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Report Reference

REPORT BY
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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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9 CONTEXT

The School and its priorities

Blaencaerau Junior School is situated in the village of Caerau, at the top of the Llynfi Valley. The original school dates from 1901 with additional buildings added in 1910 and 1926. Most pupils live locally and transfer from Blaenllynfi Infants School. Pupils live mainly in nearby housing estates and traditional terraced housing. The area is classified by the County Borough of Bridgend as having significant deprivation. There are currently 181 pupils on roll and the school receives additional funding for two special classes. These classes support eight pupils with complex learning needs and fifteen pupils defined as having transition needs; they also provide specialist support for pupils withdrawn from mainstream classes. The school has identified 52 pupils as having special educational needs and two of these pupils hold a formal statement of special educational needs. Approximately 50% of all pupils are in receipt of free school meals. Attendance in the last academic year averaged 92%.

The School Development Plan has thirteen targets which have been formulated after internal monitoring and also as a result of three recent Estyn monitoring visits. The last section 10 inspection of the school was in October 1999. The headteacher was appointed in January 2002 having been acting head since the previous May. The Deputy Headteacher was appointed in September 2002.

The Governors and staff aim to:

- bring out the best in everyone within a secure and stimulating environment;

The school's main foci for the coming year are:

- to maintain and improve the quality of teaching;
- to maintain and improve the standard of attainment in English, science, mathematics and information technology;
- to continue the building improvement programme.

10 MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Blaencaerau Junior School provides a happy and caring environment for pupils. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

- Standards of achievement are very good in 4% of lessons, good in 51% and satisfactory in the remaining 45%.

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

Subjects	Key Stage 2
English	Listening, reading and writing good. Speaking satisfactory.
Mathematics	Good
Science	Satisfactory
Welsh Second Language	Satisfactory
Design & Technology	Satisfactory
Information Technology	Good
History	Good
Geography	Good
Art	Good
Music	Satisfactory
Physical Education	Satisfactory
Religious Education	Good

- Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum are satisfactory. Pupils listen and read well in a variety of contexts and they speak satisfactorily when answering questions. The quality of writing and speaking across the curriculum for a variety of purposes is variable. Pupils' numeracy and IT skills are practised effectively in a range of subjects.

ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

- Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Very good relationships have been established between pupils and staff; this has a positive impact on standards. Pupils display respect and consideration to adults and to each other. Pupil's behaviour and attitudes are good.
- Levels of attendance are good and are now consistently above 92%. The school works effectively with other agencies to improve the punctuality of a small minority of pupils who are late for morning registration.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

- It was judged that the quality of teaching was very good in 4% of lessons, good in 47% and satisfactory in the remaining 49%. In the best teaching, sessions are well structured, teacher's presentations are clear and purposeful and learning objectives are clearly understood. Where there are shortcomings in teaching, session's lack pace and pupil activities lack challenge. Pupils have insufficient opportunity to work co-operatively or to think critically.
- The arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress are good. A range of assessment strategies are in place to assist the tracking of pupils' progress and

the setting of meaningful pupil targets. Teachers' marking is detailed and in best practice assists pupils to improve their work. Annual reports to parents are very good; they clearly inform parents and pupils of progress made and encourage active participation in planning for future improvement.

- The school provides an appropriate, broad and balanced curriculum that complies with the statutory requirements of the national curriculum and religious education. There are detailed policies and schemes of work for all subjects. There is a whole school approach to short term planning but evaluations of lessons do not yet significantly influence future teaching and learning.
- Provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is very good and there are effective procedures for child protection and for promoting the well being and health and safety of pupils.
- The teachers and staff offer very good support and guidance to their pupils. Staff praise pupils for positive effort and achievement and continually seek opportunities to enhance self-esteem. A strong feature of the school is the happy environment and the way pupils are eager to help each other.
- The quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. A strength of provision is the effective way that pupils with SEN are integrated and fully involved in all aspects of school life. Pupils with SEN, whether they are in the designated special classes or in mainstream classes, make good progress commensurate with their age and ability.
- Partnership with parents, community, schools and other institutions is good. Parents are kept well informed and there are established links with the community, infant and secondary schools and other agencies.
- Partnership with industry is good. Industrial links and industry-related projects have a positive effect on standards.

MANAGEMENT

- The headteacher provides very good leadership. She succeeds in establishing very good relationships with pupils, staff, parents, governors and the local community. Management documentation is detailed and offers a clear way forward for the school.
- The governing body is well informed and takes a lively interest in all aspects of the life of the school. The Chair of Governors works closely with the school and governors visit the school to update their knowledge of school developments. The School Development Plan (SDP) provides a good structure for the development of priorities and the budget is managed efficiently by the head and the governing body.
- The school's self-evaluation programme incorporates lesson observation, analysis of planning and the examination of pupils' work. The outcomes of this evaluation give detailed support to individual teachers. As yet the evidence gathered is not prioritised to provide a focus for whole school improvement in different subjects.

- The head and governors use national and local data to compare the schools progress and to set appropriately challenging targets. National Curriculum results at the end of the key stage compare favourably with schools of a similar type in Wales.
- The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues raised in the last inspection. As a consequence of this there has been considerable improvement in the standards achieved by pupils and a sound foundation has been established for further improvement.
- The school is well staffed for the number of pupils on roll and they are deployed effectively. The internal accommodation of the school is generous and effective use is made of the classroom space available. The external appearance of the building does not reflect the stimulating and attractive learning environment created within the school by high quality displays.

4 EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Pupils' standards of achievement are very good in 4% of lessons, good in 51% and satisfactory in the remaining 45% of sessions observed.

