouraged from an early age.
- Reports are issued three times a year, and parents have the opportunity to discuss

their children's progress with teachers at any time during the term. All parents are invited to a formal parents' evening during the spring term.

- Annual reports to parents are comprehensive, comply with statutory requirements and give clear indications of what a child has achieved and the next steps to be taken in learning.

5.3 Curriculum

Overall, the school provides pupils with a broad, balanced, relevant curriculum that fully complies with statutory requirements.

- Nursery and reception children are given a very good range of interesting experiences, which fully accord with the *Desirable Outcomes for Learning*.
- Planning for the development of skills at this level is good and enables children to make good progress in the development of basic literacy and number skills.
- At Key Stage 1, all pupils receive a broad range of experiences in the various subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education.
- Long, medium and short-term planning at this level is good overall. Although the school does not have a formal policy for the promotion of key skills, effective use is made of a variety of strategies to foster development in all areas of the curriculum.
- Sound emphasis is placed on personal and social education. Due account is taken of the new framework produced by the Assessment, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for Wales.
- Homework tasks are given on a consistent basis. Reading, in particular, is well developed through encouraging pupils to take books home to read with their parents. "Mathematics bags" help pupils to develop number skills with their parents at home, many of whom have attended workshops in school to learn how to assist their children.
- A before- and after-school club is organised by the school and led by qualified staff. Pupils who attend enjoy, drama, art and play sessions amongst other activities.
- All pupils have equal opportunities and full access to all parts of the curriculum.
- Visits within the locality help to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, and make an important contribution to the quality of learning.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

Good provision is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils.

- Teachers display good awareness of pupils' physical and emotional needs. Strong feelings of trust give pupils confidence to share their day-to-day problems or concerns.
- Parents value the secure and happy environment in which due attention is given to their children's well-being.
- The induction of new pupils is sensitively handled. Good links are maintained with the pre-school playgroup and other private nurseries.
- Strong emphasis is placed on equality of opportunity. Staff's good knowledge of pupils ensures that each is fully included in all aspects of school life, irrespective of age, gender or attainment.
- Good arrangements are in place for child-protection. The headteacher is the designated member of staff for this area and has ensured that colleagues are fully aware of responsibilities and procedures. Careful attention has been paid to statutory requirements and guidance from the local education authority.
- Appropriate supervision is provided during breaks and the lunchtime period. All members of staff have undertaken basic training in first-aid, including two who are fully qualified.
- Good attention is paid to all aspects of health and safety. Fire drills are held on a regular basis and appropriate action is taken to ensure that accidents are properly handled and recorded.
- Risk assessment is not sufficiently rigid. Procedures are not clearly documented.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.

- Approximately 17% of pupils on roll have been identified as having some form of special educational need.
- Good procedures are in place for early identification and assessment.
- The school has a clear vision for the education of pupils with special needs, which it pursues for the benefit of all.
- Pupils in all classes receive appropriate support. Work is effectively differentiated and matched to individual needs and abilities.
- Detailed individual educational plans have been drawn up for all pupils, with targets well suited to their needs. As a result, pupils are fully integrated into groups and classes, and make progress at least commensurate with their abilities. Many achieve

higher levels than the school predicts. Plans are prepared jointly by the peripatetic special-needs teacher and class teachers, and carefully implemented and monitored.

- Nursery nurses liaise closely with class teachers and are fully involved in the planning of work. The school also has a large number of volunteer helpers who support group work in reading and provide appropriate help in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils gain considerable benefits from the arrangements.
- Training for support staff is well matched both to the needs of the individual and the requirements of the school. All members of staff are fully included in school-based in-service training.
- Valuable support is received from specialist staff from various outside agencies, including the health, psychology and advisory services.
- Parents are kept fully informed of the targets set for their children and given opportunities to make their own contributions.
- Pupils, in some cases, participate in the setting of targets as part of the school's system of self-evaluation.
- The headteacher acts as the co-ordinator for special educational needs and makes every effort to secure the best possible help and provision for pupils. Records are up-to date and carefully maintained.
- Effective use is made of information technology to support pupils' learning.
- Progress is good overall.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

Overall, a very good partnership has been established with parents, the community, and other schools and institutions.

- Parents who responded to the questionnaire, and those interviewed before and during the inspection, voiced strong support for the school. All expressed their appreciation of the hard work and friendliness of the headteacher and staff, and agreed that it was easy to approach the school about any matter they wished to discuss.
- Many formal and informal opportunities for contact with teachers ensure that parents are fully aware of their children's personal and academic progress and development. Induction arrangements for new pupils are also highly effective.
- Very good working relationships have been established with a number of parents, who provide regular support in the classroom and also help with other activities. Many good examples of this assistance were seen during the inspection. Well-planned schemes ensure that support is used to maximum advantage.

