

INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF
SCHOOL INSPECTIONS ACT, 1996

BRIERY HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Woodside Crescent
Ebbw Vale, NP23 6BY

School Number: 677/2186

Date of Inspection: 10th - 13th September, 2002

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REGISTERED INSPECTOR: WO50/15890

11th October, 2002

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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 the age of eighteen is intended to ease communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local education authorities and to emphasise the importance of continuity.

The term "reception" is applied to the year-group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) who attain the age of five during the academic year. "Year 1" (Y1) is applied to the year-group of pupils who attain the age of six during the academic year and so on to Y13 – the year-group who attain the age of eighteen during the academic year.

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

Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum consists of Y1 and Y2; Key Stage 2 of Y3 to Y6; Key Stage 3 of Y7 to Y9; Key Stage 4 of Y10 and Y11 (which is the final year of compulsory education).

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The following five-point grading scale is used to represent the main judgments in the report:

1. **Very good** : many good features, some of them outstanding
2. **Good** : good features and no major shortcomings
3. **Satisfactory** : good features outweigh 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

Briery Hill Primary School occupies an elevated position on a hillside a mile or so from the town centre of Ebbw Vale and enjoys a broad, open view of the surrounding area, although access to the site can be relatively difficult, particularly in poor weather conditions.

Currently, the school has a total roll of 156 pupils aged four to eleven years, including eighteen reception children in their first term of formal schooling. Numbers have declined steadily over the past four years.

The area served by the school is economically disadvantaged, with high levels of unemployment. Free school meals are received by approximately 33% of pupils, whilst forty-six pupils are considered to have some form of special educational need, a high percentage in comparison with the national average. The annual intake covers the full ability range but includes many less able and relatively few able children.

English is the sole or predominant home language in all cases. No child comes from a Welsh-speaking home or an ethnic-minority community.

The school has a comprehensive set of aims dealing with physical, academic, moral, social, spiritual and cultural development.

No changes have been made to the type or age-range of the school in recent years. The present headteacher has been in post since September, 1990.

The school was last inspected in June, 1997.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The Main Findings of the Report

- * This is a friendly, welcoming, caring school, which is making good overall progress under a hardworking headteacher and staff.
- * During the inspection, standards of educational achievement were satisfactory or better in approximately 87% of the lessons seen, including 36% where they were good. Standards were unsatisfactory in some 13% of lessons.
- * Suitable provision is made for children under five years of age. Evidence suggests that the following standards are achieved at this level:

Area of Learning	Reception
Language, Literacy and Communication Skills	Satisfactory
Personal and Social Development	Good
Mathematical Development	Satisfactory
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Satisfactory
Physical Development	Good
Creative Development	Satisfactory

* At Key Stages 1 and 2, standards of achievement are currently the following:

Subject	KS1	KS2
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Welsh (as a second language)	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Design and Technology	No judgment	No judgment
Information Technology	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
History	Good	Good
Geography	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Art	Good	Good
Music	Good	Good
Physical Education	Good	Good
Religious Education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

* There are also several good features to work in mathematics at the top of the school and some good aspects to reading in Welsh at both key stages.

* Too few lessons were seen during the inspection to enable a definite judgment to be made about standards in design and technology, although there are indications that inadequate attention is given to the subject.

* National Curriculum assessment conducted by teachers last summer showed that, at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above exceeded the national average for Wales in speaking and listening, and was similar to the national average in reading. Results, however, were below the average in writing, mathematics and science.

* The percentage achieving the higher grade of Level 3 was considerably above the national average in science and speaking and listening, identical with the average in reading, but well below the average in mathematics. No pupils achieved Level 3 in writing.

* At the end of Key Stage 2, National Curriculum test results indicated that the percentage achieving the expected norm of Level 4 or above exceeded the national average in mathematics and was broadly similar to the average in English and science. The percentage achieving Level 5 was significantly above the average in English, almost identical with the average in mathematics but below the average in science.

- * Results have improved steadily over recent years.
- * In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in speaking, reading, writing and number, and good standards in listening. Skills in information and communications technology are not yet sufficiently developed.
- * Overall, pupils receive a broad, relevant curriculum which complies with statutory requirements, although there is evidence that insufficient time has been given to information technology, and design and technology. Deficiencies in the former subject are now being addressed. Children under five years of age receive a suitable programme of activities which conform to the *Desirable Outcomes for Learning*.
- * Appropriate attention is paid to the *cwricwlwm Cymreig*, although there are inconsistencies in the incidental use of Welsh at both key stages.
- * During the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in approximately 89% of the lessons observed, including 42% where it was good and 3% where it was very good. Teaching was unsatisfactory in some 11% of lessons.
- * Good procedures are in place for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' work and progress. Annual reports comply with statutory requirements and provide parents with clear information about the progress made by their children.
- * Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, although staffing is currently inadequate following a redundancy at the end of the last school year. The headteacher intends to manage the situation by amending the curriculum and extending his role within the school.
- * Leadership and efficiency are good overall. The headteacher provides efficient and caring leadership and is purposefully managing a process of change.
- * Effective managerial and curricular support is provided by the deputy headteacher, who undertakes a suitable range of duties covering all aspects of the life and work of the school.
- * Subject co-ordinators are developing their roles well in terms of planning, advice and assessment. Some specific time is allocated for the purpose. Weekly staff meetings provide a suitable forum for discussion and development.
- * Further scope exists for the direct monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to ensure that standards are consistent in all areas and that existing good practice is disseminated effectively throughout the school.
- * The governing body provides suitable support and is appreciative of the work of the headteacher and staff. Care is taken to ensure that resources are efficiently managed and that the effects of long-term spending are fully assessed, particularly in matters such as staffing.

- * Routine administration is smooth and efficient.
- * Good procedures have been established to enable the school to evaluate its own work and to plan for improvement. Sound measures have been undertaken to identify what has been achieved in recent years and what still remains to be further improved or developed.
- * Sound use is made of staffing, accommodation and learning resources. Provision is satisfactory overall.
- * Classrooms provide adequate space for activities and are enhanced by colourful displays to stimulate learning and celebrate pupils' achievements. The reception classroom is well arranged and provides a bright, cheerful environment for young children.
- * A new computer suite has recently been provided to support the teaching of information technology.
- * The school library is spacious and well stocked, and helps to encourage an enjoyment of reading and the development of reference skills.
- * Non-teaching staff provide good support for the school and discharge their duties efficiently and effectively.
- * Very good care is taken of the interior of the building, which is kept scrupulously clean and tidy. Its condition is a credit to all concerned.
- * Learning resources are generally good, although there is a shortage of suitable texts for use during group reading. Some of the current stock of class library books are also in a poor condition and are in need of replacement.
- * The site presents access problems, exacerbated by parked cars in an adjoining street. Difficulties could be experienced by rescue vehicles in the event of a serious emergency.
- * Good provision is made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, with very good features to some aspects of work. Values promoted by the school are well reflected in pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- * Behaviour is good overall and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and to the general ethos of the school. Lessons in most classes are characterised by good concentration and attentiveness.
- * Satisfactory rates overall are achieved for attendance and punctuality, although the school does not fully comply with the requirements of Circular 3/99 of the National Assembly for Wales in that registers are not completed at the start of every morning session.
- * Good provision is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils. Pupils have good relationships with all members of staff, and work and play amicably with each other.

