

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

**YSGOL BRO CYNFAL
FFORDD HEULOG
LLAN FFESTINIOG
BLAENAU FFESTINIOG
GWYNEDD
LL41 4NF**

School Number: 661/ 2190

Date of Inspection: 20 – 22 May 2003

**By
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Registered Inspector WO 92/16768**

Date: 23 July 2003

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

This community primary school is located in the village of Llan Ffestiniog, Gwynedd. It serves the village itself and its rural hinterland that are recognized as being economically disadvantaged. According to the pre-inspection documentation, pupils at the school reflect the full range of ability.

There are currently 70 pupils between 3 and 11 years of age on the school register and they are admitted on a part time basis in the September following their third birthday and full time in the September following their fourth birthday. There has been a significant reduction in pupil numbers since the last inspection in November 1997.

Seventeen per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals and 10 (14%) are designated as having special educational needs (SEN). Two pupils have statements of their needs. Eighty per cent of pupils are brought up in Welsh speaking homes, a slight increase on the 75% that applied at the time of the last inspection. The remainder come to speak the language fluently by the time they leave the school.

The information handbook for parents contains a statement of aims for the school, which is developed into a series of objectives in the School Development Plan (SDP). This also contains a number of curricular and management priorities.

Whole school targets are set according to the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) requirements.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

- The overall quality of educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs. Standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

	Nursery	Reception
Language, literacy and communication skills	Very good	Very good
Personal and Social Development	Good	Good
Mathematical Development	Good	Good
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Very good	Very good
Physical Development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Creative Development	Good	Good

- In Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2, pupils' standards of achievement in the different subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) and religious education are as follows:

	KS1	KS2
Welsh	Good	Good
English	-----	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	Good	Good
History	Good	Good
Geography	Good	Good
Art	Good	Good
Music	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Physical education	Satisfactory	No judgement
Religious education	Good	Good

- In KS1 in 2002, according to teacher assessments, 80% of pupils attained Level 2 (L2) or above in the core subjects at the end of the key stage (Wales 80.4%; Gwynedd 79%). In 2001 the figure was 60% (Wales 81%; Gwynedd 76.1%) and in 2000 it was 50% (Wales 80%; Gwynedd 75.9%).
- In KS2 in 2002, 66.7% of pupils at the school attained L4 or above, as determined by task/test results in the core subjects (Wales 68.1%; Gwynedd 70.7%). In 2001 it was 57.1% (Wales 68%; Gwynedd 72.1%) and in 2000 the figure was 75% (Wales 63%; Gwynedd 62.1%).
- The progress made by the under-fives in their ability to apply and improve their Welsh literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology skills (ICT) across the six areas of learning is good.
- In KS1 and KS2, the pupils listen very well. Reading standards in Welsh are generally good in both key stages and reading standards in English are satisfactory in KS2. Pupils' writing skills in both key stages in Welsh are developing well. Pupils' writing standards are satisfactory across the curriculum in English. They do not regularly write in extended mode and in a sufficiently broad range of formats. In both key stages, the pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in an appropriate range of contexts. Pupils make good progress in the development of their ICT skills in KS1 and KS2 across the curriculum.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school fulfils the statutory requirements for collective worship and the morning assemblies enhance the Christian ethos of the school. Justice and tolerance come naturally to the pupils and they are aware of the need to show respect to others, regardless of their race, background or difficulties. Welsh culture is promoted appropriately throughout the curriculum and a strong Welsh ethos permeates the life and work of the school. Pupils' awareness of global citizenship is developing effectively and they have a good understanding of their responsibility for the environment.

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- Pupils' behaviour is good and levels of attendance are satisfactory.
 - The quality of teaching was very good in 10% of lessons observed by the inspectors; it was good in 45% and satisfactory in 45%.
 - The current arrangements for assessing pupils' progress do not contribute sufficiently towards identifying their precise needs in relation to planning the next steps in their learning. Parents are given formal and informal opportunities to discuss their children's progress and they are appreciative of the open door policy employed by the school. The reports they receive conform to statutory requirements.
 - All NC subjects and religious education are presented through a curriculum that conforms to statutory requirements. The curriculum provided for the under-fives is relevant and well organised. Emphasis is placed on appropriate and purposeful activities in each of the six areas that promote the Desirable Outcomes. In KS1 and KS2, the curriculum is presented through a termly cycle of whole-school themes. These schemes are detailed, but the arrangements for planning activities from day-to-day lack the required level of detail for the range of ability found in the classes. The school succeeds in promoting the bilingualism of its pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has increased the use made of English as a medium in KS2 and although units of certain subjects are taught through the medium of English, there is room to improve the arrangements by providing more detailed guidance on the use of language. A good range of appropriate educational visits is arranged and they make a positive contribution to pupils' experiences.
 - The support and guidance given to pupils is good. The school's pastoral care is good and pupils feel safe and secure in a friendly, welcoming and caring environment. Appropriate emphasis is placed on equal opportunities and social inclusion in all school activities, and the provision for pupils with special needs is satisfactory.
 - The school promotes effective partnerships with parents and community, schools and other institutions. The partnership with industry has improved since the last inspection.
 - The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement at the school is satisfactory. It operates an annual programme of self-evaluation of various aspects of its provision, a system that has been well established for some years. This is laudable, but thus far the head teacher has been responsible for almost all evaluation undertaken, with the result that the subject co-ordinators are relatively inexperienced in this aspect of their work. The school's planning for improvement also calls for a more balanced distribution of tasks over time to ensure gradual and consistent improvement. A three-year rolling programme is operated to set whole school targets in the core subjects. Overall, they are realized, but are not particularly demanding and in the absence of a system of setting targets and tracking individual pupils, their value as a tool for improvement is limited.
 - The quality of leadership and efficiency at the school is satisfactory. The administrative routines and daily practices have been effectively established and they are guided by policies adopted over a period of time. The membership of the governing body reflects a wide and useful range of experience and it is highly supportive of the school. The head teacher presents termly reports to the governing body and this assists members to undertake their responsibilities. The school conforms to statutory requirements in relation

to teaching time, but neither the school handbook nor the governors' annual report to parents conform fully to requirements.

