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For Education and Training in Wales



BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**Inspection under Section 10 of the
School Inspections Act 1996**

**Borthyn Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Denbigh Road
Ruthin
Denbighshire
LL15 1NT**

Report by H M Inspectors

School Number: 663/3050

Inspection completed 24 – 25 June 2002

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1. Context

The school and its priorities

Borthyn Primary is a Church-in-Wales Voluntary Controlled School in the town of Ruthin, Denbighshire. The school was remodelled in 1990 and generally provides suitable accommodation in an attractive environment. Nearly all the pupils attending the school live in or near to Ruthin. It is reported that the area from which the pupils are drawn is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. No pupils come from homes where Welsh is the first language.

Pupils are aged from 3 to 11 years and reflect the full range of ability. There are 153 pupils on roll. Nursery education is available in the mornings only for 14 children. Approximately 20% of the pupils are registered as being entitled to free school meals. Currently, 30% of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs. These pupils receive extra help and attention to cater for their particular learning needs. Eight pupils have statements of special educational needs.

The current headteacher has been in post since 1988. The school was previously inspected in April 1997. Progress in addressing the key issues for action has been limited and is unsatisfactory. The school has set itself an unrealistic number of targets for improvement.

It is the aim of the school to 'provide a Christian learning environment that strives to realise the full potential of pupils through quality and excellence and further support the partnership of parents, governors and staff as educators'.

The school was subject to an inspection under Section 23 of the Schools Inspection Act 1996 referring to collective worship and school ethos. The report commends the good quality of relationships within the school and confirms that the worship is wholly Christian, of good quality and in accordance with the Trust Deed and the school's Ethos Statement.

2. Main findings

The main findings of the report

The school is very successful in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. Standards in most subjects are satisfactory and in the provision for the under-fives standards are at least satisfactory and often good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils' behaviour is good. However, there are several serious weaknesses in the key areas of assessment, management, leadership and efficiency, self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

- Standards of achievement are good in just over a third of the lessons or sessions observed and satisfactory in about two-thirds.
- In the nursery and reception classes, standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

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

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

Subject	Key stage 1	Key stage 2
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Welsh second language	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
History	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Art	Good	Good
Music	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Physical education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

- In key stage 1 National Curriculum assessments for 2001, 95% of pupils gained level 2 or above in English and mathematics, and 100% in science. In comparison with schools of a similar nature, key stage 1 pupils attain well. Their results fall within the upper quartile.
- In key stage 2, the school's results in National Curriculum assessments for 2001 in English, mathematics and science were below local and national norms. Results in science were particularly low.
- Provisional results for National Curriculum assessments in 2002 indicate a significant improvement in science at key stage 2.
- The school sets targets for improvement in National Curriculum assessments, but these are not as the result of any monitoring and consequently lack rigour.
- Standards in key skills are satisfactory overall in both key stages. In the key skills of speaking and listening, standards are good. Standards in reading, writing and numeracy are satisfactory, but information and communications technology is unsatisfactory.
- Overall, the school is very successful in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. Provision for these aspects of pupils' development is good. The school is a calm and secure place where pupils are happy and where relationships are good. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well in acts of collective worship. Their moral development is successfully fostered through the school's Christian ethos. Pupils have respect for each other and for adults and show good care for their surroundings. They have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils' cultural development is good; they show appropriate awareness of the culture and traditions of Wales. Good use is made of incidental Welsh, both in lessons and around the school.
- Standards of behaviour are good. Pupils behave well, both inside and outside classrooms. The school is an orderly environment that is conducive to learning. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and concentrate in class.
- Attendance is generally satisfactory and there are no unauthorised absences. Pupils are punctual and the school day begins promptly.
- Teaching ranges from satisfactory to good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Of the lessons observed, about two-thirds were judged to be satisfactory and just over one third were good. There were more good lessons in key stage 1 than in key stage 2.
- Teachers know their pupils well, and the good relationships that exist enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the National Curriculum subjects. Lessons are well prepared, appropriately introduced and there is good use of a variety of resources.

- Assessment, recording and reporting processes are inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall. Teachers do not use information gained from pupils' work to plan next steps or set clear and specific targets for improvement. There is little analysis of the results of National Curriculum tests in order to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The curriculum organised for children under five is suitable and promotes the desirable outcomes for the six areas of learning. Children have appropriate experiences that provide a good foundation for their education.
- The school generally provides a broad and balanced curriculum, but there are some shortcomings. There is a lack of continuity and progression across subjects and year groups. Planning is ineffective and does not influence teaching enough. There is no whole school planning for the development of key skills. A wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits enhance pupils' experiences. Regular homework contributes to an improvement in the quality of the work in some classes. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig has a suitably prominent role within the school.
- The quality of support, guidance and pupils' welfare is satisfactory. The caring ethos of the school ensures that pupils feel secure and know what to do if they have problems.
- Overall, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is well organised, with all statutory requirements met. Support for pupils is effective and parents are kept well informed of their children's progress. The school makes very good use of learning support assistants. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- The school has satisfactory partnerships with parents, other schools, the community and local industry and commerce.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is unsatisfactory. The school has not yet developed self-evaluation processes to assist with the monitoring of progress and target setting. There is limited use of school data and a lack of first-hand monitoring by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. As a result, no evaluation has been carried out of standards achieved by pupils and the quality of teaching and learning.
- The leadership and efficiency of the school are unsatisfactory overall. There is little evidence of a clear, strategic direction in planning. The school development plan is not effective and contains an over-ambitious and unrealistic set of priorities.
- Governors do not have enough awareness of quality and standards in the school and lack a strategic role.

- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are generally satisfactory. The school is appropriately staffed. Non-teaching staff give good support to pupils and teachers. There is no clear link between the school development plan and the training that staff undertake. Lack of staff expertise and training in information and communications technology limits the standards achieved by pupils.
- The school building is of good quality and is well looked after.
- The key issues identified in the previous school inspection in 1997 have not been effectively addressed. In general, progress has been unsatisfactory.

3. Educational standards achieved by pupils

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Standards of achievement are good in just over a third of the lessons or sessions observed and satisfactory in about two-thirds.

- In both key stages, standards of achievement are satisfactory in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Standards in information and communications technology are unsatisfactory. In art, standards are good in key stage 1 and 2. In all other non-core foundation subjects, standards are satisfactory across both key stages.
- In both the nursery and reception classes, children under five years of age make at least satisfactory, and often good progress in all six areas of learning.
- In key stage 1 National Curriculum assessments for 2001, 95% of pupils gained level 2 or above in English and mathematics, and 100% in science.
- In comparison with schools of a similar nature key stage 1 pupils attain well. Their results fall within the upper quartile.
- In key stage 2, the school's results in National Curriculum assessments for 2001 in English, mathematics and science were below local and national norms. Results in science were particularly low.
- Provisional results for National Curriculum assessments in 2002 indicate a significant improvement in science at key stage 2.
- Girls make better progress than boys in key stage 2 in each of the core subjects but, particularly so in science.
- The school sets targets for improvement in National Curriculum assessments but these are not as the result of any monitoring and consequently lack rigour.

3.2 Standards achieved in the key skills across the curriculum

Standards in key skills are satisfactory overall in both key stages. In the key skills of speaking and listening, standards are good. Standards are satisfactory in reading, writing and numeracy, but are unsatisfactory in information and communications technology.

- Standards in speaking and listening are good. Pupils listen attentively, speak clearly, share and discuss their experiences and express opinions with confidence. Year 6 pupils' development in speaking is restricted in some lessons by the lack of opportunities for independent discussion in pairs or groups.
- Standards in reading at key stage 1 and key stage 2 are satisfactory. Although a significant number of pupils read aloud well, a substantial minority read slowly and lack fluency. Pupils' oral responses to reading are satisfactory. Older pupils can use the library and Internet effectively to research information to support their work, particularly in history.
- Standards in writing at key stage 1 and key stage 2 are satisfactory. However, progress in writing across the curriculum in key stage 1 is hindered by the over-use of published worksheets. Pupils in key stage 2 only write extensively, with a satisfactory range of ideas, in a small number of subjects. Some work in Year 6 is not challenging enough and pupils copy work too often.
- Standards in numeracy in both key stages are satisfactory. Pupils use good computational skills in science. They measure accurately, using appropriate units and can interpret number data in the form of tables and graphs.
- Standards in information and communications technology are unsatisfactory in both key stages. However, pupils in Year 5 can use a range of software and the Internet to support and develop their work. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 use CD-ROMs to enrich music lessons. Most pupils are developing word processing skills, but generally lack confidence in using equipment and software.

4. Ethos of the school

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Overall, the school is very successful in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. Provision for these aspects of pupils' development is good. The school is a calm and secure place where pupils are happy and where relationships are good.

- Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well in acts of collective worship, where they are given opportunities to reflect on issues and relate them to their own lives. This provides them with a positive start to the school day. The general ethos of the school also supports pupils' spiritual development. It is also appropriately fostered in those lessons where pupils have opportunities to consider and reflect, either on their own work, or on the contributions of others.
- The school's Christian ethos successfully fosters pupils' moral development. Pupils have respect for each other and for adults, and they care for their surroundings. They have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They are open and friendly in their responses to each other and to adults.
- When given opportunities in class, pupils' develop their social skills successfully through working in pairs and groups; they collaborate and support each other well. Pupils are able to listen to and value one another's contributions and take turns appropriately. They make good efforts in supporting fundraising events and charities.
- Pupils' cultural development is good; they show appropriate awareness of the culture and traditions of Wales. Good use is made of incidental Welsh, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils' awareness and respect for other cultures is at least satisfactory and is enhanced through, for example, the study of Islam in Year 4.
- Pupils are fully aware of the different needs of their fellow pupils. The school effectively promotes racial equality and diversity.