- * A satisfactory partnership has been established with parents, the local community, and other schools and institutions, although there are areas which would benefit from further development.
- * Links with commerce and industry are not yet sufficiently developed.
- * Good progress overall has been made in dealing with the key issues identified in the last inspection report.
- * Overall, the school functions as a happy, harmonious, well-disciplined community and is well placed for further progress and development.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

During the inspection, standards of educational achievement were satisfactory or better in approximately 87% of the lessons seen, including 36% where they were good. Standards were unsatisfactory in some 13% of lessons.

- * Reception children achieve satisfactory standards in language, literacy and communication skills; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and creative development; and good standards in personal and social development and physical development.
- * At Key Stages 1 and 2, standards are satisfactory overall in English, mathematics, science, Welsh, geography and religious education, and good in history, art, music and physical education.
- * There are also several good features to work in mathematics at the top of the school and some good aspects to reading in Welsh at both key stages.
- * Too few lessons were seen during the inspection to enable a definite judgment to be made about standards in design and technology, although there are indications that inadequate attention is given to the subject.
- * Standards in information technology are currently unsatisfactory at both key stages.
- * National Curriculum assessment conducted by teachers last summer showed that, at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above exceeded the national average for Wales in speaking and listening, and was similar to the national average in reading. Results, however, were below the average in writing, mathematics and science.
- * The percentage achieving the higher grade of Level 3 was considerably above the

national average in science and speaking and listening, identical with the average in reading, but well below the average in mathematics. No pupils achieved Level 3 in writing.

- * At the end of Key Stage 2, National Curriculum test results indicated that the percentage achieving the expected norm of Level 4 or above exceeded the national average in mathematics and was broadly similar to the average in English and science. The percentage achieving Level 5 was significantly above the average in English, almost identical with the average in mathematics but below the average in science.
- * Results have improved steadily over recent years.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in speaking, reading, writing and number, and good standards in listening. Skills in information and communications technology are not yet sufficiently developed.

- * In general, pupils willingly answer questions as part of discussions in different subjects and use appropriate vocabulary in each area of the curriculum. Speech, in most cases, is clear and distinct. Full use is not always made of plenary sessions to encourage pupils to talk about their work and to exchange thoughts and ideas.
- * Pupils in most classes listen attentively, both to their teachers and each other. Standards decline in one class where skills are not as effectively applied.
- * Most pupils make satisfactory use of reading skills to seek out information for topic work and to learn for themselves. Younger pupils are given ample opportunities to explore "big books" and become familiar with text. Good use is made of poetry to develop an understanding of style. Group reading sessions are not entirely successful in their present format: not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- * Writing skills are satisfactorily applied across the curriculum. Pupils, for example, list ingredients for cooking, label diagrams and illustrations, and record scientific experiments and factual information. Opportunities for creative writing vary from class to class and are not always fully exploited in all cases.
- * Regular use is made of number skills in subjects such as science, where pupils measure growth and temperature, and estimate and predict. Counting skills are applied in Welsh and music, particularly in learning movements for Welsh folk dancing.
- * Skills in information and communications technology are significantly underdeveloped, partly because of the lack of an adequate supply of computer equipment until the end of the last school year. Too little use is currently made of information technology in problem-solving and research. Teachers' medium and short-term planning provides little evidence of proper attention to developing skills in this area. Insufficient use has been made of computers to support pupils with special educational needs.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Good provision is made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, with very good features to some aspects of work.

- * The daily act of religious worship is a reverent family occasion laying strong emphasis on Christian teaching and moral development. Prayers and reflection help to foster the spiritual element.
- * Values promoted by the school are well reflected in pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- * Pupils work and play amicably together. Extracurricular activities and visits to places of interest help to extend social development.
- * A school council, made up of representatives from every class, enables pupils to play an active part in the management of the school. Views are put forward with confidence and enthusiasm.
- * Work in Welsh, history, music and dance helps pupils to appreciate their cultural heritage. Good use is made of visits to places of historical interest, although less attention is currently paid to work on the local area in some subjects.
- * Suitable arrangements are made to develop awareness of other cultures and religions, particularly in music and religious education. Activities in art also make a useful contribution.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Behaviour and attitudes are good overall.

- * A sensible policy has been drawn up for promoting good behaviour. Strategies are well understood by staff and consistently applied.
- * Pupils are courteous and helpful to visitors.
- * Good co-operation is shown during work undertaken in groups or pairs.
- * Lessons in most classes are characterised by good concentration and attentiveness.
- * Appropriate supervision is provided during the midday break and other recreational periods. Lunch times are pleasant, civilised occasions.
- * Restlessness and inattention occur in one class when teaching is unsatisfactory.

- * Overall, the quality of behaviour makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and to the general ethos of the school.

4.3 Attendance

Satisfactory rates overall are achieved for attendance and punctuality.

- * Attendance has improved since the last inspection and was, on average, 93.3% during the previous school term. Similar figures were achieved during the two earlier terms of the year.
- * Unauthorised absence last year was 0.5%, which is broadly similar to the national average for Wales. Significant improvements have resulted from the school's recent efforts to encourage parents to provide reasons for absence.
- * As part of a recent first-day response system, the school now quickly gets in touch with parents if their children are absent without explanation.
- * Weekly visits are received from the education welfare officer, who discusses problems with staff and suggests ways of improving attendance.
- * Pupils who achieve full attendance for a term, or the whole year, receive a small gift and a certificate as part of an incentive scheme.
- * Most pupils arrive punctually for the start of the school day, but the late arrival of a small minority causes a degree of disruption.
- * At present, the school does not fully comply with the requirements of Circular 3/99 of the National Assembly for Wales in that registers are not completed at the start of every morning session. Satisfactory procedures are followed in respect of all other aspects.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

During the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in approximately 89% of the lessons observed, including 42% where it was good and 3% where it was very good. Teaching was unsatisfactory in some 11% of lessons.

- * In the vast majority of classes, learning takes place in a calm, orderly environment, with mutual respect between pupils and staff.
- * Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils, both in terms of behaviour and work.

