

REPORT

on the

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF
SCHOOLS INSPECTION ACT 1996**

**BRACKLA JUNIOR SCHOOL
BRACKLA WAY
BRACKLA
BRIDGEND
CF31 2EZ**

School Number: 672/2303

Date of Inspection: 29th, 30th June & 1st July, 2004

by

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under Estyn contract number: T/203/03P

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. CONTEXT

The School and its priorities

Brackla Junior School is situated on the outskirts of the town of Bridgend. Most pupils come from the surrounding housing estate and the school states that they regard them as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Pupils cover the full range of ability. The school was last inspected in June 1998. Four members of the teaching staff were in post at the time of the last inspection. The falling pupil roll noted in that report has continued and the current pupil number is 142. The Ray Hollow Unit for Motor Impaired Pupils has been disbanded and motor impaired pupils are now included in mainstream classes within Brackla Junior. The school still provides a resource base for motor impaired pupils. Almost all pupils come from English speaking backgrounds, and approximately 23% of pupils receive free school meals. One pupil has a statement of special educational need (SEN) and the school designates a further 47 pupils as having special educational need.

The School Development Plan (SDP) covers the period 2003 to 2006. The current year's cycle of the plan has eight management and pastoral targets and nine curricular targets. The plan also details the school aims and its values. The school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the first time in 2004. The school's main foci for the year 2003 – 2004 were:

- to revise documentation, including job descriptions, staff handbook, policies and schemes of work.
- to improve standards across a wide range of subjects.
- to develop the monitoring role of the curriculum leaders.

The common purpose of the school remains:

“Only my best is good enough for me”.
“Dim ond fy ngorau sydd orau i mi”

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Brackla Junior School has made good progress since the last inspection. The school provides a happy well ordered environment in which all pupils are valued. The inclusion of pupils with SEN in all aspects of the school life is a particular strength of the school.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

- Standards of achievement are very good in 10% of lessons, good in 61%, satisfactory in 27% and unsatisfactory in 2%.
- Standards of achievement in the subjects of the National Curriculum are as follows:

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

- Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum are very good in listening and good in reading, writing and speaking. Pupils skills are satisfactory when applying the key skills of numeracy and information and communication technology.

ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

- Pupils' moral and social development is very good. Pupils' cultural development is good and their spiritual development is satisfactory. Not all classes comply with statutory requirements by holding a daily act of worship.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good. The school is a caring, supportive and orderly community. Overall this very good behaviour contributes to the standards pupils achieve and to their personal and social development.
- Attendance rates are satisfactory and average 93.4%.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra curricular clubs. These serve to enhance standards in subjects such as physical education as well as having a positive impact on behaviour and relationships.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

- The quality of teaching was very good in 10% of lessons observed, good in 59%, satisfactory in 29% and unsatisfactory in 2%. In the good or better lessons teachers show a good subject knowledge, lessons proceed at a good pace and

pupils' contributions are valued. Where there are shortcomings in teaching, pupil activities lack challenge and lessons proceed at a slower pace.

- The arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress are good. A range of procedures for tracking pupils' progress is in place. Pupils' work is marked regularly with positive comments and pupils agree individual targets for improvement, in English and mathematics, with their teachers. Annual reports to parents are detailed and informative.
- The school provides a broad, balanced curriculum that includes all subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) and religious education. Most schemes of work are detailed and there is an effective whole school system for long, medium and short term planning of lessons.
- Provision for support and guidance and pupils' welfare is very good. Child protection procedures are in place and are known to all members of staff and governors.
- The head and staff attach particular importance to the pastoral care of pupils. Pupils work and play in a caring and supportive environment where they feel secure and valued.
- The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is very good. The way that pupils with SEN are integrated and fully involved in all aspects of school life is a particular strength of the school.
- The school's partnerships with the community, schools and other institutions are good. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory.
- The school's partnership with industry is good. The school has made considerable progress since the last inspection in developing pupils' experience of the world of work.

MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and efficiency is good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators provide a clear direction for the school.
- The governing body is very supportive and members carry out their duties conscientiously. They are fully involved in both financial and curricular issues. They are very keen to promote the life of the school in a wider community context.
- The school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good. The SDP sets a wide ranging agenda for improvement over a three year period. Curriculum co-ordinators have an agreed system for monitoring progress in individual subject areas.
- National Curriculum test results at the end of the key stage are very good when compared with schools of a similar type. There has been a steady improvement in results over the last four years.

- The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues raised in the last inspection. This work has had a positive effect on the standards achieved by pupils. The school is now in a position to develop the work of subject coordinators in order to further improve the standards of all subjects across the school.
- The school is well staffed for the number pupils on roll. Both teachers and classroom support assistants are well deployed. The internal accommodation is extremely spacious and high quality displays enhance the environment. However, the different teaching spaces and extensive range of books and resources are not always fully utilised during the teaching day. The school grounds are surrounded by a low fence with different points of entry. This means that the public can gain easy access to the premises during the school day.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Pupils' standards of achievement are very good in 10% of lessons, good in 61%, satisfactory in 27% and unsatisfactory in the remaining 2% of sessions observed.

