

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF
THE EDUCATION (SCHOOLS) ACT 1996**

Bedwas Junior School

**Church Street
Bedwas
Caerphilly
CF83 8EB**

SCHOOL NUMBER: 676/2323

DATE OF INSPECTION: 23 – 25 June 2003

BY

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REGISTERED INSPECTOR No: W043/15698

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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:

	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; 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

Bedwas Junior School is situated in the small town of Bedwas to the east of Caerphilly. Pupils are taught in a traditional Victorian building, the school is celebrating its centenary this year, with adjacent demountable classrooms and hard-surface area. At the time of the inspection there were 184 pupils in the school. Pupils are taught in 6 mixed-aged classes, structured to allow for the setting of classes for English and mathematics. The number of pupils on roll has remained relatively stable over the last four years.

Pupils are drawn from well established residential areas, which are neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. The school describes the intake of pupils as being neither advantaged nor disadvantaged; 17% of pupils are registered as being entitled to free school meals. The intake of pupils covers the full range of ability with approximately 29% of pupils identified as requiring special educational needs (SEN) support. English is the first language of the large majority of pupils in the school; there are no natural Welsh speakers. Two pupils are in the care of the local authority.

There are clear aims and a shared vision for the school. The school ethos is shaped by its focus on respect, responsibility and reliability and its emphasis on the development of a sense of community where every individual matters. The school's mission statement is appropriate and indicates the importance of developing success. The school has an annual and detailed programme for improvement covering subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) and aspects of the school. For the year 2002/2003 priorities include: developments in raising standards in writing; aspects of mathematics; practical science; key skill development; raising the achievements of boys and developing new special educational needs (SEN) procedures. The school was last inspected in February 1998. Since that date a new headteacher and several senior staff have been appointed.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Bedwas Junior School is an improving school, which has made good progress since the last inspection. The headteacher, staff and governing body have a clear, shared vision for developing the school. Within a strong caring ethos the efforts and activity of all have been focused on improving standards of achievement and making teaching and learning an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all its pupils.

- Standards of achievement in the subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) are as follows:

Subject	
English	Good
Mathematics	Good
Science	Good
Welsh (second language)	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Satisfactory
Information technology	Good
History	Good
Geography	Good
Art	Good
Music	Good
Physical education	Good
Religious education	Satisfactory

- Over the past few years, the school's results in National Curriculum assessments have shown year on year improvement and are significantly above the national averages. Since the time of the last inspection there has been an increase of 69% in English, 51% in mathematics and 29% in science in the number of pupils gaining level 4 and above, and 59% in the core subject indicator i.e. the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 and above in all core subjects. Also, over the same period, more pupils are gaining the higher levels, i.e. level 5 in all three subjects.
- When compared with similar schools in Wales, the 2002 test results are well above the average for English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' standards of achievements in the key skills across the curriculum are as follows:

Key Skill	
Speaking	Good
Listening	Good
Reading	Good
Writing	Satisfactory
Numeracy	Satisfactory
Information & communication technology	Satisfactory

- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The qualities of 'respect, reliability and responsibility' embodied in the school's motto are effectively nurtured through a programme of stimulating curricular and extra-curricular experiences. Pupils are well aware of the linguistic and cultural heritage of Wales, and of other faiths and cultures. Pupils' personal and social skills are very good. These are effectively developed through a range of learning opportunities during and after school; this is a major strength of the school. Pupils' spiritual development is good. Whole school acts of collective worship are varied and address appropriate themes. Pupils explore their own feelings and reflect on their attitudes in relationship to others through stories and prayers.

- The standard of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are very good. The school is a happy and supportive learning environment, based on good relationships and respect between adults and pupils. There are a number of pupils who have potentially challenging behaviour. The school's very effective procedures for promoting good behaviour have enabled these pupils to integrate smoothly into the life and work of the school.
- Attendance levels and punctuality are good. There are effective procedures in place to monitor and follow up absences.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed. In 78% of the lessons the teaching is good and it is very good in a further 14%. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the desirable outcomes, the statutory curriculum and religious education. They know their pupils well and establish good relationships with them. They provide good individual support and offer frequent praise and encouragement. Good questioning techniques by teachers allow pupils to provide extended responses to develop their oral skills and extend their understanding of the work studied. The development of pupils' oracy skills through a variety of procedures adopted by teachers is a key strength of the school. Teachers' short term planning, particularly in some foundation subjects, insufficiently identifies the key learning objectives and takes insufficient account of pupils' prior attainment. Consequently too much of the work is the same for all pupils. This limits pupils' progress, especially for the more able.
- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good. The school has good procedures for the monitoring and assessment of pupils' academic progress. Assessment data in English and mathematics is used to identify areas of difficulty in individual performance and set targets for improvement. Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers write positive and supportive comments. However, there is variability in the quality of the information provided in clearly indicating the strength of the work and how improvements can be made.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The school provides pupils with many, rich stimulating experiences. Educational visits, visitors to the school, themed weeks, for example eco-week, and the wide range of extra-curricular activities and team games contribute greatly to pupils' experiences and skill levels. Homework is set regularly and purposefully supports pupils' learning. The school has a policy for the development of key skills across the curriculum. However, these skills are not yet sufficiently highlighted in teachers' planning to ensure progression and consistency in pupils' attainment.
- The quality of pupil support and educational guidance is very good. Pupils' welfare is carefully monitored and sensitively undertaken. The school provides a safe and secure environment where all pupils are equally valued and staff take a keen interest in their welfare and personal development. Pupils' academic progress and development is carefully monitored through teacher's personal records, individual education plans and whole school record keeping procedures.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very good standards commensurate with their ability.

- Partnership with parents and the community, schools and other institutions is very good. Parents are kept well informed and value the approachability of the staff. Adults in the community make positive contributions to pupils' learning; the school is an integral part of the community. Strong partnership with the local high school and feeder infant school exists. Effective arrangements are in place for the transfer of pupils to the high school. Partnership with industry is very good. The school has developed useful links with a wide range of industries and businesses that have significantly enriched the curriculum.
- The headteacher, staff and governing body have a clear, shared vision for developing and further improving the school and have established an effective culture for self-improvement. The efforts and activity of all have been focused on improving standards of achievement and the quality of teaching and learning.
- The role of the subject leader has been considerably developed since the last inspection. A clear and focused monitoring and evaluation structure is in place for all subjects of the NC and involves the examination of pupils' work and classroom visits to assess progress in teaching and learning. Subject leaders establish action plans that inform their future activities. To make progress these plans now need to integrate more effectively with the information gained from the monitoring and evaluation process to provide a sharper focus for improvement which examines standards and includes the use of quantitative targets to inform the school improvement plan.
- The quality of leadership and management by the headteacher, staff and governors is very good. The efficiency of the school is very good and the school gives very good value for money. The school is well led. The headteacher undertakes his tasks conscientiously. He has a clear pride in the school, and its relationships with parents and the community, and exercises efficient and collegiate leadership. His leadership and management skills are very good. Sensitive to the needs of the pupils and approachable, he has ensured that all staff are valued; a very good team spirit exists. The governing body is very knowledgeable and fully involved in the life and work of the school. Its members are fully committed to their role and they have a positive impact on the school's progress and development.
- The quality of staffing, accommodation and resources is good. Staffing levels are good for the numbers on roll and all have appropriate job descriptions; curriculum and whole school responsibilities are clearly identified. Teachers are suitably qualified and provide the school with a spectrum of experience and expertise, particularly within the field of special needs education. Support staff assist and encourage pupils in a sensitive way. The creative use of staff, teachers, support staff and lunchtime supervisors, in a coherent and integrated team, enhancing the quality of education for all pupils at the school, is a significant strength.
- The main school building is in a good state of repair and well maintained through a rolling programme of refurbishment. The school is cleaned to a high standard and good displays of pupils' work and achievements in classrooms and throughout the school have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning. The

school's hard-surfaced area is in good condition, and together with the school garden provides pupils with a wealth of experiences.