4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

Overall, pupils' standards of behaviour and attitudes are good.

The school is an orderly environment that is conducive to learning. Pupils behave well, both inside and outside classrooms. They have very positive attitudes to their work and concentrate well in class.

- Pupils are friendly to each other and to staff and visitors alike; they also behave appropriately when taking part in visits and activities outside the school.
- The school has appropriate policies in place to promote good behaviour; the PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) initiative, in particular, effectively supports the development of anger management strategies.
- Pupils show self-discipline and are prepared to listen to each other and to value one another's contributions.
- No instances of bullying or any form of discrimination were observed during the inspection.
- No pupil has been excluded in the past 12 months; appropriate procedures are in place in respect of exclusion.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance is generally satisfactory.

Over the past year, attendance levels fell below 90% in the Spring Term, due to illness. However, all absences were authorised. However, it is a matter of concern that some families take holidays during the school term.

- The school has an appropriate attendance and truancy policy.
- Pupils are prompt in arriving in class, both at the start of the day and after breaks.
- Staff monitor attendance in class; regular checks are made and appropriate follow-up procedures carried out. However, specific targets for attendance are not set.
- The Education Welfare Officer is in regular contact with the school and is called on when necessary.
- The school complies with the requirements of National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99.

5. Quality of education

5.1 Teaching

Teaching ranges from satisfactory to good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection.

In the lessons observed, about two-thirds were judged to be satisfactory with just over one third good. There was more good teaching in key stage 1 than in key stage 2.

Teachers know their pupils well, and the good relationships that exist enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the National Curriculum subjects. Lessons are well prepared, appropriately introduced and there is good use of a variety of resources.

However, planning is generally ineffective and does not influence teaching enough. As a result, there is a lack of progression and continuity across subjects and year groups.

In those lessons where teaching is good:

- there is a good recap of previous work;
- teaching challenges pupils appropriately;
- lessons have good pace and work is well matched to pupils' levels of ability;
- there are opportunities for pupils to work independently of the teacher, in pairs and groups;
- teachers intervene well to support and move pupils on in their work; and
- the timing of activities is good, with objectives shared and clearly explained.

In those lessons where teaching is no more than satisfactory:

- the timing of activities is inappropriate;
- lessons lack pace and pupils spend too long on some tasks;
- teacher expectations are too low, resulting in a lack of challenge, particularly for more able pupils;
- teachers do not always demand that enough work is completed during the lesson;

- teachers do not share learning objectives enough with pupils;
- there is an overuse of photocopied worksheets; and
- pupils have too few opportunities to work on their own, independently of the teacher.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

Assessment, recording and reporting processes are unsatisfactory.

- Assessment procedures are inconsistent across the school. There are however, some examples of satisfactory practice.
- Marking is variable. There are some examples of good practice, where marking identifies areas for development. Generally, however, teachers' comments are not specific and do not often identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses so that next steps for improvement are clear.
- In some classes, teachers analyse the results of tests to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses. This information is beginning to be used for target-setting processes and for the evaluation of teaching strategies.
- The arrangements for assessing and recording the progress of pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Some moderation of pupils' work is being undertaken in line with National Curriculum level descriptions. However, this work is under-developed.
- Reports to parents are generally satisfactory. However, targets for pupils' further development are not specified. In Years 2 and 6, end of key stage reports do not provide parents with information that they can use to compare the progress of their children with others in the school, or with pupils nationally.
- There are appropriate opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress with class teachers.
- Overall, teachers do not use information gained from pupils' work to plan next steps or set clear and specific targets for improvement. There is little analysis of the results of National Curriculum tests in order to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses.

5.3 Curriculum

The curriculum is generally satisfactory, but there are some shortcomings.

- The curriculum organised for children under five is suitable and promotes the desirable outcomes for the six areas of learning. Children have appropriate experiences that provide a good foundation for their education.
- There is a wide range of schemes of work in place, but the majority have not been adapted to meet the needs of the school. As a result, there is a lack of continuity and progression across subjects and year groups. Mid and short term planning is ineffective and does not inform teaching. There is no whole school planning for key skills.
- Over-use of published materials and worksheets limits pupils' opportunities to develop their own recording skills.
- The Cwricwlwm Cymreig has a suitably prominent role within the school. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to discuss the work of Welsh artists and composers.
- Pupils undertake a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits, including sporting activities and a weekly meeting of the Urdd. These enhance pupils' experiences and the quality of their learning.
- Regular homework contributes to an improvement in the quality of the work in some classes. There are examples of home-school projects that involve good parental support for pupils.

5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

The quality of support, guidance and pupils' welfare is satisfactory. The caring ethos of the school ensures that pupils feel secure and know what to do if they have problems.