- The displays throughout the school create a positive ethos and a rich learning environment. Overall, the school has a good supply of resources to present the majority of NC subjects. The building is old and is generally in satisfactory condition. However, movement between certain areas is troublesome and the building is not fully accessible to disabled people. There is a shortage of green areas and space to present the physical education curriculum.
- Since the last inspection it was found that standards have improved in physical education in KS1. Because of severe weather conditions and the lack of suitable space on the school campus, the inspectors were unable to judge standards in physical education in KS2. Standards achieved by the pupils have improved in science in KS1, information technology and geography in KS2 and religious education in both key stages. In KS2, standards continue to be satisfactory in English and science, as they are in music in KS1 and KS2. The use of English is increasingly developed throughout KS2, but there is room to further improve the arrangements. Currently, insufficient use is made of pupil assessments for forward-planning purposes.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Of the lessons observed by the inspectors, it was seen that the standards achieved by the pupils were very good in 5% of them; good in 63% and satisfactory in 32%.

- The standards achieved by the nursery and reception children are good or better in five of the six areas of the Desirable Outcomes for children's learning before compulsory school age. The physical development of the nursery and reception children is satisfactory.
- In KS1, standards achieved by pupils in Welsh, mathematics and science are good. (English is not introduced formally in this key stage). Standards are also good in information technology, history, geography, art and religious education. Standards are satisfactory in design and technology, music and physical education.
- In KS2, standards of achievement are good in Welsh and mathematics; they are satisfactory in English and science. Pupils' standards are good in information technology, history, geography, art and religious education. In design and technology and music, standards are satisfactory. It was not possible for the inspectors to observe physical education lessons in KS2 and they have no view on the standards achieved.
- In KS1 in 2002, according to teacher assessments, 80% of pupils attained L2 or above in the core subjects at the end of the key stage (Wales 80.4%; Gwynedd 79%). In 2001 the figure was 60% (Wales 81%; Gwynedd 76.1%) and in 2000 it was 50% (Wales 80%; Gwynedd 75.9%).
- In KS2 in 2002, 66.7% of pupils at the school attained L4 or above, as determined by task/test results in the core subjects (Wales 68.1%; Gwynedd 70.7%). In 2001 it was

57.1% (Wales 68%; Gwynedd 72.1%) and in 2000 the figure was 75% (Wales 63%; Gwynedd 62.1%).

- At the end of KS1 in 2002, the standards attained by pupils were higher than national and county averages in Welsh and lower in mathematics and science.
- In KS2, the school's results in NC assessments for 2002 were higher than the national and county averages in Welsh and science and lower in English and mathematics.
- In relation to comparator schools, in KS1 in 2002, the school's performance was in the upper 50% of schools, but below the 25% best performers. In KS2, the school's performance was in the lowest 50% of schools, but above the 25% lowest performers.
- Overall, and over a period of time in KS2, teacher assessments are close to the levels attained by pupils in the tasks/tests given to them at the end of this key stage.
- In 2002, boys attained higher levels than girls in KS1 and in KS2 the girls were the better performers. Over a period of time, there are no significant gender-based differences in performance.

3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum

- The progress made by the under-fives in their ability to apply and improve their Welsh literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the six areas of learning is good.
- In KS1 and KS2, pupils listen very well and are happy to contribute during discussion sessions. They are able to express themselves very well in Welsh in both key stages and well in English in KS2.
- Reading standards in Welsh are generally good in both key stages and reading standards in English are satisfactory in KS2. A number of pupils read widely for pleasure and to discover information and improve their understanding across the curriculum. However, in general, the reading range of pupils in KS2 is broader in Welsh than it is in English.
- Pupils' writing standards in Welsh are developing well in both key stages. Pupils' writing standards are satisfactory across the curriculum in English. They do not regularly write in extended mode and in a sufficiently broad range of formats.
- In both key stages, the pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in an appropriate range of contexts.
- Pupils make good progress in the development of their ICT skills in KS1 and KS2 across the curriculum. They make effective use of ICT as a cross-curricular tool and they make natural and effective use of computers to research and present their work.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

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- The school fulfils the statutory requirements for collective worship and the morning assemblies enhance the Christian ethos of the school. Pupils receive good opportunities to reflect and to contribute in a devotional environment.
 - They develop a good awareness of the difference between good and bad. Justice and tolerance comes naturally to the pupils and they are aware of the need to show respect to others, regardless of their race, background or difficulties. They contribute generously to local and national charities.
 - Pupils have a good relationship with adults and they work well with their peers. They are also courteous to and welcoming of visitors. They show a willingness to accept responsibility, display innovation and their development is promoted through appropriate educational visits.
 - Welsh culture is promoted appropriately throughout the curriculum and through other activities such as the Urdd. The variety of experiences offered ensures that pupils become increasingly aware of their heritage and of the cultural traditions of their locality and nation. A strong Welsh ethos permeates the life and work of the school, which is itself an important facet of the local community, contributing regularly to activities arranged.
 - In the religious education lessons, attention is given to other world religions and pupils come to appreciate other cultures and traditions. Their awareness of global citizenship is developing effectively and they have a good understanding of their responsibility for the environment.