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher, staff and governors have concentrated effectively on school improvement. They have been particularly successful in improving the environment, both internal and external, addressing issues of school self-evaluation and the quality of teaching and learning. This has had a positive impact on pupils' standards of achievements. Overall, the school has made good progress in addressing the key issues identified in the previous inspection report.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY THE PUPILS

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

- Pupils' standards of achievements are good in 91% of lessons and satisfactory in 9%.
- Standards are good in English, mathematics, science, information technology, history, geography, art, music and physical education. They are satisfactory in Welsh as a second language, design and technology and religious education.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very good standards relative to their ability.
- Over the past few years, the school's results in National Curriculum assessments have shown year on year improvement and are significantly above the national averages. Since the time of the last inspection there has been an increase of 69% in English, 51% in mathematics and 29% in Science in the number of pupils gaining level 4 and above and 59% in the core subject indicator i.e. the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 and above in all core subjects. Also, over the same period, more pupils are gaining the higher levels, i.e. level 5, in all three subjects.
- When compared with similar schools in Wales, the 2002 test results are well above the average for English, mathematics and science.
- Girls perform better than boys in the NC assessments. The school is aware of this issue and is addressing the under-achievement of boys through its school development plan and consideration of appropriate support mechanisms, teaching strategies and resources.

3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum

Pupils achieve good standards in speaking, listening and reading. In writing, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) standards are satisfactory.

- Standards in speaking are good. Pupils effectively develop their speaking skills in a range of contexts across the curriculum. Purposeful oral exchanges through focused questioning in lesson introductions and in plenary sessions enable pupils to make good progress in their use of subject specific vocabulary.

- In group and paired discussions, pupils collaborate sensibly and take turns in putting forward their own ideas. In Y5/6, pupils develop an understanding of balanced arguments and make good progress in structuring their talk to present their points of view on vivisection and when sharing ideas about environmental changes in their geography studies.
- Pupils demonstrate good listening skills. Across the key stage they listen attentively to stories in assembly or class presentations and are able to reflect and respond accordingly. Older pupils are appropriately attentive during class debates and are developing more concentrated and sustained listening skills.
- Standards in reading are good. Pupils acquire good reading skills and understand that books can be used as sources of information and for pleasure. They can explain the use of the content and index pages and how they access information from the internet to assist their topic research. As they progress through the school, pupils develop a good range of information retrieval skills. Older pupils make good progress in skimming and scanning text to elicit information for class debates. During the inspection, however, opportunities to utilise a wide range of textual information to develop further understanding of foundation subjects were limited.
- Standards in writing are satisfactory. While there are some good examples of writing across the curriculum, such as writing from the viewpoint of others in history, the good standards that pupils achieve in their literacy sessions are not always sustained in their work in other subjects. Utilising writing to express personal opinions and draw conclusions from findings of investigations and research could be further developed in the foundation subjects.
- Standards in numeracy across the curriculum are satisfactory. Pupils can apply and interpret data; collecting information using tally charts and presenting data in pictograms, block graphs and bar charts. They measure and record pulse rates in science, count beats in music and in their geography studies tally the amount of waste produced by families and represent their findings in graphical form. Overall however, this aspect of the work could be further developed in the foundation subjects.
- Pupils' skills in their use of ICT across the curriculum are progressing well and some pupils often achieve good standards. They utilise computers in the ICT suite to support their understanding and contribute to their work in other subjects. They use CD Roms and the internet as a reference source for independent research. Digital cameras and interactive white boards are used to support pupils' work in other subjects. Pupils' ICT skills in word-processing and modelling are insufficiently developed.
- Pupils with SEN receive appropriate assistance and support and make good progress in the development of their key skills relative to their stage of development.
- The school has a policy for key skills in place. However, opportunities for the development and application of key skills across the curriculum are not yet clearly identified within teachers' short term planning in order to enable pupils make

systematic progress in their skills in all subject areas. The identification of key skills in schemes of work is not specifically detailed.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. It reflects the school's positive ethos and pupils' response to this provision is very good.

- The qualities of 'respect, reliability and responsibility' embodied in the school's motto are effectively nurtured through a programme of stimulating curricular and extra-curricular experiences. Within an ethos of co-operation and mutual respect, staff and pupils work purposefully together towards achieving established objectives.
- The school provides a clear moral framework for pupils. Staff are good role models and ensure that pupils develop a clear awareness of right and wrong and a sense of fair play. In their sporting activities and in group tasks, pupils display a sense of fairness and a growing ability to make reasoned judgements in their dealings with peers. Older pupils show developing self-reliance and sense of responsibility towards others in the way they carry out their duties as monitors and as members of the school council. The school is conscientious and focused in encouraging this aspect of pupils' learning.
- Whole school acts of collective worship are varied and address appropriate themes. They meet statutory requirements and make a good contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are enabled to explore their own feelings and reflect on their attitudes in relationship to others through stories and prayers. Weekly celebration assemblies provide opportunities for reinforcing positive attitudes and enhancing pupils' self-esteem.
- The school complies with the ACCAC framework (2000) in providing a range of purposeful learning opportunities for the introduction of life skills, and pupils' personal and social skills are sympathetically nurtured through a range of learning opportunities during and after school; pupils show very good social skills. Opportunities given to enable pupils to develop these skills is a strength of the school. Pupils' awareness of their own choices and responsibilities to the world in which they live and their perception of sustainable development is addressed through topic related activities in geography.
- Social skills are further developed through contact with the local community. Contributions made by adult volunteers, local clergy, visiting speakers and performers contribute to the standards achieved. Topic related visits including residential courses and the involvement of pupils and local residents in the school's centenary celebrations provide enriching experiences.
- Pupils are thoughtful and responsive to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. They develop their understanding of equality issues through

supporting various charities and through discussions in their religious education studies.

- Aspects of cultural diversity and racial harmony are positively promoted through the curriculum and through prominent school displays. Their studies in religious education, including visits to alternative places of worship, and topics in geography enhance pupils' understanding of other people's lives, beliefs and traditions. There is a policy and appropriate procedures in place to meet the legal requirements of the Racial Equality Act.
- Pupils respect and appreciate their own cultural traditions alongside those of others. Pupils' awareness of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is consistently reinforced through cross-curricular activities, annual celebrations, through the singing of Welsh hymns and studies of Welsh artists. Opportunities are further enhanced through opportunities to attend residential courses in Llangrannog.

4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

Behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good.

- The good standards of behaviour and the positive personal qualities shown by pupils result from the clear expectations of staff who are sensitive and consistent in their approach. Pupils are valued, and are courteous and responsive in return; within a secure ambience, they confidently and happily engage visitors in their class and school activities.
- Throughout the school, pupils display a positive attitude to their work. They work well together and are willing contributors to class discussions. They persevere at their tasks and generally can sustain concentration throughout the lesson.
- Pupils display a mature attitude to responsibilities placed upon them, in particular and amongst many others, their duties in the canteen during lunchtimes and in maintaining the school garden.
- The school promotes good behaviour through a number of effective initiatives. Pupils have signed an anti bullying and anti racist charter. The individual and house points system, membership of the school council and the school's response to ideas from the suggestion box helps promote self esteem and shows pupils that their views and opinions are taken seriously.
- There are a number of pupils who have potentially challenging behaviour. These pupils are supported effectively allowing them to integrate smoothly into the life and work of the school.
- Points of potential conflict, for example during break-times, in the dining room and around corridors have been removed through imaginative and effective measures. The use of support assistants as lunch time supervisors, the quality of relationships between the school and the after school club, the use of pupils as dining room supervisors and the range of activities available have all substantially contributed to ensuring a harmonious and positive experience for pupils. Management of potential conflict times and areas has played a significant part in the quality of life at the school.

