

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

***BLAENGWAWR PRIMARY SCHOOL
ABERAMAN
ABERDARE***

School Number: 674-2070

Date of Inspection: 26-28 April 2004

By

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Registered Inspector***

Date: 16 June 2004

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

A new nomenclature to describe pupils' progress through school was introduced in 1989. This system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to age 18 is intended to ease communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs and emphasise the importance of continuity.

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Blaengwawr Primary is a community school, catering for boys and girls aged from three to 11 years. There are 231 pupils on roll, including 44 children under five. There is a full-time nursery class and a reception class. Six nursery children are taught in the reception class. The rest of the school is organised into seven single-age classes. The average class size, excluding the nursery, is 26.5. There are ten full-time teachers, including the headteacher. There are also three part-time support teachers provided by the local education authority (LEA). Four learning support assistants (LSAs) enhance this provision.

The school serves the community of Aberaman, a mainly residential area, situated on the outskirts of Aberdare. The school states the majority of households are economically disadvantaged and about a quarter is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Almost half the pupils (49 per cent) are entitled to free school meals. This is well above local and national averages. There are a few pupils from ethnic minorities. No pupils come from homes where Welsh is the first language.

The school receives pupils from the full range of abilities. The results of baseline assessments are a little below local averages, particularly in language and communication. Subsequent assessments identify almost 20 per cent of pupils to have special educational needs (SEN). This is similar to the national picture. No pupils have a statement of SEN.

The school holds Investors in People accreditation and has attained the Basic Skills Quality Mark; its aims are published in the prospectus and appropriate targets are set for end of Key Stage (KS) 2 attainment. The school development plan (SDP) for 2004/5 identifies the following key targets:

Standards and quality of education:

- improve transition from home to nursery, raise standards in information and communications technology (ICT), continue to raise standards in mental mathematics and problem solving in KS2 and improve the moderation of pupils' work in mathematics across the school;
- improve standards of writing in history and religious education; review current practice in writing across the curriculum; improve standards in reading in KS1 and raise standards in spelling across the school;
- review procedures for assessment in foundation subjects; improve pupils' recording in geography and review the scheme of work;
- increase the proportion of pupils in Y2 attaining National Curriculum (NC) Level 2 and Level 3 in reading; in Year (Y) 6 increase the proportion attaining Level 5 in mathematics and set targets for improvement in spelling.

SEN:

- review guidelines, update staff training, complete pupil profiles for those requiring support at the 'School Action Plus' stage of SEN Code of Practice; develop an action plan to make best use of support for pupils with SEN and further develop the role of the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO).

Management:

- to develop the monitoring roles of the religious education and geography co-ordinators;
- to update staff development and provide training in first aid;
- to review the success of accelerated learning; review and update policy statements for teaching and learning, the curriculum, attendance, race equality and cultural diversity;
- to continue to develop the role of the headteacher and evaluate the effectiveness of recent staff training.

Buildings:

- to improve the quality of the junior play environment.

The school was previously inspected in February 1999.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

This is a caring and supportive school; its positive ethos contributes significantly to pupils' achievements. It is a steadily improving school that is well led and managed.

Educational Standards

- In the 63 lessons or parts of lessons observed, standards were judged to be very good in three per cent, good in 32 per cent, satisfactory in 60 per cent and unsatisfactory in five per cent.
- The overall quality of educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make satisfactory progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- The standards achieved in the six areas of learning are:

Area of learning	Nursery	Reception
Language, literacy and communication skills	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Personal and social development	Good	Good
Mathematical development	Good	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Physical development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Creative development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

- The standards achieved in the subjects of the NC in KS1 and KS2 are:

Subject	KS1	KS2
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Good
Science	Good	Good
Welsh second language	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Good	Good
Information technology	Good	Good
History	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Art	Very good	Very good
Music	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Physical education	Insufficient evidence to judge overall standards	

Religious education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
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- Progress across both key stages is at least satisfactory. However, the progress of pupils across the ability range, including those with SEN, is too slow when the work is not well enough matched to their needs.
- Results in the NC assessments in KS1 show that overall levels of attainment have been maintained over time. The proportion of pupils attaining level 2 or above in English, mathematics and science was 76 per cent in 2003. This is just below the national average and well above the average for similar schools with more than 48 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.
- Results in the KS2 NC tests show a significant improvement over time. In 2003, the results showed 61 per cent of pupils attained at least the nationally expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science. These results are below national averages and well above the average for similar schools.
- Standards of achievement in key skills across the curriculum are good in speaking, numeracy and ICT. Standards are satisfactory in listening and reading and unsatisfactory in writing. The overuse of comprehension exercises and worksheets limits achievement in writing.

The ethos of the school

- The quality of provision to promote pupils' moral and social development is good. This has a very good impact on the quality of life in the school. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory overall.
- The pupils' response to the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The standard of behaviour is good. This is a strong feature of the school and has a very positive impact on the quality of life in the school and the standards achieved. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning, work well on their tasks, contribute well to class discussions and show interest in lessons.
- The overall level of attendance is satisfactory.

The quality of education

- Teaching is satisfactory overall. Strengths include teaching ICT and art but there are some inconsistencies in the planning and organisation of learning.
- In the 63 lessons or parts of lessons observed, teaching was judged to be very good in five per cent, good in 32 per cent, satisfactory in 57 per cent and unsatisfactory in six per cent.
- Taken overall, teachers have good levels of subject knowledge and expertise. They have high expectations of behaviour and discipline and manage pupils well.
- Lesson planning is well supported by schemes of work but the content is not always fully developed. Although broad learning objectives are identified these are seldom structured in small steps across several lessons and shared with the pupils.
- Teaching is informed by much useful assessment data but there is too little evidence of the work being tailored to pupils' needs in response to day-to-day assessments. As a consequence, the more able and less able pupils quite often find the work either too easy or too hard.

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- Teachers use an appropriate range of teaching techniques and organisational strategies but where there is too little focus on a key learning objective, there is an over-reliance on worksheets and tasks are not rigorous enough, the pace and productivity of lessons drops.
 - The quality of procedures for assessment, recording and reporting is good. The school has an effective tracking system to monitor the progress of individual pupils.
 - The annual reports to parents are of a good quality and meet statutory requirements.
 - The overall quality of the school's curricular provision is satisfactory. Strengths include provision in art and information technology, but there are some shortcomings in implementing schemes of work where the subject knowledge and skills are not fully developed.
 - The planned allocation of time to subjects is appropriate but the long sessions given to some subjects lead to a lack of rigour and pace in learning in some lessons.
 - Planning for the development of key skills is at an early stage. There is as yet no whole-school strategy.
 - The arrangements for pupils' personal and social education are good.
 - The school is a socially inclusive community.
 - The quality of support and guidance provided for pupils is good.
 - The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good.
 - Partnership with parents and the community, schools and other institutions is good. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. This is a particular feature.
 - The partnership with industry is satisfactory overall.

Management

- The overall quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good. The SDP provides a good basis to guide the way forward although action plans to support the implementation of initiatives are less well developed.
- Procedures to monitor and assess standards are systematically organised. However, both formal and informal monitoring strategies lack sufficient rigour, as they are not closely enough linked to carefully prioritised whole-school goals.
- Leadership and efficiency are good. The aims, values and ethos of the school are an outstanding feature that contribute well to pupils' achievements.
- The role of subject co-ordinators is at differing stages of development; their involvement in managing whole-school initiatives and developing action plans is at an early stage.
- The governing body is well informed and strongly supportive of the school. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
- Day-to-day administration and organisation are very effective in ensuring the routines of the school run smoothly.
- The provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory overall. The lack of a whole-school library limits pupils' library and research skills. The school is adequately resourced for the delivery of the NC, but resources are limited in music.