4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good.

- Pupils' standards of behaviour reflect the close relationships between them and their teachers. All of this is underpinned by firm policies and procedures, and good behaviour is formally acknowledged by presenting certificates.
- The pupils exhibit a healthy attitude towards their learning. Overall, they commit themselves energetically to their work, and this has a positive impact on the work of the vast majority of pupils. Older pupils display significant maturity in their involvement with others. They are without exception respectful of all members of the school family and towards occasional visitors to the school.
- During the inspection, no instances of bullying or aggressive behaviour were witnessed.

4.3 Attendance

Pupils' levels of attendance are satisfactory.

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- The school has a range of procedures and policies that effectively support levels of attendance. It has set a target to increase attendance levels to 95% and above.
 - Registers are administered in accordance with NAW requirements.
 - The levels of attendance of the under-fives reflect those achieved throughout the school as a whole.
 - It was seen that pupils' punctuality is generally good and this provides a prompt start to the school day.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching was very good in 10% of lessons observed by the inspectors; it was good in 45% and satisfactory in 45%.

- There is a very good relationship between the teachers and their pupils and the atmosphere in classrooms is work like. Good efforts are regularly praised.
- When the teaching is at its best, clear objectives are set for the lessons and the teaching strategies are consistent with the objectives. The presentations are clear and purposeful and good use is made of resources to support the learning. The quality of the resources prepared by the teachers is often good. Good use is made of the interactive white board to stimulate and maintain pupils' interest.
- Classroom organisation is in the main appropriate for the work to be undertaken. Pupils are given regular opportunities to work in pairs and as members of groups. In the under-fives class, the children move easily from one activity to another.
- The teachers have a good knowledge of the majority of subjects they teach. The practice of using teacher expertise by exchanging classes for certain subjects works well.
- Where the teaching is less effective, the planning fails to properly differentiate the range of tasks needed for the ability ranges found in classes and the levels of expectation are not always sufficiently high so as to provide pupils with the challenges they need. This leads to a degree of underperformance, particularly so in the case of the more able older pupils.
- Some presentations fail to sufficiently motivate pupils and at times they are over-directed. They are also over-dependent on the use of worksheets and a framework for recording work provided for them by teachers.
- In the case of the older pupils, not enough attention is always given to ensuring that work set is completed fully.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

The arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting are satisfactory.

- The school's policy for assessment has been recently reviewed.

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- Baseline assessments are conducted soon after pupils are admitted to school, following which suitable targets are set for them in the under-fives class.
 - In both key stages, all pupils' work is kept for one year and assessments are undertaken of various aspects of subject work on a termly basis. The current arrangements for assessing pupils' progress do not contribute sufficiently towards identifying their precise needs in relation to planning the next steps in their learning.
 - The majority of pupils' work is marked, but it does not always offer sufficient guidance to pupils as to how to improve.
 - The arrangements for reporting back to parents are appropriate. Parents are given formal and informal opportunities to discuss their children's progress and they are appreciative of the open door policy employed by the school.
 - The written reports provided for the parents of the under-fives fulfil requirements. Likewise the reports on KS1 and KS2 pupils, but at the pre-inspection parents' meeting, it was felt that the bank of comments used to produce the reports is not of a sufficiently personal nature.

5.3 Curriculum

All of the subjects of the NC and religious education are presented through a curriculum that conforms to statutory requirements.

- The curriculum provided for the under-fives is relevant and well organized. Emphasis is placed on appropriate and purposeful activities in each of the six areas that promote the Desirable Outcomes.
- The current policies and schemes have been adapted to satisfy the requirements of Curriculum 2000 Wales. This was achieved within a very short timescale.
- The curriculum is presented through a termly cycle of whole-school themes. These schemes are detailed, but the arrangements for planning activities from day-to-day lack the required level of detail for the range of ability found in the classes.
- The school has a suitable policy for pupils' personal and social education (PSE) and this aspect is promoted within the school's scheme of work.
- The school succeeds in promoting the bilingualism of its pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has increased the use made of English as a medium in KS2 and although units of certain subjects are taught through the medium of English, there is room to improve the arrangements by providing more detailed guidance on the use of language.
- A good range of purposeful educational visits is arranged, and they make a positive contribution to pupils' experiences.
- Homework is set in both key stages but it lacks a clear sense of pattern.

5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

The support and guidance provided to pupils is good.

- The school's pastoral care is good and pupils feel safe and secure in a friendly, welcoming and caring environment. All adults working at the school provide good quality care and support to pupils. They know the pupils well and they respond immediately to their needs. The pupils in turn confidently approach staff for advice and guidance.
- Appropriate emphasis is placed on equal opportunities and social inclusion in all school activities. Good attention is also paid to sex and health education. Pupils have benefited from their involvement with the Healthy Schools initiative.
- They are well supervised throughout their time at the school.
- There are appropriate arrangements to provide for pupils' health and safety. The policy on child protection conforms to requirements and staff are aware of their responsibilities.
- There is a close relationship between home and school and the arrangements for contacting parents during the day when required are good.