- In English good standards are achieved, commensurate with pupils' levels of ability, in listening, reading and writing. Standards in speaking are satisfactory. Standards are good in mathematics and satisfactory in science. Standards are good in history, geography, religious education, information technology and art. Standards are satisfactory in music, physical education, Welsh second language and design and technology.
- Performance in the national curriculum assessments at the expected level 4 and above was good in English and slightly above average for mathematics and science, when compared with similar schools in Wales in 2002. When the results are adjusted by omitting pupils from the two SEN unit classes, they are good for all three subjects. These adjusted results are around the average when compared with all schools in Wales.
- Pupils with SEN in the designated classes and within the main school make good progress and achieve standards in line with their age and capabilities.

3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum

The standards achieved in the key skills across the curriculum are satisfactory.

- Pupils' listening skills are good and have a positive effect on their learning. They listen attentively to both adults and their peers and respond appropriately.
- Pupils' speaking is less well developed. Most pupils speak well when questioned by an adult but their ability to participate in group or paired discussions is limited.

- Pupils generally read well and value reading as a source of information and pleasure. Older pupils use their skills effectively to read from a range of media and to research information across the curriculum.
- The quality of writing across the curriculum for a variety of purposes is variable. In best practice pupils write in extended form to develop their empathic understanding in history. In other subjects and classes, an over reliance on filling in worksheets often constrains the development of pupils' independent writing skills. They make insufficient progress in developing their style of writing to suit different purposes across the curriculum.
- Pupils show increasing ability in handling numbers mentally and orally. They use equipment to measure accurately in science. Tables and graphs are used effectively to present statistical data but pupils' ability to interpret and analyse this data is less well developed, sometimes limiting understanding in these subjects.
- Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) well to support work across the curriculum. They use CD ROM and the Internet to research information to support their work in science, geography and history. They present their findings effectively using a range of software. Their effective use of ICT is demonstrated in music and art with the creation of their own CD.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

- 5 Acts of collective worship and religious education lessons make strong contributions to pupils' growing spiritual development. Christian values are reinforced and pupils contribute to and reflect on messages which develop their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge.
- 6 The quality of relationships among all who work at the school is based on warmth, trust and friendship. This is a noteworthy feature of the everyday life of the school, reflected in the school motto of 'Bringing out the best in everyone'.
- 7 The relationship between pupils is good when they work collaboratively in class. This is reinforced through posters displaying class rules and by the allocation of discretionary time for circle time. Pupils are courteous and welcoming to visitors and older pupils accept responsibilities and duties effectively.
- 8 Pupils have started to accept responsibility for their work by sharing targets for improvement with teachers. The 'Proud to present' policy encourages pupils to take pride in all they undertake. Their individual records are a celebration of academic and other achievements.
- 9 The pupils have an awareness of the needs of others in society as they consider ways to give of their time in helping others and raise money for charities including Comic Relief.

- 10 The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is in evidence throughout the school. An Eisteddfod was held recently as part of the St. David's Day celebration which develops an appreciation of their own culture. In the geography and religious education lessons pupils develop a good awareness of other faiths and cultures.
- 11 The school effectively enhances pupils' personal and social development through a wide variety of extra-curricular activities and by performing in the community; for example at the inauguration of the mayor and at an Old people's home. Older pupils are given the opportunity to make residential visits such as the London Theatre experience and the Ogmores Campcraft course.

11.1 Behaviour and Attitudes

Behaviour and attitudes are of a good standard and contribute significantly to the quality of learning

- Very good relationships have been established in class between pupils and staff. These have a direct impact on the standards of achievement and progress.
- The school successfully applies an appropriate policy to encourage and reward good behaviour and to prevent bullying, racism and other forms of discrimination.
- Pupils display respect and consideration to adults and to each other.
- Pupils collaborate successfully and enjoy interacting in groups.
- There have been two temporary exclusions in the previous year; school and statutory procedures were correctly followed.

11.2 Attendance

Attendance levels are good.

- Good progress has been made in improving attendance and the school continues to make a positive effort to reach the targets set.
- Pupils are encouraged and rewarded for good attendance.
- The majority of parents notify the school promptly when their children are absent.
- There has been a significant drop in the numbers of unauthorised absences.
- The Education Welfare Officers work closely with the school.
- Registration complies with statutory requirements.
- The school is working with the Education Welfare Officers to improve the punctuality of a small minority of pupils who are continually late for morning registration.

12 QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching was very good in 4% of lessons observed, good in 47% and satisfactory in the remaining 49%.

Where teaching is good or very good:

- Teachers display a sound subject knowledge.
- Sessions are well-structured and learning objectives are clearly identified. During whole class sessions, teachers' presentations are clear and purposeful, the questioning is pertinent and a combination of closed and open questioning is effectively used.
- Lessons proceed at a good pace and plenary sessions are used effectively to reinforce learning.
- Teachers use frequent praise and encouragement and pupils undertake tasks that are well matched to their age and ability.

Where teaching has shortcomings:

- Sessions lack pace and pupils are not consistently challenged to extend their oral contributions.
- Activities sometimes lack challenge and pupils are given insufficient opportunity to work co-operatively or to think critically.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good.

- Policies and schemes of work offer clear guidance for assessing and responding to pupils achievements.
- Teachers consistently apply a positive marking policy. Comments are detailed and encouraging. In best practice they clearly show pupils the next steps to progress. Shared targets are agreed with pupils in English, mathematics and science. These have a positive impact on standards but are sometimes too broad to be fully effective.
- Detailed records and checklists are kept of individual pupil progress in the core subjects. These serve to confirm teachers assessment of progress as pupils cover the programmes of study.
- Statutory assessments are carried out in year 6. Also a range of standardised assessments and other summative tests are used in each class. The information from these informs pupil groupings and individual pupil targets and provides a useful check on gender differences in achievement.