School improvement

- The school has made good progress since the last inspection in raising standards. It has successfully raised attainment in the end of KS2 NC tests, raised standards in science, design and technology, information technology and art and maintained standards in other subjects. Teaching has improved, and now includes a much higher proportion of good or better teaching, compared with the last inspection.
- In relation to the key issues identified in the previous inspection report, steady progress is being made. There is evidence of a wide range of writing, particularly in KS2, but improving standards in the key skill of writing remains an issue for improvement.
- Very good progress is evident in the use of ICT and there is good improvement in the use of numeracy. However, there is a lack of consistency in promoting standards of literacy.
- Although teachers work hard to improve the quality of learning, there is only limited evidence of pupils' making choices and working with a sufficient degree of independence.
- The school has successfully improved the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Standards of achievement are satisfactory overall.

- In the 63 lessons or parts of lessons observed, standards were judged to be very good in three per cent, good in 32 per cent, satisfactory in 60 per cent and unsatisfactory in five per cent.
- Children under-five make at least satisfactory progress.
- The standards achieved by children in the nursery and reception classes are good in personal and social development and in mathematical development. Standards are satisfactory in language, literacy and communication skills, in knowledge and understanding of the world and in the creative and physical areas of development.
- Progress across both key stages is at least satisfactory. Progress gradually accelerates in KS2. However, the progress of pupils across the ability range is too slow when the work is not well enough matched to their needs.
- Slower learners, including those with SEN, receive appropriate additional support and make satisfactory progress. The small number of pupils learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress and communicate confidently.
- In both key stages, standards of achievement are very good in art.
- Standards are good in science, design and technology and information technology. In mathematics, standards are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.
- Standards are satisfactory in English, Welsh as a second language, history, geography, music and religious education. In both key stages, there was insufficient evidence to judge overall standards in physical education.
- Results in the NC assessments in KS1 show that overall levels of attainment have been maintained over time. The proportion of pupils attaining level 2 or above in English, mathematics and science was 76 per cent in 2003. This is just below the national average and well above the average for similar schools with more than 48 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.

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- The three-year average in KS1 for pupils attaining expected levels in English, mathematics and science is almost 80 per cent.
 - Results in the KS2 NC tests show a significant improvement over time. In 2003, the results showed 61 per cent of pupils attained at least the nationally expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science. About one-third of pupils attained level 5 in English, one fifth in mathematics and almost half in science. These results are below national averages and well above the average for similar schools.
 - The three-year average for pupils attaining expected levels in English, mathematics and science is almost 80 per cent.
 - Analysis of the school's NC results, on the basis of gender, indicates a fluctuating picture. The school has successfully reduced the difference between the performance of girls and boys. The school generally meets or exceeds its end of key stage targets for attainment in English and science. The position in mathematics is less satisfactory.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

Standards of achievement in key skills across the curriculum are good in speaking, numeracy and ICT. Standards are satisfactory in listening and reading and unsatisfactory in writing.

- Children under five make good progress in the acquisition of early skills in numeracy and ICT, and satisfactory progress in literacy.
- Pupils in both key stages make clear and thoughtful contributions to lessons. They discuss work with confidence and are regularly given structured opportunities for speaking and listening. They are becoming proficient in using subject specific vocabulary.
- In some classes, where the pace of learning is not sufficiently stimulating, pupils become distracted and do not listen well enough to follow instructions.
- Pupils read a variety of books with accuracy and understanding. They are able to use books for reference in most classes. However, where the positioning of the class library limits pupils' access to, and use of books, their progress in using reading skills is more limited.
- The pupils' skills in using writing as a tool to express ideas, clarify thinking, and describe actions and activities are limited by the overuse of worksheets, such as in history, geography and religious education, and sometimes in science. Pupils are too often restricted to cloze or comprehension exercises or the filling in of ready-made tables. However, where pupils use specific exercise books in science the quantity and quality of writing are improving.
- Pupils' use of numeracy skills in science, geography and ICT is well developed. Graphs, tables, measurements, Venn diagrams and problem solving are all regularly practised across the curriculum in relevant subjects.
- The pupils use a range of ICT applications well in all classes. They use ICT regularly to enhance their learning in other subjects. For instance, they practise literacy and numeracy skills, access information using CD-ROM and selected Internet sites, use computer graphics and present and process data in a variety of ways.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The quality of provision to promote pupils' moral and social development is good. This has a very good impact on the quality of life in the school. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory overall.

- Circle time sessions provide suitable opportunities for pupils to reflect and talk about their thoughts and feelings and to develop self-knowledge. Opportunities for pupils to discuss their responses to particular experiences across subjects are seldom fully developed.
- Whole-school assemblies strongly promote pupils' self-esteem and regularly celebrate the achievement of personal goals. Although daily assemblies incorporate limited opportunities for reflection, and generally meet requirements, the pupils are insufficiently guided in developing appropriate knowledge, sensitivity and awareness of their own and others' beliefs and values.
- The assemblies observed provided little stimulus for quiet reflection, the development of spiritual awareness, or the creation of a meaningful sense of awe and wonder. However, special services and occasional visits and visitors appropriately promote a sense of awe and wonder in pupils.
- Pupils' moral development is well supported, such as through class and school rules. The pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. They show appropriate respect; they work together well and this helps to ensure a positive ethos that benefits all pupils.
- Pupils' social development is well promoted through everyday routines. In particular, pupils show a well-developed sense of fairness in the way they care for the younger pupils and provide constructive support for pupils who feel threatened or anxious.
- An awareness of Welsh heritage and culture is developed to a limited extent through special events, such as St David's Day and Welsh assemblies. Although incidental Welsh is often used well at KS1, some opportunities to promote *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* are not fully developed to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding about Wales and being Welsh, across the school.
- Pupils' understanding of other peoples' cultures is suitably developed by links with a school in the Czechoslovakian Republic and the fostering of a child in Zimbabwe. They also study different religions and learn about the lives of people in the Caribbean for instance, although the contribution of subjects such as art and music to pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is not systematically developed.
- The pupils' response to the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

The standard of behaviour is good. This is a strong feature of the school and has a very positive impact on the quality of life in the school and the standards achieved.

- Pupils are courteous and behave well in and around the school. Good behaviour and positive attitudes and relationships are particularly evident during break times. The staff

have good relationships with pupils, who are friendly and courteous to each other, and to visitors, contributing positively to the strong sense of community.

- The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning, work well on their tasks, contribute well to class discussions and show interest in lessons. Pupils' ability to sustain concentration and interest is variable where the pace of learning is slow; this encourages the minority of pupils who sometimes present challenging behaviour to misbehave.
- The school has a good quality behaviour policy with a comprehensive section outlining anti-bullying strategies. To encourage good and improved behaviour a detailed rewards system is consistently implemented. The procedures include appropriate sanctions for dealing with unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour.
- The pupils elect a "school watch" committee. Through this committee, pupils help to choose and formulate school rules. These are positively worded to encourage good behaviour and attitudes and are well understood by the pupils. The committee plays a significant role in minimising incidents of bullying and supporting those at risk.
- There are relatively few instances of bad behaviour; those that do occur are dealt with firmly and fairly and are closely monitored. The pupils in Y6, who act as prefects, assist staff by reporting incidents of misbehaviour to a responsible adult straight away.
- In their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, all of the parents agree or strongly agree the school achieves high standards of good behaviour and that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children. The findings of this inspection concur.
- The school has effective policies to minimise sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination.
- In general, pupils who have challenging behaviour are well managed and enabled to take part in all school activities. The school draws on the expertise of the LEA Learning Support Service and Educational Psychologist, when necessary, and in a small number of cases works in partnership with a Pupil Referral Unit to maintain pupils' education.
- During the last twelve months two pupils have been excluded on a temporary basis. The correct systems and procedures were followed.

4.3 Attendance

The overall level of attendance is satisfactory.

