

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

***YSGOL BRYN COLLEN  
PENGWERN  
LLANGOLLEN***

***School Number: 663-2234***

***Date of Inspection: 19-21 January 2004***

***by***

***MR MERFYN D JONES  
Registered Inspector***

***Date: 8 March 2004***

**Under Estyn Contract Number: CT138/03P**

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## **CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES**

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

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

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

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

## **GRADE DESCRIPTIONS**

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

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

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## 1. CONTEXT

### **The school and its priorities**

Ysgol Bryn Collen overlooks and serves the town of Llangollen in Denbighshire.

The school is housed in a modern building opened in 1983.

Currently, the school has a total roll of 294 pupils aged three to 11, including 25 nursery children. Most pupils attending the school live in the surrounding area.

The school is designated as bilingual, offering parents the choice to have their child educated through either the medium of Welsh or English.

The Welsh Language Unit was opened in September 1997 and caters for pupils of nursery age through to Year (Y) 6. The unit has grown from four pupils on opening, to 85 on roll this year.

Due to the headteacher's long-term illness, the deputy head has taken on the role of acting headteacher for the past 11 months. There are 12 full-time teachers (including the headteacher) and two part-time teachers.

It is reported that the area served by the school is 75 per cent neither prosperous nor economically disadvantage and 25 per cent relatively prosperous. About 16 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

The annual intake covers the full ability range. Fifty pupils are considered to have some form of special educational need (SEN), including five who are the subject of a formal statement.

English is the predominant home language with three per cent coming from a Welsh-speaking home and about one per cent from ethnic-minority families.

The school's mission statement and its aims and objectives are wide-ranging and underline its strong commitment to promoting education in a caring community.

The school was last inspected in April 1998.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

### **The main findings of the report**

This is a good school. Pupils and staff, ably led by the acting-headteacher, work hard to promote education and to reach worthy aims and achieve good standards. The atmosphere is happy, hard-working and, in the main, co-operative.

#### **Standards of achievement**

- Overall, standards of achievement are good. Standards were satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of the work seen, being very good in 10 per cent, good in 60 per cent and unsatisfactory in three per cent.

- Standards for all children in nursery and reception classes are currently as shown in the table below:

| <b>Area of Learning</b>                     | <b>Nursery</b> | <b>Reception</b> |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Language, Literacy and Communication Skills | Good           | Good             |
| Personal and Social Development             | Very Good      | Very Good        |
| Mathematical Development                    | Good           | Good             |
| Knowledge and Understanding of the World    | Good           | Good             |
| Physical Development                        | Very Good      | Very Good        |
| Creative Development                        | Good           | Very Good        |

- Overall standards achieved by all children aged under five years are good.
- Standards of achievement in all subjects (for both English and Welsh-medium unless otherwise stated):

| <b>Subject</b>         | <b>Key Stage 1</b>                       | <b>Key Stage 2</b>                         |
|------------------------|--|--|
| English                | Good                                     | Satisfactory<br>(Good in the Welsh Unit)   |
| Welsh first language   | Good                                     | Good                                       |
| Mathematics            | Satisfactory                             | Satisfactory                               |
| Science                | Good                                     | Good                                       |
| Welsh second language  | Satisfactory                             | Unsatisfactory                             |
| Design and technology  | Good                                     | Good                                       |
| Information technology | Satisfactory<br>(Good in the Welsh Unit) | Satisfactory                               |
| History                | Good                                     | Good                                       |
| Geography              | Good                                     | Good                                       |
| Art                    | Good<br>(Very Good in the Welsh Unit)    | Good                                       |
| Music                  | Good                                     | Unsatisfactory<br>(Good in the Welsh Unit) |
| Physical education     | Good                                     | Satisfactory                               |
| Religious Education    | Good                                     | Satisfactory<br>(Good in the Welsh Unit)   |

- Standards in the key skills of speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in a range of subjects are satisfactory. Standards in listening are good. At present, the school has no policy for planning the use of key skills across the curriculum. As such, apart from the Welsh Unit where they are highlighted in planning, opportunities to develop the key skills are often missed.

### **Ethos of the School**

- The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils' response to this provision is good.
- The standards of attendance are good and have been maintained since the last inspection.
- A large number of pupils arrive late daily in time for registration at the commencement of the school day. The remainder of the school day however, operates punctually and efficiently.

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- The overall quality of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes throughout the whole school is very good.

### **The quality of education**

- The quality of teaching was good or better in 73 per cent of the 74 lessons observed across the school, 60 per cent being good and 13 per cent very good. Teaching was satisfactory in 26 per cent of lessons, with approximately one per cent unsatisfactory.
- Twenty-seven lessons were observed in the Welsh Unit and, of these, 70 per cent were good and 30 per cent very good.
- The quality of teaching at nursery and reception level is consistently good or better, with teachers and nursery nurses planning and collaborating very effectively together. Children receive a wide range of experiences which successfully promote the desirable outcomes for learning.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are exemplary and constitute a major strength of the school. Staff have high expectations of pupils in terms of behaviour and discipline.
- In most classes, work takes place in a calm, quiet environment conducive to learning. Resources are well prepared and readily available in a stimulating environment of colourful displays.
- Where teaching is good or better, lessons are characterised by excitement and challenge, with tasks well matched to pupils' ability. Teachers employ an appropriate range of strategies to motivate pupils, including the use of a variety of learning aids and open questioning.
- In the very small percentage of lessons where standards are unsatisfactory, teaching lacks sufficient focus and classroom management is not entirely effective. Where lessons were satisfactory, they lacked pace and tasks were not always matched to pupils' abilities.
- All support staff make a significant contribution to learning, both on an individual and whole-class basis.
- The quality of assessment and recording is satisfactory: that of reporting on pupils' progress is good. The quality of marking and the assessment and recording systems are inconsistent across the school.
- Overall, the quality of the curriculum is good. It is very good for pupils in the early years, Key Stage (KS) 1 and the Welsh Unit. It is satisfactory in the English-medium KS2 where there is an imbalance in the provision for some subjects.
- The provision is socially inclusive and ensures equality of access and opportunity to all pupils.
- There is no whole-school planning for the development of key skills across the curriculum.
- The arrangements for pupils' personal and social development, including health and sex education, are satisfactory. The recently produced personal and social education policy and scheme of work are at an early stage of implementation.
- The school makes satisfactory use of homework to extend learning opportunities. The present policy lacks clarity and consistency.