- Regular newsletters are sent out to parents about the life and work of the school.
- The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents fully comply with statutory requirements.
- Funds raised by the Friends of Penyffordd School have enhanced the quality of education and resources in many areas of the curriculum.
- Very good liaison takes place with Penyffordd Junior School, with regular visits between the two schools. A well-organised system ensures that the transfer of pupils is smooth and effectively handled.
- Strong links have been forged with the local community. Pupils are encouraged to participate in community projects and develop a good awareness of environmental issues.
- A close link has also been established with the parish church, whose vicar regularly leads assemblies in the school. Good support is received for the nativity play held in the church building.
- Pupils have been successfully involved in the Penyffordd Youth Festival.
- Students from the North-East Wales Institute, Deeside College and Chester College obtain valuable training experience in the school. Students from Castell Alun High School also regularly visit for work experience. Much benefit is gained from the relationships.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

Good links have been forged with commerce and industry.

- Learning in several areas of the curriculum has benefited from links with a large commercial retail park. Pupils in Year 2 have communicated with the managers of a food company and investigated the contents and sources of products.
- Teachers have visited the Powergen training establishment to enhance their professional skills and knowledge and to gain greater insight into the manufacturing, marketing and financial aspects of industry.
- Involvement with Direct Power has given pupils an opportunity to explore the basic principles of electricity and to participate in projects.
- Partnership with a national banking organisation has helped to support new initiatives, including the "Golden Time" scheme which is having a positive effect on standards of behaviour.

- Links with the forest ranger have enhanced pupils' understanding of, and respect for, the countryside, whilst a visit to a large cement company has provided a greater insight into the world of work.
- Work in the classroom shows that links with industry have increased pupils' economic and industrial awareness. A very good foundation has been laid for subsequent development at Key Stage 2.
- The school has achieved the Investors-in-People award.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

Overall, good procedures are being established to enable the school to evaluate its own work and to plan for improvement.

- The headteacher has promoted a self-critical culture amongst staff and governors, and engendered an appropriate commitment to school improvement.
- Regular reports to the governing body help to keep governors properly informed about the life and work of the school.
- Performance in reading is regularly measured against targets set for groups and individual pupils. The headteacher has personally undertaken a review of work in this area, which has helped to raise standards of achievement.
- The headteacher, staff and governors regularly review targets in the school development plan and assess the extent of progress.
- In-service training is well linked to priorities in the school development plan.
- Regular meetings are held to review the curriculum and initiatives in various subject areas.
- The headteacher visits other schools to observe good practice and to discuss different forms of management.
- Time has been allocated for staff to fulfil their roles as subject co-ordinators, including the observation of classroom practice. Work in this area has led to some sensible targets for further improvement.
- Results of National Curriculum assessments in English, mathematics and science are analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses. As a result, attention has recently been given to areas such as speaking and listening to raise standards from nursery level onwards. Insufficient rigour, however, is currently applied to some other areas, where

skills and understanding could be better developed by a more sharply-focused programme of work, particularly in respect of more-able pupils who are not always sufficiently challenged and stretched.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

Leadership and efficiency are good overall.

- The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose and is effecting changes where necessary. Targets in the school development plan are conscientiously pursued.
- Significant benefits have been gained from discussing management issues and observing good practice in other schools.
- The headteacher teaches a class for three days a week and acts as a good role model for colleagues.
- Subject co-ordinators have been given clearly-defined responsibilities and allocated some non-teaching time for classroom visits. Much good work has been undertaken in enhancing policies, planning, assessment, resources and portfolios of work, with clear evidence of a number of improvements.
- Regular staff meetings and in-service training enable curriculum development to be undertaken.
- Strong support is received from the governing body, which takes a keen interest in all aspects of the life and work of the school. Good attention has been paid to visiting classes and becoming familiar with the curriculum.
- Statutory duties are well performed. Expenditure is appropriately monitored and controlled, with appropriate emphasis on value for money.
- Very good communication takes place with parents, who are strongly supportive of the headteacher and staff.
- Day-to-day administration is smooth and effective.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall.

- The school has an adequate number of staff for the present number of pupils on roll. All are suitably qualified and appropriately deployed.
- Good support is received from the school secretary, caretaker and midday supervisors, who discharge their duties efficiently and effectively.