- * Policies and schemes of work provide clear guidance for the delivery of subjects.
- * Long and medium-term planning is suitably detailed and is scrutinised by subject coordinators to ensure that programmes of study are properly covered.
- * Teachers make considerable efforts to keep abreast of National Curriculum requirements through weekly staff meetings and courses organised by the local education authority.
- * Reception children receive a broad range of experiences suited to their age and stage of development. The teacher and nursery nurse work closely together in the delivery of the programme.
- * Appropriate use is made of homework to provide practice for pupils and to consolidate learning.
- * Lesson time is generally well used, with a good balance between discussion and written work. On occasions, however, insufficient time is given for writing, particularly during literacy sessions.
- * Staff throughout the school generally make good use of resources.
- * Good teaching is characterised by clear, rigorously-pursued aims and objectives, an appropriate range of opportunities for developing speaking skills, and well-supported group activities.
- * Not all staff pay sufficient attention to the presentation of work and consistently demand neat handwriting and the proper formation of letters.
- * Where teaching is unsatisfactory, staff do not always employ suitable strategies to motivate and interest pupils and to ensure that tasks are properly matched to needs and abilities. Discipline declines in such cases.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Overall, good procedures are in place for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' work and progress.

- * Good use is made of the local education authority's baseline profile to assess children's attainments on entry to the reception class and to ensure that work at this level is matched to their needs and abilities.
- * Due attention has been paid to analysing National Curriculum test results to achieve improvements in English, mathematics and science.
- * A computerised system is being developed to track pupils' progress as they move through the school and to focus on areas requiring particular attention. Good efforts are made to ensure that all pupils are helped to achieve their full potential.

- * Teachers interact with pupils during the performance of tasks and help them identify ways of making improvements.
- * Work is well marked in some instances, with helpful comments and suggestions, although standards vary from class to class.
- * Samples of work are kept in portfolios to serve as benchmarks for teachers and to enable them to make accurate assessments of standards.
- * Plenary sessions are well conducted in some classes and enable teachers to assess what pupils have learned from lessons. In other classes, sessions are often truncated and allow insufficient time for discussion.
- * Reading records are not always analysed in sufficient depth and used to ensure that books are properly matched to pupils' individual needs and abilities.
- * Too little emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to set their own targets for improvement, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- * Records of the special educational needs of pupils are used to guide the planning of lessons and take due account of recommendations in the new national Code of Practice.
- * Annual reports comply with statutory requirements and provide parents with clear information about the progress made by their children.

5.3 Curriculum

Overall, pupils receive a broad, relevant curriculum which complies with statutory requirements, although there is evidence that insufficient time has been given to information technology, and design and technology. Deficiencies in the former subject are now being addressed.

- * Children under five years of age receive a suitable programme of activities which conform to the *Desirable Outcomes for Learning*.
- * Policies and schemes of work at both key stages help to secure continuity and progression in learning and provide suitable guidance for the teaching of each subject.
- * Appropriate attention is given to long and medium-term planning, with regular monitoring by co-ordinators. The school is aware of the need to readjust long-term plans to accommodate the recently-reorganised mixed-age classes.
- * Daily planning generally incorporates suitable aims and strategies, although insufficient attention is paid in some classes to matching work to pupils' needs and abilities.
- * Short-term planning does not always sufficiently identify opportunities to develop key skills across the curriculum.

- * Regular time is given to group reading but maximum benefit is not always gained from sessions. Able readers do not receive sufficient challenge because of a lack of suitable texts to promote interest and to provide a wide range of experience.
- * Appropriate attention is paid to the *cwricwlwm Cymreig*, although there are inconsistencies in the incidental use of Welsh at both key stages.
- * Homework supports learning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- * Visits to places of interest help to enhance the curriculum and to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- * Satisfactory - and, in some cases, good - provision is made for specialist teaching in Welsh and music.
- * Visiting teachers provide brass, violin and percussion tuition. Pupils are given opportunities from time to time to perform in concerts and assemblies.
- * Extracurricular activities such as sport and music contribute to the development of personal and social skills. Visits to residential centres also help to extend the formal curriculum.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

Good provision is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils.

- * The school provides a safe, happy, secure environment.
- * Pupils have good relationships with all members of staff, and work and play amicably with each other.
- * A sound policy has been drawn up on child protection. Staff show appropriate knowledge of the procedures to be followed.
- * Satisfactory policies are in place to promote pupils' health and welfare.
- * Appropriate attention is paid to personal, social and health education and measures to promote equal opportunities and racial harmony.
- * A school nurse visits several times each term to monitor the health of pupils and to help deliver sex education.
- * Good use is made of a prefect system which enables pupils in Year 6 to exercise minor responsibilities such as helping with door and passageway supervision, assisting with assemblies and supporting younger children, particularly during wet breaks and play times.
- * A merit reward scheme encourages pupils to work hard, behave well and be generally

helpful. As part of the scheme, one pupil from each class receives a certificate at a weekly assembly, and a presentation ceremony is held each term. Parents and pupils both value the system.

- * Due attention is given to academic guidance, with use of individual files to monitor progress. Personal achievements, however, are not yet included.
- * Access to the building is suitably restricted.
- * Pupils are aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire. Drills are held each term and properly recorded. Emergency doors operate satisfactorily and fire extinguishers are within the period specified for testing. Fire engines and ambulances, however, could experience difficulties in obtaining quick access to the premises because of parking problems on the street outside.
- * Entries in the accident book are relevantly infrequent. No member of staff is currently qualified in first-aid.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Overall, satisfactory provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.

- * Approximately 30% of pupils are considered to have some form of special educational need, including one who is the subject of a formal statement. The percentage is well above the national average for Wales.
- * Effective assessment procedures enable special needs to be identified at an early stage and appropriate action to be taken.
- * All pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into ordinary classes and receive appropriate support in accordance with the new national Code of Practice. Good arrangements are made for social inclusion.
- * Individual educational plans are drawn up for all pupils on the special-needs list. Targets are relevant and achievable, although pupils are not involved in identifying or selecting them. Plans are reviewed after discussions with parents each term and modified in the light of progress and new information.
- * Duties are conscientiously performed by the special-educational-needs co-ordinator who maintains comprehensive records for pupils. The headteacher assists in the process of assessment.
- * Work, in the main, is suitably matched to pupils' needs and abilities, although tasks in some subjects are not always properly differentiated, particularly since the recent introduction of mixed-aged classes.
- * Academic and social skills are continually assessed against the personal targets for each

pupil using standardised tests and National Curriculum attainment targets. Results are carefully recorded in individual folders and used to guide the future planning of work.

- * Pupils make progress relative to their abilities as they move through the school, although records show that, in recent years, few names have been removed from the list of special educational needs.
- * A questionnaire devised by the local education authority has recently been introduced to ascertain pupils' reactions to the school and the progress they are making. Few pupils, however, have completed the document, as the majority require adult support to understand exactly what is required of them.
- * Pupils in Year 3 benefit from support from a part-time classroom assistant for approximately half of the week.
- * Up to the present academic year, the school has employed a special-needs support teacher to provide additional tuition in basic skills so that pupils can attain higher standards of achievement. The monies made available for the purpose have been reduced this year, with the result that the school now engages a nursery nurse to support pupils for just 50% of the timetable. This represents a substantial curtailment of provision.
- * Appropriate support is received from the local education authority and other outside bodies. Pupils are either withdrawn for specialist teaching or provided with additional help within the classroom. Good procedures have been adopted by the local education authority to evaluate the quality of its services.
- * Suitable arrangements are made to ensure a smooth transition to secondary education. Pupils meet the teacher responsible for special educational needs in the local comprehensive school and made a short visit to the premises during their final term in Year 6. Parents are also invited to a meeting at the school.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

Overall, the school has established a satisfactory partnership with parents, the local community, and other schools and institutions, although there are areas which would benefit from further development.