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- The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Pupils' learning is enriched by a wide range of visits within the locality and further afield, including residential visits to field studies centres.
  - The provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is good. However, there are times when the health and safety of pupils is endangered when parents drop off or pick up their children on the school premises.
  - The provision for pupils with SEN is very good in both mainstream classes as well as in withdrawal groups. Pupils make good progress. Gifted or talented pupils are provided with challenge and appropriate opportunities.

#### **The partnership with parents and the community and the school's links with industry**

- Partnerships with parents and community, schools and other institutions are good with some very good aspects.
- Partnerships with industry, local business and commerce are satisfactory.

#### **Management**

- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory overall. Procedures to enable the school to evaluate its own work and to plan for improvement are not fully in place. Recent initiatives show that most staff, including non-teaching staff, wish to improve their own knowledge and skills for the benefit of the pupils.
- The curriculum co-ordinators' audit reports are used to support self-evaluation. However, the governors, parents and pupils do not have enough input into the process.
- At present, no formal system is in place for monitoring standards of teaching and learning across the school. This was a key issue in the last inspection and it has been identified as a priority by the staff.
- The quality of leadership is good. The acting headteacher has worked hard, through a difficult period, to ensure continuity and improvement in standards of teaching and learning.
- The school is adequately staffed and teachers are generally well qualified for the subjects they teach. An exception is in music in the English-medium stream at KS2; the lack of subject knowledge and confidence in the subject result in unsatisfactory standards.
- Accommodation is satisfactory for the number of pupils on roll. Space for children under five in the Welsh Unit is very confined. The sloping playground becomes very hazardous during wet weather, when it suffers from flooding and mud.
- Learning resources are satisfactory; there is a shortage in appropriate hardware and software, artefacts and non-fiction books.

#### **School Improvement**

- Progress in dealing with key issues identified during the last inspection has been broadly satisfactory. Effective actions still remain, especially in the area of monitoring teaching and learning.

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### **3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning**

Standards of achievement are good overall. During the inspection, standards of achievement were satisfactory or better in approximately 97 per cent of lessons seen, including 60 per cent where they were good and 10 per cent where they were very good. Standards were less than satisfactory in some three per cent of lessons.

- Standards were 100 per cent good or better in lessons seen in the Welsh Unit.
- Nursery children in both units achieve very good standards in personal and social development and in physical development. They achieve good standards in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.
- At reception level in both units, standards are very good in personal and social development, physical development and creative development. Children achieve good standards in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Standards at KS1 are satisfactory in mathematics, Welsh as a second language and in information technology. They are good in English, Welsh as a first language, science, design and technology, history, geography, art, music, physical education and religious education; they are very good in art in the Welsh unit.
- At KS2, standards are satisfactory overall in English, mathematics, information technology, physical education, and religious education; good in English (Welsh Unit), Welsh first language, science, design and technology, history, geography, art, music (Welsh Unit) and religious education (Welsh Unit); and unsatisfactory in Welsh as a second language and music.
- End of KS1 assessment analysis indicate that pupils attain well in the core subjects of English, Welsh first language, mathematics and science, being regularly level with or above the county averages. In both 2002 and 2003 pupils attained Core Subject Indicators above Wales and Denbighshire totals. The 'All Wales Reading Tests' for Y2 indicate that reading standards are slightly below County averages in both English and Welsh and the school has identified this as a priority in the school development plan (SDP).
- End of KS2 assessment analysis indicate a slight decline in the 2003 standard assessment tests (SATs) Core Subject Indicators, being below the Wales and county averages. However, the small size of the cohort and absences during the SATs week had an impact on the percentage figures.
- English results for 2002 and 2003 were only slightly below county (one per cent) and Wales (three per cent) figures. In Welsh as a first language, pupils' performances fluctuate greatly in percentage terms because of the small numbers participating. Data are therefore misleading.
- Over the last four years, pupils have consistently attained above or equal to standards in both county and Wales in mathematics. Performance in science has declined, in comparison to county averages, over the last two years.

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### **3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum**

There is no whole-school policy for the planning and developing of key skills across the curriculum. Pupils' overall standards in the key skills of speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and ICT are satisfactory. Standards in those of listening are good.

- Most pupils, including children in nursery and reception classes, listen very attentively in the majority of lessons and in whole-school assemblies. They maintain good levels of concentration and listen politely to the views of others, for example, during Circle Time. Pupils carry out instructions willingly and respond quickly to commands and directives.
- When given the opportunity to express their thoughts, pupils make reasonable attempts to speak to the teacher or to the class as a whole. When questioned, answers are often brief and lack depth.
- Writing skills are not fully applied across the curriculum. Worksheets often fail to develop creativity and imagination. Self-expression is limited by mechanical copying in some instances.
- Reading skills are used to carry out research and to seek information from books or the Internet, in such subjects as history, geography and religious education.
- Number skills are occasionally used in science (measuring and tallying), geography (using co-ordinates) and design and technology (measuring) but not fully applied in all parts of the curriculum and not consistently across the school.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT in some areas of the curriculum. Opportunities are frequently missed in mathematics and science. There are examples of artwork produced on the computer and of word-processing skills being used to enhance presentation of work. The Internet is sometimes used for research in different subject areas, including religious education and history.