- The nursery and reception classroom is large, cheerful and very well equipped with up-to-date learning resources. Classrooms in the rest of the school are of an adequate size and offer pleasant learning spaces for pupils.
- Good use is made of colourful displays of pupils' work to enhance the environment.
- The library, housed in a spare classroom, has a good range of books and is used by pupils for research and by the visiting special-needs teacher for computer work and withdrawal teaching for small groups of pupils. A separate fiction library is housed in the foyer.
- Due care is taken to ensure that the buildings and grounds are clean and tidy.
- Learning resources are generally good in all subjects.
- Each classroom has three computers, which are well used to support learning across the curriculum.
- Increasing use is being made of an interactive whiteboard, kept in the resources room, to promote learning during lessons.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards Achieved by Pupils

Provision for Children under Five

Educational provision for children under five years of age successfully promotes the desirable outcomes for learning and is of good quality overall. Standards of achievement are satisfactory or better in all six areas of learning.

i. Language, Literacy and Communication Skills

Good standards are achieved in the development of language, literacy and communication skills, with very good progress in reading and writing at reception stage.

Good Features

- Nursery children are given a good range of experiences to build up listening and speaking skills and to develop an enjoyment of books.
- Children at this level generally listen well, both in small and large groups, and are eager to participate in discussions and to join in rhymes and songs.
- Many are aware that words and pictures convey meaning and are able to talk about their favourite stories.
- Daily practice ensures that each child is able to recognise and find his or her own name on a place card.
- Role-play is a regular feature of the programme. Children participate with vigour and enthusiasm.
- Frequent practical activities such as painting and mark-making help to develop good hand-eye co-ordination.
- At reception level, most pupils speak clearly and listen intently during circle times. Responses to questions indicate good listening skills and clear understanding of tasks and instructions.
- Children at this level are introduced to a broad vocabulary and are able to use full sentences in answering questions.
- Very good progress is made in reading throughout the reception year. Children are able to recognise a range of familiar words and apply their knowledge of initial letter sounds, pictures and contextual clues to tackle new text.

- Good support is received from parents, who regularly read with their children at home. Voluntary helpers also make a significant contribution in this area.
- Writing skills at this age are developing well. Children can under- and over-write and, in some cases, copy accurately. Individual letters are generally well formed. Numerous activities help to foster progress in this area.
- Nursery children make good progress in Welsh. Very good standards are achieved at reception level.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were observed.

ii. Personal and Social Development

Standards in personal and social development are good overall at both nursery and reception level.

Good Features

- Children work and play harmoniously together, taking turns during activities and willingly sharing toys and equipment. Learning takes place in a happy, secure environment, with well-established routines.
- Standards of behaviour are generally good.
- Children, in the main, show due regard for the environment and a proper respect for living and growing things.
- Reception children, in particular, display growing independence in their learning.
- Good use is made of circle times to encourage a sense of responsibility and caring for others.
- When acting as the *helpwr heddiw*, children carry out their duties sensibly and responsibly.

Shortcomings

- On occasions, adults wait too long before settling minor disputes amongst children.

iii. Mathematical Development

Standards in mathematical development are satisfactory overall at nursery level and good at reception stage.

Good Features

- Children are provided with a good range of practical activities to develop basic mathematical understanding.
- Nursery children recognise basic colours and shapes, and can match items on a one-to-one basis.
- Good use is made of rhymes and songs to reinforce counting to five or beyond.
- Reception children show a growing understanding of number and can count in twos to twenty or beyond. Most are able to add two simple numbers together and recognise the difference between odd and even. Work is well reinforced by the singing of items such as “Noah’s Song”.
- Children at this level can name a number of everyday three-dimensional shapes and have some knowledge of their properties.
- Role-play is well used to develop familiarity with money and recognition of coins.
- Concepts are well reinforced by regular use of information technology and oral work during plenary sessions.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were observed.

iv. Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Good standards are achieved in developing knowledge and understanding of the world.

Good Features

- Nursery children are able to name and identify mini-beasts and discuss their features. Much benefit has been obtained from visits to places such as Alyn Waters, where children have been able to observe and gain first-hand experiences of nature. Learning has also been enhanced by visits from rangers, who have helped children to set up bird-feeders and to develop their outdoor play area.
- Good use is made of role-play to develop knowledge of occupations in the local community, such as the builder, nurse and school-crossing-patrol lady, with visitors making an important contribution to the extension of learning.
- Reception children are currently enjoying a colourful topic about animals and show good knowledge of a range of animals both in Britain and abroad.