- The school has an appropriate range of policies and procedures on health and safety, discipline and drugs education.
- All staff know their pupils very well and are sensitive to their needs.
- When help is required, pupils readily turn to adults in the school; a particular strength is the support given by learning support assistants.
- The use of the PATHS initiative effectively encourages pupils to consider the effects of individual feelings in a range of situations. This enhances their personal and social development.

- Support staff and mid-day supervisors make a valuable contribution to the care and welfare of pupils.
- There is a Child Protection Policy and procedures are in place. However, the policy contains some conflicting information. The school does not co-ordinate this aspect well enough to ensure that any potential child protection issue is either appropriately or speedily dealt with.
- Access to the school from the field, front gate and door represents a potential health and safety risk for pupils.

5.5 Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Overall, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special needs co-ordinator is very thorough in all aspects of planning.

Standards achieved are also good for those pupils.

There are currently 8 statemented pupils on roll, 2 of whom have dual registration and at present attend a speech and language unit. A further 44 pupils are on the special needs register. The school deploys three full-time learning support assistants to work with pupils who have special educational needs.

- Special needs provision is very well organised, with all statutory requirements met.
- The special needs co-ordinator carries out her role efficiently and effectively.
- There are very good links with external agencies. The school is involved in a pilot project that is of particular benefit to pupils who have speech and language difficulties. This ensures that outreach help is given to a greater number of pupils than would normally receive such support.
- The school identifies pupils with special educational needs appropriately. Good liaison between the special needs co-ordinator, class teachers and learning support assistants ensures that individual education plans are shared.
- There is good integration, and, where appropriate, withdrawal of pupils, in order to meet their needs.
- In-class support is effective in ensuring that pupils make suitable progress.
- The school keeps parents well informed of their children's progress and invites them to attend review meetings on a regular basis.

- Good planning is taking place to ensure that due regard is given to the new Code of Practice for Special Needs, with an appropriate increased emphasis on individual targets and parental involvement.
- The school makes very good use of learning support assistants who work closely with the class teachers to provide well-structured activities.

5.6 Partnerships with parents and community, schools and other institutions

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

- Parents are kept well informed of school activities.
- They actively support the school by raising funds, and some help with classroom activities.
- A majority of parents support the home-school agreement.
- Parents and members of the community are invited to school concerts, services and other school activities.
- Regular visitors to the school contribute to pupils' education, as do the visits that pupils make to places of interest.
- Satisfactory links exist between the school and a teacher training institution. Pupils benefit from this link.
- In general, good links have been established with the secondary school to which the pupils transfer.
- The governor's Annual Report to Parents does not fully comply with the statutory requirements.

5.7 Partnership with industry

Partnership with industry is satisfactory overall.

- The school has links with the Business in the Community group, which arranges for its members to visit the school to hear pupils read.
- Visits take place to local businesses and industries. These have enhanced the curriculum.
- The school receives sponsorships and donations from local businesses and industries.
- Links with Investors in People are currently being developed.
- The school has no policy for links with industry.

6. Management

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

The quality of the school's self-evaluation and its planning for improvement are unsatisfactory.

- The school has not yet developed self-evaluation processes to help monitor progress and set targets. In the last year, there has been some progress to examine how well the school is achieving, but this is at a very early stage of development.
- There has been only a limited use of school, local and national data to evaluate progress and to enable teachers to establish targets for improvement.
- There is a lack of first-hand monitoring by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. As a result, no evaluation has been carried out of standards achieved by pupils and the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school has identified science as a priority, following an analysis of the National Curriculum assessment results. This has resulted in extra time being allocated to science, prior to this year's key stage tests.
- Teachers in Year 3 and Year 5 have set tests for their pupils and analysed the outcomes of these to provide useful information on individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses.
- A good initiative has involved the staff assigning a level to pupil work in line with National Curriculum expectations. The aim is to put together a portfolio of assessed work in English.
- The school development plan contains an over-ambitious and unrealistic set of priorities. The plan does not make clear how the list of priorities was chosen and it lacks detail in terms of outcomes, success criteria, costings and timescales.
- Governors are informed of school improvement initiatives, but do not have a detailed awareness of quality and standards in the school.
- In the current academic year, the school achieved the 'Quality Mark' from the Basic Skills Agency.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The leadership and efficiency of the school are unsatisfactory overall.

- The headteacher was absent during the inspection. However, on the basis of examining all available documentation and discussions with staff who have leadership responsibilities, there is evidence that the quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient evidence of clear, strategic direction for the school.
- The school has a caring ethos. There are shared values and norms that result in a consistently good standard of behaviour. This enhances the quality of life in the school.
- Subject co-ordinators have too limited a role. They do not manage budgets or monitor teaching. As a result, no evaluation has been carried out of standards achieved by pupils and the quality of teaching and learning.
- The governing body does not have a strategic role within the school. Governors lack information on standards and progress and, as a result, are not active enough in making decisions.
- The school development plan is not an effective management tool. Financial allocations are not rigorously managed so as to implement the identified priorities.
- In-service training of teachers does not meet the needs of the school. Evaluation of the impact of training is not undertaken often enough.
- Day-to-day communication is satisfactory. Regular staff meetings and bulletins provide staff with essential information.
- Administrative procedures and daily routines are effective.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory.