- In English good standards are achieved commensurate with pupils' level of ability. Standards are very good in listening, and good in speaking, reading and writing. Standards are also good in mathematics, science, information technology, history, art and physical education. Standards are satisfactory in Welsh, geography, music, religious education and design and technology.
- Performance in national curriculum assessments in 2003 at the expected level 4 and above was very good for all three core subjects when compared with Welsh schools of a similar type. There has been a steady improvement in Standard Achievement Tests (SATs) results over the last four years and results for 2004 are at a similar high level.
- Pupils with SEN within mainstream classes make good progress and achieve standards in line with their age and capabilities.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the curriculum

Standards in listening skills are very good, standards in speaking, reading and writing are good and standards in numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory.

- Pupils apply their literacy skills well in their work across the curriculum. All pupils listen attentively to presentations and instructions given by teachers and to each other.
- Pupils enthusiastically participate in class and group activities and speak confidently in the plenary sessions. They are able to express opinions and give explanations in subjects across the curriculum using appropriate technical vocabulary.

- Pupils read for pleasure and can read and understand a variety of texts in different subjects. The ability to research information independently is underdeveloped.
- Pupils write well for different purposes. They are developing writing styles to suit different contexts and audiences in their work in geography, history and religious education. The work in their books is accurately punctuated and some of the handwriting is very good, although spelling in their note taking is often inaccurate.
- The use of numeracy across the curriculum is not fully exploited. Pupils collect and interpret data in geography and science and present their findings in a variety of graphical representations. However this work does not show progression in line with pupils' ability in mathematics.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is inconsistent and computers are not regularly used as an integral part of learning. There are examples of good practice in geography and mathematics but this work is insufficiently embedded into the work of all classes.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

- The school has a caring environment where pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils' relationships with staff, peers and visitors are based on courtesy and consideration. Pupils take ownership of their school and class rules, rarely failing to work hard and behave well. They play and work collaboratively.
- Teachers use praise and encouragement consistently. This results in a positive atmosphere throughout the school. Good behaviour is recognised and children's ideas are valued. Individual effort and progress are acknowledged in the weekly merit assembly.
- Pupils have an awareness of the needs of others in society and those less fortunate than themselves. They participate in fund raising activities and distribute harvest produce locally. Pupils demonstrate a responsible attitude towards the environment and sustainability.
- Pupils' cultural development is fostered through subjects such as geography and religious education. They know about festivals of other faiths and have a developing awareness of the diversity of other cultures. The annual Eisteddfod, culminating in the 'Crowning of the Bard' ceremony, gives pupils an insight into the cultural heritage of Wales but their knowledge of the Welsh traditions in music, art and literature is limited.
- School assemblies are inclusive, happy occasions led by the classes in turn. Pupils confidently perform items focused on social and moral issues linked with curriculum studies. There is a strong emphasis on praise within worship. However there is little opportunity to experience a devotional ethos or for quiet reflection.

Class prayers are not consistently observed and the school does not fulfill the statutory requirements with regard to a daily act of worship.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are very good. The school is a caring, supportive and orderly community.

- The headteacher, teaching and support staff recognise the importance of good behaviour as a foundation for pupils' learning. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond positively to their calm and consistent approach.
- The school has an effective policy and set of procedures to promote positive behaviour, which are implemented fairly and consistently by staff.
- Pupils' very good behaviour is evident not only in lessons but also in school assemblies, in their playground games, at meal times and in their orderly movement around the school. Pupils are proud of their school and treat the building and grounds with respect.
- Pupils' relationships with teachers and support staff are mutually respectful and friendly. Pupils are confident, courteous and display a high degree of self-discipline.
- The school has established effective procedures to deal with pupils whose behaviour is giving cause for concern and who might be at risk of exclusion. Three pupils have been excluded on a temporary basis during the past twelve months. These exclusions were carefully considered by the school and appropriate procedures were followed.
- Overall, the very good behaviour of pupils and their positive attitudes to learning contribute to the quality of life in the school, to the standards pupils achieve and to their personal and social development.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance rates are satisfactory and instances of unauthorised absence are minimal.

- Attendance rates for the past three terms average 93.4%.
- Pupils are punctual and keen to attend school. Registration sessions and lessons start promptly.
- The headteacher and school clerk monitor attendance and punctuality carefully. Effective procedures are in place to encourage good attendance and punctuality, to

ensure pupils' absence is adequately explained and to follow up situations where necessary.

- The school has set itself the target of reaching an attendance rate in excess of 93% this academic year and has successfully met its target.
- The school complies with attendance requirements set out in the National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99, Pupil Support and Social Inclusion.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching was very good in 10% of lessons observed, good in 59%, satisfactory in 29%, and unsatisfactory in 2%.

Where teaching is good or very good:

- Teachers show a good subject knowledge and pupil activities are relevant and well matched to their abilities and prior attainment.
- Lesson planning is thorough and learning objectives are clearly understood by pupils.
- Teachers successfully use a blend of whole class interactive and didactic teaching methods, as well as providing effective small group and individual teaching.
- Lessons proceed at a good pace and plenary sessions are used to effectively reinforce teaching and assess understanding.
- Pupil contributions are valued and pupils with SEN are well integrated throughout the lesson. Support staff are well utilised and they help ensure equal opportunities for all pupils.