## **4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual development.

- The school promotes a positive ethos and pupils know what is right and wrong and why it is important to obey rules in class, school and outside school. They respect their teachers, other adults in the school, property and school discipline.
- Pupils feel valued and confident in an environment where consideration for others is paramount. They respond very well to the school reward system for good manners.
- Pupils are naturally very courteous and friendly to visitors and co-operate very well with each other when working in pairs or small groups. On one occasion during the inspection a pupil showed maturity and sensitivity beyond his years in supporting a pupil with difficulties.
- Pupils learn a sense of responsibility through membership of the school council, visiting an old peoples' home and spending time with younger pupils. Each class appoints its own energy monitors to conserve resources and avoid waste.
- The school runs a number of clubs including chess, music, trains and sports and pupils benefit greatly from these in terms of social development.

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- Pupils give their time and money to support charities such as the National Children's Homes, the Poppy Appeal, Marie Curie Cancer Care and Operation Christmas Child. They invite members of the community to their Christmas concerts and attend others in the village.
  - Pupils participate in a range of cultural visits.
  - The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is well established and permeates the curriculum including the use of artists from Wales, traditional and contemporary Welsh music, folk dancing and visits to the Urdd camp at Glan Llyn, The '*Helpwr Heddiw*' is given a number of responsibilities each day. These are carried out conscientiously.
  - Pupils are gaining good knowledge and understanding of life in other countries and cultures such as aspects Islam and Hinduism in religious education, Japan in geography, African music and participation in the celebrations during the International Eisteddfod.
  - Whole-school and key stage collective worship, with a Christian approach, is held regularly and meets statutory requirements. In these services, pupils pray and sometimes reflect on issues raised and sing hymns in both English and Welsh.
  - Local clergy visit the school often and pupils attend services in the local chapel and church.
  - Classes in KS2, take turns to lead whole-school collective worship on a weekly basis.
  - There are isolated examples of learning and sharing in Circle Time. There is a recently developed personal and social education policy, but this has not yet permeated the curriculum throughout the school.

## **4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes**

The overall quality of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes throughout the whole school is very good.

- Members of staff are consistent in their implementation of the school's procedures for good discipline and pupils respond very positively.
- The school's programme of personal, social and health education makes a very positive contribution to promoting good behaviour.
- There have been two temporary exclusions but no permanent exclusions during the last 12 months.
- Pupils are very friendly and polite to each other and to adults. They respect school buildings and environment and are anxious to suggest improvements to facilities through their school council.
- The atmosphere of the school is very calm and conducive to learning. No raised voices were heard through the inspection period.
- Pupils demonstrate well-developed self-control in the classroom and while lining up for the whole-school act of worship.
- At lunch times, the pupils wash their hands and line up very orderly to go for their lunch. Lunch times, which are well supervised, are sociable occasions.
- The merit system is much valued by pupils. They eagerly await the outcomes of the points system that encourage effort and good behaviour.

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- Pupils are given appropriate responsibilities as *helpwyr heddiw* and pupils take their turn as monitors to supervise the school library as well as manning doorways and assisting younger pupils.
  - The policies in place for the prevention of bullying and racism are good. No incidents of bullying or other anti-social behaviour were observed during the inspection period.
  - Parents' comments that this is a happy school in which pupils are courteous and polite are fully justified. They expressed their pleasure at the standards of behaviour that are maintained.

### **4.3 Attendance**

Recent standards of attendance are good and have been maintained since the last inspection.

- Attendance registers are maintained in accordance with Welsh Assembly Government requirements, and the school also meets the requirements of Circular 3/99.
- There is little unauthorised absence and teachers are conscientious in following up attendance matters; absences are closely monitored by the staff and acting headteacher.
- A new computerised registration system was introduced during autumn term 2003, and the benefits of the system are being realised.
- A large number of pupils arrive late daily in time for registration at the commencement of the school day. The remainder of the school day however, operates punctually and efficiently.
- Registers for the previous school year and autumn term 2003 revealed a high rate of holidays taken during term time and of pupils who take occasional day holidays when parents withdrew their children for short periods. Taking these practices into account and allowing for approved reasons for absence such as illness, some pupils are missing a significant amount of school time.
- The Educational Social Worker gives the school valuable support and service with attendance matters.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

During the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 99 per cent of lessons observed, including 13 per cent where it was very good and 60 per cent where it was good. Only one per cent was unsatisfactory.

- Lesson planning is detailed and identifies clear learning objectives. It does not, however, place sufficient emphasis on developing pupils' key skills across the curriculum.
- Where teaching is good or very good, teachers use an appropriate range of strategies to stimulate interest and motivate pupils. Occasionally, teachers with specialist knowledge teach other classes in order to raise standards further.
- Careful attention is paid to the development and extension of vocabulary.
- Support staff make a significant contribution to the smooth running of group tasks and support for pupils in general. Pupils with SEN are very well supported.

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- Some very good teaching takes place in the Welsh Unit and in KS1, where lessons are often characterised by motivation, challenge and excitement.
  - Homework reinforces work undertaken in some classes, although there is no consistent pattern.
  - Pupils' efforts and good work are praised and consistent encouragement ensures their progress and achievement.
  - Marking is not sufficiently linked to how well the pupils have met the learning objectives and what needs to be done to improve. Differentiated tasks are often by outcome and more-able pupils are not stimulated and challenged.
  - Insufficient use is made of computers to improve pupils' ICT skills and using the skills across the curriculum.

