

INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF
SCHOOL INSPECTIONS ACT, 1996

ABERCERDIN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kenry Street
Evanstown
Gilfach Goch
Porth, CF39 8RS

School Number: 672/2046

Date of Inspection: 11th - 13th November, 2002

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REGISTERED INSPECTOR: WO50/15890

9th December, 2002

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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.

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1. CONTEXT

The School and its Priorities

Abercerdin Primary School is situated in Evanstown, Gilfach Goch, approximately a mile to the north of the A4093 road from Tonypany to Llangeinor. It lies on the eastern edge of the area now administered by Bridgend County Borough Council.

Currently, the school has a total roll of 140 pupils aged three to eleven years, including fifteen nursery children who attend on a full-time basis. Numbers have declined slightly over the last three years.

In general terms, three-quarters of the area served by the school can be described as economically disadvantaged, whilst the remainder is neither disadvantaged nor economically prosperous. Free school meals are received by some 34% of pupils, whilst forty-eight pupils are considered to have some form of special educational need. The annual intake covers the full ability range, although there is a high percentage of relatively disadvantaged children.

English is the sole or predominant home language in all cases. No pupil comes from a Welsh-speaking home or from an ethnic-minority community.

The school has produced a "vision for the future" based on a poem entitled "Children Learn What They Live":

To create a learning culture in the school in which the promotion of self-confidence and self-esteem is the key to raising the standard of achievement in all pupils.

Towards this end, it is important that children are praised both for achievement and effort. Praise is to be given freely and an effort made to remember those children who quietly maintain standards and always give of their best, when giving out rewards.

Pupils, through praise and rewards, will be made aware that their efforts are worthwhile and they themselves are of worth, thereby promoting their self-confidence and self-esteem leading to the raising of standards.

Main aims have been expressed as follows:

We hope that by giving the child guidelines through the curriculum and setting standards of behaviour, we would be giving the child the confidence to progress in a stimulating and happy environment. We would be encouraging the child to acquire habits, skills and knowledge, interests and attitudes of mind which he or she will need for living a full and happy life which will in turn benefit the community in which he or she lives.

No changes have been made to the type or age-range of the school in recent years. The present

headteacher has been in post since September, 1984.
The school was last inspected in May, 1997.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The Main Findings of the Report

- * This is a warm, welcoming, friendly school, with some very good administrative features.
- * During the inspection, standards of educational achievement were satisfactory or better in approximately 83% of the lessons seen, including 30% where they were good. Standards were less than satisfactory in some 17% of lessons.
- * Satisfactory provision overall is made for nursery children, who follow a programme of activities which broadly conform to the *Desirable Outcomes in Learning for Children under Five*. The programme at reception level, however, is far too formal and is unsuited to the age of the children concerned. Standards in the six areas of learning are currently the following:

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

- * Overall standards achieved by pupils in the rest of the school are as follows:

Subject	KS1	KS2
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory	Good
Welsh (as a second language)	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Design and Technology	Good	Satisfactory
Information Technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
History	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	Satisfactory	Good
Art	Good	Good
Music	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Physical Education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious Education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

- * There are also several good features in Welsh at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics and history in the upper part of Key Stage 2.
- * In art, there are some examples of very good work at both key stages.
- * 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 significantly below the national average for Wales in speaking and listening, mathematics and science, and considerably below the average in reading and writing.
- * The percentage achieving the higher grade of Level 3 was slightly above the national average in mathematics, but below the average in reading and writing. No pupils achieved Level 3 in speaking and listening, or science.
- * At the end of Key Stage 2, National Curriculum test results indicated that the percentage achieving the expected norm of Level 4 or above significantly exceeded the national average in English, mathematics and science. The percentage achieving Level 5 was well above the average in English, similar to the average in mathematics and considerably below the average in science.
- * In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils achieve satisfactory standards overall in listening, reading, writing, number, and information and communications technology, although there is scope for further development in reading. Skills are not yet sufficiently applied in speaking.
- * At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils receive a broad, balanced, relevant curriculum which complies with statutory requirements. The curriculum provided for children under five is satisfactory overall at nursery level but unsatisfactory in reception.
- * During the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in approximately 88% of the lessons observed, including 34% where it was good and 3% where it was very good. Teaching was less than satisfactory in some 12% of lessons, including 5% where it was poor.
- * Where teaching is good or better, pupils are given interesting and challenging tasks, which motivate and enthuse them and provide opportunities for discussion and the development of language. Sound emphasis is placed on the importance of encouraging pupils to undertake investigation and research and to learn for themselves.
- * Good procedures are in place for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' attainments and progress.
- * A sound policy has been drawn up on catering for the special educational needs of pupils. Full account is taken of the recommendations of the national Code of Practice. Provision in this area is very good overall. The headteacher personally undertakes the role of special-educational-needs co-ordinator and is efficient, conscientious and highly organised.

- * The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory, and good in some cases, although the programme given to one child of pre-school age is too narrow in range and fails to provide sufficient experiences in each of the six areas of learning.
- * The school is efficiently led and managed, with very good attention to general administrative and managerial responsibilities. The headteacher provides strong, clear leadership, coupled with much sensitivity and understanding, both in respect of staff and pupils. Much hard work has been undertaken to draw up policies and schemes of work for all subjects and to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for pupils with special educational needs. Communication with staff and parents is regular and precise.
- * Periodic visits are made to classrooms to monitor the performance of teachers and pupils, and to provide support, encouragement, advice and guidance.
- * Sound emphasis is placed on regular discussion and school-based in-service training, with a well-established pattern of weekly meetings.
- * The newly-appointed deputy headteacher is settling well into his post and gradually becoming acquainted with the school's philosophy and management procedures.
- * Subject co-ordinators have undertaken much useful work in planning and assessment, but have not yet been allocated specific time for directly observing classroom practices.
- * Curriculum roles are at different stages of development and need to be considerably expanded in some cases, particularly in relation to music and strategies for children under five.
- * Statutory duties are properly discharged by the governing body. Due attention is paid to budgetary control and management.
- * Day-to-day administration is smooth and efficient.
- * Overall, satisfactory arrangements are made for self-evaluation and planning for improvement.
- * The school development plan is a detailed working document containing a review of progress over the previous twelve months and setting targets for further improvement during the current school year. The plan, however, covers simply a one-year period and has too many targets for the school to achieve within the time-scale concerned. No planning is currently undertaken on a longer-term basis.
- * No individual member of staff currently has direct responsibility for monitoring work and raising standards in music.
- * Appropriate use is generally made of staffing, accommodation and learning resources. Provision is good overall.