4.3 Attendance

Overall attendance is good.

- The average attendance for the two full terms prior to the inspection was just under 95%; the average attendance for the preceding summer term was 92.5%
- Pupils taking holidays during the school term adversely affect the average attendance for the summer term.
- Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of regular attendance and the school has recently initiated a first day response system. Levels are monitored closely and the school receives good support from the Education Welfare Officer.
- Registration is carried out promptly and absences are, in the main, codified according to LEA guidelines. However there are some inconsistencies, in all classes, in the accurate codification of some absences.
- During the inspection the punctuality of pupils was good and lessons start promptly.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed. In 78% of the lessons the teaching is good and it is very good in a further 14%.

Where the quality of teaching is good or better:

- teachers have a sound knowledge of the desirable outcomes, the statutory curriculum and religious education;
- teachers show an enthusiasm for their work, know their pupils well and establish good relationships with them. They act as good role models, provide valuable individual support and offer frequent praise and encouragement;
- in mathematics and English, lessons are well prepared, with clear learning objectives and outcomes that are made clear to the pupils. Targets and success criteria are clearly established at the commencement and end of the lessons. Work is suitably differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils;
- teachers use a good and appropriate range of teaching approaches and strategies that reflect the needs of the pupils and the nature of the subject. Subject specific vocabulary is well developed. Good questioning techniques by teachers allow pupils to provide extended responses to develop their oral skills and extend their

understanding of the work studied. The development of pupils' oracy skills through a variety of procedures adopted by teachers is a key strength of the school;

- lessons are well structured with appropriate whole class introductions, which commence with a recapitulation of previous work to assess understanding. Direct teaching is well focused and well paced;
- during plenary sessions, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to report back on their work and share their findings, clearly indicating how pupils could improve their work;
- teachers make good use of a variety of resources. Classroom routines are well established and operate smoothly; and
- teachers make good use of a variety of resources. Classroom assistants and support staff are well briefed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and welfare. They undertake their responsibilities effectively and conscientiously.

Where teaching has shortcomings:

- in several curriculum areas, primarily the foundation subjects, pupils have insufficient time or opportunity to express their ideas, knowledge and understanding through their writing; and
- frequently in the foundation subjects, short term planning insufficiently identifies the key learning objectives and takes insufficient account of pupils' prior attainment. Consequently work often fails to challenge the more able pupil. In all subject areas insufficient planning for the development of the key skills is undertaken.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good overall.

- The policy for assessment, recording and reporting has recently been reviewed and is currently in the process of further refinement. It provides a sound basis for a whole school approach to assessment. Strategies are in place for day-to-day informal assessment and recording of strengths and weaknesses. The manageability of the monitoring process of assessment has been addressed, with a common format being devised to record the required data for individual pupils.
- Formal assessment data is used effectively to track progress in English and mathematics and is used to identify areas of difficulty in individual performance and set targets for school improvement and development. The school evaluates its results in the light of previous performance and against comparable local and national standards.
- Transition links with the adjoining infant schools and the feeder high school are well established and are identified by the school as being significant in the assessment process. Clear procedures for tracking the new intake at the start of KS2 and identifying potential difficulties are in place.

- Formative comments collated in pupils' individual profile records are used to identify achievement and under-achievement in the core-subjects when planning new work. The link between assessment and curriculum planning in the foundation subjects is not as clearly defined.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers write positive and supportive comments. However, there is variability in the quality of the information provided in written comments in the extent to which they clearly indicate the strength of the work and how improvements can be made. Guidelines provided in the school's marking policy need to be consistently applied.
- Individual targets set for pupils in English are recorded in books and are discussed and reviewed with the individual child. In some subjects such as physical education, pupils are involved in their own written evaluations. However, opportunities to enable pupils be involved in assessing their own progress and performance and identifying objectives for improvement need to be further developed.
- Reading records include home school diaries. Comments in teachers' records reflect the skills and attitudes to reading of the pupils, clearly identify strengths and contain suggestions to support improvement.
- Annotated examples of work for each child in the core subjects are kept in individual folders. Portfolios of work are evident in some subjects such as English language. The school is aware of the need to further develop portfolios of exemplar work to aid the moderation of standards and ensure consistency in teachers' understanding of agreed levels.
- Parents are invited into school termly to discuss their children's progress. They receive a written report in the summer term. Reports are of a good quality, are informative in providing an indication of standards achieved in the core and foundation subjects and provide targets for future attainment. Parents are actively encouraged to be partners in their children's learning.
- Procedures for assessing, recording and reporting the progress of pupils with SEN are effective. The school follows the SEN Code of Practice.

5.3 Curriculum

The school effectively delivers a good quality, broad and balanced curriculum, which meets the requirements of the NC and the agreed syllabus for religious education.

- The school has six mixed age classes and the pupils are taught through an appropriate range of whole class, group and individual work. Setting for mathematics, English and Welsh is established. Science and the foundation subjects of the NC are currently organised on a two- year cycle.
- Whole school policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and are generally based on local authority and published schemes. Schemes of work vary in their usefulness in offering guidance on planning, particularly in identifying specific learning objectives in the foundation subjects that can support short term

planning. Whilst planning for the core subjects is suitably detailed, a more structured framework for the foundation subjects would ensure that pupils in the mixed age classes experience more focused differentiated tasks to facilitate continuity and progression in their learning and appropriately challenge the more able pupils.

- The curriculum is suitably structured with time allocation being appropriate for most subjects: lessons in Welsh however are unduly long and this adversely affects the quality of delivery in some classes and on the standards achieved by pupils. A review of the school day has resulted in the allocation of time being extended by fifteen minutes in order to allow increased flexibility for the delivery of subjects.
- The school has a policy for the development of key skills in place, which includes a curriculum map identifying opportunities for the delivery of ICT, numeracy, and communication skills for each year group in all subject areas. However, these are not yet sufficiently highlighted in short term planning to enable teachers plan effectively to ensure progression and consistency in pupils development in key skills across the curriculum.
- Homework is set regularly and purposefully supports pupils' learning. Homework includes spelling and regular reading with alternating mathematics and language tasks consolidating classroom studies.
- The quality support given by adult helpers in class and during lunch times greatly enriches pupils learning opportunities and enables them make good progress.
- The school works hard to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities, which add a valuable dimension to pupils' cultural and sporting experiences. These are well attended and enthusiastically supported by pupils.
- The curriculum is further enhanced by fieldwork in the local area and wide ranging visits to places of educational interest. These, together with visiting speakers and participation in initiatives such as the school council, healthy eating projects and working towards the eco school award contributes positively to educational standards achieved and widens pupils learning experiences.
- The school places emphasis on ensuring the successful development of pupils' personal and social skills. The policy on personal, health and social education complies with the ACCAC framework 2000 and is thoughtfully promoted in all areas of the curriculum. The policy on sex education is incorporated into this aspect of school life.
- The school ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils and demonstrates a sensitive awareness of pupils with SEN. The curriculum for pupils with SEN is well co-ordinated and appropriate to their needs. The NC has not been disapplied for any pupils.

5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

The quality of pupil support and educational guidance is very good. Pupils' welfare is carefully and sensitively monitored.