Where teaching has shortcomings:

- Lessons are not well linked to NC requirements.
- Pupils' activities lack challenge and some pupils miss learning opportunities. There is insufficient use of information technology to support learning.
- Lessons lack pace and some pupils' learning does not progress at a appropriate rate.

5.2 Assessment Recording and Reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good.

- A comprehensive policy provides clear guidelines and effective procedures for assessing pupils' achievements.

- Appropriate use is made of information gained from standardised tests and NC assessments to identify areas for improvement in English, mathematics and science.
- Class teachers are free to develop and implement their own system of recording class-based tests for mental maths, tables, spellings and end of topics.
- Target setting based on data from various sources is developing appropriately.
- Parents have opportunities to discuss progress during parent/teacher meetings, which are held twice a year. The school operates an 'open door' policy and appointments can be made to discuss children's progress at any time.
- Reports to parents, which comply with statutory requirements, are informative and identify ways forward for pupils in the core areas. These are sent to parents at the end of the school year and parents are offered the opportunity to discuss the report.
- The assessment of pupils with SEN is good and outside agencies are fully involved when required.
- Parents of pupils with SEN attend a review meeting termly with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and class teacher. During these meetings the individual action plans (IAP) and individual education plans (IEP) for the child are reviewed and targets agreed.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly with positive and encouraging comments which provide pupils with useful suggestions for improvement. Individual pupil targets are displayed in pupils' books and progress towards achieving them is monitored effectively.
- Teachers select a piece of work termly in English, maths and science which is then levelled and recorded on a teacher assessment summary sheet.
- Records of Achievement hold samples of work, personal achievement certificates, personal information and end of year reports.

5.3 Curriculum

The school provides a broad, balanced curriculum that includes all NC subjects and religious education.

- There are policies for most subjects and schemes of work for all NC subjects and religious education. A number of these have only recently been adopted and the impact on standards has not yet been fully realised.
- Most schemes of work are detailed and show the learning objectives, suggested activities, resources and assessment opportunities. Teachers complete fortnightly plans which also include opportunities to address the key skills and the common requirements and to make evaluations.
- Curriculum co-ordinators monitor their subjects through teachers' planning, sampling children's books and some classroom observation. However, the system is not consistent across the subjects to effectively identify strengths and

weaknesses in standards of work, in order to ensure progression and continuity through the school.

- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal and social education throughout the school and across the curriculum. There is a comprehensive Personal and Social Education (PSE) policy and circle time is effectively used to promote positive attitudes and values. A school council has recently been established.
- There is a range of policies that are effective in ensuring that curriculum provision is socially inclusive and provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Inclusion is a strength of the school.
- Pupils are offered a wide range of extra-curricular activities which enhance their experiences. Pupils' learning is extended by the range of people who visit the school and by educational visits.
- There is a clear homework policy. A significant minority of parents do not fully accept that the policy works in practice.
- No pupil is disadvantaged and pupils who require a modified curriculum receive very good support.
- The school allocates discretionary time to extra sessions in the core subjects and to information technology.

5.4 Support Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

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

- The head and staff attach particular importance to the pastoral care of pupils. Pupils work and play in a caring and supportive environment where they feel secure and valued.
- Pupils are confident when seeking the help and support of staff; they readily turn to adults for guidance and are listened to and treated with respect. Very good relationships between staff and pupils underpin the life and work of the school.
- The school gives high priority to social inclusion and has a very successful policy on equal opportunities. Pupils with motor impairment are treated with dignity, respect and care by all staff and other pupils.
- Liaison with external agencies is effective and very good use is made of specialist support. Care plans are drawn up jointly by the school and the appropriate specialists. These are reviewed regularly according to individual needs.
- Achievement at all levels is rewarded through the class merit systems. Awards are given out at assemblies where pupils are proud to receive the congratulations of both staff and peers.
- Child protection procedures are in place and are known to all members of staff and governors. These comply with National Assembly for Wales requirements.

- The school has policies for sex education, race equality and health and safety, which are approved by the governors. Procedures to ensure safety are clear and comprehensive.
- All staff both teaching and non-teaching, are trained first aiders.
- The school has recently joined the Eco Schools and Healthy Schools projects. A tuck shop selling fruit is available every day.
- Pupils are well supervised at break and lunchtimes. Support staff and midday supervisors make a valuable contribution to the care and welfare of pupils. The presence of the head teacher and senior staff in the playground and dining hall during lunch breaks contribute significantly to the care of pupils and the good order that characterises the school.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is very good.

There are 47 pupils who have been identified as having a special educational need. Only one pupil has a formal statement.

- Procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs comply with the latest Code of Practice.
- The SENCO carries out his duties with great care and has produced a comprehensive and effective policy to guide and inform practices throughout the school.
- All pupils with SEN receive effective support and guidance and have full access to all aspects of the National Curriculum.
- IEPs and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) set appropriate programmes and targets for pupils which properly cater for their needs.
- Reviews of IEPs are regular, contain full details and lead to the setting of new goals for pupils. Professional reports, provided for the annual reviews are very detailed. Parents are fully involved in the process.
- Pupils with SEN benefit significantly from extra support in withdrawal sessions. Effective use is made of resources, including information and communications technology. Sessions are characterised by good teaching and a range of activities, which are appropriately linked to class work.
- Very good, caring support is provided by well-trained and experienced classroom assistants. As a result, pupils are fully integrated into classes and groups. They make good progress according to their needs and abilities.
- Parents are properly involved in review arrangements and receive regular reports on the progress made by their children.