- * Fewer than 10% of parents completed the pre-inspection questionnaire but the majority of those who did so expressed strong support for the school. Similar sentiments were expressed at the pre-inspection meeting and during the inspection itself.
- * Information provided to parents through regular newsletters, reports, meetings and the school prospectus is generally satisfactory, although the governors' annual report to parents does not fully comply with statutory requirements.
- * Most parents have subscribed to a home-school agreement.

- * A friends' association, although no longer active, has raised significant funds for the school in the past.
- * No parents currently provide help in the classroom.
- * Good relationships have been forged with the local Baptist and Anglican churches, whose ministers regularly visit the school to conduct assemblies and to lead religious worship. Pupils visit the churches to learn about religious customs and practices and to participate in occasional services. Representatives of other Christian groups also visit the school to help foster the spiritual development of pupils.
- * Regular visits are received from the school nurse, education welfare officer, road-safety officer and fire services, all of whom make a valuable contribution to pupils' welfare and safety. No recent visit has been received from the police, although plans have now been drawn up for an initial meeting. Good links have been established with the local unitary authority and other external bodies.
- * The school's annual Christmas concert is attended by several local retired people.
- * Although curricular links with the local secondary school have improved since the last inspection, liaison is still not yet sufficiently developed. Pupils in Year 6 make only a brief visit to the school prior to their transfer to secondary education.
- * Several pupils from the comprehensive school visit the school for work experience. Valuable support is also received from local colleges, who use the school for training purposes.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

Links with commerce and industry are not yet sufficiently developed.

- * About twelve local shops and other businesses support the school through the donation of money or materials.
- * Pupils have occasionally visited places such as a local bakery and Oldbury Power Station as part of their topic work.
- * The nearby steel works and a local bank have supported some of the school's environmental projects, partly as a result of arrangements made through the governing body.
- * Few professional people or business men or women currently visit the school to talk about their work or occupations.
- * No direct links have yet been established with any education-business organisation, although three members of staff have attended one-day business courses to support work undertaken in the classroom.

- * At the current time, insufficient emphasis is placed on raising pupils' economic and industrial awareness and extending their knowledge of the world of work.
- * No policy has yet been drawn up on developing a partnership with industry.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

Good procedures have been established to enable the school to evaluate its own work and to plan for improvement.

- * The school has an appropriate set of aims which the governing body and all members of staff earnestly strive to achieve.
- * Measures are in place to identify potential difficulties from an early stage and to take appropriate action.
- * The results of National Curriculum and other tests are properly analysed and used to identify areas for improvement.
- * Suitable targets have been set in the school development plan, together with strategies and cost implications.
- * Progress is reviewed by the senior management team who regularly monitor and discuss performance.
- * Good attention is paid to raising standards in English, mathematics and science, with all pupils having individual targets for improvement.
- * The headteacher has begun to monitor classroom practice and to identify staff training needs, although observation is not yet sufficiently focused or conducted on a sufficiently regular basis.
- * Much hard work has been undertaken to address key issues from the last inspection.
- * Sound measures have been undertaken to identify what has been achieved in recent years and what still remains to be further improved or developed.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

Leadership and efficiency are good overall.

- * The headteacher provides efficient and caring leadership and is purposefully managing a process of change.
- * Sound support is provided by a conscientious staff and an interested body of governors.
- * Relationships are good at all levels. A pleasant, industrious ethos characterises the daily life of the school.

- * Aims, values and policies are clearly stated and are generally well reflected in pupils' work.
- * Gradual improvements have been made in recent years in National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science, and in standards in some of the foundation subjects.
- * Key areas for further improvement have been clearly identified.
- * Subject co-ordinators are developing their roles well in terms of planning, advice and assessment. Some specific time is allocated for the purpose. Weekly staff meetings provide a suitable forum for discussion and development.
- * Further scope exists for the direct monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to ensure that standards are consistent in all areas and that existing good practice is disseminated effectively throughout the school.
- * Effective managerial and curricular support is provided by the deputy headteacher, who undertakes a suitable range of duties covering all aspects of the life and work of the school.
- * Regular meetings are held of the senior management team to discuss important issues and to formulate policy.
- * The governing body provides suitable support and is appreciative of the work of the headteacher and staff. Care is taken to ensure that resources are efficiently managed and that the effects of long-term spending are fully assessed, particularly in matters such as staffing.
- * Policy documents and regular reports by the headteacher keep the governors properly informed of curriculum matters and progress in the school development plan, although involvement in this area is not yet fully developed.
- * Routine administration is smooth and efficient.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

Sound use is made of staffing, accommodation and learning resources. Provision is satisfactory overall.

- * The school currently has an adequate complement of teachers to cater for the present number of pupils on roll. All teachers are appropriately qualified and suitably experienced in teaching the National Curriculum.
- * Job descriptions have been drawn up and agreed with all members of staff.
- * The nursery nurse provides good support for reception children during morning sessions.

- At other times, she is employed to help pupils with special needs in the rest of the school, although the time available is insufficient for the numbers involved.
- * Teaching support for pupils with special educational needs is currently inadequate following a redundancy at the end of the last school year. The headteacher intends to manage the situation by amending the curriculum and extending his role within the school.
 - * Classrooms provide adequate space for activities and are enhanced by colourful displays to stimulate learning and celebrate pupils' achievements.
 - * The reception classroom is well arranged and provides a bright, cheerful environment for young children.
 - * A new computer suite has recently been provided to support the teaching of information technology.
 - * The school library is spacious and well stocked, and helps to encourage an enjoyment of reading and the development of reference skills.
 - * Non-teaching staff provide good support for the school and discharge their duties efficiently and effectively.
 - * Very good care is taken of the interior of the building, which is kept scrupulously clean and tidy. Its condition is a credit to all concerned.
 - * The site presents access problems, exacerbated by parked cars in an adjoining street.
 - * Learning resources are generally good, although there is a shortage of suitable texts for use during group reading. Some of the current stock of class library books are also in a poor condition and are in need of replacement.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards Achieved by Pupils

Provision for Children under Five

At the time of inspection, the school had eighteen reception pupils, all of whom were attending on a part-time basis and were in just their first week of formal education. No more than half had previously attended a nursery or pre-school play group.

Indications from examining all available evidence, including work from the previous school year, are that suitable provision is made for children of this age and that standards of achievement are generally satisfactory to good.

Good Features

- * Appropriate planning is undertaken in each of the six areas of learning.
- * Suitable resources have been provided to enable children to benefit from their early experiences of school.

- * Good progress is being made in adjusting to simple routines such as responding to instructions and learning to clean up quickly and quietly after activities.