- The school is appropriately staffed.
- Non-teaching staff give good support to pupils and teachers.
- Whole school in-service training of teachers takes place but is not sufficiently focused to meet the needs of the school. There is no clear link between the school development plan and the training that staff undertake. The school does not evaluate enough the impact of training.

- Lack of staff expertise and training in information and communications technology has limited the standards achieved by pupils.
- There is no performance management system in place.
- The school building is of good quality, clean and very well cared for.
- The display of pupils' work is generally good.
- Outside play areas for the nursery and the main school are satisfactory. The school field is large, but the perimeter fencing is damaged and unsafe in several places.
- There are enough learning resources in most subjects and resources are good in physical education, design and technology and English.

7. Subjects and areas of learning

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils are making good progress in the six areas of learning. They make particularly good progress in the reception class.

Language, literacy and communication skills

Language, literacy and communication skills are good.

Good features

- In both the nursery and reception classes, children develop good speaking and listening skills. They communicate appropriately, ask relevant questions and respond in a sensible way.
- Children in the reception class, in particular, are developing good oral skills and some are beginning to express themselves with confidence.
- Reception class children are able to understand suitably challenging language.
- Children in both classes can sing in Welsh and English; in addition, greetings and responses in Welsh are well developed.
- Nursery class children are able to recognise their own and others' names.
- In the nursery class, some children can form letters correctly and are overwriting with confidence.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were noted.

Personal and social development

Personal and social development is good.

Good features

- Children are polite and show respect towards one another. They co-operate well with each other and with adults.
- Children in the reception class show good levels of concentration when listening to the teacher.
- Both nursery and reception class children are secure in daily activities and gain increasing self-confidence.
- There are clear routines that support the development of children's social skills, particularly in the nursery class.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were noted. However, in the nursery class, a minority of children become inattentive when an activity is overlong, and, as a result, do not listen enough.

Mathematical development

Mathematical development is satisfactory.

Good features

- In the reception class, children make good progress in understanding shape and number.
- In both classes, children have a good awareness of time. In the nursery, for example, children talk about what they did on the previous Saturday and Sunday.
- In both classes, children are able to recognise two and three-dimensional shapes and are able to thread beads to show repeated patterns.
- In the nursery class, they are able to repeat a pattern of up to three blocks.
- Reception class children have satisfactory counting skills and most form their numbers correctly.

Shortcomings

- In the nursery class, some opportunities are missed to develop mathematical skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.

Good features

- The children talk about their family, friends, pets and their own environment. They benefit from visitors to the school.
- In the nursery class, children are able to name pets and wild animals.
- Children in both classes are able to use the computer with a degree of confidence and are able to discuss what they are doing.
- Reception class children are able to recognise and name common materials and to make appropriate choices in their use.
- Children make progress in their development of understanding, designing and making. In this, they have well-targeted help of classroom assistants.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were noted.

Physical development

Physical development is good.

Good features

- Both nursery and reception class children make good progress in developing their physical skills.
- In both classes, children's fine motor skills are developing appropriately.
- In the nursery class, physical activities build on the enthusiasm of the children for movement and play. They make good progress.
- In the nursery class, children are developing a good awareness of space, through regular physical education lessons.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were noted.

Creative development

Creative development is good.

Good features

- In both the nursery and reception classes, children produce a range of artwork using a variety of materials.
- Reception class children, of all abilities, make models.
- Children in the reception class choose their own colours and shapes when designing and making a butterfly.
- Children in both classes use language creatively in a range of activities.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were noted.

English

Standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Standards of speaking and listening are good. Pupils listen attentively in all classes and show a keen interest in the contributions of fellow pupils and teachers. They speak with confidence when giving instructions to others. In Year 4, they respond well to questions when discussing synonyms.
- Most pupils read to a satisfactory standard with confidence and understanding.
- More able pupils in key stage 1 write extensively with detail and accuracy in different genres, including poetry.
- Older pupils, who regularly go through the process of re-drafting their work, show a good understanding of purpose, style and grammar.
- The standard of handwriting and presentation is satisfactory in key stage 1 and good at key stage 2.

Shortcomings

- Less able pupils, in both key stages, lack expression when reading aloud and have a limited range of techniques to help them make sense of unfamiliar words.
- A significant minority of pupils in key stage 1 do not use basic grammar and spelling patterns appropriately.
- In some classes, and especially in upper key stage 2, pupils do not write enough at length and progress is slow. These pupils do not have sufficient opportunities of writing in different styles either for a range of audiences or for different purposes.
- The majority of pupils do not have enough opportunities to re-draft their work and make improvements to content and grammar. This has an adverse effect on standards of writing.