## **5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

The quality of assessment and recording is satisfactory: that of reporting on pupils' progress is good

- A detailed assessment policy is in place to guide teachers in the procedures for assessment and recording to be followed at the school.
- Many of the school's schemes of work identify opportunities for assessing pupils' progress and development, which provides for continuity and progression in pupils' education within the school.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly but insufficient attention is given to developmental comments on pupils' work to move them forward.
- Pupils' work is matched to level grade descriptors in most curriculum areas and good use is made of levelled examples in English writing and in the Welsh Unit to ensure accuracy and consistency in their assessments.
- Teachers in both key stages evaluate and monitor progress and achievement through regular half termly tests in mathematics, science and standardised tests in reading, as well as teacher assessments.
- A baseline assessment is made of children's prior attainments on entry to the school and good use is made of this information to plan relevant experiences and identify SEN. Achievement and progress in the six areas of learning are regularly recorded.
- The school is in the process of introducing a new tracking software programme that will eventually contain comprehensive data on pupils' achievements and progress.
- In KS1, the Welsh Unit and Y6, individual portfolios contain samples of pupils' achievements, test results in the core subjects, and levelled samples on a termly basis.
- Pupils in the Welsh Unit benefit from writing their own improvement targets at the beginning of the year and in evaluating progress in attaining those objectives.
- Procedures for assessing and recording the progress of pupils with SEN are appropriate and in accordance with the New Code of Practice.
- The school meets its statutory requirements in reporting to parents. The parents receive a formal report annually and the school arranges two open evenings during the year to discuss and examine pupils' work and progress.

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- The quality of reports to parents is good and provides comments on pupils' strength and weaknesses in all subjects and areas of learning.
  - The quality of marking and the assessment and recording systems are inconsistent across the school.

### **5.3 Curriculum**

Overall, the quality of the curriculum is good. It is very good for pupils in the early years, KS1 and the Welsh Unit. It is satisfactory in the English-medium KS2 where there is an imbalance in the provision made for some subjects.

- Most pupils gain enjoyment from their studies. The school's curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum (NC) and religious education and teachers ensure that pupils have equality of access and opportunity to learn.
- There are clear policies and supportive schemes of work for all subjects.
- Most lessons are planned well with work which helps pupils develop the skills they need at that time. However, planning is not consistent in terms of key skills and clarity of objectives.
- The school manages satisfactorily the amount of time spent on teaching the curriculum each week but pupils in some KS2 classes do not consistently get an appropriately balanced amount of time in subjects such as music or information technology.
- The arrangements for pupils' personal and social development, including health and sex education, are satisfactory. The recently produced personal and social education policy and scheme of work are at an early stage of implementation.
- The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Teachers and other adults run extra-curricular clubs for pupils to improve their skills in drama, physical education, outdoor adventure activities and choral and instrumental music.
- Pupils' learning is enriched by a broad range of visits within the locality and further afield. Places of educational interest visited include, the International Pavilion, Chirk Castle and Erddig.
- These visits not only enhance and extend pupils' learning, but also reinforce *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*. The Welsh Dimension, generally, is promoted well in subjects such as art, music and history.
- Teachers organise interesting visits by specialists to the school. For example, pupils have benefited from visits from local people, including various clergy, police and fire fighters.
- Teachers promote racial equality well. This is enshrined in the attitudes of staff and pupils. The school's annual involvement in the Llangollen International Eisteddfod promotes this well.
- The school makes satisfactory use of homework to extend learning opportunities. The present policy lacks clarity and consistency.

### **5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare**

Overall, the quality of support and guidance to pupils is good

- The school provides a happy, caring environment where pupils are polite and courteous

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- Effective arrangements are in place for the induction of young children entering the nursery and reception classes and for the transfer of pupils to secondary school.
  - Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and respond positively when asked for help. Pupils are well supervised at the beginning of the day, during break time and at the end of the day.
  - Encroachment onto school property in the morning by parents delivering their children late to school by car, is an area of concern on safety grounds.
  - The governors take their commitment to health and safety issues very seriously and appropriate policies and procedures are in place.
  - A policy and a scheme work for personal and social education are in place. There is access to professional support from appropriate outside agencies as and when necessary, such as the school nurse to teach sex education.
  - All teachers and staff understand child protection procedures, equal opportunities and social inclusion.
  - Most staff are appropriately trained in first aid, with the remainder to be trained in the near future. Fire drills are carried out termly.

## **5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN**

Provision for supporting the progress and achievement of pupils with SEN is very good. Pupils with SEN, in both English and Welsh sectors, are making good progress in line with their ability.

- All pupils with SEN are fully integrated into school life and receive a broad and balanced curriculum. They develop self-esteem and increase their self-confidence through well-planned and differentiated work.
- The school's policy for pupils with SEN is comprehensive and full reflects the requirements of the new revised code of practice. The school emphasis on early identification of special educational needs has been very successful.
- There are currently five pupils with a statement of SEN; 29 are on the school action plus register and 25 who are on school action.
- Pupils who are withdrawn for extra support in morning sessions are very well supported and extended by the experienced staff and are ably supported by the learning assistants whose work is of high quality.
- There is good emphasis on pupils' weekly self-assessment and there is strong provision for differentiated work both in the morning SEN classes and in also in the mainstream.
- Individual education plans (IEPs) are devised by the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) in liaison with the class teachers, the support staff and visiting specialist teachers. They are reviewed regularly.
- There is very good liaison with outside agencies in establishing good quality support for pupils with both behavioural and learning difficulties.
- The school benefits from the input of member of the authority's Learning Development Team and from speech and language, occupational therapists, a physiotherapist and specialist teacher for visually impaired.