- * The teacher and nursery nurse work closely together in helping children to settle into the school and to feel happy and secure in their new environment.

- * A love of books is encouraged from the outset.

- * Children who have received pre-school education are acquainted with well-known nursery rhymes and stories, and are confident in sharing books with adults.

- * Role-play in the home corner encourages the development of speech, with adults intervening and providing support where necessary.

- * Mark-making takes an appropriate variety of forms including painting and colouring.

- * Bold use is made of paint, with most children willingly responding to questions about their work.

- * About a quarter of the children are currently able to write their names.

- * Evidence gained from books and examining work from the previous year indicates that appropriate attention is given to pre-reading and writing exercises and that pupils generally make a sound start in this area of the curriculum.

- * A range of tabletop activities promotes mathematical experiences. Children sort and match objects on a daily basis, with a few recognising simple shapes and colours. Most can count to three, and some beyond, at this very early stage of schooling.

- * Meticulous records are kept of progress. Sound evidence is available to show that satisfactory to good progress is made by all pupils throughout the course of the year.

- * Numerous opportunities are given for children to develop their creative skills and to gain experience with a range of materials. Individual help is provided with techniques such as printing when children first enter the school.

- * Experiences based on their homes, families and natural surroundings help children to understand the world around them and to develop a sense of curiosity and wonder. Areas of interest around the room encourage questioning and experimentation.

- * Appropriate attention is given to physical development, with children confidently participating in a range of activities such as jumping, pushing and pedalling. Most

generally react well to instructions.

Shortcomings

- * Although admission arrangements allow children to receive good individual attention when they first enter the school, numbers during morning sessions are currently so small (three to four children) that pupils cannot play meaningfully together. Also, there is a tendency for adults to provide too much help in some activities.
- * Insufficient attention is paid to developing snack times as meaningful social occasions.

English

Overall, standards of achievement in English are satisfactory at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Good attention is paid to the development of speaking skills, with pupils at Key Stage 1 regularly participating in role-play in the class flower shop and dentist's surgery. Regular intervention by adults ensures that all pupils are able to participate in meaningful discussion.
- * Older pupils develop skills through circle times, group work and occasional debating sessions. Most respond readily to questioning and eagerly contribute to class discussions. Speech is generally clear and distinct.
- * By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils employ an appropriate range of vocabulary and make satisfactory use of speaking skills across the curriculum.
- * Satisfactory development takes place of aural skills. Most pupils listen carefully, both to their teachers and each other, and pay due attention during whole-class sessions.
- * Reading is taught through a suitable, commercially-based scheme. A sound start is made at Key Stage 1, with appropriate emphasis on recognising key words and mastering basic vocabulary.
- * Progress at Key Stage 2 is assisted by regular group work and opportunities for pupils to read to one another.
- * Many parents also provide valuable assistance by hearing their children read at home.
- * Most pupils at Key Stage 2 read with reasonable fluency and understanding.
- * The provision of a suitable range of reference books enables pupils to seek information for themselves and gather facts for topic work.
- * Writing, at Key Stage 1, covers areas such as letters, stories, news and poetry.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 are encouraged to write for different purposes and occasions. Good

attention is paid to poetry, with pupils throughout the school producing some interesting work in this area.

- * Regular handwriting exercises support correct letter formation. Work, at the top of the school, is generally neatly presented.
- * Weekly spelling lists help pupils to recognise patterns and to use words in their correct context. Regular use is made of dictionaries from an early stage.

Shortcomings

- * During the inspection, little emphasis was placed on language centres and tape recorders as a means of developing listening and reading skills, with some pupils at Key Stage 1 and at the beginning of Key Stage 2 making no use of the equipment.
- * Insufficient time is devoted to the teaching of phonics to enable pupils to build up words and to tackle new vocabulary.
- * Texts used during group-reading sessions are not entirely appropriate. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to become familiar with the styles and techniques of different authors and to experience a range of structures to develop comprehension. Not all pupils are sufficiently challenged. Some proceed at too slow a pace.
- * Reading records are maintained by every teacher but are not always sufficiently analytical to identify strengths and weaknesses and to support future learning.
- * Work, in some classes, is not sufficiently differentiated and matched to the individual needs and abilities of pupils.
- * Standards in the presentation of work vary between classes and are generally lower in the first half of Key Stage 2 than in the rest of the school.
- * Some pupils are introduced to pens at too early a stage, particularly before mastering cursive script. Work, in such cases, is marred by crossings out and untidiness.

Mathematics

Standards in mathematics are satisfactory overall at both key stages, with several good features at the top of the school.

Good Features

- * Pupils throughout the school develop a range of calculation strategies appropriate to their age and make sound progress in the understanding of number. Calculations are generally accurately and confidently performed.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils show a growing understanding of place value, and can add and

subtract using two-digit numbers. By the end of Year 2, they recognise sequences of numbers, understand the concept of odd and even, and can use multiples of 2, 5 and 10. Most can explain their thinking in appropriate mathematical language.

- * Older pupils at this level can complete simple money problems involving addition, although not all readily recognise that subtraction is involved in the giving of change.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils recognise simple two and three-dimensional shapes and can describe their properties in everyday language. Older pupils use appropriate terminology to compare and describe more complex shapes.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress in number work and have an increasingly secure understanding of the value of place. They multiply and divide whole numbers by 10 and 100; order, add and subtract negative numbers; and use number operations to two decimal places. Sound emphasis is generally placed on inverse operations and estimations to check the accuracy of answers.
- * Older pupils recognise angles as a measure of turn and can describe the properties of different triangles in appropriate terms. When measuring length, they estimate first and then use both standard and non-standard measures to check the accuracy of the estimation. Competent use is made of multiplication to work out the areas of rectangular shapes. Sound knowledge and understanding are shown of co-ordinates.
- * At both key stages, regular use is made of graphs to record simple surveys.

Shortcomings

- * Mental recall of number facts is slow in most instances. Pupils are not generally familiar with number patterns to solve simple problems involving multiplication and division.
- * Information technology is not used sufficiently for the handling of data.
- * Work varies considerably in presentation throughout the school.

Science

Overall, standards in science are satisfactory at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Pupils at Key Stage 1 can name the parts of a plant and identify their functions. They carry out simple investigations and know that plants need air, light and water for healthy development.
- * Sound knowledge is shown of what constitutes a healthy diet and of the importance of exercise. Pupils know that their breathing rate increases with exertion, and understand why.

- * Appropriate understanding is displayed of the forces of pushing and pulling and what happens, for example, when a car goes down a ramp.
- * At Key Stage 2, pupils plan investigations, make predictions, carry out experiments, record their work and draw conclusions. Due emphasis is placed on the need to ensure that tests are fair and that reliable conclusions can be drawn from the results.
- * Pupils at this level can explain the difference between solids, liquids and gases and show knowledge of reversible and irreversible changes.
- * Studies are made of life processes, and classifications undertaken of animal life.
- * Work covers all aspects of the National Curriculum.
- * Recall of previous work is generally satisfactory at this level.
- * Appropriate links are made with mathematics - for example, in measuring plant growth and distances.