- * The school is well served by the school clerk, and lunchtime and caretaking staff.
- * Considering its age, the building is generally in good condition. Classrooms and corridors are bright, clean and well maintained. Colourful displays of materials and artefacts provide an attractive and stimulating environment.
- * Accommodation for children under five consists of two unequal-sized rooms which, if shared, could be used more effectively to support the quality of teaching and learning.
- * A well-converted playground shelter provides a useful hall for weekly assemblies, and singing and other activities.
- * The sports hall, which is used by all classes for physical education, including reception children, is in an unsatisfactory decorative condition and is some distance away from the school. During the inspection, it was cold and ineffectively heated by a noisy system which made it difficult for pupils to hear their teacher's instructions. Pupils also experienced problems in hearing each other when evaluating their own performances. As a facility, it was unsuitable for use by younger pupils, who could have used the school hall more effectively.
- * External play areas are in good condition.
- * Some problems occasionally occur with vandalism.
- * The school has an information technology suite, with seven computers and printers. Each classroom also has at least two computers. Three are connected to the Internet. Provision is sufficient to enable teachers to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- * Teachers have access to a good range of resources which are well used throughout the school day. The headteacher conducts annual reviews to enable curriculum leaders to plan effectively.
- * The school library is well stocked with both fiction and reference books, which helps to encourage an enjoyment of reading.
- * Satisfactory provision overall is made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- * Insufficient attention is given in some subjects to developing the *cwricwlwm Cymreig*. Incidental use of Welsh varies considerably.
- * During the inspection, standards of behaviour were very good. Pupils are pleasant, helpful and courteous, both towards staff and visitors.
- * Pupils with emotional and behavioural problems were generally well behaved during the inspection. Firm but kindly discipline was administered where necessary, coupled with appropriate class management strategies.

- * Satisfactory rates overall are achieved for attendance. Rates are depressed by a number of families who take their children on holiday during the school term. Punctuality is generally good.
- * Good provision overall is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils. The headteacher and staff know pupils well and respond to their needs. All pupils have equal access to every aspect of the life and work of the school. Although the school has several policies to safeguard pupils' health, safety and welfare, no policy has yet been drawn up on sex education.
- * A good partnership has been established with parents, the community, and other schools and institutions. Links with industry are satisfactory overall.
- * Progress in dealing with the keys issues identified during the last inspection has been good in the main, although some areas still require considerable attention.
- * Overall, the school functions as an efficient, well-organised community.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

During the inspection, standards of educational achievement were satisfactory or better in approximately 83% of the lessons seen, including 30% where they were good. Standards were less than satisfactory in some 17% of lessons.

- * Nursery children achieve satisfactory standards overall in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development and physical development, and good standards in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development.
- * At reception level, standards are satisfactory overall in personal and social development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development, and unsatisfactory in language, literacy and communication skills, and physical development.
- * Standards at Key Stage 1 are satisfactory overall in English, mathematics, science, Welsh, information technology, history, geography, physical education and religious education, and good in design and technology, and art.
- * At Key Stage 2, standards are satisfactory overall in English, mathematics, design and technology, information technology, history, physical education and religious education, and good in science, geography and art.
- * There are also several good features in Welsh at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics and history in the upper part of Key Stage 2.

- * In art, there are some examples of very good work at both key stages.
- * Standards are unsatisfactory in Welsh at Key Stage 2 and in music throughout the school.
- * 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 significantly below the national average for Wales in speaking and listening, mathematics and science, and considerably below the average in reading and writing.
- * The percentage achieving the higher grade of Level 3 was slightly above the national average in mathematics, but below the average in reading and writing. No pupils achieved Level 3 in speaking and listening, or science.
- * At the end of Key Stage 2, National Curriculum test results indicated that the percentage achieving the expected norm of Level 4 or above significantly exceeded the national average in English, mathematics and science. The percentage achieving Level 5 was well above the average in English, similar to the average in mathematics and considerably below the average in science.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils achieve satisfactory standards overall in listening, reading, writing, number, and information and communications technology, although there is scope for further development in reading. Skills are not yet sufficiently applied in speaking.

- * Pupils generally listen attentively during lessons and communicate satisfactorily with adults and each other. Some use is made of circle times to promote discussion, but the strategy is not yet applied with sufficient regularity throughout the school. Although role-play areas have been established for younger children, work is not always sufficiently structured to ensure that maximum benefit is gained from activities. Older pupils undertake some debate and drama work, but the amount is insufficient to ensure the full development of formal speech.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils are introduced to a range of books when studying subjects such as India, and make satisfactory use of texts to search for information. Pupils at Key Stage 2 apply their reading skills to obtain information from a variety of sources. More opportunities could sometimes be provided for pupils to read aloud during lessons to encourage confidence, fluency and understanding. The school has a good range of "Big Books", but they are not always used to maximum advantage.
- * Pupils write for a variety of purposes across the curriculum, although the amount of imaginative writing is relatively limited. The presentation of work is generally very good.
- * Number skills are regularly and, on the whole, successfully applied in science, but not as well in other subjects.
- * Pupils at both key stages are developing satisfactory skills in information and

communication technology, but mainly apply them in language, mathematics and science. Opportunities are often missed to use them in other areas of the curriculum because of insufficient focus at the planning stage.

- * Satisfactory standards are achieved by pupils with special educational needs in applying their skills in number, and information and communications technology.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Overall, satisfactory provision is made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

- * Arrangements for collective worship comply with statutory requirements. Suitable themes based on Christian values are pursued in class assemblies on four days a week.
- * The local vicar is a regular visitor to the school and helps to extend pupils' knowledge of Christian teachings and practices.
- * Sound attention is paid to social development. The majority of pupils interact well with each other, both in work and play, and are polite and friendly to visitors.
- * Opportunities for social interaction outside school hours include clubs in art, recorders and sport.
- * Pupils demonstrate concern for others less fortunate than themselves and raise funds for various charities and good causes.
- * Good use is made of the local area to give pupils an insight into their cultural heritage. Visits to places such as Llancaiach Fawr, the Roman Fortress at Caerleon and the Welsh Folk Museum at St.Fagans help to broaden horizons and increase understanding.
- * Work in art, geography and religious education helps pupils to develop an awareness of other customs, religions and cultures.
- * Opportunities are lost during class assemblies for enriching worship through music and Welsh.
- * When acting as monitors, pupils carry out their duties sensibly and willingly. Further scope, however, exists for developing responsibility and initiative.
- * Insufficient attention is given in some subjects to developing the *cwricwlwm Cymreig*. Incidental use of Welsh varies considerably.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

During the inspection, standards of behaviour were very good.

- * Sound procedures have been adopted to promote good behaviour. Policies are clearly presented and are well understood by all members of staff.
- * Pupils are pleasant, helpful and courteous, both towards staff and visitors.
- * Learning takes place in a calm, orderly environment.
- * High standards of behaviour are expected by all members of staff.
- * The school has established an effective system of rewards which are appreciated by pupils.
- * Pupils throughout the school willingly share resources and collaborate effectively with each other when required to do so.
- * Play times are happy, well-ordered occasions, with pupils of ages playing harmoniously together.
- * Pupils with emotional and behavioural problems were generally well behaved during the inspection. Firm but kindly discipline was administered where necessary, coupled with appropriate class management strategies.

4.3 Attendance

Overall, satisfactory rates are achieved for attendance. Punctuality is generally good.

- * The school has set realistic targets for improving attendance, coupled with good, sensible strategies, including an effective system of rewards.
- * Although the majority of parents understand and generally comply with arrangements for explaining their children's absences, instances of unauthorised absence are relatively high.
- * Rates are depressed by a number of families who take their children on holiday during the school term.
- * Close links are maintained with the education welfare officer who is kept informed of all unauthorised absences.
- * Arrangements for registration conform to statutory requirements.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

During the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in approximately 88% of the lessons observed, including 34% where it was good and 3% where it was very good. Teaching was less than satisfactory in some 12% of lessons, including 5% where it was poor.