- Good liaison takes place with outside agencies, including psychologists, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and the Manager for the Motor Impaired Resource Base.
- Class work is generally well differentiated for pupils with SEN and matched to their individual needs.
- Very good attitudes are displayed throughout the school to the special needs of pupils. Other pupils are considerate, patient, tolerant and supportive.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and other Institutions

The school's partnerships with the community, schools and other institutions are good. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory.

- Most parents are supportive of the school. They value the ready access they have to the headteacher and staff and express satisfaction with the aims and values of the school.
- In the questionnaires returned to the inspection team, a significant minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with some aspects of the school. The inspection team agrees with the view that there is need for greater clarification of the school's homework policy but no substantial evidence could be found to support other parental complaints, including concerns about behaviour and the values and attitudes that the school promotes.
- Parents are kept informed through regular newsletters, an informative annual report of the governing body and by regular opportunities to discuss their children's work and progress with teachers. The school prospectus has recently been updated to ensure all statutory requirements are met, and a useful home/school agreement is in place.
- A number of parents give freely of their time helping out in the classroom, accompanying pupils on educational visits and in fund-raising for the school.
- The school enjoys good pastoral and administrative links with the infant school, from which pupils transfer, and with the receiving secondary school. Curriculum links are developing well with both schools.
- The school has established successful partnerships with several institutes of higher education and provides training facilities for student teachers and students undertaking vocational qualifications. Students from local secondary schools regularly undertake work-experience placements at the school.
- The school is well supported by the local community and good use is made of the community as a learning resource. Educational visits and the expertise of members of the local community make a positive contribution to pupils' standards of achievement in a number of curriculum areas. The school readily makes available its accommodation and facilities to local community groups.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

The school's partnership with industry is good. Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection when pupils' experience of the world of work was judged to be under-developed.

- The school has no formal policy for industrial links but clear strategies are in place to raise the economic and industrial understanding of pupils and give them insight into the world of work.
- Good working partnerships have been developed with a number of relevant agencies, especially the Education Business Partnership (EBP). Several teachers have undertaken relevant industrial placements, which have enhanced professional development and enriched curriculum provision for pupils.
- Through their visits to a variety of retail, commercial and industrial sites, pupils are gaining first-hand knowledge of different working environments. Older pupils have the opportunity to engage in a mini-enterprise scheme.
- Teachers encourage personnel from different occupations and professions to speak to pupils about their work. Older pupils' understanding of the work of the emergency services has been enhanced by the school's involvement in the Crucial Crew programme.
- Pupils are keenly aware of environmental issues that impact upon their school and local community and the school actively promotes sustainable development. Many pupils are developing a love of gardening and they are justly proud of their contribution to the development of the school grounds and nature reserve.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

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

- The SDP sets a wide ranging agenda for improvement in management and curriculum areas. The plan runs over a three year period. Responsibilities for actions are allocated and the majority of the targets are costed.
- Curriculum co-ordinators have an agreed whole school system for monitoring progress in individual subject areas. Considerable progress has been made in improving provision. The impact of this work on whole school standards has yet to be addressed.
- There are effective tracking systems for evaluating pupils' standards of achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' performance in the core subjects is compared with that of similar schools and with the Welsh average. The school has performed in or near the upper quartile for all three core subjects. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for individual pupils and SATs results have improved steadily over the last four years.

- Statutory Performance Management procedures are in place. Three members of staff are trained team leaders. All job descriptions for teaching staff have recently been updated.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

The quality of leadership and efficiency is good.

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators provide a clear direction for the school. Very good relationships exist between staff and pupils and with the governing body. Pupil behaviour is very good.
- The teaching staff and classroom support staff collaborate well. Teachers have produced policies and schemes of work for most subjects. Not all of these are detailed enough to offer sufficient support and guidance. Co-ordinators inform the headteacher about resource requirements and monitor progress on a rolling programme. Many improvements in provision have been put in place but a clear evaluation of the impact of new initiatives has yet to be made.
- The governing body is very supportive and members carry out their duties conscientiously. They are fully involved in both financial and curriculum issues. They are very keen to promote the life of the school in a wider community context.
- There is a detailed and relevant statement of the schools aims and its values. The everyday life of the school reflects these with a very strong commitment to equal opportunities and inclusion.
- Day to day arrangements are managed very well. The school's administrative officer provides very good support and the school's financial management is effective. The governing body has set a deficit budget with the agreement of the Local Education Authority. This agreement is designed to phase in the loss of teaching staff because of the continued falling pupil numbers. The aim is to achieve a balanced budget by 2005/2006.
- The latest audit of finances by the Local Authority took place in November 2000. Eighteen recommendations were made for improvement. The school agreed with sixteen of these recommendations, the last of which was implemented in April 2001.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

The quality of the staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good. The day to day use of resources is satisfactory.

- There is an adequate number of suitably qualified teaching staff for the number on roll. All staff have job descriptions outlining their duties and responsibilities.
- The INSET programme includes a number of school based training events linked to the whole school priorities identified in the SDP.