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- The educational psychologist gives regular support and the statutory requirement of annual reviews for pupils with a statement of SEN is carried out very proficiently.
  - There is good liaison with the SENCO at the secondary school especially when pupils make the transition from KS2 to KS3 and there is a nominated governor with responsibility for SEN who is very well informed and makes a very positive contribution to the school's provision for SEN.

## **5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions**

Partnerships with parents and community, schools and other institutions are good with some very good aspects.

- The school prospectus is made available to parents of all new pupils. The document is of very good quality in both content and quality of presentation and it complies fully with Welsh Assembly Government requirements (Memo 14/01). Booklets are also distributed to parents of pupils in the Welsh Unit and parents of children admitted into the nursery.
- In addition, there is a regular flow of information and correspondence to parents including a termly newsletter and diary of events. The governing body's annual report to parents is not complete and does not comply with Welsh Assembly Government Memo 15/01.
- During pre-inspection meeting and in reply to a questionnaire, many parents stated that they would welcome more information about what is taught and NC requirements.
- There is a Home/School Agreement has been established and meets requirements. The school actively promotes partnership with parents and encourages their involvement. Many parents respond well, volunteering their services in support of class work, extra-curricular activities and fund raising. The Parents, Teachers and Friends raise over £5,000 annually towards school activities.
- The school operates an open-door policy whereby parents are welcome to make arrangements to discuss concerns at a mutually convenient time. In addition, there is often contact with members of staff at the beginning and end of school day.
- Two open evenings are held during the autumn and spring terms and parents are afforded an opportunity of a further meeting if they so wish after receipt of pupils' annual reports at the end of the school year. Additional meetings are sometimes held to discuss specific subjects.
- The local community is supportive of the school in many ways and pupils use the community well as an educational resource. The school is conscious of its role within the town community and supports three national charities each year.
- Annual arrangements for receiving pupils into the school are well established.
- Links with the local secondary school have developed into curricular areas and are extensive; arrangements for the transfer of Y6 are thorough and well organised. There are numerous links with other primary schools through sporting and cultural activities all of which serve to enrich school life.
- The school welcomes students annually on initial teacher training and NNEB and child care courses and in addition, young people from a college of further education and secondary schools visit on work experience placements.

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- The numbers of partnerships and quality of links have a beneficial effect on whole school life, its values and ethos.

## **5.7 Partnership with Industry**

Partnerships with industry, local business and commerce are satisfactory.

- Although there is no whole-school policy or strategy for enhancing pupils' knowledge of the world of work or economic, industrial understanding, the school has established a range of links and activities which enhance achievement and make a positive contribution to the school's provision and resources.
- Pupils in KS1 and lower end of KS2 (Y3) make a range of visits pertinent to their learning and speakers from various community services visit the school in relation to projects and thematic work.
- The business community provides valuable general support for the school including its fund raising activities.

# **6. MANAGEMENT**

## **6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement**

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory overall. Procedures to enable the school to evaluate its own work and to plan for improvement are not fully in place. Recent initiatives show that most staff, including non-teaching staff, wish to improve their own knowledge and skills for the benefit of the pupils.

- The school has a self-evaluation policy and the acting head has recently produced a report on the progress to date of the Action Plan following the last report and of the school's present situation, including areas for future development.
- The curriculum co-ordinators' audit reports are used to support self-evaluation. However, the governors, parents and pupils do not have enough input into the process.
- At present, no formal system is in place for monitoring standards of teaching and learning across the school. This was a key issue in the last inspection and it has been identified as a priority by the staff.
- The school makes good use of performance data in the core subjects to identify pupils who need a boost in their learning. National test results are analysed for trends and for comparison with other similar schools.
- The SDP is clearly set out and considers appropriate action, costs and personnel involved. The success criteria are not securely linked to standards and there are no quantitative outcomes stated.
- Regular, on-going reviews and evaluation of targets set in the SDP are apparent in the minutes of the governing body meetings.

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## **6.2 Leadership and Efficiency**

The quality of leadership and management is good. During the long-term illness of the headteacher, the acting headteacher has worked hard to ensure continuity and improvement in standards of teaching and learning.

- Staff meetings are held regularly and records kept of decisions taken. The school has identified its priorities and targets and, along with the governing body, regularly reviews and monitors progress made towards achieving each target.
- The school has a strategic vision for its improvement and the acting-head and senior managers lead school development well, using all the available support from the local education authority's (LEA) specialist staff.
- The quality of subject leadership is satisfactory overall. There is an inconsistency in the monitoring of pupils' learning and progress in all subjects across both key stages.
- The governing body is supportive of the head and the school. Members visit the school on occasion and are developing an awareness of curricular matters, though they are not actively involved in monitoring and evaluating.
- Governors have good oversight of the budget and supervise expenditure well, ensuring good value for money. An audit of the school finances has not been undertaken recently.
- The school's routine administration and organisation are effective and efficient despite being hampered by time-consuming dealings with school dinner monies.
- Some of the key issues from the previous inspection in 1998 have not been fully addressed.

## **6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources**

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall.