- * Since the last inspection, good attention has been paid to updating documentation and producing appropriate guidance for all subjects. Overall, sound documentation is now in place to guide teaching and learning.
- * Good relationships between staff and pupils have produced an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- * Routines are generally appropriate and tasks clearly explained.
- * Time, on the whole, is managed efficiently, particularly during literacy and number sessions.
- * Effective use is made of resources in the majority of classes.
- * In general, staff have a sound knowledge of the subjects they teach, apart from music and Welsh where further support and training are needed.
- * Support staff make a useful contribution to pupils' learning, particularly during group activities.
- * Work, in the main, is suitably differentiated and well matched to the individual needs of pupils.
- * Where teaching is good or better, pupils are given interesting and challenging tasks, which motivate and enthuse them and provide opportunities for discussion and the development of language. Sound emphasis is placed on the importance of encouraging pupils to undertake investigation and research and to learn for themselves.
- * Teaching in the early part of the school ranges from good to poor. Methods of organisation in one class are inappropriate and mirror too closely the curriculum for older pupils. Too little attention is given to ensuring that children receive sufficient experiences in the six areas of learning.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Good procedures are in place for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' attainments and progress.

- * A detailed policy has been drawn up on the organisation and use of assessment which is implemented consistently throughout the school.

- * Good use is made of information gained from assessment to help teachers secure improvements in learning.
- * Children's prior attainments are assessed on entry to the school by means of the *Four Counties Baseline Assessment*.
- * Teachers keep records of pupils' achievements in all areas of the curriculum and focus on areas requiring particular attention. A good picture is built up of progress as pupils move through the school.
- * All work is regularly marked, with comments and suggestions for improvement in some instances.
- * Subject co-ordinators keep samples of work in portfolios which serve as useful benchmarks for teachers and enable them to make accurate assessments of standards.
- * Strong emphasis is placed on identifying the special educational needs of pupils, with good use of records to guide the planning of work.
- * The results of National Curriculum and other standardised tests are analysed effectively and used to identify appropriate targets for improvement.
- * Annual reports comply with statutory requirements. Parents are given detailed information about their children's attainments and progress and advised of any difficulties they might be experiencing.
- * Opportunities are given each year for parents to visit the school and to discuss the annual report with their children's class teachers.

5.3 Curriculum

At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils receive a broad, balanced, relevant curriculum which complies with statutory requirements.

The curriculum provided for children under five is satisfactory overall at nursery level but unsatisfactory in reception.

- * Nursery children generally receive a suitable range of experiences in each of the six areas of learning.
- * In the reception class, children are frequently given tasks which are inappropriate to their age and their stage of development. Inadequate progress is made at this level.
- * Lessons, in some instances, are too long for younger pupils, particularly in subjects such as physical education and music. Interest and concentration are lost on such occasions.
- * Where pupils at Key Stage 1 and children under five are grouped together for singing

lessons, learning needs are not properly met in the majority of cases.

- * Learning tasks at Key Stage 1 are interesting and varied. Good-quality provision is made at this level.
- * At Key Stage 2, pupils are given an appropriate range of learning experiences which take proper account of the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- * The full National Curriculum is followed by all pupils. No modifications or disapplications have been made.
- * Curriculum documentation is generally in good order and includes policies and schemes of work.
- * Appropriate attention is paid to the *cwricwlwm Cymreig*, although there are inconsistencies in the incidental use of Welsh at Key Stage 2.
- * Where pupils are grouped according to ability for literacy and number lessons, good progress is generally made.
- * All pupils have opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities in sport and art.
- * No formal policy has yet been adopted on sex education.
- * Inadequate attention is given to planning the development of key skills across the curriculum, particularly speaking and listening skills. Opportunities are also lost to apply skills in information and communications technology, and number.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

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

- * The headteacher and staff know pupils well and respond to their needs.
- * Pupils are confident about approaching staff whenever help or support is required.
- * All members of staff are aware of their responsibilities for securing the safety and welfare of children.
- * Policy and procedures for child protection are based on guidance provided by the local education authority. The headteacher is the nominated person for dealing with such issues.
- * Effective procedures are in place to monitor pupils' academic progress and their personal development.
- * All pupils have equal access to every aspect of the life and work of the school.

- * Although the school has several policies to safeguard pupils' health, safety and welfare, no policy has yet been drawn up on sex education.
- * One matter concerning security has been drawn to the attention of the governors.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good overall.

- * A sound policy has been drawn up on catering for the special educational needs of pupils. Full account is taken of the recommendations of the national Code of Practice.
- * Good use is made of appropriate diagnostic tests and other procedures to ensure that special needs are identified at an early stage.
- * The headteacher personally undertakes the role of special-educational-needs co-ordinator and is efficient, conscientious and highly organised.
- * Effective liaison takes place between home and school.
- * Individual educational plans are clear and appropriate, and are well used by staff to guide work in most cases.
- * Progress is regularly monitored and reviewed each term.
- * Classroom work is generally well matched to the needs of each pupil.
- * Pupils with emotional and behavioural problems benefit from being taught in a small class with a good adult ratio. Needs are well met and problems handled with sensitivity and firmness. Heavy emphasis is placed upon raising self-esteem and praising success. Good concentration is shown when pupils undertake work on the computer. Work produced in art is often of a very good standard.
- * Staff from the local authority work closely with the school to ensure that it receives proper support in this area.
- * Progress made by pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory, and good in some cases, although the programme given to one child of pre-school age is too narrow in range and fails to provide sufficient experiences in each of the six areas of learning.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

A good partnership has been established with parents, the community, and other schools and

institutions.

- * The school has drawn up a policy on communications and reporting which helps to ensure that parents are kept properly informed and that newsletters and other communications are issued on a regular basis.
- * A formal home-school agreement, with meaningful aims and objectives, has contributed to the establishment of good relationships with parents.
- * Parents provide practical support by raising funds and helping with various activities such as accompanying pupils on school excursions. A number also assist in the classroom. Good support was recently provided in preparing food for the school's "India Day".
- * Open evenings are held for parents to discuss their children's development. A written report is issued at the end of the school year, when a further opportunity is given for discussions about achievements and progress. Arrangements are also made for individual consultations with class teachers in February each year.
- * Members of the local community make a valuable contribution to pupils' education by visiting the school and talking about their work and experiences.
- * A friends' association recently assisted with the school's centenary celebrations
- * Pupils regularly visit the local church and maintain good links with the community through rugby, football and netball clubs.
- * Recent building conversions have led to good community use of facilities.
- * Effective links have been forged with other schools in the area, including the local secondary school. A pre-school playgroup meets in the recently-established community hall.
- * Former pupils regularly return to keep the school informed of their progress.
- * Good support is received from local agencies and other organisations, including colleges of further education and a teacher-training institution. Pupils benefit significantly from these links.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

Links with industry are satisfactory overall.

- * Relevant visits are organised to acquaint pupils with the world of work and to develop their knowledge and understanding of industry, although little industry now exists in the area.