- Both year-groups are introduced to other customs and cultures through displays of clothes and jewellery from countries such as India and events such as the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Regular cooking sessions also provide children with opportunities to sample foods from different countries and regions.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were observed.

v. Physical Development

Standards in physical development are satisfactory overall.

Good Features

- Nursery children show that they can pedal and push confidently during outdoor play, follow routes, balance and travel through a “tunnel” successfully.
- Activities such as throwing a bean bag into a basket and using pencils, crayons and scissors show that hand-eye co-ordination is developing satisfactorily.
- Reception children have regular opportunities to develop their throwing and catching skills during outdoor games, and co-operate sensibly with each other when working together in pairs.
- Regular use is made of malleable materials and construction toys. Manipulative skills are developing appropriately.

Shortcomings

- Some activities occasionally lack an identified purpose. Not all children are continually and effectively challenged.

vi. Creative Development

Standards in creative development are satisfactory overall at nursery level and very good at reception stage.

Good Features

- Nursery children paint confidently and are given experiences with a variety of techniques and materials.
- Reception children experiment with different shades of colour and make effective use of collage materials. Some very good work has been produced with techniques such as printing and weaving. Children at this level are able to explain how they produced

desired effects and talk enthusiastically about their work.

- Much enjoyment is obtained from musical activities, with children in both year-groups having regular opportunities for singing and exploring the sounds of various instruments. Good behaviour contributes significantly to standards of achievement in this area, particularly at reception level.

Shortcomings

- At nursery level, insufficient time is given to the observation and discussion of work before it is taken home by children.
- Although there is photographic evidence of a variety of creative work, too few examples were on display during the inspection to show the achievements of individual nursery children.

English

Standards of achievement in English are satisfactory overall, with good standards in reading.

i. Speaking and Listening

Satisfactory standards are achieved in speaking and listening.

Good Features

- The majority of pupils speak clearly and make appropriate use of standard English.
- Regular use is made of puppetry and role-play to develop confidence and fluency in speech.
- Pupils, in general, listen attentively for most of the time and are able to carry out commands and instructions.
- Daily use of listening stations encourages careful listening and increased enjoyment of stories.

Shortcomings

- A number of pupils in both classes do not listen as carefully as they might. Some call out in their eagerness to respond to questions and often miss other pupils' contributions during discussion times.

ii. Reading

Good standards are achieved in reading.

Good Features

- Pupils are surrounded by a wide range of books, in English and Welsh, covering both fiction and information material.
- Good progress is made in the mechanics of reading, with effective use of a structured reading scheme.
- Pupils acquire an appropriate sight vocabulary and generally make good use of phonic knowledge to tackle new words.
- Reading is fluent in most cases, with pupils showing a good understanding of text.
- Good support is received from parents and voluntary helpers.
- Teachers hear pupils read on a regular basis, both as individuals and groups, and keep meticulous records of progress.

Shortcomings

- Reading lacks expression in some cases. Sufficient use is not made of “Big Books” and group reading to achieve maximum progress in this aspect of work.

iii. Writing

Standards in writing are satisfactory overall.

Good Features

- Writing demonstrates a suitable range of forms and, overall, shows satisfactory progress from early independent writing to story-writing by the end of Year 2.
- Good attention is paid to the writing of poetry.
- Initiatives such as the “Magic Box” help to foster imagination and creativity. By the end of Year 2, some pupils make effective use of imagination to write extended stories.
- Work, in the main, is neatly presented, although standards vary in some cases. Letters are generally well formed.
- Regular use is made of word books and dictionaries to help pupils spell simple words correctly.
- Information technology supports spelling and writing.

Shortcomings

- Insufficient adult support is provided when pupils are required to use reference materials to obtain information for topic work. Pupils are expected to extrapolate facts from a large

number of books, with many not knowing exactly what they are expected to find and some reverting to copying text.

- Use of capital letters and full stops varies considerably, with little use of question, exclamation and speech marks by the end of Year 2. Insufficient use is made of “Big Books” to promote appropriate progress in this area.
- Opportunities are lost for practising and extending writing skills in areas such as history and religious education.
- Too little attention is given to regular handwriting practice in Year 2. Materials selected for the purpose are not always the most suitable. No use, for example, is made of lined books, although there is recognition that writing is neater when teachers draw lines for their pupils.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement in mathematics are satisfactory overall