5.5 Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and their standards of achievement are also satisfactory.

- Ten pupils are designated as having SEN, two of which have statements of their needs. The provision includes half a day's support by a specialist SEN teacher for pupils on the School and School Plus stages, and individual attention provided by a support assistant during mornings for one of the statemented pupils. The other statemented pupil attends a special unit in the mornings.
- The school has a comprehensive SEN policy, but it does not refer to the various stages of intervention contained in the Code of Practice that became operational in 2002.
- A register is kept of all pupils assessed as having SEN and they are placed on the appropriate stages. The school's arrangements for the early identification of pupils' needs are effective.
- The quality of the teaching support provided by the school for individuals and groups on the register, by means of withdrawal sessions, is good. The nature of the support focuses appropriately on their needs and there is close co-operation between the peripatetic specialist teacher and the class teachers.
- The pupils have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, but not enough is done to ensure that their tasks are sufficiently differentiated.
- The Individual Education Plans (IEPs) produced for each pupil with SEN contain appropriate targets that are regularly updated. It was found that not all pupils on the SEN register possess an IEP.

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- Close contact is maintained with parents, who are given regular opportunities to discuss their children's needs and progress.
 - Good support is provided during the morning sessions for one of the pupils, but his statement does not provide for assistant support in the afternoons. This level of support is inadequate and occasionally the arrangement has an adverse effect on the whole class. The information contained in the statement is not entirely accurate.
 - The designated governor shows an interest in and an understanding of the issues related to SEN and keeps in close contact with the school.

5.6 Partnerships with parents and community, schools and other institutions

Overall, partnerships with parents and community, schools and other institutions are good.

- The school promotes a good partnership with parents. As was seen in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting, parents greatly appreciate the efforts the school makes on behalf of their children. They receive a regular flow of information, through letters, reports and meetings.
- The Friends of the School works effectively, not only as an important social focus for everyone interested in the school, but also a means of raising very significant sums of money to improve resources.
- The home/school agreement is a comprehensive document and parents have responded very well to it.
- The school plays a very important role in the life of the village and its environs. The pupils contribute well to the life of the community by taking part in religious services, concerts and other events held at the village hall and in other parts of the locality. They also contribute generously to charities and other good causes.
- There are good links with other primary schools in the catchment area and with the Cylch Meithrin in the village. The partnership with the local secondary school is very good and curricular information is regularly shared, together with bridging sessions held to facilitate pupil transfer. Year 6 (Y6) pupils are very comfortable with the arrangements made on their behalf.
- The school is glad of the support it receives from the Local Education Authority (LEA) and its officers. They are also well aided and supported by the Police, Fire Brigade, Theatr Ardudwy and Snowdonia National Park.
- The school provides work experience placements for students from the secondary school, Coleg Meirion Dwyfor and occasionally, teaching practice for prospective teachers from University of Wales Bangor.

5.7 Partnership with industry

The school's partnership with industry is good.

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- The school has an appropriate policy on this aspect of its work that is implemented effectively. It was seen that there has been progress since the last inspection.
 - There are numerous links with businesses and industrial concerns and this has enhanced pupils' experiences. The school has co-operated with the Centre for Alternative Technology near Machynlleth and with Trawsfynydd Power Station during a study of various types of energy conducted by pupils. Good links have also been established with local farms and various craft-based businesses. They also receive support from Snowdonia National Park and Canolfan y Coed Gwyrdd. There are also plans to extend the business partnership with one of the national banks.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement at the school is satisfactory.

- The self-evaluation report presented for the inspection offers guidance and action measures for evaluating the quality of provision and the standards achieved by pupils. However, it does not contain evidence or judgements on those key aspects of the life and work of the school and as a result, the contribution it makes to identifying strengths and weaknesses is limited.
- The school operates an annual programme of self-evaluation of various aspects of its provision, a system that has been well established for some years. This is laudable, but thus far the head teacher has been responsible for almost all evaluation undertaken, with the result that the subject co-ordinators are relatively inexperienced in this aspect of their work
- The SDP itself follows a recognised pattern. It is a comprehensive document that contains a profile of the school; a review of the previous year's activities; training needs and funding objectives in relation to current and long-term priorities. The expectations in terms of realizing the majority of such priorities are reasonable, but it is not good practice to undertake a complete review of all schemes of work whilst at the same time seeking to give several other priorities during the same year the attention they deserve. There is a need to arrange for a more balanced distribution of tasks over time in order to ensure the gradual and consistent development of the school.
- A three year rolling programme is operated to set whole school targets in the core subjects. Overall, they are realized, but are not particularly demanding and in the absence of a system of setting targets and tracking individual pupils, their value as a tool for improvement is limited.
- Useful targets are set for the under-fives.
- The school is aware of its performance in a local and national context, but little use is made of national benchmarking data to assist the school in identifying its performance and position in relation to comparator schools.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The quality of leadership and efficiency at the school is satisfactory.

