

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

***YSGOL GYNRADD ABERGYNOLWYN  
ABERGYNOLWYN  
TYWYN***

***School Number: 661-2179***

***Date of Inspection: 8-10 March 2004***

***By***

***MR D GWYNFOR EVANS***

***Registered Inspector***

***Date: 13 May 2004***

Under Estyn Contract Number: CT145/03P

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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 age 18 is intended to ease communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs and emphasise the importance of continuity.

The term "Reception" (R) is applied to the year group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) who attain the age of 5 during the academic year. "Year 1" (Y1) is applied to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on to Y13, the year group who attain the age of 18 during the academic year:

{PRIVATE }	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 (KS) 1 of the national curriculum consists of Y1 and Y2; KS2 of Y3 to Y6; KS3 of Y7 to Y9; KS4 of Y10 and Y11 (which is the final year of compulsory education).

## GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The five-point grading scale used to represent the main judgements in this report is as follows:

1. Very good: many good features, some of them outstanding.
2. Good: good features and no major shortcomings.
3. Satisfactory: good features outweigh some 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

Ysgol Abergynolwyn is a community school controlled by Gwynedd Unitary Authority (UA). The school is situated at the centre of the village and was opened in 1883. Then, there were approximately 100 pupils in the school. The interior of the building has been adapted over the years and now, there are two classes in the school, one for nursery children, reception and Key Stage (KS) 1 pupils, and the other for pupils aged seven to 11. There is also a staff room, canteen and kitchen. At present, there are 18 pupils on roll, the same number as there was at the time of the last inspection in April 1998. One pupil of nursery age attends the school every afternoon.

According to the school, the pupils are drawn from a residential area which is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged and it has many able pupils and a few less able. None of them are entitled to free school meals. There are two pupils on the special educational needs (SEN) register.

At the time of the last inspection, approximately half of the pupils came from homes where Welsh was the main language but by now, the number has fallen to less than a quarter. The school's aim is to ensure that every child is proficient in Welsh and English by the time they transfer to the secondary school.

The school has specific aims and objectives to enable each pupil to grow into full personalities, to nurture respect and tolerance towards people of all backgrounds, religion and culture, and enable them to be valuable members of a bilingual community. It aims to provide a broad curriculum which develops the full potential of each pupil. Specific targets are included in the School Development Plan (SDP) to try to fulfil these aims and objectives.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

### The main findings of the report

#### Standards achieved by pupils

##### Children under five

- The general quality of the educational provision for those under five years of age is appropriate to their needs. The standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

Language, literacy and communication skills	Very good
Mathematical development	Very good
Personal and social development	Very good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Very good
Physical development	Very good
Creative development	Very good

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## KS1 and KS2

Subject	KS1	KS2
Welsh	Very good	Very good
English	-	Good
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory
Science	Good	Good
Design and technology	Good	Good
Information technology	Very good	Good
History	Good	Good
Geography	Very good	Good
Art	Very good	Very good
Music	Good	Good
Physical education	No judgment	No judgment
Religious education	Very good	Very good

### Standards in key skills across the curriculum

Children under five years of age make consistent progress in using their key skills across the curriculum and attain very good standards in language, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT). In KS1 and KS2, standards in listening are very good and standards in speaking, reading, numeracy and use of ICT are good. Although there are examples of writing of good standard across the curriculum, the quality of presentation and content of the final drafts is satisfactory overall.

### The quality of education provided

- The quality of teaching is one of the strengths of the school. The quality of teaching for the under-fives is consistently very good. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was very good in 54 per cent of them, good in 36 per cent and satisfactory in 10 per cent. Good and very good teaching is characterised by detailed planning and the effective use of teaching techniques and aids by the teachers. The teachers give detailed attention to preparing tasks which are well-matched to pupils' age and ability and their relationship with the pupils is a warm and homely one. In a small minority of lessons, the objectives are not clear enough for the pupils and a period at the end of the lesson to strengthen what has been taught is not ensured. In general, opportunities to remind pupils of the need to present their work in an orderly manner and in neat handwriting are not sufficiently taken advantage of.
- A curriculum is provided for the under-fives and KS1 and KS2 pupils which is of very good quality. The school co-operates well with other primary schools to extend pupils' curricular experiences. The curriculum is enriched well by a variety of extra-curricular activities, educational visits and visitors to the school.
- The school has a policy and clear procedures for assessment. The progress and development of the under-fives are assessed thoroughly and there are appropriate arrangements for assessing pupils with SEN. In general, there is a lack of consistency in the assessments on teachers' short-term planning and, as a result, the next steps in the teaching and learning are insufficiently promoted. The quality of the reports to parents is good.
- The provision for pupils with SEN is good and conforms fully with the requirements of the Code of Practice. Pupils with SEN are well supported and they have full access to the curriculum and all work of the school.

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- A particular strength of the school is the quality of the provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare. The comprehensive policies relating to pupils' health, safety and care are implemented effectively.
  - The quality of the partnership between the school and parents and the local community is good with some very good features. As the school establishes a good relationship with different businesses and industries in the area, pupils become more aware of the world of work.

#### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is promoted very effectively through the act of collective worship, through curriculum subjects and the general life of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and their moral development is promoted very effectively.
- Pupils' social skills are very well developed. They co-operate well in class and take part in a good variety of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils have a very good awareness of Welsh culture and heritage and they have appropriate opportunities to learn about other cultures.