Good Features

- Most pupils are familiar with a variety of mental strategies to assist in the recall of number facts, including doubling and halving. They can count in twos, fives and tens, and recall addition and subtraction facts to 20.
- Many display good communication skills and are able to explain how they calculate number. A sound understanding is being acquired of mathematical language.
- Pupils can recognise the different values of coins, calculate simple bills and give the correct change from 10p, 20p, 50p and £1.00.
- By the end of Year 2, most pupils understand place value to 100, and a few to 1,000.
- Satisfactory knowledge is shown of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils can identify corners and edges, and measure accurately using standard and non-standard units.
- Sound understanding is being acquired of pattern and symmetry.
- Knowledge of fractions is developing satisfactorily. Pupils recognise $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ and are able to divide shapes accordingly.
- Many able pupils understand the angles of turn of a circle and can programme a robotic toy by applying their knowledge successfully.
- Pupils compile block charts and pictograms to represent data collected from simple surveys. Satisfactory standards are achieved in this area.

Shortcomings

- Although pupils are able to recite odd and even numbers by rote, most have not yet acquired a satisfactory understanding of the concept.
- Processes of mental calculation are generally slow. Skills in this area are mainly underdeveloped.
- Although able to read clocks accurately at quarter past, half past, quarter to and on the hour, the majority of pupils have insufficient understanding of the relationship between problem solving and time.
- Problem-solving skills are adversely affected by insecure understanding of multiplication and division.

Science

Standards in science are satisfactory overall, with good aspects in some areas of work.

Good Features

- Pupils understand that life is supported by food and water, and display secure knowledge of what constitutes a healthy diet and how the body benefits from exercise.
- Younger pupils have grown plants from seeds and know that water, warmth and light are necessary for healthy germination. Most can accurately label the main parts of a flowering plant.
- During a visit to the local power station, pupils conducted simple experiments with electricity, including constructing a circuit to light up a bulb.
- Sound knowledge is shown of how substances are changed by heating and cooling. More-able pupils recognise that some changes are reversible whilst others are not.
- When sorting materials, pupils are able to use Venn diagrams to divide items into different categories. Older pupils recognise the various effects produced by forces such as pushing, pulling, bending and twisting.
- Pupils are beginning to plan their own investigations with help from their teachers. They are able to make predictions from known facts and can explain fair tests they have undertaken into changes in materials.

Shortcomings

- Knowledge of scientific vocabulary is underdeveloped.

Welsh

Very good standards are achieved in Welsh as a second language.

Good Features

- The school is characterised by a strong Welsh ethos.
- Very good foundations are laid at nursery and reception stage, with daily opportunities for the reinforcement of simple words and phrases.
- One of the major strengths of the school is the way in which staff make regular incidental use of the language. Pupils understand and respond accordingly.
- Punctuation is generally clear and correct.
- Lessons are well structured. Pupils are challenged with a suitable range of vocabulary.
- Steady progress is made in absorbing new words and sentences, particularly in areas such as the weather, food, pets, feelings and clothing.
- Daily reinforcement takes place of numbers, days of the week and months of the year.
- Each classroom has a range of visual vocabulary, which is well used by pupils during discussions and writing.
- Effective use is made of the *helpwr heddiw*, who asks a range of questions to which pupils are able to respond in full sentences.
- Reading books are well displayed around the school. Pupils can read from “Big Books” and recognise known words when attempting to read from new text.
- Writing is a particularly strong feature, with some pupils in Year 2 making very good progress in this area.
- Class books are attractively illustrated.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were observed.

Design and Technology

Although little work in design and technology was directly observed during the inspection,

evidence gained from books, photographs and discussions with pupils indicates that standards in the subject are good overall.

Good Features

- Younger pupils draw simple pictures of what they wish to make. Older pupils produce good design drawings, list materials and demonstrate an early understanding of thoughtful evaluation appropriate to their age.
- During the inspection, pupils designed and produced postcards using pencils, crayons or felt-tip pens. Designs made effective use of colour and were generally imaginative and creative.
- Older pupils have produced interesting, well-labelled designs for a protective hat that have yet to go to the making phase.
- Suitable attention is given to food technology and textiles. Younger pupils design and make fairy cakes, dough cakes and sandwiches. Older pupils have designed the decoration for a Christmas cake.
- Pupils enjoy using construction kits such as Popoids, Mobilo and Lego to investigate structures and have made vehicles with moving parts from recyclable materials.
- Older pupils write simple programmes to send a robotic toy along a simple route – using right angle turns, for example – to find the treasure on a map.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were observed in the work available for inspection.

Information Technology

Standards in information technology are good overall.