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- The administrative procedures and daily routines are well established and are guided by policies that have been adopted over a period of time. Many policies date back to 1997.
 - Although the school has a comprehensive statement of its aims and objectives in the SDP, the limited distribution of this document means that not all parents have full access to the information that is the foundation to the work of directing the school.
 - The membership of the governing body reflects a wide and useful range of experience, and it is highly supportive of the school. Some members of the governing body visit the school on a fairly regular basis. The head teacher presents termly reports to the governing body and this assists members to undertake their responsibilities.
 - The budget is controlled by the head teacher in consultation with the governing body. The surplus of approximately five per cent of the budget that was carried forward from the last financial year has been earmarked to maintain the current year's staffing model. Some cuts are expected for the future.
 - Regular staff meetings are held to discuss a range of curricular and management issues.
 - To date, there has not been enough emphasis placed on the role of co-ordinators in monitoring quality and standards in their respective subject areas.
 - The school conforms to requirements in relation to teaching time.
 - Neither the school handbook nor the governors' annual report to parents conform fully to requirements.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing numbers and the quality of learning resources are good. Accommodation at the school is of a satisfactory standard.

- The teachers possess the qualifications and experience necessary to teach the pupils in their care.
- The school does not have a staff development policy but teachers have attended a good range of in-service training courses (INSET).
- All members of staff have job descriptions that identify their respective responsibilities.
- The support assistant makes a good contribution to pupils' experiences. Pupils are treated with great care and sensitivity.
- The peripatetic teachers who visit the school make an important contribution to pupils' educational development.
- The displays seen throughout the school create a purposeful ethos and rich learning environment.

- Overall, the school has a good supply of resources to present the majority of NC subjects. Parents and the local community make significant contributions to school funds, money that is used appropriately to improve and enhance educational provision.
- The building is old and is generally in satisfactory condition. However, movement between certain areas is troublesome and the building is not fully accessible to disabled people. There is a shortage of green areas and space to present the physical education curriculum.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

The educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for children's learning. The nursery children attend during the afternoons and they are educated side by side with the full time reception children. Standards are good in the vast majority of areas of learning. Almost all the children come from Welsh speaking homes.

Good features

- **The development of the nursery and reception children's language, literacy and communication skills is very good.** The nursery age children enjoy listening to stories and they are able to communicate confidently in Welsh with their peers and with other adults. They recognize their own names and they enjoy taking part in role-play sessions. They show an increasing interest in books and enjoy pre-writing activities. The reception children listen attentively and they respond eagerly to instructions and suggestions. They speak about their experiences with great interest and their vocabulary and language patterns are of a high quality. They begin to write and to read independently and with growing confidence.
- **The personal and social development of the nursery and reception children is good.** The children are able to relate well to others, including adults and they understand that they must wait their turn when participating in various activities. They are more than happy to seek assistance from adults and their self-confidence is developing. They are able to concentrate well on their given tasks. They understand the need to tidy up after an activity. They behave well and play happily together during break times.
- **The mathematical development of the nursery and reception children is good.** The nursery children have an increasing understanding of number. Their use of mathematical language is developing appropriately as they play with water and sand. The reception children correctly recognize and handle numbers up to 10. The more able children can handle larger numbers with increasing confidence. They make correct use of mathematical terms and they recognize two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes. They know that it is possible to record information in the form of block graphs. They make good progress in their understanding of the measures.

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- **The knowledge and understanding of the world of the nursery and reception children is very good.** The nursery children are able to talk about the weather and about the order of the day. They talk about themselves and their families and they begin to gain an understanding of the past. They are interested in the computer and through their role-play activities they begin to understand what other people do.
The reception children recognize various fruit by feel and they are aware of the conditions necessary for plant growth. They know about various items of electrical equipment and about the related dangers. They have highly developed observational skills. They know that some things sink in water and that others float. They understand the differences between night and day and they come to understand the need to wear appropriate clothing as the seasons and weather change. They are able to correctly select symbols to record the weather. They show increasing confidence when using the computer mouse. They make correct use of terms related to the passage of time and take obvious pleasure from looking at and handling artefacts from the past.
 - **The physical development of the nursery and reception children is satisfactory.** The nursery children handle small objects with increasing control and the reception children are confident in their application of skills to write, draw, colour, build and cut with scissors. The majority of nursery and reception children are able to move satisfactorily on the floor in response to adult instruction.
 - **The creative development of the nursery and reception children is good.** The children enjoy painting and mixing colours for their snail shells and to use fruit to print patterns. They use a wide range of materials to create their models. Their work is attractively displayed in the classroom and corridor. They enjoy singing simple songs and nursery rhymes.

Shortcomings

- The children receive few regular indoor and outdoor opportunities to use large items of equipment, so as to further develop their skills.

Welsh

Pupils' standards of achievement are generally good across both key stages. Oracy standards are very good and standards in reading and writing are good.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 and KS2 listen attentively to presentations and respond meaningfully to questions asked. They are confident when discussing their work and are regularly able to convey information about their experiences with great clarity.
- Pupils in KS1 read well. Their reading is confident and they respond intelligently when asked to discuss the contents of their books.
- Pupils in KS2 read with good expression. In their turn, they read in the morning assemblies, pronouncing clearly before the whole school. The more able pupils read meaningfully a range of texts from various sources.

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- Pupils' writing skills in KS1 are developing well. The majority make correct use of capital letters and they are aware of sentence structures. They also understand that writing styles must vary according to the requirements of any given task.
 - According to age and ability, the majority of pupils in KS2 are able to vary their sentence patterns. They write diaries, letters, interesting portraits and pieces of writing to seek to persuade people to visit the National Parks in Wales. They are able to improve their work by re-drafting and their spelling is fairly good. They have an appropriate understanding of punctuation. They can write dialogue in pairs and act out the product of their collaboration in front of their fellow pupils.

Shortcomings

- There is no consistency in terms of the equipment or colours used by pupils to write in their books. At times, this leads to untidy presentations, even after re-drafting their work.