- Annual reports to parents are very good. They clearly inform parents and pupils of progress made and encourage parents to share in targets for future improvement.
- Samples of pupils' work are kept in 'record of achievement' files. Moderation of work takes place during staff meetings on a monthly basis. In best practice this work is annotated to show national curriculum levels and to indicate the criteria used to make judgements.
- Assessment, recording and review of the needs of pupils on the SEN register are carried out regularly and fully meet statutory requirements.

5.3 Curriculum

The curriculum provided by the school is broad and balanced and satisfactorily meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education.

- 13 Subject policies and schemes of work provide a good overview of long term planning and assist the delivery of a balanced curriculum. Short term plans are detailed and evaluations of lessons are made. These evaluations do not as yet consistently have an impact on future teaching and learning.
- 14 The time allocated to each subject meets statutory requirements but over long sessions particularly in music, Welsh and physical education, sometimes have a detrimental effect on pupils' learning. Discretionary time is allocated to literacy, Welsh and circle time.
- 15 The setting of pupils in Year 6 for literacy and numeracy has a positive impact on standards. Pupils work in all classes is planned at different levels but tasks are not always suitably graded to successfully match different abilities.
- 16 The development of key skills is noted in long and short term planning but at present opportunities are not exploited to ensure progression of these skills, particularly in literacy.
- 17 SEN provision in the school is based on integration, with all pupils spending at least half of their time in their mainstream class. Careful planning ensures that pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum when they are withdrawn for additional support.
- 18 The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is successfully integrated into the curriculum in subjects such as history and geography and in the use of texts by Anglo Welsh authors. It is evident in acts of collective worship where pupils sing Welsh hymns and also in pupils' celebration of St David's day. The use of incidental Welsh is improving but does not receive a sufficiently high focus throughout the day.
- 19 The subject co-ordinators have identified needs with regard to resources and they monitor teaching and learning on a rolling programme. This work has had a positive effect on standards. The detailed evidence gathered is not as yet critically examined to provide a clear whole school strategy for the improvement of individual subjects.

- 20 The school has a policy for homework and much has been achieved in encouraging parents to support their children's reading.
- 21 The school provides pupils with some rich and stimulating first-hand experiences. Visitors to school enrich the quality of curriculum provision particularly in history. Pupils regularly visit places connected with the topics that they are studying and they carry out meaningful follow up work in class.
- 22 Pupils are encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities. The range of activities provided by the school includes netball and rugby, orchestra, recorders and performing arts, science and computer clubs, Bible explorers and Borris the Bookworm. This provision is good.
- 23 Pupils' personal and social education (PSE) is appropriately promoted across the curriculum and also by the establishment of a School Council. The whole school ethos contributes effectively to aspects of this work, although care for the environment is less developed. The school ensures a very effective inclusive social provision and there is a strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, in all activities.
- 24 Sex education is addressed largely through the PSE and science curriculum and incidental questions are dealt with as they arise. The school enlists the help of the 'On Track' school nurse and the local health visitor to support Year 6 and parents are informed of the issues taught.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

The quality of support and guidance given to pupils is very good.

- 25 The school is a happy community. The head teacher and staff know the pupils very well and relate with sensitivity and a caring commitment to their individual pastoral needs. They provide good support for academic work and also promote good attitudes. This is reflected particularly in the way pupils help each other and share ideas.
- 26 Teachers intervene very effectively in lessons to support and encourage pupils and to ensure they sustain their concentration. Staff offer pupils praise for positive effort and achievement and continually seek opportunities to enhance self-esteem. In this way, pupils are successfully motivated to give of their best.
- 27 SEN pupils are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils also support each other well in integrated sessions.
- 28 Pupils are well supervised throughout the day. Support staff and mid-day supervisors make a valuable contribution to the care and welfare of pupils. Pupil 'Playground Peacemakers' operate during lunch times and this peer mediation programme has a positive impact on behaviour.
- 29 No instances of bullying were seen. Pupils are encouraged to report all incidents to staff and a 'Problem Box' is provided. Assembly stories encourage good relationships and Circle Time is used to highlight concerns.

- 30 Policies for PSE, sex education, equal opportunities and race relations, have all been recently reviewed and are of good quality. The head teacher is responsible for matters which are directly related to child protection.
- 31 Health and safety procedures have been audited, and all teachers are trained first aiders. There is a policy stating clearly the procedures that should be used for giving medication to pupils and each member of staff is issued with an information document. Fire drills are held once a term.
- 32 The attention given to health education is very good, particularly in science where the focus is on specific issues of hygiene. This is the second year of the Healthy Schools Scheme linked to the Meaningful Work programme. Pupils in the main are responsible for the fruit tuck shop.
- 33 Two education welfare officers, one being a member of the 'On Track' team, work closely with the school and other outside agencies. They are an effective support for learning.

5.5 Special Educational Needs

The quality and provision for pupils with SEN is good.