Good Features

- Pupils are encouraged from an early age to use the computer for word-processing, reading and drawing. Growing skills are acquired in operating the mouse and the keyboard.
- By the end of the key stage, pupils can move text and objects around the screen and save and print their work independently.
- Most pupils are able to open programmes for themselves and select an area of work. Many can competently operate a range of programmes.
- Increasing use is being made of listening centres to promote aural skills in a range of subjects.
- Good use is made of CD-ROMs, games and the Internet to promote learning in many subjects, including geography, mathematics, science, and design and technology. Pupils open websites such as the Nature Grid and are able to send electronic mail to a friend in New Zealand who has visited the school.
- Older pupils show a good understanding of databases and can represent data in graphical formats.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were observed.

History

Standards in history are good overall.

Good Features

- Pupils show a sound understanding of the concept of change and recognise differences between the present and past.
- All understand the purpose of time-lines and most are acquiring a good sense of chronology. Exercises such as placing stories and events in order help younger pupils to develop an appropriate awareness of sequence. Good use is made of resources to support this aspect of work.
- Studies of the local area, coupled with visits to places of interest such as Penrhyn Castle and the Victorian school at Llangollen, help to provide pupils with valuable

first-hand experiences. Good recall is shown of such visits.

- Effective use is made of videos, photographs and artefacts to help pupils obtain information about events and life in the past.
- Pupils can recognise different materials in old household articles, explain why and how they were used, and suggest reasons for change.
- Stories about famous Welsh characters such as Mary Jones and her Bible help to build up knowledge of the history of Wales.

Shortcomings

- Maximum use is not made of written skills in the recording of work.

Geography

Standards in geography are good overall.

Good Features

- Good use is made of the locality and pupils' own experiences as a basis for study.
- Pupils can describe where they live, identify their area on a map of Wales and discuss other places in the vicinity.
- Most can also recognise a map of Great Britain and name the countries which make up the United Kingdom, as well as cities such as London, Cardiff and Manchester.
- Mapping skills are developing well. Pupils draw maps and plans, and recognise the purpose of keys and symbols. Older pupils are being introduced to grid work successfully.
- The "Travels of Barnaby Bear" help to introduce pupils to places further afield and to build up knowledge of climate, housing, clothing and food in different countries. Good knowledge is shown of daily life in countries such as Norway.
- Pupils are able to use a globe to find places they have studied or visited on holiday.
- Good use is made of visits to places such as Manchester Airport and Moel Famau Park to enhance and extend pupils' experiences.
- Effective links are made with other subjects, particularly history and English. Stories such as "Woolly Wendy and the Snowdon Lily" are well used to promote discussion on the Snowdonia region and Wales.
- Very good use is made of displays to promote interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject.

- Appropriate knowledge is shown of environmental issues such as cleanliness and pollution.

Shortcomings

- Whilst the recording of work is generally satisfactory, sufficient emphasis is not always placed on the use and development of writing skills.

Art

Very good standards are achieved in art.

Good Features

- Pupils are given a wide range of experiences including painting, collage, drawing, printing and modelling. Manipulative and creative skills are developing well.
- Many opportunities are provided for choosing and experimenting with materials. Sound attention is given to the mixing of paints, with pupils knowing what colours to choose to produce different hues and shades.
- Pupils concentrate well on their tasks and pay careful attention to line, shape and form, as illustrated, for example, in drawings of sea shells.
- Careful choices of colours and materials have resulted in some attractive collage work. Examples are thoughtfully displayed throughout the school.
- Studies of famous artists help pupils to appreciate different styles and approaches. Work based on Lowry is of very good quality in some cases and demonstrates pupils' abilities to capture the basic mood of a picture. Paintings imitating Seurat's techniques in pointillism also show good use and control of colour. Pupils are able to discuss how they produced the effects they desired.
- All pupils have opportunities to work with clay and other malleable materials. Work on display shows that skills are well applied in this area.
- Good use is made of computer programmes to enable pupils to produce pictures of the world around them.
- Skills in the subject are well applied in other areas of the curriculum. Class-books, for example, are well illustrated and provide clear evidence of careful drawing and colouring.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were observed.

Music

Standards in music are good overall.

Good Features

- Pupils throughout the school sing tunefully and know a range of hymns and songs in both English and Welsh. Good attention is paid to diction and pitch.
- Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to experiment with tuned and untuned percussion instruments.
- Pupils listen carefully during lessons and show appreciation of each other's efforts.
- When making music together, pupils are able to play simple rhythms, keep a steady beat and use body percussion as well as instruments. Close attention is paid to the conductor, usually one of their number, who keeps good control over the performance.
- Most pupils can recognise and name a suitable range of instruments.
- Pupils understand the purpose of a score and can read and follow simple pictorial guidance successfully.
- Simple evaluations are made of performance in the form of short recordings of work.
- Assemblies provide good opportunities for appreciating the works of great composers such as Beethoven and Vivaldi.
- Due attention is paid to music from other countries and cultures.
- Good links are made with dance and movement.
- Specialist teaching makes a considerable contribution to standards of achievement in the subject.