#### **School management and efficiency**

- The school has a very good ethos and sense of purpose in its effort to fulfil its aims and objectives.
- The headteacher offers clear and consistent leadership to the school. She works effectively with staff, governors, parents and other schools to provide a good range of educational and social experiences for the pupils.
- The governors undertake their responsibilities conscientiously. They have a good awareness of the life and work of the school.
- Financial management is good and the school has appropriate systems to ensure value for money.
- The school gives good attention to evaluating its educational provision and to planning for improvement. In general, the role of the subject co-ordinators, in relation to evaluating pupils' standards of achievement across the school, is undeveloped.
- The school makes good use of all available resources and buildings to present an appropriate range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences to the pupils.

#### **Effectiveness dealing with issues identified in the previous inspection**

- The school was last inspected in the spring term 1998 and in the report, six key issues were identified for implementation. Two of the issues were successfully addressed as well as some aspects within the remainder but some other aspects need further attention. The school has good links with parents; lunchtime supervision is effective and appropriate attention has been given to safety issues. The school's assessment procedures are purposeful and the progress of each pupil is tracked carefully and suitable targets are set. There is not enough consistency in teachers' assessments on their short-term planning to feed back regularly for the planning. The monitoring systems ensure that the activities provided for individuals and what is expected of them are consistent. The role of the co-ordinators in monitoring pupils' standards of achievement across the school is not yet sufficiently developed. The development of pupils' proficiency in mental work and their strategies in number work have been addressed but some shortcomings remain in KS2

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pupils' number work. Although some pupils ensure that their recording work and their final drafts are of good quality, there are a significant number who do not sufficiently address these aspects.

### **3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning**

In the lessons observed during the inspection, standards were very good in 41 per cent of the classes, good in 54 per cent and satisfactory in the remainder (five per cent). This shows progress on the standards reported on in the last inspection.

- Children under five make very good progress and attain standards which are consistently very good in each of the six areas of learning.
- In KS1, standards are very good in Welsh, and good in mathematics and science. Pupils achieve very good standards in information technology, geography, art and religious education, and good standards in design and technology, history and music.
- In KS2, standards are very good in Welsh, good in English and science and satisfactory in mathematics. Standards are very good in art and religious education and good in design and technology, information technology, history, geography and music.
- It was not possible to observe lessons in physical education during the inspection to make a judgement relating to standards in the subject, but the documentary evidence including photographs and pupils' responses to the arranged programme shows that a range of experiences is offered across the school.
- As the number of pupils to be assessed by teachers in KS1 is less than five and no pupils sat the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in KS2 in 2003, details of the results are not included in the report.

#### **3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum**

The standards and progress children make when using their key skills across the curriculum are very good in the early years. In KS1 and KS2, listening standards are very good and standards in speaking, reading, numeracy and use of ICT are good and standards in writing are satisfactory.

- Children under five years of age have many opportunities to apply and improve their developing skills in early literacy, early numeracy and use of ICT within and across the six areas of learning.
- In KS1 and KS2, pupils listen attentively to teachers' presentations and to the instructions they receive during lessons and in collective situations such as the assemblies. They also listen very well to other pupils' contributions in feedback sessions at the end of lessons, for example.
- The pupils are good readers. In both key stages, they use books and other texts effectively for research and study, including the increasing use of reading from the screen. They make appropriate use of various reading material in Welsh and English in different subjects.
- The progress pupils make, particularly in KS2, as regards to writing in English and Welsh in a range of contexts across the curriculum is satisfactory. Their ability to communicate their knowledge and ideas effectively in the different subjects is impaired by the

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unsatisfactory quality of the presentations and the standard of handwriting. Although there are some examples of good work, the majority do not take enough pride in the quality of the final drafts.

- In KS1 and KS2, pupils use their developing numeracy skills effectively in an appropriate range of contexts. They use their skills to measure and calculate well in their work in several subjects.
- Pupils across both key stages make increasing use of ICT in their studies. The younger pupils use information technology to differentiate shape and size, to paint and to model and, by the end of KS1, they are proficient in their use of the interactive whiteboard and they are able to use the 'mouse' to load and choose relevant programs and to edit their work. These skills have been developed further with KS2 pupils. Pupils make increasing use of different computer programs including the use of the Internet and the e-mail in their studies.
- According to their age and ability, pupils with SEN achieve standards which are generally good in literacy, numeracy and ICT when dealing with work across the curriculum.

## 4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

### 4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

- The school meets the statutory requirements as regards providing a daily act of collective worship. The services are planned carefully according to specific themes and they stimulate pupils' spiritual growth effectively. Time is set aside in the services for the pupils to reflect on the messages presented; this is done in a sensitive manner and pupils respond with extreme maturity. The act of collective worship makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development and encourages them to consider life's essential questions.
- The school promotes pupils' moral standards very well. They come to appreciate the difference between right and wrong. The regular implementation of school policies on behaviour, equal opportunities and racial equality encourages the pupils to show respect towards themselves and, respect towards others as well as towards property.
- Pupils take part in activities within the school and in the community to raise money to support good causes and charities; this year, the children's Thanksgiving Service collection was presented to the Christian Aid appeal. This close co-operation promotes their awareness of other social needs as well as their personal social development.
- Welsh language and culture have an evident place in the life and work of the school. Pupils compete in the local eisteddfod and go on a trip to the theatre in Aberystwyth to watch theatrical performances in Welsh. The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* permeates the curriculum. Pupils' awareness of other cultures is promoted appropriately through studies within the classes in subjects such as religious education and geography, for example, when studying life in Botswana.