Mathematics

In mathematics, standards overall are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- In key stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of number bonds and use mathematical terminology appropriately. They are able to measure accurately, recognise odd and even numbers and are familiar with simple fractions.
- Older pupils can describe accurately the properties of two-dimensional shapes, draw accurate maps to a scale of 1:10 and collect, analyse and interpret a range of data.
- Pupils in key stage 2, especially the most able, have a good understanding of the four rules of number and can apply them to solve problems in different contexts.
- They can find the perimeter and area of complex shapes, order fractions, measure angles accurately and can read analogue and digital time.
- More able, older pupils are particularly good at mental arithmetic.

Shortcomings

- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to undertake mathematical investigations and problem solving activities.
- In Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of number work, but do not do enough work in other aspects of the subject. As a result, they generally have an unsatisfactory understanding of shape, volume and measurement.

Science

In science, standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in Year 1 have good observational skills in identifying parts of a plant. They can correctly specify where they could find a variety of plants around the school.
- In Year 2, pupils work carefully and accurately when investigating simple circuits. They have a good understanding of how electricity is produced and the potential dangers of electrical appliances in the home.
- Pupils in key stage 1 have a satisfactory range of scientific experiences. The recording of these is mainly on worksheets and is not well targeted to the full ability range.
- In key stage 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and various physical processes.
- Older pupils have a sound understanding of the investigative process and the importance of fair testing, including changing one variable while keeping others the same. They use scientific terms accurately to describe and record their findings.

Shortcomings

- Generally, pupils do not engage in scientific enquiry or conduct investigations often enough.
- Throughout both key stages, pupils undertake scientific investigations under teacher guidance, for the most part. This limits opportunities for them to develop their investigative skills independently of the teacher.
- There is a lack of continuity and progression in science throughout the school.

Welsh second language

Standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- A particularly strong feature is the good use made by pupils of incidental Welsh throughout the school.
- Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 take part in role-play activities effectively.
- Pupils read simple big books as a whole class in key stage 1 and fiction books independently in key stage 2.
- In key stage 1, the writing process begins appropriately by overwriting and underwriting vocabulary. This leads to the writing of satisfactory descriptions by pupils in Year 2.
- A minority of older pupils write extensively and effectively with the help of writing scaffolds and frames.

Shortcomings

- Some pupils do not use the sentence pattern given and their oral responses are very brief.
- A significant minority of pupils have difficulty in constructing simple sentences and spelling key words independently.

Design and technology

Standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- More able pupils in key stage 1 have a good understanding of the design and making process. They investigate by using books and then create initial designs in detail. They apply appropriate finishing techniques. The work completed is often of a good standard.
- Some pupils in key stage 1 produce effective initial designs and models by applying knowledge gained from other areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils in key stage 2 can make mobile character puppets with care, detail and accuracy. They apply appropriate finishing techniques.

- In food technology, pupils plan and make a range of products. They complete the task successfully under appropriate supervision. Some pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of hygiene and other aspects of health and safety.
- When given the opportunity to evaluate their finished products against their initial designs, a minority of pupils can give valid reasons on how they might improve.

Shortcomings

- Many pupils' designs lack sufficient detail to inform the making process.
- Pupils do not take enough responsibility for preparation and cooking during food technology.
- Pupils do not evaluate their design ideas enough.

Information and communications technology

Standards in information and communications technology are unsatisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in key stage 1 make use of a drawing program for producing pictures, supported by some text. A minority know how to keep their work on file, retrieve and print it.
- In key stage 2, appropriate use is made in Years 3 and 5 of a simple data-handling program for gathering, organising and recording results in the form of a block graph.
- There are a few examples of effective use of CD-ROMs, recording equipment and the Internet for gathering and discussing information. A minority of pupils are able to keep their work on file, retrieve and print it.

Shortcomings

- Overall, pupils have very limited opportunities to access suitable hardware and software to develop their skills of communicating, handling information and modelling.

History

Standards in history are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages are developing an appropriate awareness of chronology.
- They are beginning to understand aspects of the past and how it has helped to shape the present.
- Pupils use a variety of sources and can identify different ways in which the past is represented.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are developing an awareness of the characteristics of different periods.
- Older pupils in key stage 2 engage effectively in role-play activities. These provide them with a good appreciation of different aspects of history.

Shortcomings

- Pupils organise and communicate their findings in a limited number of ways.
- There are few opportunities for pupils to share ideas, discuss opinions and apply these to their work.

Geography

In geography, standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- In key stage 1, pupils draw simple maps of their immediate environment and plot the location of familiar landmarks.
- Older key stage 1 pupils study the seaside as a contrasting location. They are able to identify the physical and human characteristics of their own town and others.
- Pupils in key stage 2 develop secure mapping skills and are able to draw accurate maps with a detailed key and use grid references.
- In Year 4, pupils are able to identify the main differences between their own way of life and that of the people of India.