Shortcomings

- * Pupils at Key Stage 1 generally have a poor recall of scientific facts and procedures, and cannot explain, for example, how to make a circuit to light up a bulb.
- * Relatively little use is made of information technology for measuring and recording data.
- * Insufficient emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to select the best graphical method for recording. Use is generally restricted to simple bars or block charts.

Welsh

Standards in Welsh are satisfactory at both key stages, with some good aspects to work in reading.

Good Features

- * Work at Key Stage 1 ensures that pupils acquire a sound basic vocabulary which they can use to develop simple sentences and phrases.
- * Pupils at this level are able to respond to instructions in the language and to use greetings, express their feelings and talk about everyday items such as the weather.
- * Reading is introduced by means of "big books" such as *Nos Da Arthur*. Most pupils enjoy reading with their teacher and are making steady progress in this strand of the subject.
- * At Key Stage 2, the co-ordinator employs a good range of strategies to motivate pupils

and maintains a suitable balance between oral and written work.

- * Pronunciation is clear and correct.
- * In the first half of Key Stage 2, pupils make steady progress in mastering simple phrases such as *Faint yw dy oed di?* and are given numerous opportunities to read, using a suitable variety of texts. Most read with appropriate intonation and expression.
- * Pupils in the top half of the school are introduced to different forms of questioning and are able to give suitable responses. They recognise personal pronouns, use correct structures and can maintain a short discussion on personal matters such as age, address and family.
- * Good co-operation is shown in preparing and reading dialogue and in working sensibly together.
- * All pupils undertake a suitable variety of work which takes due account of their needs and abilities.
- * Valuable help and support are received from the *athrawes fro*.

Shortcomings

- * At Key Stage 1, too much emphasis is sometimes placed on repetition at the expense of introducing new work. No opportunities are currently afforded for the co-ordinator to assist colleagues in the delivery of lessons.
- * Sufficient use is not always made of English to assist conversation and to ensure that pupils fully understand explanations and instructions. Work, on such occasions, often slows in pace.
- * Concentration in the top half of the school is sometimes marred by restless behaviour and a failure to listen carefully.
- * Incidental use of the language varies significantly between classes.
- * Insufficient use is made of audio tapes and computer programmes to assist teaching and learning in the subject.

Design and Technology

Too few lessons were observed in design and technology to enable a definite judgment to be made about standards, although there are indications that pupils' skills are not sufficiently developed because of inadequate attention to the subject.

Good Features

- * Pupils are encouraged to draw plans of what they wish to make and, in some classes, to produce a list of the relevant materials.
- * In one class at Key Stage 1, pupils investigated different types of hand puppets before drawing up their own designs.
- * Younger pupils share their ideas in groups and discuss them sensibly with one another.
- * A high-quality textile tapestry has been produced for the entrance foyer with assistance from two parents and an artist in residence.
- * Cutting and sticking skills are developing well.
- * Appropriate opportunities are provided for practical tasks such as tie-dye.

Shortcomings

- * Work presented in books is often unfinished and untidy. Drawings generally lack shape and form.
- * Written work does not show the development of an appropriate technical vocabulary.
- * Records are not always kept of pupils' own evaluation of their work.
- * Where evaluation is undertaken, pupils do not demonstrate proper understanding of the need to design, make and test their products to ensure that they are suitable for the purposes intended.
- * Little completed work was available for inspection to assess the quality of products and finishing techniques.
- * No evidence is available to show how practical skills are later applied to work, such as sliding devices to make moving pictures or batteries to transmit power to vehicles.

Information Technology

Standards in information technology are currently unsatisfactory at both key stages.

Good Features

- * All pupils now have regular time to learn about computers and to practise their skills following the recent opening of a properly-equipped computer suite.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 are able to open programmes and to use icons to select tools. Older pupils know how to change font types and sizes, use colour, and move blocks of text around the screen.
- * Since the introduction of an interactive whiteboard, skills in the subject have improved

significantly, with pupils now opening and controlling programmes with increasing confidence.

- * Pupils in the top half of the school have devised simple programmes to make a robotic toy move along a set pathway.
- * During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 used tape-recorders to record interviews as part of a lesson in English.

Shortcomings

- * Pupils' skills in almost all aspects of the subject are currently below national expectations.
- * Teachers have not yet received sufficient training in information technology to assist pupils to maximum advantage.
- * Although a new scheme of work is helping pupils to make systematic use of computers, it is not yet applied effectively throughout the school.
- * Insufficient practice has been given in using the Internet and e-mail facilities.
- * Too little use is made of computers to develop knowledge of different kinds of graphs.
- * Pupils in Year 6 show limited knowledge of ways of combining graphics with text as a means of illustrating and enhancing their work.
- * Skills in control technology and data-logging are underdeveloped. Teachers' planning gives insufficient attention to this aspect of the subject.

History

Overall, standards of achievement in history are good at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Younger pupils are developing a good sense of chronology and are able to sequence events in stories with reasonable accuracy. Family trees help them to understand their place in their own families. Appropriate awareness is being acquired of the concept of change.
- * Work at this stage is suitably based on things which are familiar to young children and includes activities such as classifying toys and household items into "old" and "new".
- * Visits to places such as the Museum of Welsh Life at St. Fagans enable pupils to gain first-hand experience of life in the past.

- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 show good knowledge of facts relating to the Tudor period and are able to compare social conditions of the time with their own lives and experiences.
- * Older pupils display a satisfactory understanding of cause and effect.
- * Pupils throughout the key stage are able to make sensible use of time-lines to identify important dates and to place events in their historical period.
- * Good use is made of the local area to study the industrial past of Wales. Pupils can describe nineteenth-century houses in Blaenafon and know what life was like for miners in Cwm and pit children in Tredegar.
- * A visit to the Roman Legionary Fortress at Caerleon has helped to bring alive the Roman period, with good use of art lessons to copy artefacts seen and discussed in the museum.
- * Pupils in most classes undertake a good range of recorded work supported by a variety of books and photographs.

Shortcomings

- * Younger pupils are not currently given sufficient opportunities to study the lives of famous Welsh personalities.

Geography

Standards in geography are satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1.

Although no lessons in the subject were seen at Key Stage 2, evidence from planning, books and discussions indicates that steady progress is made at this level.

Good Features

- * Good attention is paid to the development of mapping skills. Steady progression occurs throughout the school.
- * At Key Stage 1, most pupils display a satisfactory understanding of the general life of the community and can discuss shops, houses and people who help them. Many can express what they like and dislike about the area.
- * Visits are made to places near the school so that pupils can gain first-hand experience and knowledge.
- * In one lesson observed at Key Stage 1, good planning and organisation enabled pupils to draw up their own plan of the area and to record items of geographical interest.
- * At Key Stage 2, pupils are able to discuss the closure of the steel works and its implications for the community and the local environment.