- * Good links have been established with a local builder and the Education Business Partnership.
- * Pupils in Year 6 recently visited a nearby building site to observe construction methods.
- * The school has benefited from a visit by a factory upholsterer who prepared a reading area for nursery children.
- * Work in mathematics has been supported by a visit from a local estate agent.
- * A resource donated by a parachute factory has helped pupils to learn about industry's contribution to aiding children with gross-motor-control problems.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

Overall, satisfactory arrangements are made for self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

- * Clear progress has been made in dealing with most of the key issues identified in the last inspection report. Steps have also been taken to identify other areas for development.
- * The school development plan is a detailed working document containing a review of progress over the previous twelve months and setting targets for further improvement during the current school year. The plan, however, covers simply a one-year period and has too many targets for the school to achieve within the time-scale concerned. No planning is currently undertaken on a longer-term basis.
- * Standards in music still remain an area for improvement, as highlighted during the last inspection.
- * Good attention is paid to enhancing the professional skills of teachers, although in-service training is not always well linked to the needs of the school. No teachers, for example, have recently attended courses to raise standards in music or to deliver Welsh as a second language.
- * The headteacher undertakes formal monitoring of various aspects of teaching and learning, and provides staff with written feedback after the observation of lessons.
- * Subject co-ordinators restrict their monitoring to curriculum planning, exchanging classes and scrutinising pupils' work. No direct monitoring is undertaken of standards of achievement or the effects of different strategies in their subjects.
- * No individual member of staff currently has direct responsibility for monitoring work and raising standards in music.

- * The school carefully analyses its performance in annual National Curriculum tests to identify strengths and weaknesses and to set realistic targets for further improvement.
- * Progress and targets are discussed with all members of staff.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

The school is efficiently led and managed, with some very good administrative aspects.

- * The headteacher provides strong, clear leadership, coupled with much sensitivity and understanding, both in respect of staff and pupils.
- * Very good attention is given to general administrative and managerial responsibilities. Much hard work has been undertaken to draw up policies and schemes of work for all subjects and to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for pupils with special educational needs.
- * Communication with staff and parents is regular and precise.
- * Periodic visits are made to classrooms to monitor the performance of teachers and pupils, and to provide support, encouragement, advice and guidance.
- * Sound emphasis is placed on regular discussion and school-based in-service training, with a well-established pattern of weekly meetings.
- * The newly-appointed deputy headteacher is settling well into his post and gradually becoming acquainted with the school's philosophy and management procedures.
- * Subject co-ordinators have undertaken much useful work in planning and assessment, but have not yet been allocated specific time for directly observing classroom practices.
- * Curriculum roles are at different stages of development and need to be considerably expanded in some cases, particularly in relation to music and strategies for children under five.
- * Statutory duties are properly discharged by the governing body. Due attention is paid to budgetary control and management.
- * Day-to-day administration is smooth and efficient.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

Appropriate use is generally made of staffing, accommodation and learning resources. Provision is good overall.

- * The school has a sufficient number of qualified teachers to cater for the present number

of pupils on roll. A teacher's aide also helps out in most classes.

- * Teachers attend a range of in-service training courses and are well supported by staff of the local education authority.
- * The school is well served by the school clerk, and lunchtime and caretaking staff.
- * Considering its age, the building is generally in good condition. Classrooms and corridors are bright, clean and well maintained. Colourful displays of materials and artefacts provide an attractive and stimulating environment.
- * Accommodation for children under five consists of two unequal-sized rooms which, if shared, could be used more effectively to support the quality of teaching and learning.
- * A well-converted playground shelter provides a useful hall for weekly assemblies, and singing and other activities.
- * The sports hall, which is used by all classes for physical education, including reception children, is in an unsatisfactory decorative condition and is some distance away from the school. During the inspection, it was cold and ineffectively heated by a noisy system which made it difficult for pupils to hear their teacher's instructions. Pupils also experienced problems in hearing each other when evaluating their own performances. As a facility, it was unsuitable for use by younger pupils, who could have used the school hall more effectively.
- * External play areas are in good condition.
- * Some problems occasionally occur with vandalism.
- * The school has an information technology suite, with seven computers and printers. Each classroom also has at least two computers. Three are connected to the Internet. Provision is sufficient to enable teachers to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- * Teachers have access to a good range of resources which are well used throughout the school day. The headteacher conducts annual reviews to enable curriculum leaders to plan effectively.
- * The school library is well stocked with both fiction and reference books, which helps to encourage an enjoyment of reading.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards Achieved by Pupils

Provision for Children under Five

Nursery children follow a programme of activities which broadly conform to the *Desirable Outcomes in Learning for Children under Five*. Provision at this level is satisfactory overall.

The programme at reception level is far too formal and is unsuited to the age of the children concerned.

(i) Nursery Children (aged 3-4 years)

Good Features

- * Close co-operation takes place between the teacher and nursery nurse, who makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- * Sound attention is paid to the establishment of routines and the social development of pupils. Children share and take turns, and learn how to dress themselves. They enjoy snack times, and generally work and play harmoniously together.
- * Opportunities are provided for children to engage in role-play in the home corner and to share experiences with each other.
- * Suitable priority is given to the development of language skills. Children know nursery rhymes and characters from well-known stories, and undertake a range of mark-making activities.
- * Appropriate skills are being acquired in number work. Children learn to count objects up to five, with number games and songs reinforcing the understanding of concepts. Some can recognise simple shapes, whilst most are able to identify primary colours.
- * Sound emphasis is placed on helping children to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. They learn about growth through discussions about their development from babyhood, talk about their homes, families and life around them, and undertake cooking and computer activities. Good attention is paid to widening their horizons through studies of other customs and cultures. Useful first-hand experiences are gained from visits to places such as a local farm.
- * Steady progress is made in the development of manipulative skills, with opportunities to cut, stick, paste and paint on a regular basis. Artistic work is good, with the whole classroom reflecting the wide range of techniques experienced by children.
- * Children listen attentively during indoor physical activities and work sensibly with small apparatus, patiently waiting for their turns.

Shortcomings

- * Children are sometimes required to sit for too long a period during carpet sessions.
- * Work is not sufficiently well structured to ensure that gross motor skills are developed to

the full. Children are too inactive, often sitting and waiting for their turns with apparatus instead of enjoying vigorous exercise and experimenting for themselves.

- * Although adequate provision has been made of good-quality instruments, pupils are given too few opportunities to experiment with sounds and to learn for themselves. Work, on some occasions, is too heavily directed by the teacher.

(ii) Reception Children (aged 4-5 years)

Good Features

- * Good relationships have been established between the staff and children.
- * Learning takes place in a calm, orderly environment.
- * The teacher and classroom assistants co-operate well with each other.
- * Planning is undertaken conscientiously and conforms to the stated philosophy of the school.
- * Regular assessments are made of children's achievements within the programme of work they are given.
- * Planning indicates that "Big Books" are used for literacy in accordance with the National Literacy Strategy.
- * Daily writing sessions contribute towards developing letter formation.
- * Suitable sequencing and matching activities are given to one child who receives extra support from a classroom assistant. Steady progress is generally made in this case.
- * A good start is made in Welsh. Regular incidental use of the language, coupled with the making of simple class books, helps children to understand and respond to basic greetings and instructions.
- * Most children know the names of the main colours and can recognise simple shapes. Roughly two-thirds are secure in their knowledge of the numbers from one to ten and can perform simple calculations within that range. Regular use is made of number songs to reinforce oral counting.
- * Children develop knowledge and understanding of the world through discussion about their homes, themselves and the weather.
- * Creative activities include printing, painting, sticking and pasting. Use is made of a variety of materials to create attractive collage pictures. Children's work is colourful and well displayed.