- The significant fall in pupil numbers has resulted in a reduction of staff and curricular responsibilities have had to be reallocated. Consequently, the co-ordination of some subjects is not fully established. Performance Management procedures are undertaken by the head teacher and two team leaders
- The contribution of the classroom support staff has a positive effect on pupils' learning and is often of very good quality. The kitchen staff, midday supervisors, caretaker, cleaning staff and the administrative officer make an effective contribution to the school.
- The accommodation comprises four class areas in the main building and two classes in the Ray Hollow building. Additional areas in the main school include a hall, three libraries, two I.T. suites and a music room. Some of these facilities are underutilised.
- High quality displays feature prominently in classrooms and corridors. They celebrate children's effort and enhance the learning environment.
- The school site has sufficient hard play and extensive grassed areas. The environment is enhanced by brightly painted murals and a garden area. Outdoor activities support the curriculum and children are currently developing a woodland area.
- The perimeter fence forms an insecure boundary and there are a number of access points for parents and the public. Pupils are secure during lesson time and are very well supervised during playtime and the lunch break.
- Co-ordinators are responsible for resource provision in their subjects. Resources are purchased as necessary to support the new schemes of work and are sufficient to support the curriculum. Items such as musical instruments, small mathematical apparatus, the extensive range of books and the interactive white boards are not always fully utilised or readily available.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

English

Standards of achievement in English are good.

Good Features

- Pupils' listening skills are very good. They listen to and respect the views of others and can follow complex instructions.
- Pupils communicate confidently with each other during whole class sessions and group activities, demonstrating clarity of thought and confidence in their own opinions.
- The majority of pupils are able to make presentations to the class, with the more able adjusting their delivery to suit different audiences and contexts.

- Most pupils read fluently and with expression. They are able to talk about characters and discuss the main theme of a story. They can name their favourite authors and give reasons for their choice.
- Some pupils know how to use the reference library and to access information on the computer.
- Less able pupils enjoy sharing books they have made and they can use a range of strategies to improve their reading skills.
- Pupils' writing skills are good. They use their imagination to write in a variety of forms and for different audiences. They are able to vary their style to produce stories, letters, diary entries, play scripts and poems of good quality.
- Work is usually well planned and presented. The standards in spelling are variable but there are examples of very good handwriting.
- There are good examples of extended writing and word processing skills included in displays of work across a range of subjects.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' research skills are underdeveloped.
- Pupils' skills in reading and writing do not show sufficient progression as pupils move through the school.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement in mathematics are good.

Good Features

- Pupils show a developing understanding of place value and most pupils by Year 5 and Year 6 use the four mathematical operations competently.
- Most pupils have a good knowledge of a range of two and three-dimensional shapes and older pupils are able to draw them in different orientation, on grids.
- Pupils are able to calculate measurement and weight using standard units. Older pupils can use both the 12 and 24 hour clock effectively in problem solving situations.
- Pupils are developing an increasing competency when calculating problems that include the use of money, weight and capacity.
- Older pupils are able to identify lines of reflective and rotational symmetry. They can calculate areas and perimeters, using correct mathematical language.

- Pupils are able to recognise the different properties of angles and older pupils can draw them accurately using a protractor.
- More able pupils understand the concept of an accurate estimate and how to apply it in problem situations.
- Pupils demonstrate a good developing knowledge of the relationship between fractions, percentages and decimals.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' ability to recall number facts quickly and to demonstrate a range of mental strategies develops unevenly across the school.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunity to support their learning with the use of number lines and with small mathematical apparatus.
- A significant number of pupils are unable to recognise impossible answers when using the four rules of number.

Science

Standards of achievement in science are good.

Good Features

- Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of what is meant by a fair test and most are able to discuss and identify constants and variables.
- Year 3 pupils show a good understanding of the force of friction between an object and a surface and that it can affect the speed at which objects move on different surfaces. They are able to make sensible predictions and back these up by drawing on prior knowledge.
- Year 3 and 4 pupils have a developing understanding of the properties of magnets and are able to conduct an investigation to demonstrate that a freely moving magnet will point north/south.
- Pupils communicate and collaborate effectively when discussing their predictions and when planning their investigations.
- Year 5 pupils show a good awareness of the properties of different materials as insulators of sound and are able to conduct an investigation to test out their predictions. They have a good understanding of how sound is produced and how it travels.
- In Year 4, pupils are able to explain that when an object floats, gravity and up thrust are equal.
- Throughout all classes pupils are able to give clear explanations and draw appropriate conclusions to their findings and are confident in their conversations with their peers and adults.

- Pupils record their results in a variety of ways including tally charts, bar graphs and diagrams.

Shortcomings

- Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support the curriculum and to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of science.

Welsh Second Language

Standards of achievement in Welsh as a second language are satisfactory.

Good Features

- The majority of pupils understand familiar questions asked by their teacher and most respond in words and short phrases.
- Pupils at the lower end of the Key Stage confidently ask and answer questions about themselves, for example their name, where they live, hair and eye colour.
- Younger pupils enjoy reading the Big Books together and listen attentively to new words and phrases which they repeat accurately and with good pronunciation.
- Pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons and display enjoyment when practising oral activities in pairs or groups.
- Older pupils compose and perform simple dialogue working in small groups, using the sentence patterns and vocabulary with which they are familiar.
- Pupils' understanding is supported by the displays of key words and phrases in classrooms and in other public areas of the school.