- The policy of the school and guidelines for SEN comply with the national code of practice. Reviews of statements and individual education plans (IEPs) are carried out carefully and code of practice (COP) procedures are followed correctly.
- A range of assessment procedures are used effectively to provide information for early identification and intervention and to monitor progress to ensure appropriate levels of support.
- The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) manages and plans the provision effectively and ensures that the liaison with the class teachers and support staff is appropriate. The named governor with responsibility for SEN is well informed about SEN issues.
- Four support staff are employed to support pupils in class. The deployment of these members of staff is well organised and overall the support provided is effective.
- Approximately 29% of pupils are on the SEN register for School Action and School Action Plus and two of these pupils carry statements.
- The school receives funding for two designated area classes to provide education for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, from within and outside the catchment area of the school. The funding is used in an innovative way and successfully supports the designated pupils. One class is run as a designated special class with pupils working in the class, taught by the SENCO. In the afternoons these pupils join their mainstream classes for foundation subjects and some science. The funding for the other class has been used for in-class support at Years 5 and 6. One year 5 class is identified as the transition class where pupils receive in-class support from an learning support assistant (LSA) and at times the SENCO. At Year 6 pupils with SEN are

fully integrated with the support of a Key Skills LSA. These pupils in year 5 and 6 are withdrawn to work with the SENCO for 1/2 hour sessions each week, depending on their needs.

- Withdrawal arrangements are good and concentrate on literacy and numeracy. A good feature is the way in which SEN pupils are well integrated and fully involved in all aspects of school life. Their contribution is valued by all staff and other pupils respond well to them.
- The IEPs designed for pupils on the SEN register are of good quality. They include appropriate learning objectives which are reviewed regularly and are a basis for the work undertaken by teachers and support staff. Both parents and pupils are involved in the review and setting of targets for the IEPs. Pupils are clearly involved and take responsibility for these targets. There is frequent liaison with parents.
- The school has well established links with outside agencies, including the local education department, and these contribute well to the quality of pupils' learning.
- Pupils with SEN have good attitudes to learning and make good progress commensurate with their age and ability. However, ICT is insufficiently used to support the learning of these pupils.

33.1 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and other institutions

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

- Parents are kept well informed by the school prospectus, newsletters, school reports and regular meetings.
- Parents are appreciative of the ready access they have to the headteacher and other members of staff.
- There is no parent association at present but parents attend celebration assemblies and raise funds through social events.
- Members of the community attend school functions and pupils take part in community activities.
- There are good pastoral, curricular and administrative links with the infant and comprehensive schools.
- The school receives very good support from outside agencies and works closely with the local Education Adviser.
- Pupils from the comprehensive school regularly gain work experience at the junior school.
- Plans are in place to further enhance links with the teacher training institutions.

33.2 Partnership with Industry

Partnership with Industry is good.

- The school has been successful in forging strong links with local industry and business.
- Very good use has been made of the support available from the Education Business Partnership.
- The school has taken advantage of sponsorship and grants for teacher placements and pupil workshops.
- A number of projects have been undertaken by pupils which improve their knowledge and understanding of the work place.

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 and deputy have a clear vision for developing provision. Detailed documentation has been produced which enumerates and evaluates actions that have been undertaken.
- Governors receive reports on the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Regular monitoring of teaching takes place by the headteacher, deputy and some co-ordinators, and teachers are made aware of their strengths and weaknesses.
- The school's self-evaluation programme incorporates lesson observation, analysis of planning and the examination of pupils' work. This work is considerable, and gives detailed support to individual teachers. However, observations are sometimes descriptive and they do not clearly point the way to whole school subject improvement. Interviews with pupils relating to standards achieved do not take place.
- The SDP provides a good structure for the development of priorities. It identifies relevant issues for attention and sets suitable targets for improvement relating to the curriculum, staff development, behaviour and ethos, teaching and learning and the physical environment of the school. Responsibilities for the work to be undertaken are noted, timescales are set, finance is identified and success criteria listed. Evaluation of the previous SDP is included and the Governing Body receives regular reports on the progress made in implementing the current plans.
- National and local data are used to compare the schools progress. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for individual pupils and good progress has been made since the last inspection with regard to SAT's results and standards of learning.

33.3 Leadership and Efficiency

The quality of leadership and efficiency is very good.

- The headteacher provides very good leadership. She has a very good overview of the life and work of the school and has a clear vision of the future. She succeeds in establishing very good relationships with pupils, staff, parents, governors and the local community. Management documentation is extremely detailed and offers a clear way forward for the school.
- The teaching staff collaborate well. They have been fully involved in the production of detailed policies and schemes of work for all subjects. They have responsibility for the ordering of resources and they carry out monitoring on a rolling programme. This work gives detailed guidance for individual teachers. The wide range of evidence that they gather is not always used to provide clear whole school priorities for improvement.
- The governing body is well informed and takes a lively interest in all aspects of the life of the school. The Chair of Governors works closely with the headteacher and members of the governing body visit school to view curriculum presentations and to update their knowledge of school developments.
- The general budget is managed efficiently by the head and the governing body. School priorities are listed and attention is given to cost effectiveness. Significant funds have been directed towards subject priorities as identified in the SDP. The school has been running a deficit budget with the agreement of the Local Unitary Authority but the governors plan to have a break even budget this year.
- The latest local authority audit of finances was carried out in June 2000. This reported good budgetary control. All recommendations made have been implemented.
- The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are detailed and informative.
- The head is well supported by the school secretary and day to day administration is very good.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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

- The school is well staffed for the number of pupils on roll and they are deployed effectively. Their qualifications and experience are appropriate to their responsibilities. Opportunities to exchange teachers for specialist teaching are taken in physical education, design technology and Welsh.
- Teachers benefit from in-service training experiences related to their individual and subject-coordinator needs. This has a positive effect on classroom practice.