Shortcomings

- * Classroom practice and activities at this level are more akin to Level 1 of the National Curriculum than to the *Desirable Outcomes* for the six areas of learning.
- * Space is not currently used to maximum effect. The arrangement of furniture does not facilitate ease of movement or encourage activities such as role-play, games and discussion.
- * During the inspection, no use was made of the good facilities available in the large adjoining nursery area.
- * Children are given far too sedentary a programme, particularly during morning sessions, and have to sit at tables or on the carpet for the majority of the time. Few opportunities are provided for practical activities or the full development of language.
- * Phonics are introduced at far too early a stage, with a detrimental effect on the flow of children's reading. Too much emphasis is placed on word-building, without the accompanying development of language skills through pictures, stories, poems and discussion.
- * During the inspection, no use was observed of "Big Books". Instead, each session was devoted to the building of three-letter words such as "cat", "bat" and "hat". Some children could not recognise the letters matching the sounds of the words, despite heavy emphasis on the mechanics of the process.
- * Written work is primarily based on worksheets. Little evidence is available to show emergent free writing related to children's own personal experiences.
- * Too little use is made of apparatus to support the understanding of mathematical concepts.
- * Insufficient thought has been given to the production of a proper programme for the development of gross motor skills.
- * During the inspection, the venue used for indoor physical education was inappropriate and the programme insufficiently vigorous to ensure maximum activity for the age-group.
- * The combination of classes for musical activities is inappropriate and does not provide sufficient opportunities for children to explore and experiment with instruments on an individual basis. The lesson is too long and leads to restlessness and loss of interest. Too few opportunities are provided for children to practise nursery rhymes, action songs and other suitable musical activities.
- * The school has given insufficient attention to updating its philosophy and practices for teaching children of this age.

English

Standards in English are satisfactory overall at both key stages.

Good Features

- * All pupils listen attentively in class and have daily opportunities to ask and answer questions.
- * When questioned about visits to places which have aroused their interest, or work which has captured their imagination, pupils are eager to talk about their experiences.
- * Steady progress is made in reading, which is taught through a commercial, phonic-based scheme.
- * Staff hear pupils read on a regular basis and conscientiously record dates and progress.
- * By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to offer opinions about different books and authors, give reasons for their preferences, and write short reviews of the texts they have read.
- * Satisfactory use is made of the school library which provides a wide range of books, including non-fiction material for topic work.
- * At Key Stage 1, regular attention is paid to writing, with some pupils making good progress in this aspect of work.
- * Pupils are given opportunities for independent writing across the curriculum.
- * Sound emphasis is placed on correct letter formation and the recognition of simple punctuation marks. Work is generally neatly presented.
- * At Key Stage 2, pupils are able to write in an appropriate variety of forms for different purposes and occasions.
- * Ability grouping throughout the key stage helps to ensure that work is suitably matched to individual needs and capabilities.
- * Teaching and organisational strategies are sound and ensure that steady progress is made by all pupils.
- * The presentation of work is consistently good and, in some instances very good.
- * Appropriate use is made of information technology for the drafting and improvement of work.
- * Books are marked on a regular basis, with encouraging remarks and rewards for good work.
- * Regular assessments are made of pupils' attainments and progress. Good use is made of

the information to try to achieve further improvements in standards.

Shortcomings

- * Many pupils find it difficult to express themselves in extended sentences. Insufficient emphasis is placed on developing confidence in using formal speech through strategies such as circle times, role play and, in the case of older pupils, regular debate and drama.
- * At Key Stage 1, too little use is made of listening stations to develop good aural skills.
- * Heavy emphasis upon the use of phonics from an early age ensures that pupils are able to tackle new words and build up vocabulary, but results in reading which is often hesitant and lacking in fluency and expression, even among many older pupils. Although some group reading takes place to remedy these deficiencies, practice is not sufficiently regular to ensure success.
- * "Big Books", although ample in quantity and quality, are not used often enough to develop a love of literature, promote fluency and expression, and raise awareness of grammar and punctuation.
- * Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to express themselves through imaginative writing.
- * Spelling varies throughout the school. Insufficient emphasis is placed on the consistent use of dictionaries and thesauruses.

Mathematics

Standards in mathematics are satisfactory overall at both key stages, with several good features in the upper half of Key Stage 2.

Good Features

- * The presentation of work throughout the school is of a very high standard.
- * Pupils make sound progress in the understanding of number and develop a range of calculation strategies appropriate to their age.
- * Regular use is made of graphs to record data at both key stages.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils recognise simple two- and three-dimensional shapes and can describe their properties in everyday language.
- * Pupils at this level are developing appropriate number skills. Those in Year 2 can recognise coins, work with numbers up to 100 and understand the concept of odd and even. Standard units are used for measurement.

- * At Key Stage 2, pupils have a secure knowledge of the place value of digits and are able to use a range of methods to multiply and divide. Good progress is made in number by top-set pupils.
- * Older pupils can recognise angles as a measure of turn, make accurate measurements to one degree and plot co-ordinates in four quadrants.
- * Sound progress is made by pupils with special educational needs in recognising the faces, edges and corners of three-dimensional shapes. Progress is more limited when handling numbers to ten.

Shortcomings

- * Insufficient use is made of information technology to extend pupils' skills and knowledge during numeracy sessions.
- * Too little emphasis is placed on the systematic development of investigative and problem-solving skills.
- * Opportunities for practical weighing and measuring are relatively limited. Pupils' skills in these areas are underdeveloped.
- * Pupils have too few opportunities to explain their work during plenary sessions. Oral skills are not developed satisfactorily.
- * Limited links are made with other areas of the curriculum.

Science

Standards in science are satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2.

Good Features

- * Pupils throughout the school regularly engage in experimental and investigative activities. Work is often good in this area.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils understand the characteristics of living things and can name the parts of a plant. They carry out simple investigations into food and are able to sort and classify using their senses.
- * Younger pupils at this level make good use of a writing frame to record the results of investigations.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 conduct a range of investigations into exercise and its effects upon the body. Older pupils show a good knowledge of the topic and understand why pulse rate and breathing increase with exertion.

- * Work at this level shows that pupils know how to undertake investigations by planning a fair test, predicting outcomes, recording results and drawing conclusions. During one lesson, pupils successfully investigated the abilities of different kinds of kitchen rolls to absorb five millilitres of water.
- * Findings are recorded in tables, graphs, diagrams and sometimes by independent writing. Presentation is generally good.
- * Younger pupils at Key Stage 2 are able to compare the similarities and differences between various types of soil and to sort rocks by characteristics such as hardness and colour.
- * Older pupils show a sound knowledge of what constitutes a healthy diet and of the importance of exercise. They can classify food into groups and have a developing knowledge of the skeletal systems of humans and animals.
- * During the inspection, pupils with special educational needs were able to identify parts of the human body and the main features of a plant. They had carried out investigations into how plants develop from seeds and recorded their findings. Many could describe how the human body changes between birth and old age.