### 4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good.

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- The school has a good range of policies, procedures and values which promote a high standard of behaviour and attitudes. This is a large contribution to the life and social inclusion of the school.
  - Pupils apply themselves to their work with enthusiasm and interest and this has a good effect on the standard of their achievements.
  - The pupils respect their teachers and the support staff, and they are polite and pleasant towards visitors. They are confident and enjoy the experiences they have in school.
  - The school has suitable procedures to deal with any case of bullying or oppressive behaviour.

### **4.3 Attendance**

Attendance levels are good.

- Over the last three full terms, the attendance average was 94.4 per cent. The school has purposeful targets to improve attendance.
- The attendance levels of the under-fives are good reflecting whole-school levels of attendance.
- The school has effective policies and procedures to monitor and maintain good attendance levels. Parents' letters and records confirm the accuracy of the statistics.
- Registers are administered correctly and conform fully with Welsh Assembly Government requirements.
- Punctuality is very good and this ensures a swift start to the school day.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

In the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was very good in 54 per cent of the total, good in 36 per cent and satisfactory in the remainder (10 per cent). The quality of teaching for the children under five years of age is very good.

- The teachers plan the lesson activities in detail. In the vast majority of lessons, they set clear teaching aims at the start of lessons and pupils have a very good awareness of what is expected of them in the activities.
- In general, the teachers have a good subject knowledge and their enthusiasm and their interest in the topic they are presenting at the time retains the pupils' attention and encourages them to respond and take part in the activities.
- There is a good pace to the teaching and teachers make effective use of praise and compliment in lessons.
- In the planning work and in lesson presentations, teachers give good attention to planning tasks which match pupils' age and ability.
- Teachers make effective use of a variety of teaching techniques and aids to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- The relationship between pupils and all school staff is a warm and homely one.

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- In a small minority of lessons, the learning objectives are not clear enough for the pupils and no period is ensured at the end of the lesson to strengthen what has been taught.
  - In general, opportunities to remind pupils of the need to present their work in an orderly manner and in neat handwriting are not sufficiently taken advantage of.

## 5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good.

- The school has a policy and clear procedures for assessment.
- The progress and development of the children under five years of age are assessed thoroughly by means of the basic assessments and through the effective provision adopted by the school for the early years.
- The methods of assessment and recording for pupils with SEN are appropriate and meet the requirements of the Code of Practice; the individual education plans (IEPs) are reviewed regularly.
- A record of the individual child's progress is kept.
- Written reports are presented annually to parents on the progress of their children; these are of good quality. Two periods are organised annually for parents to have the opportunity to discuss the development of their children with the teachers.
- The school analyses National Curriculum (NC) assessment results as well as the basic assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses to work on.
- The NC subject assessment scheme is in use in KS1 and KS2. Music, however, is not included in the current assessment cycle.
- There is a marking policy, but in its implementation, insufficient attention is given to attainable, short-term target-setting for the older pupils.
- There is insufficient consistency in the assessments on teachers' short-term plans so that they can be used to guide the next steps in the teaching and learning.

## 5.3 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum provided for the children under five and for KS1 and KS2 pupils is very good; it is suitable, broad and balanced and meets NC requirements and religious education.

- The curriculum for the children under five years of age is very good and promotes the Desirable Outcomes.
- There are thorough policies and schemes of work for each subject. Appropriate time is set aside on the timetable to teach all NC subjects and religious education. At present, because of problems with the available facilities, the school is facing difficulties in its effort to fulfil its physical education programme fully.
- The school plans appropriately for the development of pupils' key skills. Regular opportunities arise in the curricular activities for the pupils to nurture these skills.
- The school works effectively with other primary schools in the area to enrich pupils' curricular experiences. Physical education activities are held with nearby schools and pupils attend workshops which enrich their musical and linguistic experiences, for example.

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- There is a relevant policy for personal and social education and it is implemented effectively through the curriculum, the services and other activities of the school.
  - Pupils with SEN are regularly supported and the quality of provision for them is good.
  - The curriculum is enriched by a good variety of extra-curricular activities, visits to places outside the school and by visitors who come to the school to contribute towards pupils' education.
  - The curriculum is socially inclusive and every child has access to the full curriculum.

#### **5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare**

The quality of the support and guidance provided for pupils is very good and is one of the strengths of the school.

- There is a homely and family atmosphere in the school. The staff's commitment to provide appropriately for all pupils whatever their needs is an outstanding aspect of the work of the school.
- There are comprehensive policies and procedures to promote pupils' health and safety within the classes and around the school. Clear guidelines have been prepared for the staff regarding the way issues on pupils' health, safety and care should be acted upon throughout the day.
- There is a written policy for health education, including a reference to drug abuse, and health education and sex education are linked appropriately with the curriculum with emphasis on care for personal health.
- There is a written policy which specifically relates to child protection. The headteacher is responsible, and there are clear action guidelines prepared for the staff.
- A risk assessment is held on a regular basis and the governing body is very aware of their responsibility to provide a safe environment for all pupils. The health and safety issues reported on in the last report have been addressed appropriately.
- Equal opportunities are ensured for pupils in every aspect of the work and life of the school.
- Pupils respond positively to the support and guidance given to them by showing respect and courtesy and an appreciation of what is provided for them.

#### **5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN**

The provision for pupils with SEN is good and pupils achieve standards which are at least satisfactory.