- The school is adequately staffed and teachers are generally well qualified for the subjects they teach. An exception is in music in the English-medium stream; the lack of subject knowledge and confidence in the subject result in unsatisfactory standards.
- The professional development of teachers is balanced and, apart from music, most teachers are receiving satisfactory, though limited, in-service training (INSET). There is well-considered induction for new teachers but performance management is not yet fully developed.
- Apart from those for the NNEB's, clear job descriptions are in place for all staff.
- Accommodation is satisfactory for the number of pupils on roll. The school has attractive displays and is clean and well-maintained.
- The learning space for the Welsh-medium children under five is confined. The under-fives and pupils in the KS1 teaching room in the Welsh-medium department are continually disturbed by a thoroughfare linking one part of the school to another. Children under five have adequate access to their own secure playing area.
- The external play area is adequate but, during wet weather, it is subject to flooding and mud and, as such, becomes hazardous. The school governors have identified this as a priority for improvement under health and safety issues.
- The library offers limited space for pupils to sit, research and read independently.

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- Learning resources are satisfactory. In subjects such as science, mathematics, history and geography resources are adequate, at least, but there are too few non-fiction books, software is limited, especially for early years children, too few modern computers, and very few artefacts in religious education. This dearth of resources affects the standards of achievement and rate of progress in English, information technology and religious education.

## **7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

#### **Provision for the under-fives**

The provision for children under-five successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Children in the nursery classes make at least good progress in all areas of learning and make very good progress in personal and social development, and in physical development. Children in the reception classes make very good progress in personal and social, creative and physical development with good progress in language and communication development, mathematical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. This is in response to an imaginative and broad curriculum.

#### **Language and communication skills**

##### **Good features**

- Children in the English stream are developing confidence in speaking clearly and in answering and asking questions.
- Children practise their language skills through play and singing activities. In the Welsh stream, nursery and reception children are acquiring good speaking and listening skills in Welsh, in response to rich and well-structured language experiences.
- They sing English songs and rhymes accurately and enthusiastically. They talk confidently with the adults in their class and with each other during role-play.
- They listen with interest to stories, and make immediate responses to simple greetings and instructions in class, especially during physical activities.
- Most are acquiring satisfactory basic reading skills, identifying simple and familiar words quickly and have a good working grasp of the letters of the alphabet. They handle books well.
- Children make good progress in making significant marks and early writing, forming letters and repeating patterns accurately. Most reception children can identify words which begin with the designated letter and write their own names.

##### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

#### **Mathematical development**

##### **Good features**

- Nursery children enjoy acting and singing number rhymes and using play to develop their number skills.

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- Reception children count, recognise objects and shapes to 20 and order numbers to 10. Most can sort and match according to colour, shape or size. Children identify and name two and three-dimensional shapes.
  - Their role in the toy shop supports their understanding of money.
  - Both nursery and reception children are acquiring and using appropriate mathematical language during their activities in the sand and water areas (comparing size, length and capacity), when building Teddy' home with blocks and construction kits, and when creating three- dimensional models with waste materials.
  - The children are developing very good understanding and use of a wide variety of repeating patterns.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Personal and social development**

#### **Good features**

- Nursery children are settling into the school's regime well and respond positively when encouraged to participate.
- Children understand the need to treat others with care and respect, to share resources and to co-operate well with others. Reception children are making very good progress in developing collaboration in small groups and in developing independence.
- The children demonstrate confidence in their ability and are respectful and comfortable when speaking to adults.
- By the age of five, children attend to their own hygiene and most dress themselves quickly for physical education.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

#### **Good features**

- The children are curious about, and keen to explore, their environment. They prepare and cook food such as toast, jelly and icing.
- In their gardening activities, children learn about looking after plants, searching for mini-beasts and hunting to identify various animals and birds. Most know the days of the week and understand the order of the events in a school day. They know night and day, how the four seasons differ, and are beginning to understand that some things happened a long time ago.
- In their topic '*Ar y Fferm*', the children broaden their knowledge of the natural world and the importance of different types of work.
- Most can find their way around the school and have been on walks and trips to learn about the local area, noting geographical features they have observed.
- They are beginning to learn about the lifestyles of people in other countries or in other times. For example, they questioned '*Lady Myddleton*'.

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- They enjoy books, knowing that they are a source of information, and are able to follow pictures.
  - The children know their five senses and their importance to their lives. They can describe the properties of some materials, particularly by touch. They understand the forces of pushing and pulling in relation to everyday objects and the effect of the angle of a slope on the speed of a vehicle.

### **Shortcomings**

- Many children are offered only restricted access to computers to improve their language and number.
- Too few use modelling programs to develop their skills and understanding often enough.

### **Creative development**

#### **Good features**

- Children in the nursery, play a variety of roles, paint freely and imaginatively, explore sand and water-play with interest and respond naturally to music.
- Reception children, in their work on snow and winter scenes, make good choices of medium and colour. They use brushes, pencils and chalk with very good control; cut and stick carefully and are keen to display their work.
- The children are developing very good dexterity and imagination when working with collages or constructing from junk material.
- Children keep good rhythm by clapping and tapping and sing a wide repertoire of songs with enjoyment. They listen and respond with interest when puppets comment on the quality of their singing.
- They investigate and identify different sounds and try to emulate them with voice or percussion instruments. They perform confidently in front of an audience.

#### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Physical development**

#### **Good features**

- Children's fine motor skills develop very well in the nursery and reception classes. They use small equipment and tools with increasing care and skill.
- In physical activities, they find space quickly and respond very promptly to directions. They use the apparatus maturely and imaginatively, often taking calculated risks.
- They warm up and cool down sensibly, participating fully in the exercises. They run, walk, jump, skip, hop, tip-toe, crawl, climb, roll, pull and swing on equipment, accurately and confidently.
- Children move in different directions, quickly and slowly, obeying instructions promptly. They develop very good orientation, physical and independence skill when playing with the large wheeled toys.

#### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

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## **English**

In the English-medium classes, standards of achievement in English are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2. They are good in the Welsh Unit (KS2 only).