- The overall level of attendance was 92.3 per cent over the three terms prior to the inspection. Levels of attendance have not improved since the last inspection in 1999. However, for the spring term 2004 attendance has risen to 93.5 per cent, having steadily improved over the last year.
- The school sets appropriate targets on attendance and punctuality and is currently close to achieving them. Patterns of absence and lateness are systematically monitored. Attendance data are computerised and the school follows up any identified long-term patterns of absence. The school receives very helpful support from the Education Welfare Officer on a regular basis.
- Levels of unauthorised attendance are minimal and the school clerk and headteacher strictly monitors holidays taken in term-time. The school prospectus gives a clear outline of the attendance policy agreed by the governors and parents are well aware of it.

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- Punctuality at the start of the school day is satisfactory for the majority of pupils with a minority arriving late. Patterns of lateness are regularly analysed and investigated. In general, lessons begin and end on time.
 - The school's registration procedures are good and fully comply with Welsh Assembly Government circular 3/99.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Strengths include teaching ICT and art but there are some inconsistencies in the planning and organisation of learning.

- In the 63 lessons or parts of lessons observed, teaching was judged to be very good in five per cent, good in 32 per cent, satisfactory in 57 per cent and unsatisfactory in six per cent.
- Taken overall teachers have good levels of subject knowledge and expertise. For the most part, they demonstrate a good range of professional skills with notable strengths in teaching ICT but there are shortcomings in their knowledge of Welsh and music.
- Teaching of the under-fives is at least satisfactory. Although a good range of learning activities is provided these are not always structured in line with the needs of the children. Planning is not closely enough linked to the six areas of learning and in some cases the teaching approaches, such as overlong literacy and numeracy sessions are inappropriate.
- The nursery nurse makes a positive contribution to teaching and contributes well to the on-going assessment of children's progress.
- Across the school lesson planning is well supported by schemes of work. The fortnightly format of lesson planning provides for appropriate progression but the content is not always fully developed. Although broad learning objectives are identified these are seldom structured in small steps across several lessons and shared with pupils.
- Teachers use an appropriate range of teaching techniques and organisational strategies but agreed approaches, such as in the teaching of numeracy, are not consistently implemented. In general, too little emphasis is given to developing independent and investigative work, and the overuse of worksheets is restrictive.
- Where the guidance provided for teachers, such as in mathematics is effectively built upon, lessons are tightly structured; teaching is focused on the differing needs and abilities of pupils, the pace is brisk, and plenary sessions are used well to consolidate learning. Such lessons were most evident in KS2 during the inspection.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and discipline and manage pupils well. However, there are inconsistencies in expectations of achievement. Lessons often begin with clear explanations and the skilful use of questioning but where there is too little focus on a key learning objective, and tasks are not rigorous enough, the pace and productivity of lessons drops.
- Lesson planning is informed by much useful assessment data but although pupils are often grouped by ability there is too little evidence of the work being tailored to pupils' needs in response to day-to-day assessments. As a consequence, the more able and less able pupils quite often find the work either too easy or too hard.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The quality of procedures for assessment, recording and reporting is good.

- The accuracy and consistency of assessment are good. Appropriate baseline assessments are systematically administered for children under five. The school complies with statutory requirements for NC assessment and target setting.
- The arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are good. The school's updated policy gives appropriate guidelines for the assessment of pupils' achievements.
- In both key stages, pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science are assessed termly using a range of standardised tests. The information gathered provides the basis of a clear record of pupils' progress.
- The school has developed an effective tracking system to monitor the progress of individual pupils. The system provides the means to set realistic targets and identify any pupils making less progress than expected.
- The school maintains a useful record of achievement for each pupil. These provide helpful evidence of progress over time and include examples of work, which are annotated to indicate NC levels.
- Learning targets are set for pupils in the core subjects. However, strategies for involving pupils in self-assessment are underdeveloped.
- The assessment and recording procedures for pupils with SEN are appropriate and meet the demands of the SEN Code of Practice. Assessment information is effectively used by the SENCO and teachers to set targets in the pupils' individual education plans (IEPs).
- The quality of marking is not consistent throughout the school. It is at its best when teachers acknowledge the efforts of their pupils and identify targets in order to improve the standard of pupils' work.
- The annual reports to parents are of a good quality and meet statutory requirements. They provide a full picture of pupils' progress. However, in both key stages, areas for future development are not indicated.
- Test results are systematically analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance. Good use is made of this information to identify areas to improve pupils' performance and monitor equality of opportunity.

5.3 Curriculum

The overall quality of the school's curricular provision is satisfactory. Strengths include provision in art and information technology, but there are some shortcomings in implementing schemes of work.

- The curriculum for the under-fives appropriately promotes the Desirable Outcomes in the six areas of learning. However, planning is linked to discrete subjects and is not closely enough linked to the six areas of learning, with the result that some activities are inappropriate to the needs of the children.
- The curriculum in both key stages is broad, and meets statutory requirements. The long term planning for NC subjects provides well for both continuity and progression in

learning. There is appropriate emphasis on the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* in most schemes of work.

- Although there is good emphasis on English and mathematics, and overall provision is generally balanced, there is generally too little emphasis on developing pupils' investigative skills in mathematics and science, and on developing their literacy skills in imaginatively presented tasks.
- The school has identified the need to develop the quality, quantity and range of writing across subjects. However, the overuse of worksheets continues to restrict pupils' written responses in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education.
- The planned allocation of time to subjects is appropriate but too little emphasis is sometimes given to fully developing the subject knowledge and skills set out in the NC programmes of study. Furthermore, the long sessions given to some subjects lead to a lack of rigour and pace in learning in some lessons.
- Although there is no agreed whole-school strategy for planning the development of key skills, teachers are provided with a 'model' framework and they often identify opportunities to promote key skills in their fortnightly planning.
- Taken overall, the school's curricular provision is effective. There is greater consistency in KS2. The regular provision of homework tasks has a positive impact on the standards achieved.
- The arrangements for pupils' personal and social education are good. The different elements of the programme are set out in a clear whole-school programme. Opportunities for pupils to enhance their understanding of citizenship within the school community are developing well. The school is developing its provision in line with the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) requirements.
- The programme of educational visits and the contribution of visitors to the curriculum suitably enrich pupils' experiences. A few pupils benefit from instrumental tuition. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular clubs in sport, science and literacy.
- The school places appropriate emphasis on conservation and encourages pupils to understand the need for sustainable development through consideration of issues linked to the local environment.
- The school is a socially inclusive community. In general, pupils have equality of access and opportunity within the curriculum but the needs of more able pupils are not always fully met and in some instances the learning targets for pupils with SEN are not developed sufficiently.
- There are no pupils for whom the NC is modified.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

The quality of support and guidance provided for pupils is good.

- The school provides a happy, pleasant and caring environment in which positive attitudes and good relationships are well promoted.
- The teaching and support staff know the pupils well and take a keen interest in their progress and welfare. Pupils' personal achievements are celebrated in assemblies but the

guidance they receive in their learning, such as through marking, is not always sufficiently focused.

- Arrangements to ensure child protection are good. The headteacher is the designated officer and staff are familiar with the procedures and their obligations in this area.
- Good quality policies are in place to promote health and safety, equality of opportunity, personal and social education, race equality and cultural diversity, the administration of medicines and sex education. Pupils are well supervised at break and lunch times and support staff and midday supervisors make a valuable contribution to the care and welfare of the pupils.
- Sex education is introduced in a sensitive manner through science lessons and health education programmes. Parents are informed of the procedures when the health visitor is invited to discuss personal development and relationships with the pupils.
- The school places a high priority on the social inclusion of all pupils. The needs of 'looked-after' children and children from ethnic minority backgrounds, including those who are learning English, are effectively monitored and addressed.
- Fire checks and drills are carried out at appropriate time intervals. The headteacher routinely carries out risk assessments and outside visits are well organised and supervised to ensure the safety of all pupils and staff.
- Effective arrangements are in place to deal with pupils who are ill or who have had an accident. Incidents are routinely recorded in 'an accident file' and the parents contacted. Currently one teacher is a qualified first aider and although others have undertaken the appropriate course, their skills need updating.
- The school has improved site security by investing in CCTV cameras and implemented a signing in system for visitors. An intercom system controls entry through the main gates.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN

The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good.