Shortcomings

- Pupils are insecure in the use of incidental Welsh. They do not have sufficient opportunities to practise using vocabulary and sentence patterns in a range of situations, as a natural part of the school day.
- At the end of the Key Stage, pupils lack appropriate confidence in speaking, largely because of an insecure command of vocabulary.
- Pupils do not read a sufficient range of texts and the older pupils do not make enough use of writing.

Design and Technology

Standards of achievement in design and technology are satisfactory.

Good Features

- Younger pupils are beginning to appreciate the ways that materials can be joined together, both in solid structures and when moving parts require freedom to move around a pivot.
- Most pupils can measure and mark out materials when making prototypes and final products.
- Younger pupils show a steady and consistent acquisition of skills as they experiment with new product assignments.
- Younger pupils enhance their understanding of moving products by investigating levers, linkages and pulleys.
- Older pupils carry out simple enterprise projects connected to products they are making. They have a rudimentary understanding of the commercial side of production.
- Pupils work diligently at making individual products and co-operate effectively when making group contributions to the production process.
- Pupils are able to produce sketch designs of their proposed products and to make simple evaluations of their finished products.

Shortcomings

- The labelled sketches and designs of older pupils are limited and do not sufficiently extend the work completed earlier in the school.
- Pupils' ability to make and evaluate products is insufficiently developed as they move through the school.
- Older pupils' skills of working with a range of materials are limited.

Information Technology

Standards in information technology are good.

Good Features

- Pupils use computers confidently and competently in a variety of contexts. They can save and retrieve information from personal folders, change font size, colour, and can import pictures into their work.
- Pupils learn to use ICT to communicate and handle information, to explore and solve problems and to enhance the presentation of their work.
- In their work in geography, Year 4 pupils are able to use a software package to enable them to illustrate their route to school identifying human and physical features along the way.
- Pupils in Year 4 are able to use a maths programme on the Interactive Whiteboard and on computers to support their work in understanding probability.

- Pupils with SEN make good progress with effective support from classroom assistants.
- Pupils are able to process and display comparative data about temperature to create a variety of graphs and spreadsheets.
- Year 5 pupils' work in text and picture frames on a desktop publishing package to create leaflets advertising a forthcoming school event.
- Some pupils in Year 6 are able to use Power Point to present information about projects they have researched.
- Older pupils confidently gather and evaluate information from the Internet to support their work in history.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills in using information technology to support and develop their learning across the curriculum are underdeveloped.

History

Standards of achievement in history are good.

Good Features

- Pupils demonstrate a developing awareness of the chronology of historical events. The youngest pupils can place their studies in historical order.
- Pupils have a good awareness of change and their studies of transport have helped them develop a sophisticated view of progress over time.
- Pupils confidently share ideas, discuss opinions and orally present their findings clearly and knowledgeably. Older pupils studying World War II are able to empathise with people who worked during wartime.
- Pupils are able to participate in a role play of a time in the past. They effectively play roles and are able to ask meaningful historical questions of each other.
- More able older pupils are beginning to understand the causes and consequences of major events. They know that historical evidence may have a bias, for example the different opinions of the British and Germans during World War II.
- Pupils are able to record their historical findings in a number of ways. They write effective accounts of events from an imagined first hand perspective.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' use of time lines, historical artefacts, reference books, the internet and visits to places of historical interest is uneven across the school.

- Pupils' understanding of history in a Welsh context is underdeveloped.

Geography

Standards of achievement in geography are satisfactory.

Good Features

- Pupils can talk about environmental change and know some of the ways human activity affects the environment.
- Pupils collect information on the weather in contrasting locations and analyse the findings.
- More able pupils can locate Wales, Europe and Asia on a world map. They can compare both human and physical features and understand some of the differences.
- Younger pupils can describe their route to school and identify local business and services in Brackla, using an aerial map. They have undertaken traffic surveys, recording their findings in graphical form using an appropriate scale.
- Younger pupils can use a plan of the school to identify different places in the building and the school grounds. They can make suggestions as to how the environment could be enhanced and can use ICT to present their ideas.
- Older pupils can make comparisons between life in Brackla and Chembakolli, a village in India. They can explain the differences in climate, seasons, education and services, and the associated implications.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' mapping skills are not consistently developed through the school.
- Some pupils' understanding of the purpose of symbols and the use of co-ordinates is insecure.
- Some pupils have an insecure knowledge of the work covered and their recall is sometimes superficial.

Art

Standards of achievement in art are good.

Good Features

- Pupils work confidently with a range of media including paint, pencil and crayon to gain the desired effect. They evaluate their own work and are able to suggest improvements.

- Pupils use sketchbooks effectively to record and refine observational drawings. They demonstrate a good understanding of proportion, line and tone.
- Pupils are able to mix paint and create hues within one colour when painting fruit and flowers. They can talk about contrasting colours and are aware of depth and tone.
- Younger pupils have experimented with different materials and techniques to produce imaginative two and three dimensional work. They have an increasing awareness of texture through producing collages and designing and making futuristic vehicles.
- Older pupils can talk about the work of Monet and William Morris and replicate the techniques used in their own work.
- Older pupils study the different techniques and effects used in advertising and packaging to produce imaginative designs.
- Pupils have worked with a local artist to produce effective clay figures of animals and are able to describe the sequence of processes used.