- The school is a caring, supportive community in which all pupils are treated with great sensitivity. All staff know their pupils well and take a keen interest in their welfare and personal development. They are able to identify problems quickly and to offer advice and support; pupils feel confident in approaching teachers and staff when necessary.
- Pupils' academic development and progress is carefully monitored through teacher's personal records, individual education plans and whole school record keeping procedures.
- Detailed and well considered policies have been drawn up on matters such as behaviour and discipline, child protection and health, safety and welfare issues to ensure that pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum.
- The school has instituted a well organised system of filtered and cooled water to be available to all pupils when working in classrooms; this is much appreciated by pupils and reflects the detail of care and concern for pupils' welfare at the school.
- There is a programme for personal and social education (PSE) that is meaningfully integrated into various areas of the curriculum and provides a balanced programme of learning opportunities for the consolidation of life skills. There is a policy for sex education that is relevant to children's ages and level of understanding and is included in the wider framework of health education and gives appropriate emphasis to respect for oneself and others within a clear moral framework.
- Liaison with outside agencies is effective and procedures for child protection are good. Staff are conversant with child protection and safe handling procedures. School policies and procedures in this area are clear.
- The school provides a safe and secure environment where all pupils are equally valued. The quality and range of educational activities available to pupils both during break-times and after school is an especially strong feature. Pupils are very well supervised in activities and the provision for the health, safety and welfare of pupils is very good. Regular fire drills and risk assessments are undertaken and an accident book maintained.
- Parents expressed an overwhelming measure of satisfaction with the quality of care provided by the school.

5.5 Provision for pupils with SEN

The quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good. Pupils make very good progress commensurate with their ability.

- Fifty-three pupils are on a graded approach of action and intervention, one has a statement of SEN. There are no NC disapplications. The school responds positively to the principle of inclusion; pupils are enabled and supported in mainstream classes. All have appropriate individual education plans (IEPs).

- A strong feature of the school is the extent to which pupils, many of whom have emotional and behavioural difficulties, and excluded from other schools, are welcomed and fully supported. In a short time they are well settled and make significant progress in their attitude to school and their academic progress.
- The headteacher is the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and with other staff brings a wealth of experience in special educational needs to the school. He works very efficiently and effectively and has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the needs and requirements of the pupils with SEN. He has been imaginative and creative in the effective deployment of support teachers and classroom assistants and has used the monies, assessment information and staff available to ensure support is well targeted to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- The support teachers and classroom assistants have a good knowledge and thorough understanding of the needs of the pupils in their care and provide purposeful and effective support which enables pupils to make very good progress relative to prior attainment. The quality of teaching in small group sessions is consistently good; pupils are enabled through an effective programme of learning activities.
- The school's policy and documentation on SEN is very good. It is informative and clear and pays due regard to the SEN Code of Practice. There are clear and effective arrangements for identifying pupils with difficulties. Support from outside agencies is used appropriately to guide staff and pupils.
- Pupils' IEPs are focused and specific. They are reviewed regularly with parents who are kept informed of their child's progress. Annual reviews for pupils with statements of SEN are held in line with requirements. Procedures are efficient and reports are well written.
- Classteachers are well aware of the pupils' needs and fully involved in the development of IEPs and the formulation of tasks in the classroom to meet these needs. Support staff make a valuable contribution to enhancing the quality of learning and standards attained in classrooms and are actively involved in all aspects of the planning of lessons and used fully to support pupils with special educational needs during whole class activities.

5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions

Partnership with parents and the community, schools and other institutions is very good.

- Parents are well informed on school activities including teaching topics and aspects of the curriculum. There are regular meetings to discuss their child's progress and also workshops, such as the SHARE project, to help them support their children's learning. The school's policy of designating Thursday as homework day and 'written communications' day is simple and effective and is very much appreciated by parents. The school's innovative 'hot line' also allow parents to find out quickly information on school events.

- Parents make a valuable contribution to the life and work of the school. There is an active PTA that helps to organise social and fund raising events. Individual parents also effectively support classroom activities; one parent runs the school's healthy eating tuck shop and a number of parents have been instrumental in assisting the forging of partnerships with local businesses.
- The school is very much part of the community it serves. The school's premises are used by a number of local associations and clubs. The school has made good use of New Opportunities Funding to start afternoon clubs for parents and members of the general community. The school is also developing links with schools in the wider European community through the Comenius project.
- Representatives from local organisations are regular visitors to the school and there are particularly strong links with the local chapel and church. Ministers regularly take assemblies at school and pupils attend Harvest festival at a local chapel and Christmas service at the church. Pupils support local and international charities, and talks by visitors give them an understanding of the wider world.
- Strong partnerships exist with the high school to which most pupils transfer and with the local cluster group of schools. The school is able to make use of many of the high schools' facilities including swimming pool and all weather pitches. Joint drama and arts productions have taken place with pupils from the cluster group together with joint residential outdoor pursuit activities. There is close liaison between the staffs of the both schools, particularly in the core subjects. Heads of departments visit to observe lessons being taught and to take lessons themselves. A revised partnership with the infant school is developing well.
- There is a formal partnership with a nearby teacher training institution and there are regular links with a local college particularly in IT. The school has good partnerships with outside agencies and the LEA.

5.7 Partnership with industry

Partnership with industry is very good.

- The school has developed useful links with a wide range of industries and businesses. Local shops supported and sponsored the school's eco- project. Large supermarkets and small businesses support the school through book prizes, supplying groceries for the school tuck shop and donations for fetes and the summer fayre.
- The LEA and local Art Centre has sponsored visits to travelling theatre groups and links with the EBP has sponsored a science road show. The EBP has also sponsored travelling expenses for industrial visits.
- The curriculum has been enriched by the schools 'industrial week' where pupils of each year group were involved with different industries, a supermarket, a chemical plant, an aero-engineering works and the post office being visited
- Pupils of the school have taken part in the making of a BBC television programme where much of the filming was done at the school.

- A number of staff have received placements at commercial organisations to support their own development and experience.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

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

- The headteacher, staff and governing body have a clear, shared vision for developing and further improving the school and have established an effective culture for self-improvement. The efforts and activity of all have been focused on improving standards of achievement and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Staff are closely involved in the self-evaluation process. They are keen to take on new initiatives and work hard for success. The governing body is well informed and has a good knowledge of the school's aims, achievements and educational provision. Staff and governors work closely together in making necessary improvements.
- The school development plan (SDP) is a comprehensive document. It is costed effectively within the budget, indicates the school's priorities and is flexible enough to respond to new initiatives. The document reviews the success of earlier targets and provides a solid foundation for further improvement. The priorities are concerned with improving standards and give a good indication of the processes involved in achieving the targets set. Appropriate attention is given to timescales and criteria for success, many of which indicate quantitative targets, resource and staff training implications. Priorities are kept under review and progress is clearly monitored. The content of the plan is the result of whole staff discussion and debate within the governing body.
- The role of the subject leader has been considerably developed since the last inspection. A clear and focused monitoring and evaluation structure is in place for all subjects of the NC and involves the examination of pupils' work and classroom visits to assess progress and teaching and learning. Subject leaders establish action plans that inform their future activities. To make progress these plans now need to integrate more effectively with the information gained from the monitoring and evaluation process to provide a sharper focus for improvement which examines standards and includes the use of quantitative targets to inform the school improvement plan.
- The school makes good use of teacher assessment, test results, external data and comparative information. Based on this process, challenging and measurable targets for school development have been established. Over the past two years school performance has exceeded the targets set.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The quality of leadership and management by the headteacher, staff and governors is very good. The efficiency of the school is very good and the school gives very good value for money.