- In Year 5, pupils have undertaken a successful project centred on work in their own town. They worked well on traffic issues and were able to suggest solutions to problems. They successfully linked their class work to life in the outside world by writing to the local council.

Shortcomings

- Not all pupils have enough access to the National Curriculum requirements.
- Current planning does not ensure progress and continuity.

Art

Standards in art are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils make use of opportunities to work with a variety of resources and use different cultures and historical periods in their work to good effect.
- They are able to experiment effectively with methods used by a number of other artists.
- Pupils use information and communications technology appropriately, to support and enhance work in art lessons.
- Pupils' collages show care and thought and they are able to use a variety of materials in their production.
- Pupils in key stage 2 have good design skills.
- Older pupils, in particular, work with very good levels of concentration and develop good observational skills.
- Pupils across both key stages show reasonable brush control and good choice of colour.
- In most lessons, pupils can describe, evaluate and make comparisons between their own work and that of others.
- Good use is made of the local environment as a stimulus.

Shortcomings

- Pupils in key stage 2 do not make enough use of reference materials to support their work.
- Pupils, in both key stages, do not investigate and record enough from direct observation.

Music

Standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Throughout the school, pupils sing a variety of songs with some control of dynamics and with a satisfactory pitch. Occasionally, they use untuned percussion instruments to accompany songs. Older pupils in Year 5 are able to sing two-part songs.
- In Year 2, pupils use a range of tuned and untuned percussion and other sounds to compose a 'sound picture' of the seaside.
- Pupils are becoming familiar with technical terms in their work and are developing appropriate evaluating techniques.
- Pupils in Year 3 work well in pairs to create and respond to patterns using high and low untuned percussion.
- Pupils benefit from working with a musician in residence. They gain a deeper understanding of Afro-Caribbean music by listening to a performance and taking part in a workshop.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to compose and arrange music in response to a range of musical stimuli.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to appraise music and express their own opinions.

Physical education

Standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- In key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils are aware of the need to warm up before exercising and work energetically throughout the lesson. They dress appropriately for the activities and show a good awareness of safety issues.
- Most pupils can catch and throw balls of different sizes accurately over a range of distances. When working in pairs they throw and retrieve balls at an appropriate pace. Pupils show good hand eye co-ordination and can strike a ball well. There is clear progression in pupils' skills during lessons.
- In athletics, the majority of pupils are able to simulate shot putting and discuss throwing by using small balls and quoits effectively.
- Pupils work well both individually and in pairs to create a simple Indian folk dance. They work together effectively in response to music and create sure and definite movements, combining them in sequence appropriately.
- Older pupils benefit from a wide range of outdoor pursuit experiences.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not have enough time to practise and refine their skills in athletics, dance and ball games before moving into game situations or new activities.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to evaluate and refine their own work and the work of others in dance lessons, in order to improve their own performance.

8. School improvement

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The key issues identified in the last inspection report have not been effectively addressed. In general, progress has been unsatisfactory.

- **Raise standards in design and technology and geography in both key stages.**

Some progress has been made in raising standards of achievement in these subjects. Standards are now judged to be satisfactory in both key stages in design and technology and in geography.

- **Raise standards in key stage 2 in science and some aspects of Welsh and information and communications technology.**

Standards in science are satisfactory in both key stages. Provisional test results for science at the end of key stage 2 for 2002 show substantial improvements. However, pupils have insufficient experience of practical and investigative work and are not encouraged to collaborate in order to solve problems.

Welsh is satisfactory in both key stages. There is good use of incidental Welsh throughout the school.

Standards in information and communications technology are unsatisfactory in both key stages. Planning does not ensure that pupils are provided with the full range of opportunities, as required by the National Curriculum. Pupils do not make appropriate progress in developing their information technology skills.

- **Improve curriculum planning by implementing whole-school schemes of work for all subjects, firmly based on National Curriculum requirements.**

There is a wide range of schemes of work in place but these have not been adapted fully to meet the needs of the school. Progress on this key issue has been unsatisfactory.

- **Implement a policy for assessment in order to secure consistency throughout the school in assessing and recording pupils' achievement and progress.**

Assessment, recording and reporting processes are inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall. Teachers do not use information gained from pupils' work to plan next steps or set clear and specific targets for improvement. There is little analysis of the results of National Curriculum tests in order to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses.

- **Develop the role of the headteacher and subject co-ordinators in monitoring curriculum provision and the standard and quality of pupils' work.**

Progress has been unsatisfactory.

The school has not yet developed self-evaluation processes to assist the monitoring of progress and target setting.

There is a lack of first-hand monitoring by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. As a result, no evaluation has been carried out of standards achieved by pupils and the quality of teaching and learning.

- **Implement a system for the appraisal of all teachers.**

There are currently no effective systems in place for the appraisal of teachers.