Shortcomings

- Pupils have a limited knowledge and understanding of the work of Welsh artists and designers.

Music

Standards of achievement in music are satisfactory.

Good Features

- Pupils are able to recognise rhythm and pulse and can identify the number of beats to a bar.
- In whole school assembly pupils sing Welsh and English hymns tunefully and with expression.
- Pupils in Year 4 are able to imitate, memorise and recall musical patterns and rhythms. They listen attentively and evaluate and comment on increasing and decreasing tempo.
- Older pupils listen to and appraise songs from World War 11 and use parts of the body to interpret sections of a song. They perform different parts in groups and evaluate thoughtfully how they can improve their performances. They are able to select appropriate non-tuned instruments to perform an ostinato rhythm.
- Pupils who receive lessons from peripatetic woodwind and violin teachers make good progress.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not sing a range of songs from other cultures.
- Pupils' skills in using a range of tuned and untuned instruments are limited and their composition skills are underdeveloped.
- Many pupils do not have a clear understanding of the terminology used for musical elements.

Physical Education

Standards of achievement in physical education are good. No games, athletics or swimming lessons were observed during the inspection.

Good Features

- Pupils have a good understanding of the impact of exercise on their bodies and of the importance of safety during physical education sessions.
- Pupils are able to work effectively in pairs and small groups during physical education sessions.
- Pupils are able to evaluate their own performance and that of others during physical education sessions.
- Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 can perform step patterns and dance moves they have learned. They can respond to music when improving the rhythm of their dance and create a simple dance pattern in pairs and groups.
- Pupils in Year 5 are able to work independently and are able to demonstrate increasingly more complex sequences of movement on the floor and when using simple apparatus.
- Pupils make sensible use of space and are able to roll, turn, and spin showing contrast in body shape.
- Pupils' standards in physical education are enhanced by participating in a wide range of extra curricular games clubs. The more able have attained representative honours at county level.

Shortcomings

- Although they are given opportunities to evaluate their own performance, pupils do not always use the assessments to refine their future work.

Religious Education

Standards of achievement in religious education are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils know the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter and can talk about their significance. They know that Jesus is God's son.
- Pupils know that the Bible is God's Word and can recall some of the familiar stories from the old and new testaments.
- Younger pupils can talk about a church service with a developing sense of reverence. They can name some of the artefacts that support the worship.
- More able pupils can talk about lifestyles and festivals from Islam and Judaism. They know that each religion has its own holy book, a special place of worship and rules associated with the beliefs.
- Older pupils are aware that prejudice can be associated with religious belief. They display empathy when discussing the diary of Anne Frank and through 'hot seating' demonstrate awareness of different points of view.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' knowledge of bible stories and their significance is uneven across the school.
- Pupils have a limited awareness of the use of symbolism in the different religions.
- Pupils cannot explain how, in some cases, a person's way of life is determined by their religious belief.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

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

The first issue required the school to improve standards in information technology and religious education.

Information Technology – Two computer suites have been created, staff training has been undertaken and a new scheme of work introduced. Standards in information technology are now judged as good. The computer suites were underused during the time of the inspection and there is a lack of opportunity for pupils to use information technology to enhance their work in other subjects.

Religious Education – A new scheme of work has been introduced and additional resources purchased. Some monitoring of religious education has taken place. Religious education is now judged as satisfactory.

The second issue required the school to improve the quality of the curriculum to ensure balance, depth, progression and continuity by:

- **completing policies and schemes for all subjects;**
- **completing policies and schemes for KS1 and for the under-fives;**

- **improving medium and short term planning in order to specify teaching and learning objectives and include the differentiation of work for all abilities and opportunities for assessment.**
 - (i) Policies are in place for most subjects and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. In most cases they offer comprehensive support and guidance.
 - (ii) Since there are no longer any KS1 pupils this issue no longer applies.
 - (iii) The school now operates a consistent approach to long, medium and short term planning. Teaching and Learning Objectives are clearly specified. Short and medium plans offer opportunities for noting ongoing assessment. In best practice these plans detail differentiated activities relevant to pupils of all abilities.

The third issue required the school to further develop whole-school assessment and recording procedures in order to support pupils' progress and learning.

Two members of staff are delegated to take charge of assessment recording and reporting. Training has been undertaken by these two teachers to enable them to support whole school assessment. A new detailed policy and procedure document for assessment, recording and reporting has been implemented. Assessment recording and reporting is now judged as good.

The fourth issue required the school to further develop pupils' independent learning, particularly the skills of problem solving, investigation, research and enquiry, and extend pupils' range of written and computer-assisted recording techniques.

A new teaching and learning policy has been produced. Teachers use a range of teaching and learning approaches. There are increased opportunities for pupils to undertake problem solving and investigative work in subjects such as science, design and technology and mathematics. Although there has been some increase in pupils' written accounts, individual pupil research of books and computer assisted research is still under developed.

The fifth issue required the school to extend the roles of the headteacher, senior management team and curriculum leaders in their monitoring of standards and the quality and consistency of teaching and learning so they impact more fully on curriculum improvement.