- The school has appropriate aims, a commitment to providing a full and positive educational experience for all pupils and a strong sense of purpose. The school has a strong sense of community that permeates all aspects of its life; this is a major strength of the school. The orderliness of daily routines and the quality of relationships between adults and pupils and among pupils are strong features of the school, which all staff have worked to achieve.
- The school is well led. The headteacher undertakes his tasks conscientiously. He has a clear pride in the school, and its relationships with parents and the community, and exercises efficient and collegiate leadership. His leadership and management skills are very good. Sensitive to the needs of the pupils and approachable, he has ensured that all staff are valued; a very good team spirit exists.
- Staff operate as a hard working, professional and cohesive team and give of their own time during school and outside school hours to provide additional enriching experiences for pupils. Communication procedures in the school are clear and operate efficiently. Staff meetings occur on a regular basis and decisions are based upon full consultations with all staff.
- The governing body is well informed and fully involved in the life and work of the school and have a positive impact on the school's progress and development.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher, staff and governors have concentrated effectively on school improvement. They have been particularly successful in raising standards of achievement and enhancing the ethos and environment of the school. Its reputation within the community is high.
- The headteacher and subject leaders are involved in regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and educational provision. This has been well organised and is developing well. Subject leaders have been involved in the development of subject based moderation portfolios to assist teachers in their assessment of pupils' work, and in ensuring appropriate standards in the subjects for which they have responsibility. In science, the portfolio is of a good standard; these portfolios now need to be extended across all subjects.
- The budget is well managed and controlled and financial priorities clearly identified. Expenditure is carefully monitored and evaluated and financial planning is well targeted. The governing body takes appropriate responsibility for the oversight of financial management.
- Available resources are used effectively and efficiently to promote high standards and good quality learning experiences for pupils.
- Administrative procedures are clear and operate effectively. The school runs smoothly as a consequence of the efficient operation of the school office and the effectiveness of the school secretary.

- The school complies with statutory requirements and takes note of NAFW guidelines.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

The quality of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good.

- Staffing levels are good for the numbers on roll and all have appropriate job descriptions; curriculum and whole school responsibilities are clearly identified. Teachers are suitably qualified and provide the school with a spectrum of experience and expertise, particularly within the field of special needs education.
- All staff are well motivated. They work effectively as a team and this has had a positive impact on many aspects of the life and work of the school. Change has been swiftly implemented through effective procedures, group and staff meetings and well-targeted professional development.
- Support staff assist and encourage pupils in a sensitive way. The creative use of staff, teachers, support staff and lunchtime supervisors, in a coherent and integrated team enhancing the quality of education for all pupils at the school, is a significant strength of the school. Throughout, positive techniques are adopted to include all pupils into the school community.
- The main school building is in a good state of repair and maintained through a rolling programme of refurbishment. The school is cleaned to a high standard and good displays of pupils' work and achievements in classrooms and throughout the school have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning.
- The school's hard-surfaced area is in good condition and together with the school garden provides pupils with a wealth of experiences; effectively organised by pupils, parents and support staff. An adjacent dining area also operates as an effectively organised after- school facility.
- The school building and site is well secured with secure entry systems, fencing and gates. The school has no parking facilities and access to the school site is restricted.
- The provision for learning resources is good. Books and resources are well organised in the classroom and resource areas. Newly acquired resources, an information technology suite and the equipping of electronic whiteboards (EWB's) in the classrooms, are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' standards of achievements. Staff would benefit from more subject specific training in the effective use of the EWB as a teaching and learning tool.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

English

Standards of achievement in English are good.

Good features

- Pupils achieve good standards in their speaking skills. They confidently offer extended responses to questions during plenary sessions and learn to adapt their speech to a widening range of demands. Pupils in Y3/4 begin to apply musical terminology when identifying musical elements and use subject specific vocabulary in their religious education studies. Older pupils, through structured discussion, are enabled to contribute to class debates.
- In collaborative group discussions, pupils take turns and incorporate responses from others. They pose questions and justify their own opinions. Pupils in Y5/6 develop good skills in offering opinions on poetry performances, whilst others can identify features of a balanced argument. Pupils throughout the school are responsive to questions from visitors and give explanations logically and confidently.
- Throughout the key stage, the majority of pupils listen with an increased span of concentration to peers and adults. They recall relevant information following during lesson introductions and interpret instructions sensibly. They make good progress in developing their listening skills in different contexts.
- Pupils achieve good standards in their reading skills, with some pupils achieving very good standards. Pupils use an increasing range of strategies to assist in identifying unfamiliar words and search for appropriate meaning. They enjoy recalling favourite books and authors, speculate about incidents and give reasons for their preferences related to different characters and communicate meaning from the text coherently. Throughout the key stage, pupils locate information through index, contents and headings and retrieve information from a variety of sources to support their work.
- Adult helpers in their support of reading activities, including the development of library skills, provide a positive learning experience for pupils and help them succeed.
- Pupils make good progress in their independent writing. They are able to plan, draft and organise initial ideas. Pupils know how to structure sentences and

incorporate punctuation relevantly. They demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of dictionaries and reference books and use them to support their written work. They show a developing sensitivity to the choice of vocabulary in their written work. In Y3/4, they develop their understanding of adjectives when responding to text relating to castles; drawing from first hand experience they select their own words, using thesauri to assist them in their work.

- Most pupils have a good grasp of punctuation and parts of speech. More able pupils often demonstrate a very good command over written language. They develop their own personal style, write complex sentences and are well aware that written work must be purposeful. The majority of pupils achieve good standards in their handwriting and take pride in the presentation of their work.

Shortcomings

- Many pupils do not sustain the good standards they achieve in literacy sessions across a range of written work in other subjects. Pupils' ability to record written responses in their own words and extent their independent writing in a range of contexts across the curriculum needs to be further developed.
- The over- use of work sheets in some subject areas and the resulting lack of challenge presented in some written tasks inhibits pupils' abilities to write adequately at length.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Throughout the school pupils' understanding of number is developing well and appropriate use is made of mathematical terminology when discussing their work. Pupils display a positive attitude to the subject. They respond well in mental mathematics sessions, and are able to explain various processes and strategies.
- Younger pupils use a range of mental strategies to add two and three-digit numbers, round 1-place decimals to the nearest whole number and recall multiplication facts appropriate to their age; they have a good understanding of place value. Older pupils are able to multiply and divide decimals by 10 and 100, understanding the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages and calculate simple fraction and percentage increases. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 extend methods of computation to include all four operations. When undertaking tasks, pupils in Y5 and Y6 show a good understanding of proportion and ratio and can apply their knowledge of fractions to solve problems.
- Older pupils explore number sequences, for example triangulation numbers, and are able to explain patterns observed and predict subsequent terms, generalise, construct and use formulae
- Pupils are able to describe the properties of two-dimensional (2D) and three-dimensional (3D) shapes. Younger pupils use appropriate language to describe and discuss shapes and recognise the geometrical features of shapes. Older pupils

are able to transform shape by rotation and later use degrees to measure the amount of rotation; they have an understanding of bearings and can use co-ordinates to specify location.

- Throughout the school pupils are able to interpret mathematical data and present their results using diagrams, tables and a variety of graphs appropriate to their age and ability. Pupils have a good understanding of probability and of mean, median and mode as measures of spread.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings, though ICT and the application of numeracy across the curriculum is insufficiently used to support their learning and to enable pupils to extend their developing skills in a range of contexts.