- The school's policy for pupils with SEN gives clear guidelines to both teaching and non-teaching staff. The requirements of the SEN Code of Practice and the Building Excellent Schools Together (BEST) programme are effectively met.
- The SENCO suitably manages day-to-day arrangements and provides appropriate support and guidance to class teachers and the LSAs.
- The school maintains an appropriate register of pupils identified with SEN. The criteria for placing pupils at the 'School Action stage' or at the 'School Action Plus stage' on the register are clear. There is evidence of pupils moving between stages in line with their needs. Currently, there are 28 pupils on the School Action stage and 16 on the School Action Plus stage. There are no pupils with a statement of SEN.
- Procedures for identifying and monitoring pupils with SEN are effective. Pupils' learning needs are identified at an early stage through comprehensive screening. They are placed on the SEN register and allocated support appropriate to their needs, either within class or through being withdrawn for individual or small group tuition.
- The IEPs devised for pupils with SEN are carefully constructed and include specific learning targets to correspond with the needs of every pupil. Progress is reviewed twice a

year at the School Action stage and three times at School Action Plus. Parents are invited to attend review meetings.

- Reading support teachers and (LSAs) work effectively with pupils who have SEN. They are aware of pupils' targets and have a good understanding of their needs. However, their progress is not always maximised where lesson planning is not specific enough in outlining differentiated tasks and activities.
- The responsible nominated governor visits the school regularly and is well informed about the school's arrangements for pupils with SEN.
- Links with outside agencies, such as the Tai Centre, are well established and there is good liaison with the school psychological service and the health and welfare agencies.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

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

- The quality of information provided for parents is very good. This is a particular feature. Parents are very well informed about the life and work of the school. Regular newsletters are very informative about a range of topics and class teachers explain the content of the curriculum to parents when their children move to a new class.
- The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are both full and informative documents. Both comply with statutory requirements.
- Parents are invited to a weekly coffee morning and to attend class assemblies. They are welcomed into the school to discuss their children's progress and their roles in supporting them. The headteacher regularly makes herself available for parents to discuss any problems.
- Parents are also formally invited to discuss their children's progress with the staff on a regular basis and where IEP's are in place, parents are positively encouraged to discuss these with the staff at more frequent intervals.
- The school implements an appropriate home-school agreement and the majority of parents respond positively. The school regards the support of parents as important for the children's education, well-being and enjoyment of school, and occasional evening educational workshops are held to inform parents of current teaching methods.
- The quality and extent of parents' contribution to school life are good overall. Parents are encouraged to come in and help in the classroom. A small number do so regularly and are given specific tasks to undertake by the staff. There is a hard-working Parent/Teacher Association, which meets regularly and raises considerable funds for the school to use for the benefit of pupils.
- The school maintains good links with the community. Pre-admission home visits for children entering the nursery provide a good link with parents together with link-up meetings in the school. The vicar is a regular visitor to the school and pupils visit the local church. Pupils make visits locally and to places of interest that contribute satisfactorily to their overall development and standards of achievement.
- Other visitors to school encourage pupils to be aware of life outside Aberaman. There is an established link with a school in Czechoslovakia and an African boy named "Bruce" who has been adopted by the school.

- The parent questionnaire and the pre-inspection meeting with parents indicate that parents are very supportive of the school. This positive picture was endorsed in discussion with parents during the inspection.
- There are good liaison arrangements with the local secondary school. An effective transition policy is in place and there are good links with other primary schools in the 'cluster group' that enhance curricular links and aid the transition process. The school is also actively working to establish effective links with pre-school agencies.
- The school has a successful partnership with Swansea University, taking some four students undertaking initial teacher training, each year. The school benefits from this partnership and also provides placements for further education and work experience students.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

The partnership with industry is satisfactory overall.

- There is no formalised policy for promoting partnership with industry. Current links are arranged on an "ad hoc" basis to enhance pupils' studies.
- The headteacher has participated in a Management Exchange link with a local supermarket to enhance her professional development and other members of staff, with the support of the Education Business Partnership (EBP), are completing National Vocational Qualifications visiting assessors monitor their work.
- The school has a training link planned with a local superstore for staff to attend a training course during the summer term.
- The school has achieved Investors in People status and the Basic Skills quality mark was awarded in June 2003.
- A number of visits to supermarkets, utilities and to exhibitions such as Techniquet enhance pupils' standards of work and the EBP funds the science club and its activities.
- In KS2, a governor has established an engineering link for science and technology projects. The pupils, on completion of their projects, receive the reward of a key ring made out of aeroplane metal.
- There is a sports link with Pontypridd Rugby Club, which is funded by a Public Limited Company, together with local funding for rugby training.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

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

- The scope of the school's procedures to evaluate standards is good. These include the use of tests and arrangements to moderate assessments of samples of pupils' work. The procedures to evaluate the quality of provision and monitor the school's work are also well structured.
- The SDP provides a good basis to guide the way forward in making improvements. The nature of the issues identified is wholly appropriate to the needs of the school but there is an enormous range. The details of action planning to support the implementation of initiatives are less well developed.

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- Teachers and governors make qualitative evaluations and are effectively involved in identifying goals for the school. These arrangements are part of a well-established process of self-evaluation that begins with the previously agreed goals on an annual basis.
 - The effectiveness of development planning is satisfactory. On the one hand, the success of particular strategies is evident in improved results in the end of KS2 tests but some inconsistencies in teaching and learning remain.
 - The analysis of test results has enabled the school to highlight areas for improvement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, the impact of these initiatives lacks consistency.
 - Procedures such as the monitoring of planning by the headteacher and opportunities to monitor and assess standards are systematically organised. However, both formal and informal monitoring strategies lack sufficient rigour, as they are not closely enough linked to carefully prioritised whole-school goals.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

Leadership and efficiency are good. The aims, values and ethos of the school are an outstanding feature that contributes well to pupils' achievements.

- The headteacher, with the support of governors, provides very positive and supportive managerial systems that direct and guide the school's work effectively. There is strong emphasis on promoting higher standards and maintaining a teamwork ethos.
- The school has a clear mission statement and its key aims are very well reflected in its work, particularly the encouragement of good behaviour. The school strives to provide equal opportunities for all its pupils; it is successful in providing equal access to all school activities but pupils of different abilities are not always enabled to achieve their best.
- Governors and teachers make a positive contribution to strategic leadership. The teamwork among the staff is a strong feature and the organisation of staff's roles and responsibilities contributes well to the school's work. The headteacher is well supported by the senior management team but the arrangements to manage and quality assure curricular improvements across the school are only satisfactory.
- The role of subject co-ordinators is at differing stages of development. There is good practice in developing schemes of work and compiling collections of exemplar work for example, but although some co-ordinators are involved in monitoring, their involvement in managing whole-school initiatives and developing action plans is at an early stage.
- The governing body is strongly supportive of the school. It is kept well informed by the headteacher and the work of governors is well organised. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
- The efficiency and effectiveness with which the available time, staff, money and resources are used are satisfactory. The basic organisation is good but there are inconsistencies in the use of lesson time. Some lessons are overlong but where the longer sessions are timetabled for different activities, this improves the rate of work.
- The school has identified the need to maximise its use of the learning support available within classes but during the inspection, assistants were not always utilised to the best effect. Furthermore, although key skills are planned for, opportunities to develop pupils'

literacy skills through the use of a range of texts and by providing a variety of contexts for writing are not always fully developed and this limits standards.