English

English is not introduced formally to pupils in KS1. Overall, in KS2, standards are satisfactory. Oracy standards are good, and standards in reading and writing are satisfactory.

Good features

- In KS2, the majority of pupils listen well to teachers' presentations and they respond appropriately to questions and during discussions, with some pupils offering extended responses.
- In reading, the pupils achieve varying degrees of fluency and expression, with the more able pupils reading confidently, showing an understanding of what they have read. The more confident pupils are able to express their views on the contents of a book.
- Occasionally, they write in various modes, including formal reports, poems and newspaper reports. A small percentage of pupils write pieces of good quality creative work, making increasing use of adjectives and metaphors that add character and expression to their writing.

Shortcomings

- A number of pupils read with little confidence and with insufficient expression. They are not able to adequately convey the full meaning of what they read and they need assistance in order to correct their errors.
- There are few examples of pupils who display the necessary perseverance to write extended forms of creative and factual work.
- Pupils do not write with sufficient regularity for various purposes and audiences.
- They do not do not exhibit sufficient pride and care in the presentation of their written work.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils have a good and sometimes a very good grasp of their multiplication tables. They respond quickly and make good progress with their mental calculations.
- They have a good understanding of number bonds and place value.
- They are able to produce simple graphs to record information and the majority of pupils exhibit well-developed skills when handling data.
- The majority of older pupils in the key stage have an appropriate understanding of time. They can correctly read the time on an analogue clock, to the hour, half and quarter hour.
- They are confident in their use of ICT equipment to extend and support their mathematical knowledge and skills.
- In KS2, pupils are able to quickly recall table facts. They use their knowledge to correctly make mental multiplications, including using three digit numbers. They have a firm understanding of place value.
- They are able to double and halve numbers several times over. At the end of the key stage, they have a firm grasp of decimal fractions and are able to convert simple fractions into their decimal and percentage equivalents.
- The older pupils understand that negative numbers are used to measure temperature and they are able to accurately read scales.
- Across the key stage, pupils exhibit an appropriate mastery of the measures.
- They recognise a good range of three-dimensional shapes and can correctly refer to their characteristics.

Shortcomings

- The investigative skills of some pupils in KS2 are limited.

Science

Pupils' standards of achievement are good in KS1 and are satisfactory in KS2.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils make good progress in their work on green plants as organisms. They are able to correctly name the main parts of plants and by looking at wilted plants and conducting simple experiments, they come to realize that they need care and water to grow. They fully understand that it is from seeds that new plants grow.

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- Their observational skills develop well as they give detailed attention to the seeds in a collection of fruits placed before them. They correctly identify in pictorial form the differences between the various fruits, classifying them according to size and number of seeds.
 - They have learnt that materials can change when stretched, pressed, folded and torn. They also know from their investigations that materials can change when heated or cooled.
 - The majority of pupils possess a good scientific vocabulary and are able to confidently discuss their work with a clear understanding of the activity in question.
 - In KS2, pupils have come to understand how water travels from the roots to the leaves. They know of the importance of the leaf if the plant is to remain alive and healthy.
 - They know that pushing and pulling are different types of forces and that the power of gravity operates downwards. They understand that a toy car is able to travel more quickly as the gradient becomes steeper.
 - In their experiments with magnets, pupils have come to understand the meaning of attraction and repulsion, using both terms correctly.
 - The older pupils understand that upthrust is a force that affects objects in water and that it is an influential factor in determining whether an object floats or sinks.

Shortcomings

- Pupils in KS2 do not make sufficient use of their own skills to plan and conduct scientific investigations.
- There is little evidence of pupils checking their own measurements through repetition and the measurements they record are consistently similar for most pupils.
- There is excessive use of work sheets and this limits pupils' ability to develop their recording skills.
- The knowledge and understanding of older pupils are not sufficiently extended.

Design and technology

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS1 and in KS2.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils' investigative skills are developing appropriately. Before setting out to design and make their own eggcups, they have, by conducting some research, become aware of the different types of eggcups and this has assisted them with their own ideas.
- Through thematic work, they have begun to investigate farm machinery and they have a developing understanding of axles and wheels.
- They are able to talk intelligently about their work and can draw a picture of what they intend to produce.
- They are able to systematically record the steps taken to complete the task they have been set.

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- In KS2, the understanding of mechanisms of the younger pupils has increased as they have planned and produced cards containing moving parts. The finished articles are of a satisfactory standard.
 - The older pupils have made good use of their measuring skills to manufacture bird boxes for a local nature trail.
 - Following a period of research into different types of bread, they have a firm grasp of what is needed to make bara brith.
 - They have a growing understanding of and a lively interest in the architecture of bridges.

Shortcomings

- Pupils are over-dependent on a structured framework and adult direction to guide them in their work.
- Pupils' design skills do not show sufficient progress as they move up the school.
- There is a tendency for pupils' evaluations to be superficial and to concentrate excessively on the appearance rather than the function of their work.