A structure for supporting individual teachers' performance is in place. Statutory requirements for performance management have taken place. Team leaders have carried out the required meetings and observed teachers teaching. The annual Performance Management cycle was not completed at the time of the inspection. There is a curriculum leader allocated to each subject and a rolling programme for monitoring is in place. A whole school Monitoring and Evaluation Policy is in place. Not all leaders are sufficiently well trained or knowledgeable to effectively lead their respective subjects. Monitoring has tended to concentrate on provision and now needs

to focus on the precise impact of new schemes of work, and curriculum initiatives, on pupil standards.

The sixth issue required the school to comply with statutory requirements and Welsh Office guidelines as mentioned in the report.

All requirements enumerated in the last inspection are complied with. The school does not now comply with the statutory requirement for an act of daily worship.

The last issue required the school to address matters of health and safety with regard to the ramp to the demountable classroom, the condition of the playground, the lack of suitable cover between the pupil resource base and the main school building.

- (i) The demountable classroom and ramp are no longer on site.
- (ii) The playground has been resurfaced.
- (iii) Fire regulations do not allow a covered way between the Ray Hollow resource base and the main building.

The open nature of the school grounds means that members of the public have free access to the outside of the school. This presents a considerable burden on the teaching and support staff in terms of supervision in the morning, at playtimes and lunchtimes and particularly at the end of the day.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school needs to:

- Raise standards in subjects and aspects that are unsatisfactory and satisfactory, by giving attention to the shortcomings noted.
- Fulfill statutory requirements with regard to an act of daily worship.
- Build on the work of the curriculum leaders to ensure that:
 - i) all co-ordinators have sufficient subject knowledge to lead their respective subjects;
 - ii) co-ordinators develop a continuous monitoring programme that assesses the impact of new schemes of work, and other curriculum initiatives, on pupils' standards of achievement;
 - iii) co-ordinators have a clear view of provision and progression across the whole school.
- Increase the day to day use of key resources such as the libraries, musical instruments, IT suites and interactive whiteboards.

- Improve opportunities for pupils to develop and use their key skills of numeracy and ICT across the full range of subjects.

APPENDIX A

School Data

A. Basic information about the school

School's Name	Brackla Junior School
Type	Junior
Age range of pupils	7-11 years
School Address	Brackla Way Brackla Bridgend
Postal Code	CF31 2EZ
Telephone number	01656 766224

Name of Headteacher	Mr P C Jones
Date of Appointment	June 1992
Chair of the governors/ The appropriate authority	Councillor B Lewis
Registered Inspector	Mr C R Palmer
Date of Inspection	29.6.04 – 1.7.04

{~}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					29	37	42	34	142

<i>Number of teachers</i>			
	Full time	Part time	Full time equivalent (FTE)
Number of teachers	7		7

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio,	21 :1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	24
Teacher : class ratio	1.2 :1

<i>Attendance in percentages for the three terms prior to the inspection.</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School
Term 1			93.6	93.6
Term 2			90.6	90.6
Term 3			93.4	93.4

Number of pupils excluded during the 12 previous months.	3 temporary
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{~}C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

**NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS
END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2003**

Results of the National Curriculum Assessments KS2:								No. of pupils in Yr. 6 : 142						
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	10	60	30	0	
		National	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	16	45	31	0
	Test/Task	School	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	57	27	0
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	5	12	38	40	0
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	40	58	0	
		National	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	19	46	30	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	38	60	0
		National	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	4	18	42	33	0
Science	Teacher	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	55	35	0	

	Assessment	National	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	49	35	0
	Test/Task	School	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	11	54	33	0
		National	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	48	39

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (First language).			
By Teacher Assessment		By test	
At the School:		At the School:	83.6%
In Wales:	70%	In Wales:	68%

Note: The national and school figures refer to the year 2003

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

D. Evidence base of the inspection

The inspection team comprised of four inspectors who were present at the school for 11 inspector days. During that time:

- pre-inspection meetings were held with parents and the governing body to discuss the life and work of the school.
- 49 questionnaires were completed and returned by parents and were carefully analysed.
- school policies, schemes of work, management documentation, planning notes, assessment records and examples of pupils' records of achievement were examined prior to the inspection.
- discussions were held with the headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators.
- 50 sessions or part sessions of teaching were observed.
- pupils were heard reading and discussions took place with them about their work.

- samples of pupils' work were examined from all classes.
- attendance registers, pupils' records and teachers' planning files were inspected.
- inspectors observed pupils during playtime and lunchtime and were present at whole school acts of collective worship.
- post inspection meetings were held with the Headteacher , staff and the governing body.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Name	Role	Aspects	Subjects
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Mr C Palmer	Registered Inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Context 2 Main findings 3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning 3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum 5.1 Teaching 6.1 Self-Evaluation and planning for improvement 6.2 Leadership and efficiency 8.1 Progress since last inspection 8.2 Key issues for action Appendices	Mathematics Design technology History Physical education
Mrs C Phillips	Team Inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum 4.1 Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. 5.3 Curriculum 6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources. 	English Geography Art Religious Education
Mrs S Crowley	Team Inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.2 Assessment recording and reporting 5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 5.5. Provision for pupils with SEN 5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and other institutions. 	Welsh second language Science Information Technology Music
Mrs J Warr	Lay Inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes 4.3 Attendance 5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and other institutions 5.7 Partnership with Industry 	

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