Shortcomings

- * Relatively little use is made of information technology for measuring and recording data.
- * At Key Stage 1, work is not always properly differentiated and matched to the varying needs and abilities of pupils. The same work is generally undertaken by pupils in both Years 1 and 2.

Welsh

Overall, standards of achievement in Welsh are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. Work at Key Stage 1 displays several good features.

Good Features

- * Pronunciation at both key stages is clear and intelligible.
- * Each classroom has its own Welsh area, with a good display of vocabulary to aid discussion and prompt the memory of pupils.
- * Children under five years of age make a sound start to the subject. All enjoy tasks such as making simple books and reading their own work.
- * At Key Stage 1, incidental use is made of the language throughout the school day. Work in this area constitutes a strong feature of the subject.

- * Invaluable help is received from the *athrawes fro* who visits the school on a fortnightly basis. Priority is rightly given to work in the nursery, reception and infant classes to support the newly-appointed co-ordinator and to ensure that a firm basis is laid at this level. Some work is also undertaken at Key Stage 2.
- * At Key Stage 1, good knowledge is shown of greetings, with pupils giving confident responses. Most know the names of colours and can count to ten in the language.
- * Pupils at this level are able to use set patterns to express their likes and dislikes and to make short statements about themselves. They can describe their feelings, talk about the weather and clothing, and use correct vocabulary for various parts of the body. Effective use is made of puppets to promote interest and enthusiasm.
- * Satisfactory progress is made in reading "Big Books" such as *Tedi Twt* and writing simple words and phrases.
- * In the first part of Key Stage 2, pupils draw upon their knowledge to answer questions in full sentences. Vocabulary is broadened to include areas such as food. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work together in pairs and collate information from simple questionnaires.
- * Good efforts are made in middle of the key stage to remedy deficiencies in reading. Simple texts such as *Paent Wlyb* are well used for this purpose.
- * Pupils at the top of the school can tell the time at hour, half-hour and quarter-hourly intervals.

Shortcomings

- * The subject is taught in one long session per week rather than for a shorter time at more regular intervals. Pupils, as a result, become inattentive and restless, particularly as the lesson becomes overlong and learning slows in pace. Opportunities are lost for the frequent practice and reinforcement of vocabulary.
- * Incidental use of the language varies considerably at Key Stage 2 and is generally underdeveloped. Too few opportunities are given for pupils to hear the spoken language and to practise and develop their oral skills.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 speak hesitantly and are often unsure of vocabulary and simple sentence patterns learned at an earlier stage.
- * Insufficient use is made of reading and writing at Key Stage 2 to enrich pupils' experiences and to reinforce and extend vocabulary.
- * Assemblies do not make provision for hymns and prayers in the language.
- * Apart from the recently-appointed deputy headteacher, no member of staff has attended a training course in the subject.

- * Whilst lessons are generally suitably structured, too narrow a range of strategies sometimes leads to a loss of enthusiasm, particularly amongst pupils at the top of the school.

Design and Technology

At Key Stage 1, only one lesson was seen in design and technology, and none at Key Stage 2. Evidence from completed work, discussions with staff and pupils, and the one lesson observed indicates that, although there are weaknesses in some areas, standards overall are good at Key Stage 1 and broadly satisfactory at Key Stage 2.

Good Features

- * Pupils at Key Stage 1 carried out a variety of activities during the one lesson observed. They displayed good cutting, sticking and making skills when constructing puppets and were aware of health and safety aspects in making coconut barfis.
- * Good attention was paid to planning and design before pupils painted mehindu patterns on their hands.
- * During the lesson, pupils also made model clay bricks and took turns in using a digital camera to record activities.
- * All pupils evaluated their work in the oral plenary session.
- * Making skills are developing appropriately at this level.
- * Pupils throughout the school undertake lessons to improve their cutting skills. Older pupils have opportunities to use hammers, glue guns and saws.
- * Appropriate use is made of construction kits.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 examine the nets of shapes and incorporate them into their own designs.
- * Display work shows attention to the principles of weaving.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils' likes and dislikes are recorded in food technology.

Shortcomings

- * Too little use is made of information technology to encourage pupils to extend their thoughts and ideas and to develop skills in design.
- * Making skills are not fully developed at Key Stage 2. Insufficient attention is given to the use of pneumatics.

- * Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to evaluate their finished products and to make suggestions for improvement, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- * At Key Stage 2, insufficient emphasis is placed on information technology as a means of developing skills in control technology.

Information Technology

Overall, standards of achievement in information technology are satisfactory at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Pupils are introduced to computers from an early age.
- * Younger pupils know how to use the mouse and operate programs.
- * All classrooms have sufficient computers to allow pupils to practise and develop skills in word-processing.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 1 can successfully operate a digital camera to record events and activities.
- * At Key Stage 2, pupils are able to gain access to the Internet to develop their skills in research.
- * Older pupils can use electronic mail, employ simple databases to support work in mathematics and science, and record readings on *Excel*.
- * A sound understanding has been acquired of the *Paint* art package. Pupils have made effective use of the program to design their own stained-glass window as part of work in religious education.
- * All pupils are aware of the benefits of technology in everyday life and know how to use simple audio equipment.
- * Pupils with special educational needs know that computers can store information which can be retrieved at a later stage.

Shortcomings

- * Computers are not used to maximum effect in all subjects. Lessons, in many cases, do not have identified opportunities for using information technology across the curriculum.
- * Little use is made of CD-ROMs to locate information and to support work in other areas of the curriculum.

History

Standards in history are satisfactory overall, with evidence of good work at the top of the school.

Good Features

- * At Key Stage 1, considerable emphasis is placed on helping pupils to distinguish between fact and fiction. Work is suitably based on pupils' own experiences, together with changes in their lives and those of adults around them.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 1 are developing a satisfactory basis for the understanding of chronology. They undertake activities such as the sequencing of stories and are introduced to appropriate vocabulary to help them understand the passage of time.
- * Stories are told about famous people to develop an understanding of life in previous times. Pupils show a satisfactory recall of characters such as Florence Nightingale and Mary Seole and can talk about similarities and differences between the past and present, with the aid of pictures.
- * At Key Stage 2, pupils show an increasing awareness that the past can be divided into different periods and can describe some of the people, events and main changes of the periods they are studying.
- * Discussions show a clear interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject.
- * In general, pupils understand the purpose of a time-line and are able to place characters and events in order within their own period of study.
- * Appropriate use is made of books, artefacts, videos and photographs for reference and study purposes.
- * Visits to places such as Llancaiach Fawr and St. Fagans provide pupils with first-hand experiences and help them to gain a better understanding of the period concerned.
- * Work undertaken on a coal-mining community in the Rhondda Valley helps pupils to become aware of their own cultural heritage. Opportunities have been provided for pupils to talk to a retired miner and to learn about conditions in pits in the past. Work is linked with speaking and listening activities in English, particularly through dialogues in plays.
- * Recording takes a variety of forms and is generally well presented.