Science

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils make good progress in their understanding of scientific principles and have a sound knowledge base, due to a comprehensive coverage of the different areas of the National Curriculum.
- Throughout the school pupils have a good recall of previous learning and are able to share their understanding. They are able to use appropriate equipment sensibly and make observations about their tasks. They show a keen interest in their scientific work, are able to make predictions based on previous learning and recognise the need for a fair test. They can explain outcomes of their investigations, using appropriate vocabulary, and how these outcomes compare with their predictions.
- Through their investigative work on materials and their properties, pupils in Y3/Y4 understand that some materials are better thermal conductors than others and through the use of sensor equipment and analysis of line graphs are able to examine changes over time.
- Older pupils further develop their understanding of materials when exploring changes in materials. Pupils show a good understanding of chemical and physical changes and recognise that heating and cooling can cause some materials to change and that some changes are reversible while others are permanent.
- Pupils in Y3/Y4 are able to describe the main functions of the heart and the circulatory system. Through investigation they are able to consider the effect of exercise and rest on the pulse rate and explain why changes in the pulse rate occur.
- Older pupils show a good understanding of the functions of the external and internal parts of a plant. They are able to design an experiment to investigate the effect of seed density rates on plant growth.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' investigative skills could be extended through further work on repeating observations and measurements and the identification of patterns and trends.
- While pupils are able to formulate questions and hypothesise they have limited skills in devising their own experiments. As a result the recorded work of whole classes tends to be very similar and some pupils are insufficiently challenged.

Welsh second language

Standards in Welsh as a second language are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils respond enthusiastically to a balance of reading, writing and oral activities. Their recall of previous work is generally satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils understand simple instructions and commands, respond to greetings and answer registration appropriately.
- Pupils throughout the key stage make good progress in learning basic vocabulary and in counting activities that are utilised in other subject areas. In Y3/4, pupils can identify parts of the body; they participate with enjoyment in related group activities to reinforce their questioning skills and consolidate their understanding. Others in Y3/4 can identify items of food and question each other using specific language patterns.
- In Y5/6, pupils make good progress in responding to mixed questions relating to sporting activities. They recall the appropriate vocabulary and sentence patterns and contribute sensibly to paired questioning.
- Reading skills are developed appropriately throughout the key stage. Pronunciation is generally good; some pupils read with appropriate expression. Pupils understand a range of words and phrases displayed in classrooms and on flash cards. In Y3/4, pupils read individual books from a published scheme and respond to related questions. They are confident when reading dialogue from worksheets.
- Written work is varied and pupils achieve satisfactory standards in developing their writing skills. They undertake labelling and sentence completion using familiar vocabulary. They record personal preferences and answer questions relating to topics using identified sentence patterns. In Y5/6, pupils use dictionaries to find alternate words when finding opposites. In Y3/4, they begin to utilise word sentence books to assist in formulating their own sentences. Pupils have written their own letters to a Welsh magazine with a view to publication.
- The use of ICT is effective in supporting writing and oral activities. Relevant use is made of the interactive whiteboard to consolidate target phrases and vocabulary and to generate interest.
- Cross-curricular work, displays, the inclusion of Welsh hymns in assemblies, participation in annual celebrations and topic linked visits including residential

courses in Llangrannog contribute significantly towards creating a Welsh ethos in the school and supports language development. The assistance of the athrawes fro in the delivery and organisation of the subject programme has a positive effect on pupils' progress.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' ability to initiate dialogue is often limited. The extended responses encouraged in some classes during registration need to be consolidated across the key stage to ensure pupils' progression in developing oral skills in everyday situations and in other subjects.
- The good practice of utilising incidental Welsh at the start of the school day needs to be consistently applied to enable pupils to develop confidence and spontaneity in their conversations.

Design and technology

No teaching of design and technology was seen during the inspection. However, discussions with pupils about the work in their folders and around the school, as well as examination of the D&T portfolio, indicate that pupils overall achieve satisfactory standards.

Good features

- Across the school pupils use plans appropriately and develop and communicate aspects of the design in a variety of ways, for example, through their sketching and the use of graphic modelling packages. They are able to use labelled sketches to show the detail of their design. Pupils are able to illustrate alternatives using sketches and make choices between them.
- Pupils show secure skills in clarifying the requirements of the task, for example, when planning for a pasta salad or designing a litterbin. When required, pupils are able to incorporate the results of tasting groups in the design of the finished product and recognise that users have different views and preferences.
- Younger pupils are able to research ideas, follow a specific design brief and test and evaluate their product against specific design criteria, and utilise computer-aided design and manufacture when making a bookmark.

Shortcomings

- There is insufficient progression in pupils' ability to use a range of materials, equipment, tools and techniques, of the use of electrical components, reciprocating and rotary movement (gears and cams) and of applying appropriate finishes.
- There is variable progress in the development of pupils' designs and in their evaluation of the finished product.
- Some design and make tasks are over prescriptive and do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills.

Information technology

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils are able to save, retrieve, edit and print their own work. They are able to input, sort, search and access information from a variety of sources, including databases, and produce graphs in a variety of forms.
- Pupils are able to work independently and exercise a high degree of autonomy in their work. They use the equipment to process and present information and enhance its quality. Pupils are able to modify and improve their work and present it in a variety of formats.
- Pupils are able to use IT equipment and digital cameras to communicate, share and exchange ideas and information in a variety of forms, including text and pictures and show awareness of the needs of an audience, for example in school newspapers and in multi-media presentations. Pupils are able to use sophisticated desktop publishing and presentation software effectively.
- Pupils are able to interpret and analyse information obtained from the Internet, for example, when supporting work in geography, and can display their results effectively using computer-generated graphs.
- In science pupils are able to use sensor equipments to study the properties of materials and seek further understanding of insulation.

Shortcomings

- IT is insufficiently used to support other subjects such as mathematics, music and art.
- Pupils' ability to use simulation programmes to explore real and imaginary situations is underdeveloped.

History

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils in all classes show a keen interest in the subject. They listen well, show a good recall of previous learning and use relevant language and vocabulary. Lessons invariably commence with the setting of a series of questions about the past.

- Pupils can recall facts about the periods, places and events they have studied. Work is well supported by visits to places of historical interest, for example Caerphilly Castle, when studying the development of castle building in Wales, and to Caerleon, when investigating social life in a Roman town.
- Throughout the school the effective use of timelines contributes to pupils' chronological awareness and enables them to sequence events and use appropriate conventions when describing the passage of time. For example though a time line on changes during the industrial revolution, pupils in Y5/Y6 show a good understanding of working conditions and the demand for changes in Victorian Britain.
- Pupils have a good sense of the social aspect of history and can show empathy with characters and events. They show a growing ability to identify the causes and the consequences of historical situations and to recognise changes over time, for example, in Y3/4 the development of concentric castles, and in Y5/Y6 the impact of the industrial revolution and the factory method on working conditions for children during the Victorian period.
- Pupils in Y3/Y4, through a series of well-structured enquiries and visits have a good understanding of changing ways of life in Roman times and show empathy with characters and events. In their work on the 13th century attack on Caerphilly Castle pupils show a good understanding of the prevailing methods of attack and defence.
- In their study of the Industrial Revolution pupils in Y5/Y6 are able to identify the causes and consequences of the use of child labour in 19th century mines and factories. In their studies of evacuees during World War 2, pupils are able to consider the reasons and implications for both child and family of such events.

Shortcomings

- There is a need to further develop pupils' understanding of the value of evidence and the different ways in which the past is interpreted.
- Pupils would benefit from undertaking research projects that would enable them to develop their ability to select and organise historical information and present their results in a variety of ways, including the use of information technology.

Geography

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- There is good progression in pupils' understanding of how human activities have changed the environment, of ways in which the environment is managed and how potential conflict arises out of competing demands for land. Younger pupils have a good understanding of changes that affect their local area while older pupils, through their study of the development of a landfill site show a good awareness of the sources of conflict and are able, through role-play, to debate and discuss ideas.