- **Revise the school development plan in order to:**
 - a) **identify staff responsible for specific initiatives;**
 - b) **provide accurate costings for all priorities;**
 - c) **link staff training to curriculum developments; and**
 - d) **establish formal procedures for monitoring the plan and evaluating the cost-effectiveness of expenditure.**

The school development plan contains an over-ambitious and unrealistic set of priorities. It does not make clear how the list of priorities was chosen and the plan lacks detail in terms of outcomes, success criteria, costings and timescales.

Governors are informed of school improvement initiatives, but do not have a detailed awareness of quality and standards in the school.

8.2 Key issues for action

The school needs to:

- improve standards of achievement in information and communications technology in both key stages, and address the shortcomings in those subjects that are only satisfactory;
- ensure that the headteacher and governors establish clear priorities in the school development plan, so that there is a direct link between these and the quality and standard of the work;

- develop a monitoring role for the headteacher and co-ordinators in order that the processes of self-evaluation become firmly established;
- revise curriculum planning so that learning objectives and progression and continuity in pupils' learning are improved; and
- make better use of assessment to improve teachers' short term planning and to match the work more closely to pupils' needs and abilities.

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

Appendix

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Borthyn Primary Controlled
School type	Voluntary
Age -range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Denbigh Road Ruthin Denbighshire
Post-Code	LL15 1NT
Telephone Number	01824 702727

Headteacher	Mr N C Roberts
Date of appointment	September 1988
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mr M While
Reporting Inspector	HMI Mr M Maguire
Dates of inspection	24 June – 25 June 2002

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	7	18	9	22	21	24	26	19	153

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	6	2	7.3

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	22:1
Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	7:1
Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	23
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.2: 1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>					
	N	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School (excluding Nursery)
Spring 01	93.8%	91.4%	93.5%	91.86%	92.25%
Summer 01	92.5%	95.6%	94.5%	92.28%	94.12%
Autumn 01	88.3%	97.06%	93.46%	93.72%	94.74%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	20%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2001				Number of pupils in Y2: 21					
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	A	W	1	2	3	4
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	5	76	19	0
		National	0	0	4	13	62	21	0
EN: Reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	5	38	57	0
		National	0	0	4	13	54	29	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	5	43	52	0
		National	1	0	3	13	53	30	0
EN: Writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	5	90	5	0
		National	0	0	5	13	70	12	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	5	86	10	0
		National	0	1	5	10	75	9	0
EN: Speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	10	71	19	0
		National	0	0	3	11	63	23	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	5	57	38	0
		National	0	0	2	9	60	29	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	5	29	67	0
		National	0	0	2	6	56	36	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	33	67	0
		National	0	0	2	10	67	21	0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language) by Teacher Assessment			
In the school:	95%	In Wales:	80%

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results: 2001								Number of pupils in Y6: 29					
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	3	45	31	21	0
		National	0	0	1	N/a	0	1	6	19	48	25	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	7	3	35	48	7	0
		National	0	2	2	0	N	N	4	14	47	31	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	48	31	17	0
		National	0	0	1	N/a	0	1	4	19	47	28	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	41	45	7	0
		National	0	2	1	1	N	N	4	18	42	32	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	48	38	10	0
		National	0	0	1	N/a	0	0	3	15	52	29	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	62	31	0	0
		National	0	2	0	1	N	N	2	13	51	31	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:	48%	In the school	27.6%
In Wales:	68%	In Wales:	68%

- D Pupils who are exempted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
N Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
B Pupils not entered for tests because they are working outside the level of the test
W Pupils who are working towards level 1
N Tests do not cover these levels
N/A Not applicable

D. The evidence base of the inspection

A team of three inspectors spent a total of 6 inspector days in the school. This is in addition to the corroboration visit made in April 2002. Altogether inspectors spent a total of 12 inspector days in the school.

Prior to the inspection:

Meetings were held with the acting-headteacher, the senior management team, staff and governors.

School documentation and samples of pupils' work were examined.

During the inspection:

40 lessons or sessions were observed in the subjects of the National Curriculum. A sample of pupils' work from across the ability range in each year group was examined. Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils' reading and talked to them about their work and about the life of the school. Pupils' behaviour was observed during break periods, at lunchtime and at the beginning and end of the school sessions. Inspectors attended assemblies and observed a sample of extra-curricular activities. Discussions were held with the acting-headteacher, senior management team, staff with specific responsibilities and support staff.

After the inspection:

Meetings were held with the acting-headteacher, staff and the governing body.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspectors	Aspects	Subjects
Mr M Maguire HMI	The school and its priorities The main findings of the report Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning Assessment recording and reporting Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement Leadership and efficiency Partnerships with parents and community, schools and other institutions Partnership with industry Progress since the last inspection Key issues for action	Mathematics Science History Geography
Mrs M Turford HMI	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Quality of teaching Behaviour and attitudes Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs	Early Years Art
Mr A. Thomas HMI	Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum Curriculum Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	English Welsh second language Design and technology Information and communications technology Music Physical education