Information technology

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils' information technology skills and their use of appropriate subject-specific vocabulary are developing well.
- Pupils are confident in their use of the keyboard and are able to control the mouse to undertake a range of tasks.
- They use a wide range of appropriate programmes to support their work in language, mathematics and art. They work well together in pairs on the computer.
- In KS2, pupils make confident use of the Internet and the interactive white board to conduct research linked to their studies in other subjects.
- A significant number of pupils in KS2 are able to create a document, select font and size, and edit text. They can incorporate graphics and move them around. They are able to save and print their work and store on a personal disk.
- The school has a good collection of CD-ROMs and pupils make good use of them to enhance their knowledge and understanding.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

History

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages develop a good historical vocabulary. They develop a good chronological awareness and very good use is made of time lines to promote their learning.
- They convey their historical knowledge and understanding when identifying the differences between lifestyles in different periods. They develop their skills of investigation of the past by using a wide range of historical sources including artefacts, visual sources, books and other written sources.
- Pupils make effective use of visits to local sites of historical interest to expand their historical awareness.
- Pupils in KS1 recognize the changes that have occurred to them since infancy. They are able to authoritatively discuss the history of farming, intelligently describing the process of butter production using a churn, wooden hands and stamping it with a stamp unique to one of the local farms. They know that these methods are no longer widely used.
- Pupils in KS2 have a good recollection of earlier work on the Tudors and the Celts. As part of a recent study on the effects of the Second World War on Llan Ffestiniog, they made good use of historical sources such as the school log books, in order to discover information about the school itself and about the local events that led to the arrival of the evacuees. They are able to compare school life then and now and can offer reasons for the changes that have taken place.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Geography

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils are aware of some of the main features of a farm. They know that seasonal weather patterns affect farmers' work and that different animals produce different foods.
- They observe the weather and correctly record it using recognized symbols. They know of the effects of the weather on their own lives.
- Their geographical vocabulary is developing well.
- They have learnt that land use varies from one area to another. They understand that other areas, such as the Dordogne in France, are different to their own locality and they know of the produce of that region.
- They make good use of questionnaires to develop their geographical skills and to gain an understanding of employment patterns in their area.

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- In KS2, pupils' understanding of rivers has been strengthened as a result of their fieldwork. They are able to identify some of the main features of a river, correctly using a range of appropriate terms.
 - Their mapping work is developing well.
 - The older pupils are aware of some of the physical and economic factors that account for the differences between their own locality and an area of Lesotho.
 - They know of the importance of National Parks. They can offer sound reasons for their protection and for the need to respect the environment as a whole. They have a highly developed awareness of sustainability issues.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Art

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages are familiar with the work of a very broad range of artists representing a whole variety of periods and styles.
- They benefit from the experience of artists that visit the school to share their expertise and to assist with the development of their skills.
- In KS1, pupils work well with charcoal and pastels and they enjoy studying and discussing various textures. They exhibit a good understanding of the way in which different colours and textures can be used to create contrasts in their work.
- In KS2, pupils successfully use a range of tools and techniques in their work with clay. They develop a critical eye and skilfulness when evaluating their work.
- Many of the pupils are able to confidently discuss the details of decorating and colouring.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Music

Pupils' standards of achievement are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils know a variety of songs that befit their ages.
- When listening to selections from *Carnival of Animals* they are able to correctly describe the music according to some of the musical elements.

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- Their awareness of rhythm is developing as they respond by clapping to the names of different animals.
 - In KS2, pupils are able to maintain their parts when performing a round song. They can suggest a number of songs that are suitable for singing in this way.
 - They have an awareness of Indian Raga music.
 - When working in small groups, they come to be able to successfully provide accompaniment to a tune using a drone.
 - They are able to compose simple computer-generated tunes.

Shortcomings

- In vocal work in both key stages, pupils' control of breathing, sentencing and dynamics has not been developed sufficiently.
- They do not sufficiently discuss or evaluate their own music.
- They are not sufficiently knowledgeable of the works of famous composers.

Physical education

During the inspection one lesson in KS1 was observed, as was evidence of another lesson in video format in the local leisure centre. Standards of achievement are satisfactory. No lessons were observed in KS2 and inspectors do not have a view on the standards of achievement in this key stage.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils respond fittingly to their lessons. The majority listen well and commit themselves to their tasks.
- They make good use of space as they move about the room, walking, running and skipping according to instructions. They have good body control and they perform their skills fairly confidently.

Shortcomings

- Because of the shortage of indoor space to stage the various activities regularly, the development of pupils' skills is restricted.

Religious education

Religious education is taught according to the Agreed Syllabus of Gwynedd LEA. Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils know a good number of stories from the Bible. They know of the Christian festivals and are able to discuss some of the main events associated with them.

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- They have a good awareness of the features and practices of places of worship and can correctly describe rituals such as baptism. The presence of artefacts related to baptism assists them in the development of their understanding.
 - They have an understanding of the significance of prayer and of the function of the services held at the school. Their awareness of values such as friendship and kindness to others is developing well. They appreciate the importance of gratitude.
 - In KS2, pupils are able to talk at greater length about the main Christian festivals. They know that the Bible is a sacred book to Christians and can talk about many of the characters found in the stories in the New Testament and the Old Testament.
 - They know the meaning and function of a parable. They are able to refer with a real sense of maturity to a good number of the parables of Jesus and the messages they contain. They know of leaders such as Mother Theresa and others who embody the teachings of Jesus.
 - They are aware that religions other than Christianity are today practised throughout the world. They have a good awareness of the key elements of Islam and of some of the main Jewish celebrations.
 - They are aware of the function of prayer and their own prayers reflect a real sense of sensitivity.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The report produced following the inspection held during the Autumn term of 1997 identified the following as being key issues for action:


- improve the unsatisfactory standards in physical education;
- raise standards in subjects deemed satisfactory by addressing the shortcomings identified;
- ensure that the use of English as a medium of teaching develops increasingly throughout KS2;
- make more specific use of assessments of pupils' progress in order to forward-plan subsequent work.