- The provision conforms with the requirements of the Code of Practice and teachers are aware of the demands on them and of the importance of implementing the guidelines regularly and correctly.
- The support arranged for pupils by the SEN co-ordinator is of good quality. The IEPs describe pupils' needs clearly and concisely, and the steps which need to be followed to meet those needs. Good records are kept of the performance and progress of pupils with SEN.
- There is a close link between the school and the parents of pupils with SEN. Meetings are arranged regularly to discuss the pupils' progress and development.

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- One-to-one support is given by a support teacher from the county's Dyslexia Unit. There is a positive response to this provision and there are clear signs of progress in pupils' work especially in aspects of literacy.
  - Pupils with SEN are fully integrated into the life of the school.
  - The school discusses with the UA the shortcomings in the building in relation to ensuring access for pupils with physical disability. There is no pupil with physical disability on roll at present.

## **5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions**

The partnership with parents and the community, schools and other institutions is good, with some very good features to the links with the community and other schools.

- Parents appreciate greatly the work of the school and the efforts it makes for their children. This is confirmed in the responses received through the questionnaires and the pre-inspection meeting with parents. The quality of the information provided for parents, which include letters, reports and meetings, is also good.
- The Parent Teacher Association is an enthusiastic body, supporting a good range of school activities, a socialising focus, and also raises significant sums of money for the school's funds. The school prospectus meets the requirements, and the home/school agreement is also a suitable and comprehensive document, and has been signed by almost every parent.
- The school is very important to the village and the area, with strong family and historic links. The pupils not only contribute very well to the cultural and social life of the area, but the community also responds by regularly supporting the school activities. The pupils are very hard-working through the year holding concerts, occasional services, and taking part in Urdd activities, '*Eisteddfod Gadeiriol*' Abergynolwyn and similar events. They make generous contributions also to a number of charities.
- There is a very good partnership with the primary schools in the catchment area. Information and resources are shared regularly and there are good social links between the pupils. The transfer arrangement for Year (Y) 6 pupils to Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn is good, with bridging courses, emphasis on curricular progression and appropriate attention is also given to pastoral requirements.
- The support of the UA and support officers is also good, with ready advice and service available. Other establishments, such as the police, the fire brigade and the National Park also contribute well to this partnership.
- At times, pupils from the secondary school and Coleg Meirion Dwyfor take advantage of the opportunity to have work experience in the school.

## **5.7 Partnership with Industry**

The partnership with industry is good.

- The school has adopted a policy for this partnership, with a specific structure; it is developing well. A number of links have been formed with businesses, industry, and tourist enterprises. This enriches the curriculum and extends pupils' educational experiences.

- Links with food production businesses, shops, farms and Tal-y-Llyn Railway have been established, and a study of Bryn Eglwys Quarry and its influence on the area has been made. In addition, the school has formed a small card production business, and the pupils have learnt how to market and prepare a financial sheet. The profit has been used to buy resources for the school.
- Emphasis is placed on recycling, protecting the environment and sustainable development through activities such as planting trees and developing the school garden, and reaching the Bronze level with the Green Garden Scheme. The pupils visited Coleg Meirion Dwyfor's construction department to extend their understanding of buildings.

## **6. MANAGEMENT**

### **6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement**

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good.

- Following the last inspection, a new self-evaluation plan was formulated to gather evidence on pupils' standards of achievement and the quality of the educational provision.
- Within a two-year monitoring programme, attention is given to one curricular aspect and one managerial aspect each term.
- Reports are regularly presented to the governors by the headteacher and county advisers noting the nature of the provision, the outcomes which stem from the review and the action tasks for improvement.
- The reports mainly refer to the quality of the educational provision and, although there are more general comments on pupils' standards of achievement, the judgement is not based on a range of evidence across the two key stages.
- Although the governors are not linked with specific subjects, the members become more aware of their role in the self-evaluation process.
- Parents contribute to the self-evaluation process by completing evaluation forms at the end of an open evening and pupils also evaluate their work themselves from time to time.
- The SDP identifies the priorities and sets targets for the school and pupils to reach. Information is analysed on pupils' achievement in NC tests and the information is used for future learning and teaching steps.

### **6.2 Leadership and Efficiency**

The quality of leadership and efficiency of the school is good.

- The school has a very good ethos and sense of purpose in its effort to fulfil its aims and objectives. It promotes definite values and aspects which generate a positive response from the pupils and parent support.
- The headteacher offers clear and consistent leadership to the school. She has a good relationship with the pupils, staff, parents, governors and the local community. She co-operates effectively with teachers in primary schools in the area to extend and enrich the educational and social experiences offered to the pupils.
- The school has adopted performance management procedures and methods of monitoring the quality of the educational provision. However, the role of the co-ordinators is not

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sufficiently developed from the standpoint of judging pupils' standards of achievement across the school.

- The governors undertake their responsibilities conscientiously. Meetings of the governing body are held regularly and the members have a good understanding of the life and work of the school.
- The governing body's finance sub-panel meets regularly to consider financial issues. It is ensured that school expenditure is linked appropriately with the priorities in the SDP. Over a period of years, the school has built a significant balance in the budget to secure the school's staffing through a period of decrease in the numbers of pupils on roll.
- The SDP includes a judgmental review of the previous year's main priorities together with the impact on pupils and the educational provision. The school's short-term and long-term priorities from 2003 to 2006 are detailed.
- The administrative procedures and day-to-day arrangements are effective and efficient. Good and purposeful use is made of all resources, buildings and facilities available in the school.

### **6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources**

The school is well staffed and there is a good supply of learning resources; the provision as regards buildings and classrooms is good.