- Support staff are well deployed and managed by the SENCO. Some internal and external training for LSAs is developing but opportunities for more focused training are limited.
- The performance management system is in place with all teaching staff having had a performance review with targets set for the coming year.
- Accommodation is good in relation to the numbers on roll. Effective use is made of the space provided. Classrooms which are no longer needed to accommodate classes have been adapted effectively for use as art, music and resource rooms. The library is well organised and inviting. Its use is developing well.
- The governors have worked hard to enlist the support of pupils, parents and staff and the community, to reduce instances of vandalism. The installation of CCTV cameras and security systems has supported this endeavour.
- Attractive wall displays feature prominently in corridors and classrooms and help create an environment conducive to learning. Standards of cleanliness inside the building are good. Externally the building is unattractive, external woodwork is in need of repair and the hard play surface is deteriorating. Plans to provide a new hard play area are well advanced.
- The school is well resourced for the delivery of the curriculum and these resources are well organised and managed by the staff. Access to NOF funding has expanded pupils' experiences in art. The reorganisation of computers into the IT suite has had a positive effect on pupils' IT skills. However, more use of computers in the classrooms would address individual needs.
- There is a small grassed area which is used to practise sport skills but access to a suitable playing field is not available.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

English

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- 34 Throughout the key stage, pupils listen attentively and demonstrate an interest, whether in lesson presentation or in pupil contribution to class discussion.
- 35 All pupils are eager to contribute to whole class discussions and SEN pupils achieve good standards of oracy according to their ability.
- 36 The reorganisation of the school library has supported an emphasis on encouraging pupils to read for pleasure. Most pupils read with enjoyment, confidence and understanding. Many take due note of punctuation and convey expression and emotion in their delivery. More able pupils talk readily about books they have read and the characters and main events in the works of their favourite authors.

- 37 The most able pupils read stories in depth and are able to skim and scan text for clues, discussing examples and explaining their decisions with enthusiasm. Less able pupils make a fair attempt to read books that correspond to their reading level.
- 38 Pupils respond well to the challenge of writing in a range of styles for different purposes. For example, a newspaper report based on Macbeth, stories and fables, playscripts and poetry, comparing a novel and screenplay version, biography and autobiography, informal and formal letters. Good examples were seen of use of persuasive language in setting out arguments about whale hunting and school uniform.
- 39 Pupils have a clear knowledge of the characteristics of descriptive writing and use a dictionary or thesaurus to improve their work. SEN pupils are well supported, producing written work according to their ability.
- 40 Pupils present their work neatly and most of them develop a fluent style of handwriting by the time they are in Y6.
- 41 More able pupils have a secure understanding of punctuation, spelling patterns and paragraphing.

Shortcomings

- 42 Pupils are not given enough opportunities to participate in well-structured discussions and debates where they can formulate their own questions or respond to others' points of view.
- 43 Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to redraft their written work but do not do so independently in order to improve the structure, style and content of their extended narrative writing.
- 44 More able pupils are sometimes restricted by the use of writing frames.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement are good.

Good Features

- Most pupils are familiar with the names and properties of common two and three-dimensional shapes.
- Pupils are able to calculate using the four number operations and most become competent at working with decimals, simple fractions, percentages and negative numbers.
- Older pupils are able to identify lines of reflective and rotational symmetry. They can calculate areas and perimeters, using correct mathematical language when explaining their work.

- Pupils are able to use standard measurement and can use a ruler accurately. The more able can calculate problems that include the use of money, weight and capacity.
- Pupils are able to make three dimensional patterns and by the end of the key stage they use co-ordinates and six figure grid reference effectively in applied situations in other subjects.
- Pupils are able to recall multiplication facts and tackle simple mental work. More able pupils carry out their work with quick recall and are able to use a variety of mental strategies.
- Pupils make good progress in data handling. The more able can interpret different graphs and explain their working and answers. They use information technology skills appropriately when handling data.

Shortcomings

- Pupils of average ability are unable to recall number facts and use different mental strategies with speed and confidence.
- Younger pupils make insufficient use of number lines to support calculations.
- Only the more able pupils are confident when tackling mathematical problems in new contexts.
- A significant number of pupils are unable to recognise impossible answers when using the four rules of number.

Science

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils carry out fair tests, generally using correct scientific vocabulary and making careful observations. They record their work effectively in tables, graphs and labelled diagrams. The majority of pupils show understanding of a fair test.
- Younger pupils studying physical processes relate observable effects to their scientific knowledge. They identify the dangers related to the use of electricity, explain the elements required to make a circuit and make reasonable predictions about which materials are good conductors and are attracted by a magnet.
- Older pupils know that when two equal forces are acting against each other they are balanced. They demonstrate understanding that materials will record a lower reading on a Newton meter when in water.
- In their work on changes in materials, pupils explain the process of evaporation clearly and can hypothesise about the best material to use as a filter to clean

water. They describe which materials are the best thermal insulators and conductors and explain the difference between them.

- Pupils can explain how day and night are related to the spin of the earth's axis. They demonstrate a knowledge of the relative positions of the earth, sun and the other planets.
- In their work on the organs of the body, pupils use CD ROMs and the Internet effectively to carry out background research.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' investigative skills are limited by the lack of opportunities for them to plan and carry out their own investigations in groups. The majority of pupils do not offer their own conclusions and ask subsequent questions.
- Pupils do not demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the subject matter when recording their findings in writing.
- Following investigations, pupils do not effectively analyse and interpret their findings presented in graphs.
- A minority of pupils are not able to explain the requirements of a fair test.

Welsh second language

Standards in Welsh are satisfactory.

Good features

- 45 In all classes, pupils use limited incidental Welsh during registration periods.
- 46 Younger pupils listen and respond well to oral stimuli and follow simple commands.
- 47 Pupils can describe the weather, count, name pets and items of clothing, tell the time, answer simple questions about themselves and state preferences with regard to television programmes.
- 48 Pupils' sight reading is reasonably accurate and pronunciation is good.
- 49 Pupils undertake simple writing tasks which involve completing worksheets and composing dialogues.
- 50 Older pupils have produced reading books for infants using ICT.