Shortcomings

- Work observed during the inspection showed too few opportunities for pupils to experiment and collaborate with each other.

Physical Education

No overall judgment can be given about standards in physical education, as dance was the only aspect of the subject observed during the inspection. Standards in this area of work are good overall.

Good Features

- Pupils undertake appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities and understand how their bodies are affected by exercise.
- Good use is made of space during dance lessons. Pupils are developing appropriate awareness of their bodies and can travel forwards and backwards along straight and curved pathways.
- Movement in dance conveys rhythm and expression, with pupils showing good balance and grace as, for example, when performing dances such as the Maypole.
- When working in groups or pairs, pupils generally collaborate well with each other, successfully linking different movements and moving in time to the music.

Shortcomings

- Insufficient emphasis is placed on evaluation as a means of improving performance and raising standards of achievement. Pupils do not normally evaluate each other's work when observing performances.

Religious Education

Standards in religious education are good overall.

Good Features

- Pupils learn about Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism and recognise that each has a sacred text. They are familiar with terms such as church, temple and synagogue, and appreciate that people worship in different buildings according to their faith.
- Visits to the parish church have helped to develop awareness of the main features and purposes of the building and to promote understanding of religious practices and rituals.
- Pupils display sound knowledge of the major Christian festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest, and recognise that most religions celebrate special days.
- Most pupils show a good recall of stories from both the Old and New Testaments, and know the significance of Christ's life from his birth at Bethlehem to his death in Jerusalem. They enjoy recounting miracles and stories about Jesus, and show good understanding of how parables and stories relate to everyday life.

- Good use is made of artefacts to help pupils understand the significance of ritual and custom in worship and to develop awareness of features such as Hindu prayer. Artefacts are sometimes labelled bilingually, with use being made, for example, of both English and Hindi script.
- Pupils write individual prayers of thanksgiving, which they read during collective worship.

Shortcomings

- Although pupils appreciate that religions often have similar festivals, they are unable to link celebrations such as Christmas, Divali and Hanukkah.
- Little use is made of writing to record work undertaken in lessons and to develop individual thoughts and ideas.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the Last Inspection

Good progress overall has been made in dealing with the key issues identified during the last inspection, although there are still some areas requiring further attention.

- The last inspection report, published on 14th August, 1998, identified six key areas for action. The school was advised that it needed to:
 - i. review practices in the nursery class to ensure that children receive appropriate teacher support and make maximum progress in all areas of learning;
 - ii. provide greater opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills and to develop their imagination and creativity;
 - iii. broaden pupils' experiences in number work to ensure full development of computational skills;
 - iv. arrange a more equitable distribution of staff curriculum responsibilities;
 - v. disseminate existing good practice to all areas of the school;
 - vi. deal with the safety hazard caused by the condition of the paving stones on the path from the front gate.
- Progress since that time has been the following.

Key Issue 1

Appropriate action has been taken to address this key issue. Practice at nursery level is now good, with children making sound progress in all areas of learning.

Key Issue 2

Some thought has been given to ways of extending pupils' writing skills and developing creativity and imagination. Use of the "Magic Box", for example, has stimulated ideas and encouraged creative writing in English. Much scope, however, still exists for providing greater opportunities for writing across the curriculum and developing pupils' skills in this area. Insufficient emphasis is currently placed on writing in areas such as history and religious education.

Key Issue 3

Good progress has been made in developing pupils' number skills by increasing opportunities for oral, practical and number work. Sufficient challenge, however, is not yet provided for higher-achieving pupils.

Key Issue 4

Curriculum responsibilities have been reallocated since the last inspection and distributed more equitably, although staffing reductions have meant an increased number of subjects for several teachers.

Key Issue 5

Good practice is now disseminated more effectively throughout the school, with staff sharing experiences through planning, discussions and classroom observation. Much benefit has also been gained from the headteacher's visits to other schools, which have enabled staff to consider new thoughts and ideas.

Key Issue 6

Action to deal with the condition of the paving stones was taken shortly after the last inspection. No other health or safety issue is currently outstanding.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school now needs to:

- continue efforts to bring standards in all subjects up to the level of the best, particularly the core subjects of English, mathematics and science;
- place greater emphasis on the development of writing skills in subjects across the curriculum;
- ensure that maximum challenge is provided for higher-achieving pupils;
- extend existing monitoring procedures to ensure that full benefit is gained from the process and further improvements are made in both teaching and learning.