- The correspondence between the number, qualifications and experience of teaching staff ensures that NC requirements are met appropriately.
- The good team spirit is evident among the adults who work in the school. This contributes to the positive ethos within the school.
- There are job descriptions which have been updated appropriately, and the professional development of staff is planned considering the SDP priorities and the monitoring cycle.
- The quality and supply of learning resources are good. However, the school is dependent on collaborating with other schools to effectively fulfil NC aims and objectives in physical education as it does not have sufficient facilities indoors or outdoors.
- The school is a fine old building and the classrooms are suitable for the number of pupils on roll. Pupils' work which is displayed in the classrooms and on the walls of the foyer, is attractive and interesting and adds to the positive ethos found in the school.
- The arrangement of exchanging classes to deal with different aspects of the curriculum is a very effective one.

## **7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

#### **Provision for the under-fives**

The educational provision for the children under five years of age is appropriate and promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. A balanced curriculum is provided for them and they achieve very good standards in each one of the six areas of learning.

#### **Language, literacy and communication skills**

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The language, literacy and communication skills of the children under five years of age are very good

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### **Good features**

- The children talk with enthusiasm. The children who do not come from Welsh-speaking homes develop an active Welsh vocabulary after they start in school. They hear good linguistic patterns from the teacher and succeed to imitate them with time.
- They listen well and evidently enjoy oral and role-playing activities, for example in the wendy house, and when looking after the baby.
- The children contribute well to pre-reading activities and understand that words and pictures have a meaning.
- They come to understand that written symbols have a sound and meaning, and they have numerous opportunities to use marking equipment for different purposes for example, drawing a picture, scribbling or conveying a message in the form of letters.
- Their linguistic development is very well promoted by the effective use of the interactive whiteboard.

### **Personal and social development**

The personal and social development of the children under five is very good.

#### **Good features**

- The children settle in easily within the class and learn to play together and take their turn.
- The children behave very well and show confidence in responding to their peers and adults.
- The children show independence when choosing activities in class.
- They concentrate well on the set tasks and they persevere.
- They respond sensitively to the needs of others within the group.

### **Mathematical development**

The mathematical skills of the children under five are very good.

#### **Good features**

- The children begin to develop mathematical language in relevant contexts, for example, when finding numbers in the sand.
- They can recognise pattern and sequence; the majority can arrange and sort familiar objects into sets.
- The children begin to understand mathematical concepts such as 'less' and 'more' and they understand that combining sets is adding.
- They begin to recognise numbers and match number with sign and sounds.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

Their knowledge and understanding of the world are very good.

#### **Good features**

- The children are able to talk about their environment and the practical experiences they have in school and about their families.

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- They begin to become aware of the features of the area they live in and compare it with a different location, such as Botswana. They compare the wild animals of both locations and place them in appropriate sets.
  - They begin to understand the concept of time by referring to different times of the day. They can discuss what day it is today, what day it was yesterday, and what day it will be tomorrow.
  - They begin to compare yesterday and today and make effective use of historic artefacts to promote role-play such as the methods of washing years ago.
  - Children can discuss 'rough' and 'smooth' objects through using the '*Bocs Teimlo*', by beginning to appreciate the differences between various materials.
  - The children use the computer quite confidently. They can control the mouse skilfully.

### **Physical development**

Children's physical development is very good.

#### **Good features**

- The children can move confidently and imaginatively as they enjoy a physical development session by making various shapes with their bodies, and doing this to music. They can form interesting shapes with their bodies.
- The children handle small equipment with increasing control by working with paint brushes and pencils; they use scissors skilfully and safely.
- The children make good use of the limited space to practise their physical skills on large equipment.

### **Creative development**

The creative development of the children under five years of age is very good.

#### **Good features**

- The children enjoy playing imaginatively.
- They can make independent decisions relating to colour and medium in artwork such as when creating a collage to illustrate the 'Story of the Creation'.
- They respond positively to rhythm work in music, and very enthusiastically when singing songs with matching physical poses.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings in any of the six areas.

## **Welsh**

Standards of achievement are very good in KS1 and KS2.

Standards in oral work and reading are very good and writing standards are generally good with examples of very good work at the end of both key stages.

#### **Good features**

- Key Stage 1 pupils listen attentively to the teacher reading a story and they respond enthusiastically. By Y2, pupils talk clearly and confidently and are keen to share their experiences with others.

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- Key Stage 1 pupils enjoy books and read texts within their experience clearly and quite accurately. They discuss easily what they read. Year 2 pupils develop well as independent readers and they choose some texts voluntarily.
  - Key Stage 1 pupils write in a variety of forms which include story, portrait, letter, news and simple poems. Year 2 pupils succeed in writing some extended sentences including the correct use of the short past forms of the verb.
  - Key Stage 2 pupils converse confidently in formal and informal situations. They speak with ease, with the more able pupils giving expression to their feelings and opinions clearly and briefly. They can recognise characteristics in characters and they have a good range of adjectives to describe them.
  - The pupils read clearly and meaningfully. In responding to what they read, they show a good understanding of the events and characters. They gather information on a particular subject from more than one print source and use it appropriately.
  - Key Stage 2 pupils write in a range of forms. The more able pupils show originality when selecting words and expressions for writing a story or poem. They make effective use of sayings and idioms in their creative work. By Y6, they are aware of the nature of the audience, such as when writing a script for an article in a newspaper.

### **Shortcomings**

- Although there are no significant shortcomings in pupils' standards of achievement, there are shortcomings in the quality of handwriting of the majority of pupils in KS2.