- * Studies of the area include landscape and industrial changes.
 - * Pupils at the top of the school display satisfactory knowledge of other parts of the world and use appropriate terminology to discuss particular features. Competent use is made of maps and globes.
 - * Due attention is paid to environmental care and protection.
- Shortcomings**
- * Whilst some attention is given to the study of contrasting areas, work is not generally pursued in sufficient depth.
 - * Significant variations occur in the recording of work. Too few opportunities are provided to develop literacy skills through extended writing.
 - * Weather studies are undertaken in isolation without sufficient reference to specific places either in Britain or further afield.

Art

Standards in art are good at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Use is made of a wide range of techniques and materials to give pupils good experiences in painting, drawing and collage work.
- * Younger pupils maintain good concentration and readily discuss their work with adults.
- * Good use is generally made of colour, with numerous opportunities for the mixing of paints. Some colourful work has been based on Monet's "Daisies" and "Scenes from the Garden at Giverny".
- * Pupils are introduced to the work of famous artists from reception stage where they paint in the style of Kandinsky. Older pupils have produced some detailed and interesting work based on Lowry and Caulfield. Good use is made of colour, shape and space.
- * At both key stages, pupils are able to discuss their work and to explain the techniques they have employed.
- * Steady progress is made in drawing, as pupils move upwards through the school. Some very good work in still life is produced by the end of Key Stage 2.
- * Examples of sketch work are kept in individual folders.
- * Some work takes place on the techniques and products of other cultures. Interesting pictures, for example, have been produced on the Aborigine story of Creation using

patterns to create images.

Shortcomings

- * Although some attention is paid to Welsh artists and sculptors, work in this area is not yet fully developed.

Music

Standards in music are good at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Pupils throughout the school sing tunefully, with clear diction and accurate pitch.
- * Younger pupils demonstrate a good awareness of rhythm and make confident use of their voices and bodies to create musical sounds. Considerable enjoyment is shown of singing.
- * A well-adapted scheme of work helps to ensure that skills are developed progressively throughout the school.
- * Specialist teaching in the subject was good during the lessons observed.
- * At Key Stage 2, pupils are able to compose short pieces of music, using a range of tuned and untuned instruments. Some good work is produced by older pupils.
- * Good co-operation takes place during group activities, with pupils showing the ability to evaluate their work and to suggest improvements.
- * Opportunities are provided for pupils to join the school choir, which performs for a variety of audiences, including the mayor on civic occasions.
- * Good use is made of music in morning assemblies. Pupils have opportunities to appreciate the work of different composers and to enjoy performances which the co-ordinator gives on the harp. Hymns are sung in both English and Welsh.
- * Violin, brass and percussion tuition is provided by peripatetic teachers. Three pupils have gained Grade 1 with merit in brass.
- * Benefits are received from regular visits by professional musicians.

Shortcomings

- * Younger pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to benefit from piano accompaniment in their singing.

Physical Education

Standards in physical education are good at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Pupils at Key Stage 1 make sensible use of space and move around in a variety of ways placing weight on different parts of their bodies. Most display good spatial awareness and respond quickly to their teachers' instructions.
- * Sound emphasis is placed on evaluation at this level. Pupils make sensitive suggestions about each other's performances, with many less confident pupils showing improvement during lessons.
- * The majority of pupils are able to move in time to music and to combine a sequence of movements. Regular opportunities are provided for Welsh folk dancing and other creative activities.
- * Older pupils participate in games lessons throughout the year. Activities seen during the inspection included rugby and rounders. Pupils learn how to improve their skills and work in small groups and pairs to practise different passes. Ball and body control are developing well.
- * Most pupils understand the rules of team games and display a sense of fair play coupled with appropriate competitiveness. The school fields several teams that participate successfully in local tournaments.
- * Effective use is generally made of speaking and listening skills, particularly during evaluation sessions. Most pupils pay attention to their teachers and listen carefully to each other.
- * In many classes, pupils not actively participating in lessons help to appraise performance and make valid observations during class plenary sessions.

Shortcomings

- * Insufficient emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to evaluate each other's performances at Key Stage 2.

Religious Education

Standards in religious education are satisfactory overall.

Good Features

- * Pupils learn about major world religions and have an understanding of the rites of passage from a Christian perspective. They are beginning to appreciate that various religions have similar customs such as festivals of light and ceremonies to mark the birth

of a baby.

- * Most pupils appreciate that the Bible is regarded as a sacred text and that many of its stories can be applied to modern-day life. Sound knowledge is shown of the fact that other religions such as Judaism also have special days and sacred books.
- * Older pupils recollect the key aspects of several religions and appreciate that artefacts often express spirituality.
- * Acts of collective worship, especially when led by visiting ministers, help to foster the spiritual development of pupils and to promote a deeper understanding of the meaning of religion.
- * All pupils show an understanding of moral issues and appreciate stories illustrating right and wrong.
- * Visits to local churches and chapels help to increase knowledge of Christian teachings and practice.

Shortcomings

- * Pupils are given too few opportunities to record their own thoughts and ideas. Written work relies too heavily on worksheets.
- * Speaking and listening skills are not always promoted effectively during class discussions.
- * Not all pupils are able to recall facts satisfactorily. Knowledge of religions outside Christianity and Judaism often lacks depth and understanding.
- * Pupils have too few opportunities to gain first-hand experience of other customs and practices. Too little emphasis is placed on visits to places of worship other than Christian chapels or churches.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the Last Inspection

Overall, good progress has been made in dealing with the key issues identified during the last inspection.

- * The last inspection report, published on 4th July, 1997, identified six key areas for action. In order to enhance the quality of education and to raise standards of achievement, the school was advised that it needed to:
 - i. improve the standards of pupils' achievements in mathematics in Key Stage 2;

- ii. improve the standards of pupils' handwriting and address identified shortcomings in English;
- iii. improve the standards and quality of teaching and learning in one class towards the end of Key Stage 2;
- iv. develop planning and assessment to ensure that work is appropriately matched to the abilities of all pupils;
- v. improve the whole-school monitoring of the quality of educational provision and the standards achieved by pupils;
- vi. address the safety issue identified in the report.

* Progress since that time has been as follows.

Key Issue 1

Standards have improved in mathematics. Good teaching at Key Stage 1 lays solid foundations for learning, whilst clear aims, sound planning and effective strategies in the upper part of Key Stage 2 enable pupils to make satisfactory progress overall. Results in National Curriculum standard assessment tests have steadily improved since the last inspection.

Key Issue 2

This key issue has been partly addressed. The school has made significant efforts to improve presentation through regular handwriting exercises with the result that most pupils, by the end of Key Stage 2, achieve satisfactory standards. However, there are still considerable variations, with work in the middle of the school in particular being marred by crossings out, untidiness and careless letter formation.

A sound scheme now provides strong guidance for the teaching of English. Regular spelling exercises and homework tasks have helped to achieve improvements in this area.

Key Issue 3

The quality of teaching and learning in the top of Key Stage 2 now ranges from satisfactory to good. There are no longer any significant problems at this level.