- Pupils in Y3/Y4 show a good awareness that different places may have both similar and different characteristics. Using a study of the Harvey family in St Lucia, pupils are able to show an understanding of how the physical and human features of places affects the lives and activities of people living there.
- Through their studies of tourism in St. Lucia, and in particular a debate on a proposed hotel development younger pupils are able to identify ways in which people affect their environment while recognising the benefits that tourism brings to an island community. This work is further developed in Y5/Y6 when pupils, in their study of the impact of tourism on Snowdonia, show a good understanding of the ways in which people attempt to safeguard the environment for future generations.
- A key feature of much of the work throughout the school is the development of pupils' awareness of environmental change and sustainability within a context of contrasting localities. In addition pupils show good skills in being able to formulate opinions and communicate their views. Pupils show a good awareness of the individual's responsibility for the environment.
- Through their work on global sustainability, older pupils in the school have a good understanding of Agenda 21 and the Rio Summit, the global drive for economic sustainability and the impact of human activity on the environment.

Shortcomings

- There is a need to further develop pupils' mapping skills. Pupils have a limited ability to make and use maps and plans at a variety of scales and locate places using atlases.
- Pupils would benefit from a greater emphasis on the development of analytical skills when interpreting geographical processes and explaining patterns observed.

Art

No lessons in art were taught during the inspection. From evidence of work in sketchbooks, displays and the recently collated school portfolio, standards of achievement were good.

Good features

- Pupils develop their skills in art through a range of experiences. They are developing an appreciation of the use of colour and achieve good standards in their drawing skills. They are familiar with a range of materials, media, equipment and techniques and are developing good skills in their creative work.
- Some effective pencil drawings relating to plants and trees, are produced in sketchbooks which demonstrate confident recording and sensitive response to line. Pupils in Y5/6 demonstrate their understanding of perspective in their still life drawings using charcoal. They illustrate the need to vary line and tone to create a particular effect.

- Pupils are able to respond to the style of other artists. They show a good understanding of the way in which artists such as Van Gogh, Seurat, Braico and Warhol use colour, pattern, shape and texture to create effect. In response to studying the paintings of Lowry, pupils in Y5/6 produce their own in acrylic paint. In Y3/4, pupils inspired by the work of David Hockney produce their own water pictures. Pupils effectively reflect in their own work good use of colour intensity, line and form.
- Visits to museums are utilised to develop pupils understanding and appreciation of famous artists. They use pastels to produce work of a good standard in the style of Monet and create their own tissue collages. Using viewing frames to good effect pupils produce abstract flower designs in oil pastels. Observations of a range of techniques enable pupils to use them well in their own work.
- Positive experiences in the form of a whole school art exhibition, where individual pupils are able to view mounted and framed versions of their own work, prove to be enriching experiences and contributes to standards achieved.
- Good quality displays around the school reflects pupils' work well and ensures that pupils' self respect and their appreciation for the work of others is well established.

Shortcomings

- Three-dimensional work needs to be further developed; this is an area already identified by the school.
- Pupils have limited skills in the use of ICT to enhance their artwork

Music

Standards in music are good

Good features

- Pupils show enthusiasm in their music lessons through an appropriately integrated programme of activities.
- They know a wide range of hymns and songs and sing in both Welsh and English. Words are enunciated clearly. They sing in tune and are able to vary pitch and rhythm appropriately. They perform confidently together with appropriate expression and sensitivity and obviously enjoy the experience of singing together.
- Pupils throughout the key stage demonstrate that they can listen attentively to music and respond well to instructions. They can maintain a steady beat and utilise body percussion effectively.
- In Y3/4, pupils demonstrate an understanding of pitch and dynamics when identifying animals represented by instruments in 'Carnival of the Animals.' They begin to use appropriate musical terminology when discussing the musical elements. Pupils can name instruments and categorise them into orchestral sections.

- Pupils' in Y5/6 develop their skills in composing by creating a graphic score relating to their topic on WW2. They recognise the significance of 'silence,' correctly identify the number of beats in a bar and offer some imaginative suggestions for inclusion in the score.
- Opportunities to undertake extra-curricular instrumental tuition have a positive effect on pupils' musical development and contribute to the standards achieved. Enabling pupils to perform in school events, notably in assemblies, as witnessed during the inspection, provide enriching experiences and reinforce the development of skills and musical appreciation.

Shortcomings

- The use of ICT to develop pupils' skills in composition and aid progression could be further developed. This is an area already identified by the school.

Physical education

Standards in physical education are good. Lessons in gymnastics, games and extra-curricular activities were observed during the inspection. No lessons of dance were observed.

Good features

- Pupils respond well to a varied programme of curricular and extra-curricular activities through which they develop a range of skills. They are conscious of the importance of safety and handle apparatus carefully and sensibly. Pupils demonstrate a developing understanding of the body and its capabilities and know the purpose of warm up and warm down.
- Pupils are attentive in their physical education lessons and respond well to instructions. Pupils in Y3/4 travel confidently when performing movements that involve change of speed and direction. They control their movements and demonstrate good spatial awareness. They concentrate well on the task of varying movements using different parts of the body and are successful in transferring movements to apparatus.
- Throughout the key stage, pupils' control and co-ordination is developed using a range of apparatus. In Y5/6, pupils perform with increasing control and clarity of body shape. They co-ordinate shapes and apply appropriate balance when producing a variety of turns. They perform a series of rolls following a three - point balance. Pupils display a good level of co-operation in their extra-curricular gymnastic activities.
- In team activities, pupils develop good skills in sending, receiving and striking. They make good progress in demonstrating hand eye co-ordination and control. Pupils in Y3/4 work well in pairs to develop their throwing and catching skills using hoops.
- Pupils in Y5/6 develop their games skills through a range of activities including athletics. They demonstrate sound techniques in running, jumping for distance,

throwing, bowling and catching. They demonstrate enthusiasm and discipline in their tasks. Pupils compete eagerly, show good understanding of rules and apply elements of fair play into their team games.

- Extra- curricular activities during lunchtimes and after school are well supported by pupils and contribute significantly to improving standards. Pupils participate willingly and show developing competency in teamwork skills. Pupils attend swimming lessons and opportunities are provided for outdoor and adventurous activities, including residential courses.
- Pupils in some classes are involved in written evaluations of their own efforts in order to improve the quality of their work.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Religious education

Standards of achievement in religious education are satisfactory.

Good features

- Within a caring school community in which appropriate values are shared, pupils are enabled to develop a sensitive understanding of the needs of others. Appropriate emphasis is placed on Christian values and beliefs in questions and discussions and pupils develop an understanding of the significance of these to daily life.
- Through conducting surveys, pupils have a good understanding of their responsibility to the local community and can clearly outline ways of helping others. They are able to reflect thoughtfully on aspects of friendship and understand how their actions can affect their wider community.
- Throughout the school pupils recognise the significance of rules and of the need for their lives in and out of school to be guided by a code of conduct. They know of the importance of the Ten Commandments to the Christian faith and have a good understanding of why rules are essential within broader society.
- Pupils have a good understanding of significant stories from the Bible and are able to recall these well; they recognise the importance of the Bible to Christians. In Y5/6 pupils learn to appreciate the special nature of the Bible in their study of the story of Mary Jones. They are able to equate the experience to a modern day context.
- Pupils develop their knowledge through a range of well-planned experiences. Good use is made of visits to places of worship to enrich pupils understanding. They learn tolerance and understanding of other religions through visits to alternative places of worship.

Shortcomings

- Opportunities for pupils to record their own thoughts and feelings through a range of written activities need to be further developed. Over use of worksheets limits pupils' personal responses.
- The use of ICT to support work in religious education is under- developed.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The last inspection report, of February 1998, identified eight key issues for action. The school has overall made good progress in addressing all aspects.

1. address identified shortcomings in aspects of work where standards are currently satisfactory.

Much good work has been undertaken in developing pupils' standards in English, mathematics, information technology, geography, art and music. Through the introduction of effective schemes of work, the acquisition of resources and new facilities and the work undertaken by subject leaders in developing, planning and supporting staff, standards have been raised. In English and mathematics the development of setting arrangements and the establishment of targeted group teaching have also aided the raising of standards. Standards in the above subjects are now good.