Since the last inspection it was found that standards have improved in physical education in KS1. Because of severe weather conditions and the lack of suitable space on the school campus, the inspectors were unable to judge standards in physical education in KS2. Standards achieved by the pupils have improved in science in KS1, information technology and geography in KS2 and religious education in both key stages. In KS2, standards continue

to be satisfactory in English and science, as they are in music in KS1 and KS2. The use of English is increasingly developed throughout KS2, but there is room to further improve the arrangements. Currently, insufficient use is made of pupil assessments for forward-planning purposes.

8.2 Key issues for action

There is a need for the school to:

- continue with the work of raising standards by addressing the shortcomings identified under the various subject headings;
 - strengthen the procedures for assessing pupils' progress in order to better identify their needs and to use the information to plan the next steps in their work;
 - improve the arrangements for using English as a medium in KS2 by providing more detailed guidance on the use of the language within the curriculum;
 - place greater emphasis on short-term curriculum planning so as to ensure work of a more differentiated nature for pupils;
 - ensure that the SDP is used more effectively as a tool to plan for consistent improvement;
 - develop the role of co-ordinators to take more responsibility for monitoring and evaluating their subject areas across the school;
 - fully satisfy requirements in relation to the contents of the school handbook and the governors' annual report to parents.
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APPENDIX

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Ysgol Bro Cynfal
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3 – 11 years
Address of school	Ffordd Heulog Llan Ffestiniog Blaenau Ffestiniog Gwynedd.
Post-Code	LL41 4NF
Telephone Number	(01766) 762688
Headteacher	Mr K W Robinson
Date of appointment	February 1991
Chair of Governors / Appropriate Authority	Mr Edgar Williams
Registered Inspector	Mr D M Cray
Dates of inspection	20 –22 May 2003

B School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	3	9	10	4	10	11	11	9	67

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	3	1	3.8

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	17:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	16
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>				
Term	R	KS1	KS2	Whole school
1 Spring	94.4%	91.6%	93.7%	93%
2 Summer	91.4%	92.3%	93.4%	92.4%
3 Autumn	96.1%	91.1%	93.8%	93.7%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	17%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.	0

C. Results of National Curriculum assessments.

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2002

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2002			Number of pupils in Y2: 10					
Percentage of pupils at each level			D	W	1	2	3	4
WELSH	Teacher Assessment	School			10	70	20	
		National		2	11	63	24	
Speaking and Listening	Teacher Assessment	School			10	70	20	
		National		2	11	63	23	
Reading	Teacher Assessment	School			20	70	10	
		National		3	17	57	22	
Writing	Teacher Assessment	School			30	70		
		National		4	20	65	10	
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School			20	70	10	
		National		2	9	61	26	
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School			20	80		
		National		2	10	68	20	

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

In the school: 80% | In Wales: 80.4%

D Excepted or disappled under Sections 364 or 365 of the Education Act 1996.

W Working towards level 1

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2002

National Curriculum Assessments KS 2 Results: 2002			Number of pupils in Y6: 15										
Percentage of pupils at each level			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher Assessment	School	6							14	66	14	
		National						1	6	17	46	30	
	Test/Task	School	6	7						20	53	14	
		National		2	1	1			5	12	41	38	
Welsh	Teacher Assessment	School							7	13	73	7	
		National	1					1	4	19	50	23	
	Task/Test	School							7	13	66	14	
		National	1	2		1			3	18	51	24	
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School							7	20	53	20	
		National						1	4	19	47	28	
	Task/Test	School							6	27	40	27	
		National		2	1	1			4	19	43	30	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School							6	7	87		
		National							2	13	50	33	
	Task/Test	School							6	7	80	7	

		National		2				1	10	47	38	
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Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)

by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	73.3%	In the school:	66.7%
In Wales:	69.6%	In Wales:	68.1%

- D Excepted or disappplied under Sections 364 or 365 of the Education Act 1996.
A Pupils who have failed to register a level due to absence.
N Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence.
B Pupils not entered for the tests because they are working outside the set levels of the tests.
W Pupils who are working towards level 1.

D. The evidence base of the inspection

- The team of three inspectors inspected work in all classes. Between them they spend six full days at the school;
- pre-inspection meetings were held with governors, staff and parents;
- a range of documentation produced by the school was examined, including examples of work by the pupils across the curriculum in the early years and the two key stages;
- forty two lessons or sessions were observed;
- morning assemblies were attended;
- pupils were listened to reading and were questioned about their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum;
- school registers were inspected;
- discussions were held with the headteacher and school staff relating to curricular and management matters;
- minutes of governors' and staff meetings were examined as well as documents relating to the school's financial matters;
- pupils were observed as they arrived and departed from school, and during breaks;
- seven parents were present at the pre-inspection meeting and 20 (37%) questionnaires were returned;
- a post-inspection meeting was held with the staff and governing body.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Mr D M Cray	RgI	1; 2; 3.1; 3.2; 5.1; 5.5; 6.1; 6.2; 8.1; 8.2	The under-fives; English; science; design and technology; geography; music; religious education.
Mr D K Davies	Team	4.1; 5.2; 5.3; 5.4; 6.3;	Welsh; mathematics; information technology; history; art; physical education.
Mr W Owen	Lay	4.2; 4.3; 5.6; 5.7	

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