Key Issue 4

Much work has been undertaken by the headteacher and staff in developing long, medium and short-term planning. Subject co-ordinators now examine the medium-term planning of their colleagues, check against National Curriculum requirements and make helpful suggestions. Samples of work are also collected for assessment purposes.

Good efforts are made in some classes to differentiate work for pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1, although there is still some unevenness in parts of the school, where work is not always properly matched to ability.

Key Issue 5

Good attention has been paid to improving arrangements for monitoring provision and standards. The headteacher monitors teaching and learning, and discusses work with individual members of staff. Advice provided by the local education authority has been absorbed and acted upon. The role of subject co-ordinators has been developed to incorporate aspects such as producing policies and schemes of work, carefully analysing test results, drawing up and maintaining portfolios for assessment purposes, and regularly examining teachers' planning. Further development, however, is still needed to enable co-ordinators to undertake direct classroom observation and to assist in improving teaching and learning where necessary. Existing good practice is not yet disseminated effectively throughout the entire school.

Key Issue 6

- * The safety issue identified in the last report has been properly addressed.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school now needs to:

- * raise standards of achievement in design and technology, and information technology;
- * provide pupils with greater challenge in reading in order to accelerate progress;
- * ensure that work throughout the school is consistently matched to pupils' needs and abilities;
- * continue to develop links with parents and form a stronger partnership with industry, so that learning can be further enriched and extended;
- * take steps to ensure that the requirements of Circular 3/99 of the National Assembly for Wales are fully observed in respect of procedures for registering attendance;
- * seek the assistance of the local authority and the police, ambulance and fire services in ensuring that emergency vehicles have swift and ready access to the premises.

The inspection team would like to thank the headteacher, staff, governors, parents and pupils of the school for their kind hospitality and unfailing courtesy, co-operation and

assistance throughout the inspection.

APPENDIX A

Basic Information about the School

Name of School	Briery Hill Primary School
School Type	Community
Age-Range of Pupils	4 – 11 years
Address of School	Woodside Crescent Ebbw Vale
Post Code	NP23 6BY
Telephone Number	01495 304292

Headteacher	Mr. John L. Roberts
Date of Appointment	1st September, 1990
Chairman of Governors	Mrs. M. Wilcox
Registered Inspector	Mrs. E. Griffiths
Dates of Inspection	10th – 13th September, 2002

APPENDIX 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	-	19	15	27	19	25	15	36	156

<i>Total Number of Teachers</i>			
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time Equivalent (fte)
Number of Teachers	7	0	7

<i>Staffing Information</i>	
Pupil : Teacher (fte) Ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	22.29
Average Class Size (excluding nursery and special classes)	26
Teacher (fte) : Class Ratio	1 : 17

<i>Percentage Attendance for Three Complete Terms Prior to the Inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School (excluding nursery)
Term 1	91.43	92.53	93.65	93.3
Term 2	94.23	94.01	95.39	94.54
Term 3	93.81	92.93	94.36	93.7

Number of Pupils Excluded during Twelve Months prior to Inspection	0
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APPENDIX C

Results of National Curriculum Assessments

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2002			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	5	19	48	29	0
		National	0	0	4	13	62	21	0
ENGLISH: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5	14	52	29	0
		National	0	0	4	13	54	29	0
ENGLISH: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5	24	71	0	0
		National	0	0	5	13	70	12	0
ENGLISH: Speaking and Listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	10	52	38	0
		National	0	0	3	11	63	23	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	10	10	62	19	0
		National	0	0	2	9	60	29	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	29	29	43	0
		National	0	0	2	10	67	21	0

Percentage of Pupils Attaining at least Level 2 in Mathematics, Science and English (or Welsh as a First Language) according to Teacher Assessment			
In the School:	67%	In Wales:	81%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements
- A Pupils who were absent from the tests/tasks
- W Pupils who are working towards Level 1

National figures relate to 2001, as results for 2002 are not yet available.

The majority of seven-year-old pupils are expected to attain Level 2.

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2002								Number of Pupils in Y6 32						
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	13	22	53	13	0	
		National	0	0	0		1	1	6	19	48	25	0	
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0				13	13	38	38	
		National	0	2	1	1				5	14	47	30	
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	0	28	56	16	0	
		National	0	0	0		0	1	4	20	47	28	0	
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0				0	16	53	31	
		National	0	2	1	1				4	18	42	32	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	3	28	63	6	0	
		National	1	0	0		0	0	3	15	52	29	0	
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0				0	22	56	22	
		National	0	2	0	1				2	13	51	31	

Percentage of Pupils Attaining at least Level 4 in Mathematics, Science and English (or Welsh as a First Language)			
By Teacher Assessment		By Test	
In the School:	63%	In the School:	66%
In Wales:	68%	In Wales:	68%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied 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 who have not been entered for tests because they are working outside the levels of the tests
- W Pupils who are working towards Level 1 but have not yet achieved the standards needed for Level 1

National figures relate to 2001, as results for 2002 are not yet available.

The majority of eleven-year-old pupils are expected to attain Level 4.

APPENDIX D

The Evidence Base of Inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors over a period of 3½ days.

- Pre-inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and governing body.
- Three parents attended a meeting with two members of the inspection team.
- Fourteen questionnaires were returned, analysed and summarised.
- All documentation submitted by the school was analysed and discussed, including the school development plan, policy and curriculum documents and teachers' planning files.
- Pupils were observed as they arrived and departed from school and during the midday and other breaks.
- At various times during the day, inspectors took the opportunity to talk to pupils and to discuss their work.
- Thirty-nine lessons or part-lessons were observed.
- Pupils were heard reading and were examined in their knowledge and understanding of English, mathematics, science and other subjects.
- A wide range of pupils' written and other work was examined in each class.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' work with class teachers and examined assessment records.
- Discussions were also held with the headteacher, curriculum co-ordinators and other staff.
- The work of pupils with special educational needs was examined.
- Minutes of meetings and documents relating to the financial management of the school were discussed.
- Budget figures were examined and discussed with the headteacher.
- Attendance and pupil records were inspected.
- Inspectors attended acts of collective worship.

APPENDIX E

Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Team Member	Subject Responsibilities	Aspect Responsibilities
Mrs. E. Griffiths	Areas of Learning for Children under Five English Welsh (as a second language) History Geography Art Music	The School and its Priorities Main Findings Standards of Achievement in Subjects and Areas of Learning Standards of Achievement in Key Skills across the Curriculum Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Behaviour and Attitudes Teaching Curriculum Leadership & Efficiency Progress since the Last Inspection Key Issues for Action
Mrs. V. Howells	Mathematics Science Design and Technology Information Technology Physical Education Religious Education	Main Findings Assessment, Recording and Reporting Special Educational Needs Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources Key Issues for Action
Mr. S. J. R. Page		Main Findings Attendance Support and Guidance Partnership with Parents, the Community, Schools and Other Institutions Partnership with Industry Key Issues for Action