Shortcomings

- 51 Pupils are insecure in their knowledge of basic sentence patterns and do not have sufficient knowledge or command of question patterns to enable them to conduct a simple dialogue.

52 Pupils' range of incidental Welsh is not sufficiently extended from class to class to ensure progression. Apart from a weekly Welsh assembly, the language is not a feature of everyday life in the school.

53 Although pupils read words and notices displayed and read whole texts as a class, they show limited progress in reading from books.

54 Pupil's independent writing is limited.

Design and Technology

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good Features

- Pupils use a suitable range of materials and components to make a variety of products including, pop-up-cards, moving toys, boxes, cushions and solid frame products.
- Most pupils can measure and mark out materials and make simple connections for joining structures.
- Pupils are able to investigate levers, linkages and pulleys which enhances their understanding of moving products.
- Pupils are able to produce sketch designs of their proposed products and to make simple evaluations of their finished products.
- Older pupils successfully carry out an enterprise project connected to a product they have made. This work has helped pupils understand the commercial side of production and enabled them to work effectively in teams.
- Older pupils are able to use computer control to control a moving product they have made. They are aware of the place of computer control in the world around them.

Shortcomings

- Pupils investigating and designing skills are insufficiently extended.
- Pupils' ability to talk about their designs and products, and to suggest improvements as they work, is limited. They are over dependent on direct instruction from teachers.

Information Technology

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils use equipment and software confidently. They start up and shut down the computer independently and load, store and retrieve their work competently.
- Pupils use word-processing skills effectively for a variety of purposes. They highlight text, align it, and can change the colour, size and style of the font.
- Pupils use a Desk Top Publishing programme confidently to create a CD cover. They construct a greetings card, inserting a digital photograph and text.
- Pupils use a paint programme confidently to draw a labelled picture of a house, alter a digital photograph of themselves and create a new national symbol for Wales.
- Older pupils choose and use the tools of Power Point to present their work on history. They choose an appropriate slide design, insert new slides, pictures, sounds and text, to create meaning to their presentation.
- Older pupils compose music by mixing rhythms and sounds using a software programme.
- Pupils search and extract information from CD Rom and the Internet effectively.
- Pupils use ICT confidently in a range of ways to enhance their work across the curriculum.

Shortcomings

- The lack of opportunity to use spreadsheets and ICT based models and simulations, limits the pupils' ability to make decisions using ICT.
- Pupils' use of databases to store and analyse information lacks progression throughout the key stage.

History

Standards of achievement are good.

Good Features

- Pupils show a developing sense of chronology. They develop an understanding of history by studying everyday events from the past and comparing them with life today.
- Pupils' recall of key historical facts and figures from the past is good. They are able to discuss historical topics from previous work in a meaningful way.
- Pupils' studies of the past are wherever possible rooted in local and Welsh examples, this helps them develop a good understanding of a Welsh dimension.

- Pupils' visits to places of historical interest enhance their historical understanding. They talk eagerly about such visits and display a good understanding of the historical perspective they have experienced.
- Pupils' use of historical artefacts and meeting people who relate first hand experiences, helps to establish a deeper understanding of historical realities.
- Pupils across the key stage produce some good examples of empathic historical writing about topics that they can relate to, such as the feelings of evacuees in World War II.
- More able pupils at the top of KS2 are beginning to understand the causes and consequences of major events. They know that historical evidence may have a bias, for example, they understand the different perspectives of evacuees in Britain and those in Germany.
- Pupils are able to present their historical findings in a range of ways, including graphical, written and in the manner of role-play.
- Older pupils are able to investigate historical information from books, photographs, first hand evidence and the Internet. They are able to organise this research in the form of a sophisticated IT presentation.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' understanding of historical sequence could be further improved by the use of time lines in class displays.
- Pupils' use of reference books and other primary source materials is underdeveloped. Also their understanding of historical topics is sometimes adversely effected by the completion of low level written tasks.

Geography

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils use appropriate vocabulary to describe both human and physical features of the localities studied and can differentiate between them.
- Pupils make good progress in mapping skills. They draw simple sketch maps of routes in the contrasting locality and use four figure grid references to locate features. They are able to use a key to identify features on a map and locate the eight points of the compass in relation to their school.
- Pupils are able to identify simple patterns of weather and land use in their local area.
- Younger pupils use their enquiry skills competently to carry out first hand investigations into weather, the local area and Porthcawl. They can identify the

key geographical features in these places and describe the human activity carried out there.

- Pupils match ground photographs of features to aerial photographs and OS maps correctly.
- Older pupils demonstrate their enquiry skills in their investigations into a village in India and use a range of secondary sources to make a fact file of India using ICT.
- In their discussions about life in India and the views and opinions of the people there, they demonstrate an understanding of life in a less economically developed country. They are able to make comparisons between the seasons, climate and physical and human features of the Indian village and their local area and explain some of the differences.
- Pupils are able to use an atlas to locate places in the world and to name the continents of the world.
- In their investigations into the rainforests, pupils have gained knowledge of climate, plants and human activity.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' understanding of environmental change is limited. Opportunities to work in-depth on how human activity affects the environment and to analyse the views and opinions of others, are underdeveloped.

Art

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils experiment with a wide range of tools, textures, and media to inform their work. They make judgements about future work based on this experimentation.
- Younger pupils mix colours and use a range of tools effectively to respond practically to the methods and ideas of Monet and Cezanne when creating their work on moving water. They choose colours carefully and show understanding of why certain tools create the desired effect.
- Pupils produce effective three dimensional work representing movement using soft wire and plaster. They use clay to create houses which form a street based on the work of the artist Tom Hutchinson.
- Older pupils produce effective work on the school building using a combination of paint, ink, pencil and pastels. They use the work of a Welsh artist and observations in their local area to inform their work on drawing in perspective. They exhibit an awareness of line shape and tone.