## **English**

Standards of achievement are good in KS2. English is introduced to KS1 pupils but it is not a core subject which is assessed formally.

### **Good features**

- In KS1, pupils begin to express themselves clearly and confidently; they can record work and read English together and independently.
- In KS2, pupils listen attentively to presentations in lessons; they can recall important features of a chapter of the book they are studying and they re-present the information clearly to the rest of the class.
- The standard of the oral work which pupils achieve is good. They respond confidently to direct questions by expanding on their answers.
- The standard of reading of the majority of pupils is good; they come to read with more fluency, accuracy and understanding by the time they reach Y6.
- Pupils can write in a range of styles and for a variety of purposes such as writing a diary and re-writing a part of a novel in the first person. They achieve good standards.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils' presentation of work is generally untidy. Pupils do not give enough attention to the development of legible handwriting or to the use of different forms of handwriting for different purposes.

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## Mathematics

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2.

### Good features

- In KS1, pupils show a good understanding of number bonds and make good progress when using them. They are confident when doing adding and subtraction work, they can recognise number sequences and they begin to understand patterns including odd numbers and even numbers.
- Pupils recognise and name a good range of two and three-dimensional shapes correctly and they develop a good understanding of their properties. They show good standards when discussing the value of coins.
- Key Stage 1 pupils interpret mathematical problems expressed in words well.
- Pupils can use number fans and the interactive whiteboard to strengthen mental mathematical work effectively demonstrating good standards.
- In KS2, pupils know the features of three-dimensional shapes and they can sort them in line with their features well.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of the four rules and previous work shows that the pupils have an increasing understanding of money, measures and interpreting data.
- Key Stage 2 pupils demonstrate satisfactory standards when using a large dice to promote mental work in mathematics.

### Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills using and applying mathematics in practical tasks and research work have not been sufficiently developed across KS2.
- Key Stage 2 pupils do not understand or use, in their context, fractions to estimate, describe and compare parts of one whole.
- Pupils rely too much on work sheets.

## Science

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

### Good features

- Key Stage 1 pupils can name the main outer parts of the body correctly. They understand the function of the skeleton to give form to the body and to protect organs such as the lungs and the heart.
- They have a good knowledge of the senses and how they would use them. They use them appropriately to sort materials into groups, for example, feeling objects and putting them into 'smooth' and 'coarse' sets. Year 2 pupils can write more extended sentences to compare materials which have been sorted into 'smooth' and 'coarse' groups.
- They know that pushing and pulling are examples of forces. They present their information by means of pictures, charts, graphs and simple recording.
- Key Stage 2 pupils have a good knowledge of basic life processes. They are able to explain how a lack of light or water has an effect on plant growth.

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- They acknowledge that feeding relativity exists between plants and animals in a habitat, and they describe those relativities using food chains and terms such as predator and prey.
  - They can name the main parts of a plant and explain the function of the main parts such as the root and the stem. They are able to identify the main steps in a flowering plant's life cycle.
  - In both key stages, pupils' scientific vocabulary is developing well and they are aware of the requirements of a fair test when carrying out experiments.

### **Shortcomings**

- In general, pupils make insufficient use of their conclusions to note what was found out.
- Written presentations, graphs and diagrams of the majority of pupils in KS2 are not orderly, clear and neat enough.

## **Design and technology**

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and KS2.

### **Good features**

- In KS1, the pupils, as part of their topic on 'food', design and make sandwiches; they choose suitable produce for the task and they give appropriate attention to the importance of hygiene when dealing with foods, and care when using equipment.
- They design and make a hand puppet talking enthusiastically about the task and the end product. Good standards are demonstrated when pupils assemble and join materials and components.
- They made cards with a simple mechanism to move different parts effectively. The standard of the final work is good.
- In KS2, the pupils consider the strengths and weaknesses of designs intelligently and they become more confident when developing their designing and making skills further.
- Pupils can make simple mechanisms with moving parts. They understand how a gear system works and they use the knowledge when making a model of various rides in a fair.
- The older pupils consider appearance, function, safety and reliability when developing ideas for products and then evaluate them, for example, in their work creating models of creatures.
- They make suitable use of information technology skills to support their work.

### **Shortcomings**

- The quality of the designing, sketching and recording work of the older pupils is not a fair reflection of their ability to design and evaluate.

## **Information technology**

Standards of achievement are very good in KS1 and good in KS2.

### **Good features**

- Key Stage 1 pupils are confident when using ICT to communicate ideas and information in different forms. They use their word-processing skills effectively to vary size, colour and form of the font.

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- They can create a picture to illustrate an event, story or to show symmetry.
  - They are able to open a file, add to it and save it to use in the future. They use a database already prepared on eye colour of the class pupils to show the information in graph form.
  - They can program the roamer to complete simple movements on the floor and they give directions to make objects move along a specific path on the interactive whiteboard.
  - In KS2, pupils build well on the skills mastered in KS1. They exchange and present information in different forms showing an awareness of the audience.
  - They use a database to store information relating to their studies, they check it before entering it and produce a variety of graphs.
  - They make increasing use of the Internet and the CD-ROM to gather information and transfer it to other software. They can send and receive a message on the e-mail.
  - They begin to investigate the impact of changing the variables in a computer model.

### **Shortcomings**

- Overall, KS2 pupils' ability to use ICT for control systems is undeveloped.