- Budget setting and the pattern of spending appropriately reflect the school's needs. Astute financial management ensures appropriate plans are in place to manage the school's reducing budget.
- The governing body exercises appropriate oversight of the school's finances. A finance sub-committee examines expenditure plans and monitors trends. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure best value for money.
- The most recent auditors' report confirmed a good standard of financial administration. A number of recommendations were made including the documentation of financial procedures.
- Day-to-day administration and organisation are very effective in ensuring the routines of the school run smoothly. The school clerk is efficient and effective in all matters of administration.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

The provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory overall.

- The school is suitably staffed for the numbers of pupils presently on roll. Teachers are appropriately qualified for their curriculum responsibilities and have sufficient knowledge and expertise overall to meet the needs of the pupils.
- All members of staff have job descriptions, although some are in need of updating due to changes in responsibilities. The arrangements for performance management are in line with statutory requirements.
- Learning support assistants make an appropriate contribution to the quality of learning. However, the current arrangements do not provide for sufficient engagement of support staff with children in the reception class. All the members of the ancillary staff contribute greatly to the warm, caring ethos of the school community.
- There are good arrangements for the induction of teachers new to the school and for all teachers' continuing professional development. In order to update their knowledge and to develop their professional skills, all teachers have had opportunities to attend training relevant to their personal needs and to the needs of the school.
- The age and design of the accommodation do not easily facilitate the needs of the curriculum and the organisation of classes. The school has done its utmost to develop a practical layout to the school and makes the best use of the rooms available. It has worked hard to create a warm, welcoming atmosphere that provides a stimulating, exciting, learning environment.
- The school is heated in part (the hall and some corridors) by electric heaters suspended from the ceiling or mounted on the wall. This is not energy efficient and does not provide sufficient heating in these areas.
- There is very little storage space in the school and the small partitioned area, formerly a library, which is used for the withdrawal of pupils for SEN support teaching is not suitable for the purpose.
- The lack of a whole-school library limits the accessibility of books. Furthermore, the libraries provided within classrooms are not always easily accessible. Classrooms are

clean and well organised and most are of an appropriate size. However, in KS1, practical activities are made more difficult by the cramped conditions and limited space.

- The school has done much to refurbish the building over the past few years. Classrooms in both key stages have an interactive whiteboard and very good use is made of this resource in all classes. Further improvements to the outdoor environment are planned.
- The school is adequately resourced for the delivery of the NC, with the exception of music. Here resources are limited. Resources are kept in a variety of locations around the school. This sometimes results in limited use of 'big books' and artefacts for example.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

The overall quality of educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make satisfactory progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

- The under-fives are taught in two classes, a nursery class for the younger children, and a reception class for the older children. There are 25 full-time children in the nursery class and 19 in reception. Six nursery children are currently working with the reception class.
- Children enter school the day after their third birthday, and admission continues until the January of that school year. Children who reach the age of three years after that date wait until the following September to begin.
- The children begin school with a range of prior attainment; a high proportion has immature language and communication skills.
- The school has high expectations of behaviour from the children and they quickly develop positive attitudes to learning. Children's attendance is generally satisfactory, although overall figures are below 90 per cent. However, any absence is nearly always accompanied by a telephone call to give the reason.
- There is one teacher and one full-time nursery nurse with the nursery class and one teacher with the reception class. Learning support is provided on a rota basis, none of which was observed during the Inspection.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. Good use is made of the nursery nurse in nursery and of the adult/parent helpers who regularly assist the classes. However, on occasions teaching focuses on learning objectives that are inappropriate to the age group, and sometimes uses unsuitable teaching techniques, such as lengthy literacy and numeracy sessions.
- The assessment of children's progress is on-going, but the two-weekly planning cycle does not take sufficient account of day-to-day assessments to inform the planning of activities in the short term.
- Curricular planning for the under-fives is undertaken by the subject co-ordinators. The Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning are subdivided into the discrete subjects. As many schemes of work used in the school are published documents, these are sometimes inappropriately linked to the English Early Learning Goals, rather than the required Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

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- The range of learning opportunities offered to the children is wide and generally appropriate to the children's needs. However, there is insufficient emphasis on structured approaches to the development of children's pre-number and pre-reading skills.
 - The environment offered to the children is exciting and stimulating, and a good range of learning activities is offered. However, the children only use a well-equipped physical activity area during playtime and lunch times, instead of it being available to them as an 'outdoor classroom' during the day.
 - The school has good relationships with the parents; they are welcome to come into the classroom to discuss any urgent problems and the information they receive regularly is informative. Several parents regularly volunteer as "Helping Hands".

Language, literacy and communication skills

Standards of achievement in language, literacy and communication skills are satisfactory in nursery and reception.

- All the children have good memories for songs and rhymes. They listen attentively to stories, and respond enthusiastically to all types of oral activities.
- Nursery children enjoy looking at books; they know their orientation and can hold them correctly to turn the pages.
- Reception children understand that print conveys meaning. They are developing their knowledge of phonics and are beginning to build up words.
- Nursery children enjoy making marks and drawing with pencils. They understand that words and pictures have different purposes.
- Reception children are making satisfactory progress in developing their emergent writing skills.

Shortcomings

- A number of children in nursery and reception are reluctant to express themselves and have a limited vocabulary.
- Some children in reception have yet to develop appropriate concentration skills and become easily distracted.

Personal and social development

Standards of achievement in personal and social development are good in both nursery and reception.

Good features

- In nursery, children enter school eagerly and settle down quickly to a familiar routine. They play together well, will share the apparatus and are prepared to take turns. They are aware of personal hygiene and can wash their hands independently. They sit together at milk and lunchtime and enjoy a sociable occasion.
- Children in reception demonstrate independence in selecting activities for free play. They make a good attempt at dressing and undressing themselves after physical education sessions, and are beginning to use co-operative play alongside parallel play situations.

Shortcomings

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- No major shortcomings were identified in personal and social development but children are unable to profit sufficiently from activities such as role-play, where they are not provided with a clear structure to follow.

Mathematical development

Standards of achievement in mathematical development are good in nursery and reception.

- Children in the nursery have made a good beginning in understanding the mathematical concepts of sequencing, sorting and counting through a range of suitable activities. They are able to recognise certain numbers and can often identify 'one more' and 'one less'.
- Nursery children enjoy singing number rhymes and playing counting, sorting and matching games. They are learning a range of mathematical language.
- Reception children can count accurately to 10, and some can count to 20 and will make a good attempt to go higher. They can identify common two-dimensional shapes and are able to put a number in the correct place between two other numbers.
- They are making good use of mathematical language and respond well to a range of challenging activities.

Shortcomings

- No major shortcomings were identified in children's mathematical development although some children lack concentration and become disinterested when the pace of the learning slows or the activity goes on too long to keep their attention.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are satisfactory in both nursery and reception classes.

Good features

- All children gain knowledge of the world about them through participating in stimulating class activities. Children often make visits to places of interest, or have visits in school from interesting people.
- The children are all aware of changes that happen over the seasons, and can talk about why they go to the seaside in summer. They are aware of the changes that have happened to their bodies since they were babies and can talk about their families and friends.
- Reception children are beginning to develop some awareness of the times of day; breakfast, school time, home time and so on, and many can say when their birthday is, and where they live.
- Reception children make good use of the computer and several are able to save programs and open new ones.

Shortcomings

- Children are not proficient at building on subject knowledge and developing a range of skills across and between learning activities. The fragmented nature of the curriculum planning limits opportunities for incidental learning.

Physical development

Standards of achievement in physical development are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

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- The nursery and reception children both have many opportunities to develop fine motor skills. Activities encouraging cutting, sticking, drawing, colouring and constructing develop increased dexterity.
 - In the reception class, the children have developed good hand-eye co-ordination. They are able to build complex structures and have agility in their use of craft and other creative implements.
 - There is an outdoor play area where the children have developed appropriate confidence in the skills of climbing, steering, rocking, sliding and jumping.

Shortcomings

- Children seldom persevere with a sufficient degree of independence in physical tasks; they are assisted at too early a point by inappropriate adult intervention.
- Children do not develop balancing skills outside formal physical education lessons. This limits their achievements.