### **Good features**

- Standards of speaking are satisfactory in the English section and good in the Welsh Unit.
- All pupils, including those with SEN, are making good progress in line with their ability.
- Pupils are increasingly able to communicate their own ideas and feelings. They use suitable and relevant vocabulary. Throughout the school, pupils are being regularly introduced to new words, which are recorded in their personal wordbooks.
- Pupils make appropriate use of the KS1 and the KS2 school libraries. Good use is made of dictionaries and thesauri, especially in the older classes.
- Standards in listening are good throughout the school. Pupils listen attentively and ask appropriate questions and respond well to instructions.
- Reading together from the 'big book' in Y1 is good, with pupils having a good recall of facts. Pupils in Y2 have a good idea of what is meant by a traditional tale.
- Throughout the school, reading is generally accurate with good knowledge of punctuation. Pupils read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, both individually and as class texts.
- Through appropriate guidance given, pupils read books at an appropriate level. Most have a clear understanding of the contents of their books and have good predicting skills. A minority read extensively and make good use of the local library. They can name their favourite authors and describe what kind of fiction they enjoy most.
- In the Welsh Unit, standards of reading in English are consistently good and sometimes very good.
- Pupils can write in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes. The younger pupils can write in sentences about main characters in their reading books.
- Most of the pupils in Y3 can plan and develop their own stories, though a number need a great deal of support and work at a slow pace. However their vocabulary is good, with pupils offering words such as 'heroine', 'disgusting' and 'threatening' in their brainstorming session.
- Year 4 have a good understanding of the past tense and can write interesting newspaper reports.
- In Y5, the less able pupils make good efforts to find alternatives to over-used words to add interest to their stories. Others have a good knowledge of the rules governing soft and hard consonants and write interesting prose and poetry.
- In Y6, some of the pupils have very good factual recall and understand the fear of the blitz and explore the personal feelings of children evacuated during World War II.
- The school's handwriting scheme encourages good practice and most pupils write well.

### **Shortcomings**

- Some of the pupils are hesitant in their reading and do not use their understanding of phonics to assist their reading. They do not always read expressively.

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- A minority of older pupils still use a pencil to write with, do not form their letters correctly and are yet to adopt cursive writing.

## **Welsh first language**

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages. This is the result of hard and thorough work by pupils and teachers.

### **Good features**

- Pupils in both key stages listen attentively and speak with increasing confidence to teachers, each other and other adults. They contribute effectively when responding to class discussions, performing well in formal and informal situations. The majority of pupils succeed to express their ideas and describe events clearly.
- In KS1, pupils build upon their experiences in the reception class. They show their understanding of the content of stories by responding accurately to the teacher's questions and sequencing correctly with pictures and text.
- In both key stages, pupils understand the use of punctuation to help the reading process, and read aloud with increasing fluency. They are making satisfactory progress with their individual reading and are learning a range of suitable reading strategies. In investigative work, pupils make effective use of a wide range of books.
- Pupils are developing good writing skills. They form their letters correctly and with increasing control over the overall presentation. They label pictures and diagrams, answer questions using a word, phrase or sentence, copy correctly and compose their own stories or personal anecdotes. They spell familiar words correctly.
- In KS2, pupils' writing skills are well developed and they write for a wide range of purposes, including stories, letters and sensitive poems. Some pupils write good, extended pieces, showing a lively imagination and using good descriptive words and phrases. They realise that accurate spelling and punctuation is important, and gradually their writing style is improved.

### **Shortcomings**

- Some pupils in KS2 do not make sufficient progress in developing basic skills and strategies in their reading.

## **Mathematics**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in both key stages.

### **Good features**

- Pupils at KS1 quickly become familiar with number symbols and start to recognise sequences and patterns. They confidently undertake simple addition and subtraction sums and show a growing knowledge and recall of number bonds.
- Pupils count to 100 in ones, twos, fives and tens from different points. They recognise, name and order numbers correctly with older pupils managing up to 100 and beyond. They are developing a good understanding of place value.
- In Y2, pupils recognise the value of coins and are able to buy items and calculate simple change.
- Most can identify and name a good range of two and three-dimensional shapes and are developing a good understanding of their properties.

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- They make sensible use of non-standard measures of length and mass, and older pupils begin to understand and use standard measures.
  - From an early stage, pupils gather information and display data in graphical forms, sometimes making use of information technology.
  - In KS2, pupils are developing a good understanding of place value to 1,000 and beyond. Most show good recall of mathematical tables and are confident in computation, including negative numbers.
  - Older pupils understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages and can correctly state the equivalent values.
  - They can find or fix a position using co-ordinates, recognise simple line of symmetry, measure accurately using standard units, and calculate the perimeter and area of rectangles.
  - They correctly name the features of two and three-dimensional shapes and identify reflective symmetry in simple two-dimensional shapes.
  - Pupils are developing a good vocabulary of mathematical terms.

#### **Shortcomings**

- They have limited skills in using computers for representing and exploring data.
- Pupils' knowledge and use of mental strategies are underdeveloped. Recall of number bonds and multiplication facts (as opposed to multiplication tables) is often slow and uncertain.
- Pupils' estimating skills, using standard units of measure, are underdeveloped.

#### **Science**

Standards of achievement in both key stages are good.

#### **Good features**

- In KS1 pupils have acquired a vocabulary that enables them to name and describe living things, materials and phenomena.
- They are familiar with every day electrical appliances and are aware of health and safety issues. They understand the principles of the electrical circuit.
- They are able to classify materials according to their properties and link this to the use made of them. Observational skills are developing well.
- In KS1 of the Welsh Unit, pupils can classify how sounds are produced on musical instruments and record their work as labelled bar graphs.
- Pupils have opportunities at both key stages to participate in experimental and investigative activities. Their investigative skills are developing well. They assess the validity of their findings and draw conclusions from them. Pupils are developing a firm appreciation of fair testing and its importance in evaluating the evidence gained.
- In KS2, pupils show a good understanding of solids, liquids and gases. Through appropriate investigations, they know that there are reversible and non-reversible changes.