Shortcomings

- * Too few opportunities are provided for younger pupils to develop an understanding of the history and culture of Wales by hearing stories of famous Welsh people.
- * During discussions, pupils often find it difficult to give extended answers to questions.

Some experience problems in clearly expressing their opinions and reaching a conclusion.

- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 have difficulty in setting their own period of study within its historical time-line.

Geography

At Key Stage 1, history rather than geography has been the main course of study this term. Evidence from observing lessons, examining books and discussing work with staff and pupils indicates that standards at this level are satisfactory overall.

Good standards are attained at Key Stage 2.

Good Features

- * Work is well planned and pays good attention to the development of skills.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils know their addresses and can describe the route their take from home to school. Many can express their likes and dislikes about the locality.
- * Visits are made to a local farm and the Rhondda Heritage Museum to give pupils an insight into activities and community life in the area.
- * Observation of the start of a topic on India indicates that pupils at Key Stage 1 are introduced to a contrasting area in an interesting and relevant manner.
- * Studies at Key Stage 2 are well rooted in investigation and research. Pupils make local surveys and investigate areas such as the dangers posed by tipping rubbish on nearby wasteland. Sensible suggestions are put forward on ways of making improvements.
- * Good use is made of the school buildings and grounds to collect information on the environment. Pupils show the ability to collaborate sensibly with each other when carrying out tasks.
- * Pupils in Year 3 can recognise their area on a map of Wales and know simple facts about other areas of Great Britain.
- * Older pupils can name the continents and display satisfactory understanding of the hot and cold areas of the world.
- * Mapping skills are developed steadily throughout the key stage, with pupils in Year 6 showing an increasing understanding of co-ordinates and the ability to read symbols on an Ordnance Survey map.
- * Suitable links are made with other subjects such as mathematics and history.
- * Good attention is paid throughout the school to environmental care and protection.

- * Work is recorded in an appropriate variety of forms.

Shortcomings

- * Full use is not yet made of information technology in every class to reinforce learning and promote enthusiasm for the subject.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 1 have relatively limited knowledge of places further afield.

Art

Standards of achievement in art are good overall, with some examples of very good work at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Good guidelines are in place for the teaching of the subject, including an appropriate list of the skills to be developed at various stages.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 1 undertake a wide range of activities, including drawing, collage, printing and painting.
- * Colour-mixing skills are developed appropriately, together with good understanding of hues and tones.
- * Work at this level is creative and colourful.
- * A good start is made on drawing skills and techniques. Some interesting work has been undertaken on the local area, with drawings entitled "A View across the Mountains" showing good attention to detail. Many pupils are able to talk about their drawings and explain the enjoyment they give them.
- * Pupils in Years 1-3 have benefited from working with a Welsh artist at the Welsh Heritage Museum.
- * Skills are further developed at Key Stage 2, where strong emphasis is placed on studying the styles and techniques of famous artists. Some good work has been based on Van Gogh and Matisse.
- * Due attention is paid to Welsh artists such as William Brown and Kyffin Williams.
- * A range of suitable books and posters help to extend pupils' knowledge and provide a useful stimulus for discussion.
- * Some good work is undertaken in pencil and charcoal, with effective use of line and tone to create shadows and textures.

- * A useful portfolio of annotated work is being produced by the subject co-ordinator showing the areas which pupils have covered and the progressive development of skills.
- * Good use is made of art to enrich other areas of the curriculum. Younger pupils, for example, paint patterns on their hands when studying Indian customs and culture. Older pupils capture the mood and atmosphere of the coal-mining valleys when producing pictures in history.
- * A successful art club provides good opportunities for working with a variety of media, including clay.

Shortcomings

- * Work in the subject is not yet fully developed in the early part of Key Stage 2.

Music

Standards in music are unsatisfactory at both key stages, with pupils failing to make sufficient progress in the subject.

Good Features

- * Pupils know a number of songs in both English and Welsh, although the range is relatively limited.
- * Older pupils sing enthusiastically to taped music and can perform a round with confidence.
- * Listening skills are generally good at Key Stage 2. Much enjoyment is gained from making music.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 display a developing knowledge of tempo and dynamics. Most are beginning to choose suitable instruments to represent animal sounds when undertaking compositions.
- * Opportunities are provided for recorder tuition.

Shortcomings

- * Lessons combining nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes are too long for the youngest children, who become tired and restless.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 1 are given too few opportunities to experiment with untuned percussion instruments and to explore their sounds before trying to play them.

- * Hymns are not always sung during class assemblies. Opportunities are not always taken for pupils to listen to music and appreciate the work of different composers.
- * During one class assembly at Key Stage 2, pupils sang to a guitar accompaniment but lost their tuning.
- * Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to undertake the appraisal of different pieces of music.
- * Inadequate attention is paid to the development of performing skills and the correct use of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Pupils, in some cases, have no opportunity to record their own basic compositions or to play from simple musical scores.
- * The quality of singing is unsatisfactory throughout the school. Pupils show inadequate control over breathing and pitch.
- * Insufficient use is made of the school hall to promote learning in the subject. Classrooms do not always provide a suitable venue for musical activities.
- * A new scheme of work is helping to develop pupils' composing, evaluating and performing skills but has not yet raised standards to national expectations.

Physical Education

Standards in physical education are satisfactory overall at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Lessons are well planned and focus on the clear development of skills. Appropriate time is allowed for warm-up and cool-down sessions.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils listen carefully and can understand the terminology used by their teachers. Apparatus is used effectively.
- * Pupils at this level can hop and jump, and show a developing control of balance. Sensible use is made of space, although the area available is too large for pupils.
- * During the inspection, older pupils at Key Stage 2 displayed satisfactory skills in volleyball, working well in pairs and collaborating effectively with each other when part of a larger group.
- * Records show that satisfactory progress is made by pupils who attend swimming lessons in Year 6.
- * Extracurricular activities throughout the year support the development of skills in soccer, rugby, cricket, netball and athletics.

- * Older pupils evaluate their performances, with assistance from their teacher.
- * Pupils throughout the school are aware of the need for correct dress and the removal of jewellery when undertaking activities in the subject.

Shortcomings

- * Lessons observed at both key stages were slow in pace. Pupils were inactive for a substantial part of the period.
- * Too little emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to demonstrate skills to each other.
- * Pupils have only limited opportunities to practise their skills and to experiment with apparatus.

Religious Education

No lessons were observed in religious education, but evidence from books and discussions with pupils indicate that standards in the subject are satisfactory overall.

Good Features

- * Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong, and appreciate the need to care for others. Themes in class assemblies reinforce Christian values and provide a good starting point for discussion.
- * At both key stages, pupils consider the traditional values of family life and examine the significance of festivals within Christianity and other religions.
- * Satisfactory knowledge is displayed of festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest.
- * Most pupils are aware of the main features of a Christian church and understand the role which furniture, artefacts and symbols play in rituals and worship.
- * The local vicar makes a valuable contribution to learning by regularly visiting the school and receiving pupils in the parish church.
- * Younger pupils have enacted the service of marriage and produced some interesting and attractive display work as a result.
- * Suitable attention is paid to the beliefs, customs and practices of other faiths. Good use is made of artefacts to develop knowledge and understanding.