Creative development

Standards of achievement in creative development are satisfactory in nursery and reception.

Good features

- Singing is a strong feature of the nursery and reception classes, and the children sing a range of songs with energy and a good sense of rhythm.
- Nursery children enjoy using paper and card to make flowers and faces. They use bright colours to paint vivid pictures and can explain their content. They form shapes from play dough and can roll and cut with confidence.
- Reception children have used good painting techniques to produce colourful self-portraits. They are able to choose appropriate materials from a selection to produce an individual collage, and discuss the process used in creating it.
- Children in both nursery and reception enjoy using the role-play areas and benefit from the structured, yet creative play opportunities it offers.

Shortcomings

- Children's creativity is sometimes restricted where their choice of media and techniques is restricted when creating their artwork. Progress is limited by excessive direction and too early intervention by adults.
- Standards in creativity in music are restricted in reception, as children do not have frequent opportunities to experiment with musical instruments or listen to a range of music.

English

Standards of achievement in English are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils' listening skills are satisfactory throughout the school. The majority listen attentively to their teachers and maintain appropriate concentration levels.
- In KS1, speaking skills are satisfactory. Pupils express themselves with increasing confidence and are keen to ask and answer questions. They speak appropriately to adults.

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- In KS2, the majority of pupils respond to teachers' questions with enthusiasm. Older pupils express themselves clearly, in group and class discussions and offer detailed views and opinions such as the effect of tourism in St Lucia.
 - Pupils in KS1 develop the skills of reading satisfactorily. They possess a number of strategies to decode new words by looking at patterns or by using phonic skills. A small number in Y2 can describe the story and characters in their books.
 - In KS2, pupils read with growing confidence. Most use punctuation correctly to promote good expression and intonation. The more able pupils in Y5 and Y6 express views on choice of books and their favourite authors, recall the events of a story, and predict endings.
 - Pupils in KS1 make satisfactory progress in writing. They write for different purposes and produce a range of texts in an appropriate style. Pupils record personal experiences, compose stories and write about topics such as 'Guy Fawkes' using capital letters and full stops appropriately.
 - Across KS2, pupils write for different purposes and audiences, including letters, stories, dialogues, poems and reports such as class visits to Big Pit and Caerleon. The more able pupils have a secure understanding of spelling patterns and paragraphing. The content of their work is coherent and interesting.
 - Standards of handwriting are satisfactory. In the best examples, pupils' handwriting is neat, well formed and presented.
 - The small number of pupils learning English as an additional language develop oral competence well and make at least satisfactory progress in reading and writing.

Shortcomings

- Pupils in KS1 do not build sufficiently on their reading skills while working independently and they seldom record their answers to questions in well-structured sentences.
- Across both key stages, pupils do not spell a number of basic words accurately and make limited use of dictionaries to support their learning.
- Pupils do not sufficiently develop the skills of drafting and redrafting to improve their writing. They do not produce a sufficient variety of extended pieces of good quality imaginative and factual writing.
- Pupils' library and research skills are insufficiently developed. In particular, the older, more able pupils do not develop fully their reference skills through using resources, such as dictionaries, thesauri and class libraries.

Mathematics

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

Good features

- In Y1, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of addition and subtraction to at least 10. They name a variety of two and three-dimensional shapes, begin to describe their properties and achieve well in identifying symmetrical patterns.

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- In Y2, pupils confidently count in twos, and fives to 100 and know number bonds to 10. The majority are able to identify the smallest or largest number in sets of numbers up to 100 and gain confidence in sequencing numbers.
 - By the end of the key stage, pupils gain a satisfactory knowledge of measurement, including time, they have a satisfactory knowledge of shapes and can interpret simple graphs.
 - In Y3, pupils appropriately develop their knowledge of place value and number operations in line with age and ability. The majority can subtract 20 from a given number, record amounts of money including pounds and pence, and calculate change from a pound and complete sums using the four operations with figures including 100s.
 - Pupils in Y4 understand the difference between area and perimeter and can calculate the area and perimeter of regular and irregular polygons. The more able pupils have a good knowledge of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes, identify lines of symmetry and know how to represent data on a block or line graph.
 - In Y5 and Y6, pupils have a good understanding of place value, including decimal notation, and their competence in more complex calculations using the four operations is developing well. They subtract using the exchange method, understand place value to at least a thousand, convert grams to kilograms and have a developing knowledge of fractions, mixed numbers and percentages.
 - Pupils know the formula for calculating area and accurately calculate the area and perimeter of complex shapes. Their knowledge of measurement and topics such as time is good. Pupils are developing competence in interpreting 12 and 24-hour clock notation and reading timetables. They collect and record a variety of data and know how to present these in a variety of graphs.
 - In Y6, pupils have a good knowledge of angles and measurement and they increasingly use a range of mathematical vocabulary accurately.

Shortcomings

- In KS1, pupils are insufficiently aware of number patterns and relationships. Their knowledge of shapes and measurement, and their competence in problem solving are underdeveloped.
- There are no major shortcomings in KS2, however pupils lack confidence in thinking mathematically, identifying alternative mental strategies and explaining their methods.

Science

Standards of achievement in science are good in both key stages.

Good features

- At KS1, pupils have a good understanding of the properties of a range of materials and recognise how these affect their use.
- Pupils have a developing knowledge of forces. Stimulated by appropriate activities, they are able to discuss the way things move and whether they have been pushed or pulled.
- They can name the parts of a plant and are developing a clear understanding of the factors, such as light, warmth and moisture that affect growth.

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- At the lower end of KS2, pupils are beginning to understand what constitutes a fair test and by the end of the key stage, pupils have a good understanding of fair testing procedures. They know that variables have to be taken into account, for instance.
 - The younger pupils are able to distinguish between and classify plants and animals. They can identify the essential differences between the two.
 - The older pupils have a good knowledge of the solar system, know that materials change when heated, cooled or mixed, know the differences between a mixture, a solution and a compound, and that some changes are reversible and some are not.

Shortcomings

- Although there are no major shortcomings in pupils' scientific knowledge their investigative skills are underdeveloped. They do not sufficiently develop the skills of planning, enquiry and fair testing.

Welsh second language

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- The majority of pupils have good listening skills. They understand a limited range of familiar questions and most respond appropriately in simple words and short phrases.
- In KS1, pupils know and use a number of greetings, such as '*bore da*' and '*pryhawn da*' and they can ask simple questions such as '*sut wyt ti?*' They recognise and respond well to a series of commands.
- Pupils become familiar with everyday language patterns to describe where they live and how they feel. They use a developing vocabulary to name parts of the body, fruit and simple numbers.
- In KS2, pupils build on previous work by repeating and extending set phrases about themselves, colours, weather, homes and the family. They use familiar language patterns when expressing their likes and dislikes, describing friends or heroes and respond positively to simple commands and greetings.
- Pupils in Y4 show growing confidence in using the language and effectively rehearse language patterns during role-play situations. Their pronunciation and confidence in speaking Welsh are greatly enhanced by these activities.
- Older pupils develop reading skills by reading work sheets and simple Welsh books. They read intelligently and with expression.
- Pupils reinforce their oral work and reading by completing appropriate written tasks. Pupils' writing is based on the topics studied in Welsh lessons and consists of simple sentences. The majority write to a satisfactory standard. The more able, however, compose simple dialogues, describe themselves or their friends and express likes and dislikes to a good standard.

Shortcomings

- Pupils generally have a limited vocabulary. They practise speaking Welsh in a narrow range of contexts and this inhibits their oral fluency.
- In KS2, many of the language patterns spoken by pupils are repetitive and do not consolidate knowledge acquired in KS1.
- Pupils make too little use of incidental Welsh as part of everyday routines, particularly during assemblies or across the curriculum.
- Pupils' writing skills are often fragmented and hence lack continuity and progression. Their skills and knowledge of the language are not developed sufficiently across the key stages.