- Pupils make a design for a print based on symbols from the local church. They use roller and paint accurately to reproduce the symbol and evaluate the effectiveness of the design for the purpose.
- Pupils use sketches of Van Gogh to gain understanding to inform their own work on self-portraits.

Shortcomings

- A lack of opportunity for large scale projects limits the pupils' skills in collaborative work.
- Insufficient use is made of sketchbooks to investigate, experiment and make observational drawings.

Music

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- 55 Pupils enjoy singing and the standard of the hymn singing in whole school assemblies in both Welsh and English is very good.
- 56 As the younger pupils study Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf, they are able to recognise the instruments of the orchestra which portray the characters in the story. They record a reading of the story with musical effects.
- 57 Year 4 pupils name and play a wide range of percussion instruments and can keep a beat successfully as they follow a graphic score. They also record simple compositions by producing their own graphic scores.
- 58 Older pupils are able to use an ICT software programme to make simple compositions and explain the patterns they choose to generate rhythm.
- 59 Pupils who avail themselves of the tuition for violin, flute, clarinet and the recorder benefit considerably and achieve good standards as do the members of the Performing Arts club. Participating in morning assemblies and other public events gives pupils experience and confidence in performing to a large audience.

Shortcomings

- 60 Pupils' knowledge of classical composers is limited and their vocabulary to appraise the work of famous musicians is underdeveloped.
- 61 Pupils' ability to evaluate their own and other's music and to use musical terminology identified in the national curriculum (N.C.) recommendations, is underdeveloped.
- 62 Pupils' abilities to produce compositions with understanding and appropriate use of musical elements lacks progression across the school.

Physical Education

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils apply themselves well to warm up and cool down exercises at the beginning and at the end of sessions.
- Pupils make sensible use of space and are developing effective balance and control of their body movements.
- In dance/movement sessions pupils are able to perform a range of actions, including quick, slow, gentle and vigorous movements. They are able to move with control and respond effectively to music and the beat of a tambourine.
- Older pupils can set out large gymnastic apparatus efficiently and safely. They work effectively on a series of balance movements and can co-operate in small groups.
- Pupils are keen to observe the work of their peers and note good examples of performance.
- Pupils show developing handling skills in hockey. They are able to travel and dribble using their sticks with accuracy and control.
- Pupils' standards in physical education are enhanced by participating in a range of extra curricular games clubs. The more able have attained representative honours at local and district level.

Shortcomings

- Pupils are sometimes unable to demonstrate sustained energetic activities because of the stop start nature of the activity. During these sessions the benefits of warm up are lost and a minority of pupils begin to lose interest in the activity.
- Although pupils have opportunities to evaluate their performance, this is often superficial. Pupils' performance tends to improve by practice rather than on focused skill refinement.

Religious Education

Standards of achievement in religious education are good.

Good features

- 63 Pupils know the Bible has two sections, the Old and the New Testaments and are able to recall a number of well known Bible stories.

- 64 Following a visit to the local church, pupils have a detailed knowledge of the various parts and features of the building and of their use.
- 65 Pupils understand the significance of Lent and are able to recall the temptation of Jesus and the forty days in the wilderness. They understand the significance of the cross as a symbol for Christians.
- 66 Pupils reflect on what is important in their lives as they consider ways of helping others by giving of their time and discuss the significance of Mothering Sunday as a Christian celebration.
- 67 In their study of Islamic belief, pupils describe the importance of cleanliness to Muslims as a reminder that their bodies must be pure before prayer. Pupils understand the significance of Ramadan and demonstrate empathy towards the religion they are studying.
- 68 With the aid of photographs, the Internet and artefacts, pupils in year 3 and 4 are able to name and explain features associated with a Mosque.
- 69 Morning assemblies make a positive contribution to the standards of pupils' understanding in religious education.

Shortcomings

- 70 Pupils' ability to discuss their experiences and to offer opinions in group situations is insufficiently extended.
- 71 Pupils' written work is sometimes limited and restricts an in-depth understanding of religious education.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

71.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

The school has made good progress overall since the last inspection.

The first issue required the school to establish clear procedures by which the governing body, senior management team and curriculum leaders evaluate the work of the school, and plan for further improvements which are focused on raising standards of achievement and improving the quality of education.

Self-review and monitoring procedures are now in place. The new senior management team leads the school in its examination of comparative data and helps the governing body to set suitable targets. Subject leaders monitor classroom practice, pupils work and planning documents. The information gathered is used to inform individual teachers of their performance and to point the way to future progress. Standards of achievement have improved across the range of subjects since the last inspection. The headteacher provides the governing body with detailed progress reports on a termly basis.

The second key issue required the school to enhance teachers' subject knowledge and extend the range of teaching strategies used.

This issue has been successfully addressed. Teachers have attended a range of school based and external Inset. Lesson observations indicate that the school now uses a range of teaching strategies and teachers show a good knowledge of subjects taught.

The third issue required the school to improve progression through the curriculum by planning for the development of learning skills, including the key skills, and ensuring full coverage of the National Curriculum, programmes of study, especially giving attention to investigative and skills-based aspects.

All schemes of work have been updated and they provide useful frameworks for planning. All subjects have been planned in terms of long, medium and short-term objectives. Key skill opportunities are highlighted in schemes of works and elaborated upon in short-term plans. The school now provides a broad curriculum and in best practice key skills and investigative approaches are given appropriate attention. This skills based work is not yet embedded in all subjects and classes across the school.