Shortcomings

- * Too little attention is paid to the stories of Jesus and their relationship with Christian

standards and values.

- * In general, few opportunities are provided for older pupils to reflect on spiritual issues.
- * The range of written and other recorded work is relatively limited at Key Stage 2.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the Last Inspection

Progress in dealing with the key issues identified during the last inspection has been good in the main, although some areas still require considerable attention.

- * The last inspection report, published on 18th June, 1997, identified five key issues for action. The school was advised that it needed to:
 - i. improve standards in music and information technology and continue the development of better standards in science and design technology;
 - ii. improve standards of abler pupils by developing teaching strategies which place greater emphasis on challenge;
 - iii. develop further the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators;
 - iv. incorporate in the school development plan a vision for the future with clear targets for raising standards;
 - v. ensure that statutory requirements are met in the school prospectus and in the annual report of the governing body to parents.
- * Progress since that time has been the following.

Key Issue 1

Much work has been undertaken to improve standards in information technology. Teachers have undertaken additional training, whilst resources for the subject have been greatly increased. Standards have risen from unsatisfactory to satisfactory overall.

At Key Stage 2, pupils now achieve good standards in science. Greater attention is now being paid to investigative work.

Although few lessons were seen in design and technology, evidence indicates that, at Key Stage 2, standards remain satisfactory and that, at Key Stage 1, standards have risen from satisfactory to good.

Music remains unsatisfactory throughout the school. Considerable effort will be required if standards are to be raised in the subject.

Key Issue 2

Since the last inspection, pupils have been placed in ability sets for English and mathematics, and more challenging work is now provided for higher-achieving pupils. Test results show a significant improvement at Key Stage 2.

In subjects such as science and geography, greater emphasis is now placed on investigative work to help develop skills in research.

Key Issue 3

Since the last inspection, a number of changes have been made to the roles of co-ordinators. Policies and schemes are now in place for all subjects, and co-ordinators have worked on improvements to planning in the various subjects of the National Curriculum. Pupils' workbooks are scrutinised and samples of work retained in some areas.

No member of staff, however, has yet been given specific responsibility for geography or music. An urgent decision is now needed in relation to the latter of these two subjects.

Classroom monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken solely by the headteacher, with co-ordinators still having no role in the process.

Key Issue 4

The school development plan still covers solely a one-year period and, as such, contains too large a number of targets for achievement within the time-scale concerned. No forward planning is currently undertaken to identify further targets over the next few years and to develop a vision for the future.

Key Issue 5

The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents now comply with statutory requirements. This key issue has been fully addressed.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school now needs to:

- * take early action to effect improvements in Welsh at Key Stage 2 and in music throughout the school;
- * restructure teaching strategies and the programme of work at reception stage to conform with the *Desirable Outcomes in Learning for Children under Five*;

- * develop a culture of classroom observation amongst staff in order to effect improvements where necessary and to disseminate good practice;
- * provide greater opportunities for pupils to extend and improve their speaking skills;
- * attend to the safety matter discussed with the governors.

The inspection team would like to thank the headteacher, staff, governors, parents and pupils of the school for their kind hospitality and co-operation throughout the inspection.

APPENDIX A

Basic Information about the School

Name of School	Abercerdin Primary School
School Type	Community
Age-Range of Pupils	3 – 11 years
Address of School	Kenry Street Evanstown Gilfach Goch Porth
Post Code	CF39 8RS
Telephone Number	01443 672262

Headteacher	Mrs Millicent Phillips
Date of Appointment	1st September, 1984
Chairman of Governors	Mrs. Julie Bryant
Registered Inspector	Mrs. E. Griffiths
Dates of Inspection	11th – 13th November, 2002

APPENDIX B

School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of Pupils in Each Year Group</i>									
Year Group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of Pupils	15	12	13	17	22	19	20	22	140

<i>Total Number of Teachers</i>			
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time Equivalent (fte)
Number of Teachers	8	1	8.2

<i>Staffing Information</i>	
Pupil : Teacher (fte) Ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	17.36
Pupil : Adult (fte) Ratio in Nursery Class	5 : 1
Average Class Size (excluding nursery and special classes)	20.83
Teacher (fte) : Class Ratio	1.17 : 1

<i>Percentage Attendance for Three Complete Terms Prior to the Inspection</i>					
	N	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School (excluding nursery)
Term 1	83.4	90.9	89.3	88.4	89.5
Term 2	86.0	89.4	92.8	93.3	91.8
Term 3	86.3	89.1	92.9	91.3	91.1

Number of Pupils Excluded during Twelve Months prior to Inspection	3
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APPENDIX C

Results of National Curriculum Assessments

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2002			Number of Pupils in Y2: 21						
Percentage of Pupils at Each Level									
			D	A	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	14	29	52	5	0
		National	0	0	4	13	62	21	0
ENGLISH: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	10	33	33	24	0
		National	0	0	4	13	54	29	0
ENGLISH: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	29	14	52	5	0
		National	0	0	5	13	70	12	0
ENGLISH: Speaking and Listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	10	19	71	0	0
		National	0	0	3	11	63	23	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5	14	48	33	0
		National	0	0	2	9	60	29	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5	19	76	0	0
		National	0	0	2	10	67	21	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:	57%	In Wales:	81%

- 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

National figures relate to 2001, as results for 2002 are not yet available.

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2002								Number of Pupils in Y6 12					
Percentage of Pupils at Each Level													
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0		0	8	0	17	58	17	0
		National	0	0	0		1	1	6	19	48	25	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	8	0			0	8	42	42	
		National	0	2	1	1			5	14	47	30	
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	8	8	67	17	0
		National	0	0	0		0	1	4	20	47	28	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0			8	8	50	33	
		National	0	2	1	1			4	18	42	32	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	8	8	67	17	0
		National	1	0	0		0	0	3	15	52	29	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0			0	8	83	8	
		National	0	2	0	1			2	13	51	31	

Percentage of Pupils Attaining at least Level 4 in Mathematics, Science and English (or Welsh as a First Language)			
By Teacher Assessment		By Test	
In the School:	75%	In the School:	83%
In Wales:	68%	In Wales:	68%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
- A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
- N Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence.
- B Pupils who have not been entered for tests because they are working outside the levels of the tests
- W Pupils who are working towards Level 1 but have not yet achieved the standards needed for Level 1

National figures relate to 2001, as results for 2002 are not yet available.

The majority of eleven-year-old pupils are expected to attain Level 4.

APPENDIX D

The Evidence Base of Inspection

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

- Pre-inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and governing body.
- Two parents attended a meeting with the registered inspector
- Twenty-four 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-nine lessons or part-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 Religious Education	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 Behaviour and Attitudes Teaching Special Educational Needs Leadership & Efficiency Progress since the Last Inspection Key Issues for Action
Mr. E. G. Atwell	Mathematics Science Design and Technology Information Technology Music Physical Education	Main Findings Assessment, Recording and Reporting Curriculum Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources Key Issues for Action
Mr. R.H Thomas		Main Findings Attendance Support and Guidance Partnership with Parents, the Community, Schools and Other Institutions Partnership with Industry Key Issues for Action