Design and technology

Standards of achievement in design and technology are good in both key stages. Pupils' work is proudly displayed throughout the school and this adds to the stimulating working environment.

Good features

- At KS1, pupils develop good cutting, joining and assembling skills through interesting and purposeful activities.
- In Y2, pupils design prototypes before deciding on the perfected version of a product; they examine and disassemble products to decide on fitness of materials for purpose.
- Pupils in KS2 discuss, examine and evaluate articles, disassemble the finished product, then design and make their own versions.
- In Y5, pupils enthusiastically undertake a mini-enterprise scheme to develop the most effective production line for making carrier bags.
- In both key stages, pupils competently use graphics programs to create designs. In KS1, pupils can input instructions to send a controllable robot along a predetermined pathway and they successfully manipulate a simulation program to design a park, for example.
- In KS2, pupils confidently explain how to program a 'screen turtle' and have well developed skills in manipulating simulations on screen.

Shortcomings

- No major shortcomings were identified in pupils' skills but in some classes, pupils' ability to make appropriate choices from a sufficient range of materials and to record their oral evaluations is underdeveloped.

Information technology

Standards of achievement in information technology are good in both key stages. Across the school, the regular use of interactive whiteboards enhances standards and ensures pupils have very well developed computer skills.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils use the mouse confidently to control events on the computer screen. They follow instructions carefully and work through appropriate programs to support their learning with considerable confidence.
- Pupils match text to pictures successfully and produce colourful pictures using a graphics program. They use the menu and tools well and know how to change their work. They enter and amend text using a word processing program and know how to change the font.
- In lower KS2, pupils further their skills in word processing such as changing the font, adding borders and formatting the page layout. They manipulate graphics, enter data into a prepared database, and generate graphs appropriately.
- In upper KS2, pupils have well developed word-processing skills and competently use a range of software. They have a secure knowledge of databases and successfully use a graphics package to produce a range of detailed images. They know how to use a multi-media package and have made a good start in developing presentations.

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- Across KS2, pupils use the CD-ROM appropriately and know how to scroll through pages to locate information. They have appropriate opportunities to use e-mail and access selected Internet sites from which they retrieve information.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings in pupils' knowledge and skills but in KS2, pupils' competence in using modelling programs is less well developed.

History

No lessons in history were observed during the inspection in KS1 and a small number were observed in KS2. Scrutiny of previous work and discussions with pupils indicate that standards of achievement are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils' historical enquiry skills are developing appropriately. They find out about the past from a range of historical sources including artefacts and visual sources.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the past are enhanced through listening to a range of stories, including stories from Welsh history. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the contribution made to Welsh life by characters such as William Morgan.
- By looking at pictures of schooldays in the past and objects such as toys from different periods, pupils are gaining an insight into the way people used to live and are learning to make comparisons with their own lifestyles.
- In both key stages, pupils demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the importance of places of historical interest such as St Fagans, Big Pit, Llancaiach Fawr and Caerleon. Educational visits to such places significantly enhance pupils' understanding and awareness of history.
- In KS2, the chronological skills of the majority of pupils are developing satisfactorily.
- In Y4, pupils can recall details about significant events from the Tudor period. Pupils gain insights into the daily life of a Tudor household and through studying Hampton Court; they display appropriate familiarity with historical terms.
- Pupils in Y5 are developing well in their knowledge and understanding of local history, including the changes that have occurred in the history of the school, of the village of Aberaman and the importance of coal mining in the valley.
- The oldest pupils have an increasing knowledge of the Second World War and are able to recall a range of facts about it, such as the war's effects on people's lives, including evacuees.

Shortcomings

- In KS1, pupils do not develop a sufficient awareness of chronology.
- In KS2, pupils' historical enquiry skills are insufficiently developed and their ability to note the causes and results of key events and changes is insecure.

Geography

No lessons in geography were observed during the inspection in KS1 and a small number were observed in KS2. Scrutiny of pupils' previous work indicates that standards of achievement are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils develop a satisfactory geographical vocabulary. They show appropriate knowledge of people and services that support the community.
- Pupils begin to develop a satisfactory awareness of their area. In their local study, pupils identify various homes and buildings in Aberaman. They draw simple maps of the school and identify familiar features on maps of the area.
- In KS2, pupils have a good understanding of their locality. They make observations and collect and record information when undertaking a village survey. Simple maps are drawn, identifying human and physical features. Pupils make effective use of their knowledge of co-ordinates and four-figure grid references to identify places.
- Pupils' awareness and understanding of contrasting areas are developing satisfactorily through their study of St Lucia.
- In Y5, pupils have a good grasp of the 'water cycle' and how it influences weather conditions. They have satisfactorily conducted a study of a river's journey from its source to the sea noting its speed and its effects on the local landscape.
- Pupils further their knowledge of the locality and identify different types of land use. In their study of Cardiff Bay, they demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the features that might attract tourism and they evaluate their observations appropriately.
- Older pupils in KS2 use a range of secondary sources appropriately to obtain information, ideas and explanations. They study and compare maps and aerial photographs to obtain information well.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not have a sufficiently wide range of geographical knowledge and skills such as those linked to the use of maps, aerial photographs and local studies.
- Pupils seldom demonstrate the skills of geographical enquiry. They use a limited range of geographical terms and have too little understanding of the links between physical features and human activity.

Art

Standards in art are very good across both key stages. Pupils' artwork is attractively displayed; this contributes to the school's welcoming and stimulating environment. Pupils' achievements are enhanced through visiting exhibitions of Welsh art at nearby locations and visits from local Welsh artists. For example, they have worked alongside an artist to develop a mural on a wall of the school.

Good features

- At both key stages pupils work happily and purposefully at a variety of two and three-dimensional art. They observe carefully, experiment with different types of artwork and are unafraid of making mistakes.
- The pupils are proficient in representing shape and texture, using pencil and pastels, and in experimenting with tone and colour. They successfully use a wide variety of media and record a range of subjects well.

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- Pupils are familiar with and can discuss the works of famous artists, such as Monet, Renoir, Leger, Kandinski and Seurat, and know the characteristics of their respective styles. They study the techniques used and emulate different styles in their own artwork.
 - Pupils have good observational and drawing skills. The use of sketchbooks is well developed and pupils feel able to use them as they wish, for example, to experiment with sketching parts of objects to form a larger picture.
 - Pupils evaluate their own and others' work, and can reflect on their own and other pupils' development and expertise.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Music

Standards of achievement in music are satisfactory in both key stages. Three group singing practices and three music lessons were observed. A number of pupils benefit from instrumental tuition. This provision enhances standards.

Good features

- Pupils achieve good standards in singing in both key stages; their posture is good, they breathe correctly and perform with sensitivity and varied expression. They sing in tune, keep in time, maintain the rhythm well and enjoy both moving to the music and adding actions to a song where appropriate.
- In Y1, pupils can clap a simple rhythm and keep time appropriately. They distinguish between loud and soft sounds, name a variety of percussion instruments and vary the speed of their 'beating' and 'shaking' of instruments to match the song performed by the class.
- In Y3, pupils create imaginative sound pictures using instruments and in Y4, pupils accurately click a simple rhythm with their fingers and satisfactorily add an accompaniment to a song using percussion instruments.
- In KS2, some pupils plan and perform their own compositions and carefully record their music in graphic scores.

Shortcomings

- Pupils across the school have limited knowledge about musical instruments and a range of composers; neither do they have sufficient knowledge of musical elements or a variety of musical styles.
- In both key stages, pupils' composing and appraising skills are underdeveloped.

Physical education

There was insufficient evidence to judge overall standards in physical education, as it was not possible to observe the full range of work in the subject. The school's physical education programme reflects the requirements of the NC. Standards are enhanced through extra-curricular activities including rugby, football, netball and athletics.