### **History**

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

#### **Good features**

- Key Stage 1 pupils become more aware of the passage of time through discussing a 'life cycle'. They construct a time line which shows their own growth and development from the time of their birth to the present day. They place pictures of people from the youngest to the oldest in their correct order.
- They become aware of the difference between 'long ago' and 'the present day' by watching a video dealing with life in the past and discussing artefacts which deal with washing practices of long ago.
- They can discuss the significance and contributions of prominent people from the past such as Louis Braille, Guy Fawkes and Susan Rees.
- They record their work methodically in the form of pictures, labels and simple sentences.
- Key Stage 2 pupils have a good knowledge of the Celtic period. They refer to their way of life and their clothes. They write well about their work as hunters, warriors and craftsmen.
- They make good use of video evidence and books to interpret life in the Tudor age. They refer to some of the differences in the way people used to live and work in that period compared with the present day.
- Their understanding of local history is promoted well through visits to historic places in the area and through the information they gather from books and pictures.

### **Shortcomings**

- In general, pupils do not convey their knowledge and understanding of the past in an adequate variety of forms.

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## Geography

Standards of achievement are very good in KS1 and good in KS2.

### Good features

- Key Stage 1 pupils have a sound, developing knowledge and understanding of place and features of places. They can refer simply to some of the differences between their homes and homes in Botswana.
- Pupils' mapping skills are developing well in KS1. They make appropriate use of simple symbols when mapping and they can relate co-ordinates with the map.
- Pupils are beginning to use geographical terms confidently and accurately and they ask and answer geographical questions, offering comments.
- Key Stage 2 pupils develop further their understanding of place as they study two contrasting countries, Wales and Botswana. They refer to special features such as social, cultural and historical factors.
- They respond well in oral work when discussing the human and physical features of two contrasting areas.
- Key Stage 2 pupils make effective use of maps, photographs and ICT to find additional sources of information to gather and present evidence to others.

### Shortcomings

- Not all pupils in KS2 are confident when using maps to research.

## Art

Standards of achievement are very good in KS1 and KS2.

### Good features

- In KS1, pupils experiment with various techniques to develop very good skills when they create a 'church window', a 'story of the Creation' collage, and monoprint editions using ink and screen.
- They are beginning to come to appreciate and research different types of art and design to be seen in the local environment. Through the variety of activities, they are developing a sound subject vocabulary and demonstrating good mathematical skills in the context of their artwork.
- Pupils demonstrate very good standards when observing in detail line and tone; they can discuss the depth of tone when describing and discussing their own work and the work of others.
- In KS2, pupils are developing their knowledge and understanding of artists, craftsmen and designers who work in a range of media. They particularly observe the work of Catrin Williams and Mary Jones. The pupils demonstrate very good standards in their studies.
- The pupils respond well to the methods and ideas of Welsh artist Wil Roberts, observing in particular the shapes to be seen within the picture as a complete work. Pupils are able to respond imaginatively to the motivation by varying the method and the medium to create a personal complete work. They achieve very good standards.

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- Key Stage 2 pupils experiment effectively with the art visual language elements of line, tone, pattern, texture and form; their sketch books show very good recording and observing skills.
  - The pupils select, control and experiment with a wide range of materials. They can discuss their work maturely.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Music**

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and KS2.

### **Good features**

- In KS1, pupils can sing a variety of simple songs from memory with some control on breathing and diction. They respond well when reading a simple graphics score.
- They can compose and arrange music simply by using a variety of sound sources such as their voices, bodies, and untuned percussion instruments.
- The pupils listen attentively to motivation to compose music, such as the story of the 'Shrinking Mouse', discussing the musical elements heard well overall.
- In KS2, pupils can sing various songs, such as folk songs and hymns, with increasing control on pose, pronunciation and continuity. They can hold a part as a member of a group in a 'circle song'.
- The majority of pupils can read sol-fa well overall using their knowledge to compose a simple song. The majority of pupils are aware of the musical elements and can explain their meaning. They use the computer to listen to music, giving focus to the element 'structure'. They demonstrate good standards when composing impromptu.
- They evaluate their own work orally well; they can listen and offer sensible improvements.

### **Shortcomings**

- In general, pupils, especially in KS2, do not have a wide enough range of musical vocabulary to discuss and evaluate music.

## **Physical education**

As it was not possible to observe a physical education lesson in the school during the inspection, a judgement is not being given on standards in the subject.

The school has an appropriate scheme of work to present physical education activities to KS1 and KS2 pupils. The school co-operates with other primary schools in the area to offer a programme of gymnastics, dance, games and swimming lessons for all pupils. There is evidence in the files of pupils evaluating their progress and performance in these activities. The school yard is used for some games and outdoor activities.

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## Religious education

Standards of achievement are very good in both key stages.

The collective worship services make a very positive contribution to the work in religious education.

### Good features

- Pupils in both key stages have a very good knowledge of stories from the Bible. They are confident when responding to questions relating to stories in the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- Their knowledge of places of worship is being developed well through visiting the local church and learning about the significance and importance of the altar, the font and the candles, for example.
- Pupils in both key stages know about the important contribution of benefactors such as Bishop William Morgan, Thomas Charles and the story of Mari Jones and her Bible.
- Key Stage 1 pupils tell the story of the Creation with confidence. They record what happened in the seven days accurately and methodically in the form of pictures and simple sentences.
- Key Stage 1 pupils refer simply to some of the differences between symbols and places of worship of Christians and Jews. Key Stage 2 pupils know about some of the customs and celebrations relating to the Islam religion.
- Key Stage 2 pupils discuss maturely and intelligently issues which relate to our contemporary life; they show care and concern for the homeless and express their feelings sincerely orally and by means of pictures and poems.
- The pleasant displays which include artefacts and symbols of celebration, extend pupils' understanding of customs, aspects and values relating to the Christian faith and some other beliefs.

### Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

## 8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### 8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

In the last report, six key issues were identified to be addressed. A practical action plan was formulated to deal with the issues identified. Two of the issues were successfully addressed together with some aspects within the remainder but other aspects need further attention.

**1. Address the nature and breadth of the work in mathematics with a specific look at ensuring the work is congenial with pupils' ability and that their proficiency in mental work and their strategies in number work are developed.**

By following the Numeracy Strategy plan, adding to resources and taking advantage of relevant training courses, pupils' proficiency in mental work and their strategies in number work were successfully developed. However, KS2 pupils' understanding of the four rules and their ability to apply mathematics in practical tasks and research work are satisfactory.

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**2. Ensure that the form and quality of the recording work and final drafts of pupils' work in both languages are a fair reflection of their ability and the planning and discussing which takes place on the class floor, and that every piece of work is finished appropriately.**

Although some pupils ensure that their recording work and their final drafts are of good quality, a significant number of them do not give sufficient attention to these aspects, especially in KS2.

**3. Continue with the implementation of current assessment guidelines by ensuring that there is a written record of the response to KS2 pupils' work, and that assessment work through the school maintains the current sound standards by feeding back regularly for planning.**

The school has reviewed its assessment arrangements. Work in the subjects is assessed termly and the progress of the under-fives is assessed regularly; the progress of each child is tracked carefully and suitable targets are set. There is not enough consistency in teachers' assessments on their short-term planning to feed back regularly for planning.

**4. Formalise the monitoring and monitoring systems to ensure that the activities provided for individuals and expectations of them are consistently appropriate.**

Following the last inspection, a new monitoring plan was formulated. A two-year programme was created looking at one curricular aspect and one managerial aspect each term. The reports presented to the governors address appropriately some of the strengths and offer suggestions where improvement is needed. The role of the co-ordinators has not been sufficiently developed to judge pupils' standards of achievement across the school.

**5. Ensure that the supervision of pupils during break times and the issues noted in the SDP, and the condition of the end walls and the sheds specifically are reviewed carefully.**

The pupils are well-supervised during break periods. The safety issues referred to in the last inspection have been dealt with appropriately.

**6. Build on the goodwill and present communication channels which exist between the school and parents and extend them further.**

The school holds meetings regularly with the parents to share ideas and information. The parents appreciate the open afternoons held where they can discuss pupils' work with their children and their teachers. Parents' responses through the questionnaires and the pre-inspection meeting were very positive.

## **8.2 Key Issues for Action**

In order to build on standards which are generally good and sometimes very good, the school needs to:

- address the shortcomings identified in a few subjects;
- reconcile teachers' assessments on their short-term planning to promote the next steps in the learning and teaching;
- develop further the role of subject co-ordinators, especially in relation to judging pupils' standards of achievement across the school;
- improve the quality and form of recording work and pupils' handwriting in their work across the curriculum.

## APPENDIX

### A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Ysgol Gynradd Abergynolwyn
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Abergynolwyn Tywyn
Post-Code	LL36 9YP
Telephone Number	01654 782257

Headteacher	Mrs Nia Evans
Date of appointment	January 1992
Chair of Governors	Mr Gareth Evans
Registered Inspector	Mr D Gwynfor Evans
Dates of inspection	8-10 March 2004

### 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	0.5	2	1	5	4	4	0	1	17.5

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	2	0	2

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	9:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	9
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>			
	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Spring 2003	89.0	95.8	92.4
Summer 2003	98.0	94.0	96.0
Autumn 2003	94.3	95.0	94.7

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0
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## C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2003

<b>National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2003</b>	Number of pupils in Y2: 4
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As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 was fewer than five, summary information is not included.	
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END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2003

<b>National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results: 2003</b>	Number of pupils in Y6: 0
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As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 was fewer than five, summary information is not included.	
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## D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

- The school was inspected by a team of three inspectors who were present for six inspector days.
- Twenty-two lessons or part-lessons were inspected.
- A sample of pupils in both key stages was heard reading. Discussions were held with a number of pupils and they were questioned about aspects of their work in NC subjects.
- A sample of their written and practical work was scrutinised in all subjects.
- School policies and documents were studied before the inspection.
- Inspectors held discussions with teachers during the inspection period on a wide range of issues relating to their responsibilities and school work. Consideration was given to the school's planning documents and its various files and records.
- Attendance registers were scrutinised.
- Inspectors were present for every act of collective worship.
- Eight parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and 11 questionnaires were completed.
- The Registered Inspector met with the governors before and after the inspection.
- A pre-inspection meeting was held with staff and they were provided with an oral feedback following the inspection.

## E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Mr D G Evans	Rgl	Context; Main findings of the report; Educational standards achieved by pupils; Teaching; Curriculum; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement; Leadership and efficiency; School improvement.	Welsh, science, information technology, history, physical education, religious education
Mr W Owen	Lay	Behaviour and attitudes; Attendance; Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions; Partnership with industry.	
Miss I Owen	Team	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Assessment, recording and reporting; Provision for pupils with special educational needs Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.	English, mathematics, design and technology, geography, art, music, under-fives

The visiting inspectors wish to thank the governors, the headteacher and all the staff for the co-operation and courtesy they received during the inspection.