The headteacher has already identified these issues as areas for further improvement.

The inspection team would like to express their warm appreciation of the welcome, co-operation and assistance they received from the headteacher, staff, governors, parents and pupils of the school.

APPENDIX A

Basic Information about the School

Name of School	Abbot's Lane Infants' School
School Type	Community
Age-Range of Pupils	3 – 7 years
Address of School	Abbot's Lane Penyffordd Flintshire
Post Code	CH4 0HW
Telephone Number	01244 547214

Headteacher	Mrs. Elizabeth Dawn Westaway
Date of Appointment	September, 2001
Chairman of Governors	Mrs. Jane Littler
Registered Inspector	Mrs. Eirwen Griffiths
Dates of Inspection	7th – 9th June, 2004

APPENDIX B

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	16	26	22	39	-	-	-	-	103

Total Number of Teachers			
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time Equivalent (fte)
Number of Teachers	3	3	4.3

Staffing Information	
Pupil : Teacher (fte) Ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	28.1 : 1
Pupil : Adult Ratio in Nursery Classes	1.7 : 1
Pupil : Adult Ratio in Special Classes	-
Average Class Size (excluding nursery and special classes)	29
Teacher (fte) : Class Ratio	1.17 : 1

Percentage Attendance for Three Complete Terms Prior to the Inspection					
	N	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School (excluding nursery)
Term 1	86.0	96.2	97.1	-	96.8
Term 2	85.0	93.6	94.1	-	93.1
Term 3	89.7	95.8	94.2	-	94.6

Number of Pupils Excluded during Twelve Months prior to Inspection	0
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APPENDIX C

Results of National Curriculum Assessments

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2003			Number of Pupils in Y2 29					
Percentage of Pupils at Each Level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	3	97	0	0
		National	0	4	13	63	20	0
ENGLISH: Speaking and Listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	3	97	0	0
		National	0	3	12	63	22	0
English: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	3	67	30	0
		National	0	4	14	55	27	0
ENGLISH: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	7	93	0	0
		National	0	5	14	69	11	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	7	73	20	0
		National	0	2	11	63	24	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	3	63	33	0
		National	0	2	10	66	22	0

Percentage of Pupils Attaining at least Level 2 in Mathematics, Science and English (or Welsh as a First Language) according to Teacher Assessment			
In the School:	93%	In Wales:	79%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements
 A Pupils who were absent from the tests/tasks
 W Pupils who are working towards Level 1

The majority of seven-year-old pupils are expected to attain Level 2.

APPENDIX D

The Evidence Base of Inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors over a period of 2½ days.

- Pre-inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and governing body.
- Fourteen parents attended a pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector.
- Fifty-one questionnaires were returned, analysed and summarised.
- All documentation submitted by the school was analysed and discussed, including the school development plan, policy and curriculum documents and teachers' planning files.
- Pupils were observed as they arrived and departed from school and during the midday and other breaks.
- At various times during the day, inspectors took the opportunity to talk to pupils and to discuss their work.
- Thirty lessons or parts of-lessons were observed.
- Pupils were heard reading and were examined in their knowledge and understanding of English, mathematics, science and other subjects.
- A wide range of pupils' written and other work was examined in each class.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' work with class teachers and examined assessment records.
- Discussions were also held with the headteacher, curriculum co-ordinators and other staff.
- The work of pupils with special educational needs was examined.
- Minutes of meetings and documents relating to the financial management of the school were discussed.
- Budget figures were examined and discussed with the headteacher.
- Attendance and pupil records were inspected.
- Inspectors attended acts of collective worship.

APPENDIX E

Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Team Member	Subject Responsibilities	Aspect Responsibilities
Mrs. E. Griffiths	Areas of Learning for Children under Five English Welsh (as a second language) History Geography Art Music	The School and its Priorities Main Findings Standards of Achievement in Subjects and Areas of Learning Standards of Achievement in Key Skills across the Curriculum Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Teaching Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement Leadership & Efficiency Progress since the Last Inspection Key Issues for Action
Mrs. Valerie Howells	Mathematics Science Design and Technology Information Technology Physical Education Religious Education	Main Findings Assessment, Recording and Reporting Curriculum Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare Special Educational Needs Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources Key Issues for Action
Mr. S. Roberts		Main Findings Behaviour and Attitudes Attendance Partnership with Parents, the Community, Schools and Other Institutions Partnership with Industry Key Issues for Action