Good features

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- In KS2, pupils are aware of the need to warm up at the beginning of lessons and know the importance of exercise on their bodies and understand the effect of energetic activity on the heart.
 - Pupils' ball skills are developing well. They have good hand-eye co-ordination and make effective progress in the skills of catching and throwing. They understand the importance of concentration and perseverance.
 - The majority has a good awareness of space and are encouraged to evaluate their own work and the work of others.
 - Pupils in KS2 attend swimming lessons and the school reports that the majority attain the NC standards expected of 11-year-olds.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not sufficiently challenge themselves to improve the quality of their performance and skills.

Religious education

Standards of achievement in religious education are satisfactory. The school's programme is based on the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

Good features

- In Y1, pupils have some knowledge of the Jewish Festival of Sukkot and know Harvest Festival is an important celebration in the Christian calendar. They enthusiastically recall making Diva lamps and have a developing knowledge of Hindu practices and of Jewish, Hindu and Christian places of worship.
- In Y2, pupils further their knowledge of religious festivals including Chanuka and Christmas appropriately. Pupils develop an increasing understanding of themselves, their families and friends and develop greater understanding of the importance of rules.
- In lower KS2, pupils satisfactorily consider Christian, Muslim and Jewish rules. They know that Moses and Abraham were leaders and that festivals such as Passover are celebrated to recall important events in Jewish history.
- Pupils have a developing knowledge of religious celebrations, the features of worship and of ceremonies such as the Jewish Bar Mitzvah.
- In upper KS2, pupils can name the holy books of Islam, Judaism and Christianity; they further their knowledge of major festivals, including Easter and Ramadan and consider religious teachings about right and wrong.
- Pupils have opportunities to visit places of worship and to observe their distinctive features. They are beginning to appreciate the significance of such places within the community. They know that the artefacts and rituals have a special symbolism.

Shortcomings

- In KS1, pupils' knowledge of Christianity is very limited. They seldom develop research skills to further their understanding of religious observance for children and their families from different faiths.
- In KS2, pupils' perception and understanding of religion are limited in scope and progress in written work lacks pace, rigour and detail. Pupils do not sufficiently develop enquiry skills through using artefacts and reference sources.

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- Pupils' knowledge about the development of religion in Wales is underdeveloped.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

The school has made a good measure of progress since the last inspection. In particular it has successfully raised attainment in the end of KS2 NC tests, raised standards in science, design and technology, information technology and art and maintained standards in other subjects. The quality of teaching has improved in this inspection. In observed lessons, almost 40 per cent of teaching was judged good or better compared with 25 per cent good in the last inspection.

In relation to the key issues identified in the previous inspection report, steady progress is being made although significant shortcomings remain. The school has worked on the following issues:

- **Increase the quantity and improve the quality of writing;**

There is evidence of a wide range of writing, particularly in KS2, but across classes the school has identified the continuing need to improve the quality and range of writing.

- **Give more attention to standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum;**

These aspects continue to be a key focus in the SDP. Very good progress is evident in the use of ICT and there is good improvement in the use of numeracy. However, there is a lack of consistency in promoting standards of literacy.

- **Adopt strategies and provide more opportunities for pupils to develop a greater degree of independence in their learning;**

Although teachers are working to improve learning styles, there is only limited evidence of pupils' making choices and working with a sufficient degree of independence. However, there are some positive examples of the promotion of greater independence within the school community.

- **Ensure that initiatives already in place to improve the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are fully implemented;**

Good progress is evident here; the school has systematic procedures to assess and monitor pupils' progress.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order to raise standards and further improve the quality of education, the school and the governing body, with the support of appropriate agencies, should continue to implement the SDP and place particular emphasis on:

- raising standards further in the areas of learning for the under-fives and the NC subjects in both key stages, where standards are satisfactory;
- improving standards of writing across subjects in both key stages;
- developing greater consistency in teaching and learning by:
 - detailing the development of learning objectives in lesson planning;

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- using on-going assessments to modify lesson planning and match work more closely to pupils' differing needs and abilities;
 - tightening the structure and organisation of lessons to improve the pace of learning;
 - consistently implementing schemes of work to ensure the content is fully developed and review the use of lesson time;
 - developing and implementing detailed action plans to promote whole-school priorities, develop the role of co-ordinators and rigorously focus monitoring strategies to assure consistent progress towards the school's goals.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Blaengwawr Primary
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3–11 years
Address of school	Gwawr Street Aberaman Aberdare Rhondda Cynon Taff
Post-Code	CF44 6YP
Telephone Number	01685 871064

Headteacher	Mrs P Newton
Date of appointment	01 January 1997
Chair of Governors	Councillor A Christopher
Registered Inspector	Mr M T Ridout
Dates of inspection	26–28 April 2004

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	25	19	29	29	24	44	30	31	231

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	10	0	10

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	23.5:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	5:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	26.5
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.1:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Summer 2003	87.66	90.30	92.57	90.17
Autumn 2003	92.78	91.90	93.67	92.96
Spring 2004	94.24	92.84	93.45	93.86

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	2
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C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2003			Number of pupils in Y2: 26					
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	4	16	36	44	0
		National	0	4	14	63	20	0
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	4	20	28	48	0
		National	0	4	14	55	27	0
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	8	4	64	24	0
		National	0	5	14	69	11	0
EN: Speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	4	12	32	52	0
		National	0	3	12	63	22	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	8	52	40	0
		National	0	2	11	63	24	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	4	8	52	36	0
		National	0	2	10	66	22	0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment

In the school:	76	In Wales:	79
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D Pupils who have been disapplied under sections 364 and 365 of the Education Act 1996 or, in the case of the Task/Test were absent.

W Pupils who are "working towards" level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for level 1.

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results: 2003			Number of pupils in Y6: 33										
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	43	33	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	16	45	31	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	18	40	36	0
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	5	12	38	40	0
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	24	49	21	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	19	46	30	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	27	49	21	0
		National	0	2	1	0	0	0	4	18	42	33	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	39	46	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	49	35	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	42	46	0
		National	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	9	48	39	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	43	33	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	16	45	31	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	18	40	36	0
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	5	12	38	40	0

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:	67	In the school:	61
In Wales:	70	In Wales:	71

D Pupils who have been disapplied under sections 364 and 365 of the Education Act 1996.

A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence.

N Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence.

B Pupils not entered for tests because they are working outside the levels of the tests.

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

- The inspection team consisted of three inspectors who worked for 11 inspector days (over three days) gathering first-hand evidence. In total, 63 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Inspectors observed classes and evaluated the pupil’s work.
- Inspectors attended registration sessions and school assemblies and observed break times. All teachers were observed teaching several times. Discussions were held with members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, representatives of the governing body, parents and others both during the inspection and initial inspection visits.
- All the available work and records of a representative sample of at least three pupils from each class, plus the work of a sample of pupils with SEN were scrutinised. A representative number of pupils were heard to read both formally and informally.
- A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection.
- The registered inspector held a meeting attended by 16 parents before the inspection and considered 43 parents’ responses to a questionnaire.
- No lessons in history and geography took place in KS1 during the inspection. Too few lessons in physical education were available to reliably judge standards.
- At the end of the inspection, the main findings of the inspection were discussed with the senior staff. A short time after the inspection, meetings were held with staff and governors to report the findings of the inspection.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Mr M T Ridout	RgI	The school and its priorities; Main findings of the inspection; Standards in subjects and areas of learning; Teaching; Curriculum; Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement; Leadership and efficiency; Progress since the last inspection.	mathematics; information technology; music; religious education.
Ms M Sheen	Team	Standards in key skills; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.	provision for the under-fives; science; design and technology; art.
Mr O Phillips	Team	Assessment recording and reporting; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Provision for pupils with SEN;	English; Welsh as a second language; history; geography; physical education.
Mr S Hammond	Lay	Behaviour and attitudes; Attendance; Partnership with parents, the community, schools and other institutions; Partnership with industry.	

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