In Welsh as a second language and design and technology, standards have shown some improvement but a lack of clear progression is still evident; standards remain satisfactory.

2. increase the element of differentiation in various ways in order to meet the wide range of pupils' needs.

The school has addressed this issue very well with regard to English and mathematics with the establishment of setting arrangements, focussed group teaching and the effective use of support teachers. However, there is still a need to develop effective differentiation strategies for the foundation subjects, especially to meet the needs of the more able pupil.

3. improve the management of whole class, group and individual work to ensure more consistent practice in maintaining appropriate challenge in pupils' learning.

This issue has been well addressed. There is a good team spirit among the staff and a whole school approach to teaching and learning; the quality of teaching throughout the school is consistently good. The structure of lessons is good, whole class introductions are focused and well paced. Teachers' questioning techniques are effective and provide good opportunities for pupils to make extended responses. Intervention in group and individual work by the teacher is positive and is used to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.

4. use assessment information to produce quantitative targets in relation to pupils' achievements and progress.

The school has addressed this issue well. The school now records systematically assessment information from a variety of sources to target pupils effectively and inform the setting and group teaching and support arrangements. This effectiveness of the arrangements is apparent in the significant improvement in the NC test results since the last inspection and the improvement in targets achieved. The next stage, which the school is beginning to develop, is to use the information to regularly track pupils as they move through the school and to extent this process to the foundation subjects.

5. develop the roles of the head, deputy head and co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the effects of implementing policies and plans on the life and work of the school.

A new headteacher and several senior staff have been appointed since the last inspection. The school has developed a good culture of self-improvement. Subject leaders are actively engaged through classroom visits to colleagues in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and standards. The headteacher also is involved in the regular monitoring of teaching and learning. Regular meeting of lower and upper key staff and staff meetings ensure that the life and work of the school are effectively examined. The school has a climate of wishing to move forward and provide the pupils and the community with a good quality of education. Much progress has been made in this aspect of the work of the school

6. improve the security of the school building.

The school has addressed this issue very well. The school building is secure and prevents, through a series of measures, unauthorised access.

7. designate responsibility for child protection to a member of staff and provide relevant INSET for all staff.

Very good progress has been made on this issue. The headteacher has overall responsibility as the child protection officer for the school. Staff have been appropriately trained and systems and procedures are clearly in place and known to all staff.

8. address outstanding health and safety issues in relation to the kitchen and the dining hall; improve the fabric of the two detached classrooms, the surface of the school yard and the quality of the environment in the outside quiet area.

The school has made very good progress on this issue. All items identified in the previous report have been addressed. The school provides a very good quality of accommodation, for the age of the building, pupils have access to lockers for the storage of bags and coats and rooms have been well decorated and maintained. The outside area has been resurfaced and now provides a wealth of learning experiences and a school garden which also operates as an outside quiet area. The quality of the provision and support from adults is excellent and does much to create the very good

standard of behaviour and the community atmosphere of the school. Much has been accomplished within a short period of time.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order to build on its current progress the school needs to:

1. raise standards in those subjects identified as satisfactory, namely Welsh as a second language, design and technology and religious education;
2. ensure planning and teaching consistently and effectively promotes the key skills and raises standards, particularly in writing, numeracy and information and communications technology across the curriculum;
3. improve the quality of short term planning in the foundation subjects to more clearly define learning outcomes and strategies for matching the work to pupils' abilities and prior attainment.

The inspectors wish to thank everyone associated with the school, especially the headteacher, staff, pupils and governors for the co-operation and courtesy they received during the inspection.

APPENDIX

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Bedwas Junior School
School type	Junior
Age -range of pupils	7 - 11
Address of school	Church Street, Bedwas
Post-Code	CF83 8EB
Telephone Number	02920 852511

Headteacher	Mr. Steve Rees
Date of appointment	May 2000
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mr. R. Davies
Registered Inspector	Mr. Allan Fear
Dates of inspection	23-25 June 2003

B. School data as 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	na	Na	Na	Na	45	46	44	49	184

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	2	8

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	23 :1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	na:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	na :1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	31
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1 :1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>					
	N	R	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Spring 2003	na	Na	Na	94.6	94.6

Summer 2002	na	Na	Na	92.5	92.5
Autumn 2002	na	Na	Na	94.5	94.5

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.	0
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C. Results of national curriculum assessments and public examinations

NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS
END OF KEY STAGE 2 : 2002

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results: 2002			Number of pupils in Y6: 43										
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School							0	20	37	43	
		National	0	0	3		0	1	5	16	45	29	
	Test/Task	School							0	20	37	43	
		National	0	2	2	0			4	12	41	38	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School							1	13	60	26	
		National	0	0	3		0	1	4	19	46	27	
	Test/Task	School							2	12	55	31	
		National	0	2	1	1			4	19	43	30	
Science	Teacher assessment	School								3	46	47	
		National	0	0	3		0	0	2	13	49	33	
	Test/Task	School								4	49	47	
		National	0	2	0	0			1	10	47	38	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	82.4	In the school:	76.5
In Wales:	68	In Wales:	68

- D Pupils who are exempted 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
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS
END OF KEY STAGE 2 : 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results: 2003										Number of pupils in Y6: 50				
Percentage of pupils at each level														
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	
English	Teacher assessment	School							6	10	52	32		
		National	0	0	0		0	0	4	10	44	42		
	Test/Task	School							4	18	37	43		
		National	0	2	2	0			4	12	41	38		
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School							4	20	40	36		
		National	0	0	3		0	1	4	19	46	27		
	Test/Task	School							2	12	48	38		
		National	0	2	1	1			4	19	43	30		
Science	Teacher assessment	School		2					2	2	60	34		
		National	0	0	3		0	0	2	13	49	33		
	Test/Task	School		2					0	4	66	28		
		National	0	2	0	0			1	10	47	38		

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	76	In the school:	78
In Wales:	68	In Wales:	68

NB All Wales figures are for 2002

- D Pupils who are exempted 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
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

D. The evidence base of the inspection

Before the inspection, meetings were held with the staff, the governing body and the parents of pupils registered at the school. Thirteen parents were present at the pre-inspection parents' meeting. Documents supplied by the school were scrutinised and 47 questionnaires returned by parents were analysed. A team of three gave 7 inspector days to the inspection, in the course of which 37 formal observations were made of lessons or part lessons. In addition, 58 formal notes were made of aspects of pupils' work and provision. Discussions with pupils from all age groups and abilities were undertaken, both inside and outside the classroom. A representative sample of pupils' work from all classes and for the whole academic year was scrutinised. Teachers' plans and records were examined. Inspectors considered the site, fabric and resources of the school. Discussions were held with the Head and with teachers, particularly about their subject management roles. Still within the context of the inspection, reporting back meetings took place with the Head, the staff and the governing body.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

NAME	ASPECTS	SUBJECTS
Mr.Allan Fear	1.0 The School and its Priorities; 2.0 Main Findings; 3.1 Standards achieved in the subjects and Areas of Learning; 5.1 Teaching; 5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs. 6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement; 6.2 Leadership and Efficiency; 6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources; 8.1 Progress since the last inspection; 8.2 Key issues for action.	Mathematics Science Information Technology Design & Technology History Geography
Mrs Gwyneth Rees	3.2 Standards achieved in the Key Skills across the Curriculum; 4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development; 5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting; 5.3 Curriculum;	English Welsh second language Art Music Physical education Religious education
Mr. Cliff Hewitt	4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes; 4.3 Attendance; 5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions; 5.7 Partnership with industry.	