The fourth issue required the school to ensure progression across the key stage by establishing a manageable system of teacher assessment, and by using its outcomes to inform the next stages of teaching.

The school has made good progress on this issue, though further refinements will be required. In particular all teachers invest considerable effort into constructively marking pupils work. They make positive comments that point the way forward for individual pupils. Pupils are set individual targets in the core subjects. Although these are compiled alongside pupils, they do not always effectively support pupils future work. Summative approaches to assessment, such as the use of NFER testing, are effectively used to track progress and to set meaningful targets. Evaluations are made on teachers short term plans but these do not always influence the planning of future activities.

The fifth issue required the school to pursue suitable strategies to improve the level of attendance.

The school has made very good progress on this issue. The average for the previous year is now 92%. Pupils are encouraged and rewarded for good attendance and there has been a significant drop in the number of unauthorised absences. For most weeks of the year attendance is in excess of 94% and the overall figure is lower in the weeks proceeding school holidays, because of pupil absence. The head and governors are making great efforts to address these absences. The Local Education Department's educational welfare officer works closely with the school to support the attendance of targeted pupils.

The last issue required the school to ensure that all statutory requirements are met in respect of the governing body annual report and the school's prospectus.

This issue was recognised as having been addressed in the first ESTYN monitoring visit following the section 10 inspection. The annual report of the governing body and the school's prospectus are of a good standard and continue to meet statutory requirements.

71.2 Key Issues for Action

The school needs to:

- raise standards in subjects and aspects that are satisfactory by giving attention to the shortcomings noted.
- encourage independent learning by providing activities that present appropriate challenge to pupils of all abilities and to increase opportunities for pupils collaborative and investigative work.
- make the evaluations made on short term plans more effective so that adjustments can be made to future teaching and learning.
- refine the self-review audit procedures to provide a clear whole school focus for subject improvement.
- improve opportunities for pupils to develop their key skills at an appropriate level for their age and ability.

APPENDIX A

School Data

A. Basic information about the school

School's Name	Blaencaerau Junior School
Type	Junior
Age range of pupils	7-11 years
School Address	Blaencaerau Road Caerau Bridgend
Postal Code	CF34 0PP
Telephone number	01656 734233

Name of Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Bevan
Date of Appointment	January 2002
Chair of the governors/ The appropriate authority	Mr Paul Young
Registered Inspector	Mr C R Palmer
Date of Inspection	17 th – 19 th March 2003

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year Group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils					45	37	49	50	181

<i>Number of teachers</i>			
	Full time	Part time	Full time equivalent (FTE)
Number of teachers	8		8

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio,	22 :1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25
Teacher : class ratio	1.1 :1

<i>Attendance in percentages for the three terms prior to the inspection.</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School
Term 1			92	92
Term 2			89	89
Term 3			92	92

Number of pupils excluded during the 12 previous months.	2
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C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

**NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS
END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2002**

Results of the National Curriculum Assessments KS2: 2002												
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	N	B	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher Assessment	School					2	11	17	44	26	
		National					1	6	17	46	30	
Mathematics	Test/Task	School					4	7	9	48	28	
		National		2	1	1	0	5	12	41	38	
	Teacher Assessment	School					0	13	17	52	19	
		National					1	4	19	47	28	
Test/Task	School					0	13	20	43	19		
	National		2	1	1		4	19	43	30		
Science	Teacher Assessment	School					0	2	19	50	30	
		National						2	13	50	33	
	Test/Task	School					0	0	17	54	26	
		National		2				1	10	47	38	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science and either Welsh (First language) or English.			
by Teacher Assessment		By test	
At the School:	67	At the School:	60
In Wales:	69	In Wales:	68

Note: The national figures refer to the year 1999

- D Pupils who have been exempted from part or whole of the National Curriculum
- A Pupils failing to record a level because of absence.
- N Pupils failing to record a level for reasons other than absence.
- B Pupils not entered for tests/tasks because they are working outside level of tests.

D. Evidence base of the inspection

The inspection team comprised of four inspectors who were present at the school for 14 inspector days. During that time:

- pre-inspection meetings were held with parents and the governing body to discuss the life and work of the school.
- 45 questionnaires were completed and returned by parents and were carefully analysed.
- school policies, schemes of work, management documentation, planning notes, assessment records and examples of pupils records of achievement were examined prior to the inspection.
- discussions were held with the headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators.
- 55 sessions or part sessions of teaching were observed.
- pupils were heard reading and discussions took place with them about their work.
- samples of pupils' work were examined from all classes.
- attendance registers, pupils' records and teachers planning files were inspected.
- inspectors observed pupils during playtime and lunchtime and were present at whole school acts of collective worship.
- post inspection meetings were held with the Headteacher , staff and the governing body.

D.

E. E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Name	Role	Aspects	Subjects
Mr C Palmer	Registered Inspector	1 Context 2 Main findings 3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning 5.1 Teaching 5.2 Assessment recording and reporting 4.1 Self-Evaluation and planning for improvement 4.2 Leadership and efficiency 4.3 Progress since last inspection 4.4 Key issues for action Appendices	Mathematics Design technology History Physical education
Mrs V Scurlock	Team Inspector	4.5 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum 4.6 Provision for pupils with SEN 4.7 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Science Information technology, Geography Art
Mrs M Thomas	Team Inspector	4.1 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 4.2 Curriculum 4.3 Support, guidance and pupils welfare	English Welsh second language Music Religious education
Mrs E Taylor	Lay Inspector	4.4 Behaviour and Attitudes 4.5 Attendance 5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and other institutions 5.7 Partnership with Industry	

The inspectors wish to thank the school governors, head, staff, pupils and parents for their willing co-operation during the inspection.