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- In Y5, pupils work together harmoniously to create an air-propelled monorail. They understand the properties of gases and their different uses.
  - Pupils know the requirements and the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise, and the harmful effect of drugs on the body.
  - Appropriate emphasis is given to the use of scientific vocabulary and technical terms, and their use by pupils, orally and in written work, is good.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Welsh as a second language**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS1 and unsatisfactory in KS2.

#### **Good features**

- Most pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons and demonstrate a good attitude towards learning the language. They try hard.
- Pupils understand a variety of classroom instructions, commands and questions.
- They ask and answer questions about the weather, their feelings and their general likes and dislikes with good pronunciation.
- Older pupils are able to extend statements with simple conjunctions and create short dialogues with a partner using the learnt phrases and adding appropriate adjectives.
- They are developing a good range of vocabulary including, numbers, colours, days of the week, months of the year, parts of the face and body, and items of clothing.
- Pupils read with good pronunciation and intonation and complete written tasks in their workbooks.
- They sing Welsh songs with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment.

#### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils in Y5 and Y6 have difficulty recalling vocabulary and phrases without the help of the teacher or the written word. As such, their reaction to simple questioning is often slow, insecure and incorrect.
- There is a lack of progression in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in KS2 which inhibits their development over time.

### **Design and technology**

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages. Pupils follow a clear and substantial process of designing and making in a variety of activities which are practical and focused.

#### **Good features**

- Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate good skills in cutting, shaping, joining and assembling.
- In early KS1, pupils have a good understanding of how to access information to research different types and variety of housing, the various materials used and details of different structures.

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- They study mechanisms when they make good examples of moving pictures with hinges.
  - Year 2 pupils produce well-finished examples of Joseph's Coat. They know about patterns, joins and seaming textiles and are developing good sewing skills.
  - In KS2, younger pupils study healthy eating and both make and evaluate food using that criterion. They construct houses in the style of the Tudors and succeed in paying close attention to individual Tudor characteristics.
  - Pupils use information technology satisfactorily when producing patterns for wrapping paper.
  - They use electrical control well when designing and making lighthouses, using switches within simple circuits.
  - Older pupils plan and make biscuits and moving toys with good use of evaluating and modifying their work until they are satisfied with its quality.
  - In their work on musical instruments, they demonstrate good understanding of the cultural background of instrument, how they are played and the effect different materials have on sound.
  - By the end of KS2, pupils research and design shelters based on their World War II studies. They pay particular attention to the conditions which they expect their structures to withstand.
  - In their work on slippers, there are examples of good investigation on their purpose and use, and on the characteristics of the materials.

### **Shortcomings**

- Not all pupils, especially towards the end of KS2, take enough time to produce an attractive, well-finished product.

### **Information technology**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in both key stages and good in KS1 of the Welsh Unit.

### **Good features**

- Pupils in KS1 use the 'mouse' effectively and confidently; this is very apparent in their designs and pictures produced from a 'paint' program. They introduce text to their artwork, change and create borders, and save and print their work.
- They are developing a number of basic skills such as executing program commands, using the mouse and pointer, and operating a number of facilities on the tool bar.
- Many pupils can select and move objects confidently on an interactive whiteboard.
- In KS2, most pupils can find appropriate files on a hard disk, and can open and use them.
- Pupils have improved their ICT capability in their word-processed writing, for example, by using a range of fonts and styles of text in poetry and letters, often writing directly on to the screen.
- They used computers to combine text and images. Pupils in the Y5/Y6 class, for example, have designed and created pamphlets relating to their topic on the Second World War, as information for younger pupils.

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- Pupils make effective use of the Internet to conduct research in subjects such as history and religious education.
  - Pupils with SEN make sound progress with good support from teachers and classroom support assistants.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils' skills in the use of ICT across the curriculum are underdeveloped because they do not use computers enough in the other subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils have a limited understanding of the standards they achieve because their work is not formally assessed or recorded.
- Pupils' progress is only satisfactory over time because they use computers far less in some year groups than others.

### **History**

Standards of achievement in history are good at both key stages. All pupils including those with SEN are making sound progress. Standards are now better than those observed in the previous inspection.

### **Good features**

- In KS1, younger pupils can sequence their work chronologically. They can construct a time line of their own lives from birth to school days.
- They can compare the difference between modern day hospital practices with those practiced by Florence Nightingale and her nurses at Scutori.
- In KS2, Y3 and Y4 make good use of artefacts, for example, the telephone, from earlier periods in the last century and they appreciate the rapid development of technology in the last decade.
- In their study of Roman times, pupils discuss the reclining arrangement for taking meals and compose an imaginary menu, which slaves would serve to the centurions. They study the lives of the Welsh saints such as St David and St Collen and know the story of Gelert and of Mary Jones' visit to Bala.
- They display a developing sense of enquiry and an understanding of chronology though their knowledge of the Roman, Tudor and Victorian periods and they ask pertinent questions in class and group discussions. They share their ideas, express differing opinions and present their findings clearly and neatly.
- They understand the significance of primary and secondary sources and use the Internet and CD-ROMs for their individual research and in preparing group projects.
- The pupils appreciate the opportunities to visit historical sites and understand the importance of places visited. They visit Erddig and examine toys as part of their study of the Victorian period. They visit a Victorian school at Llangollen and the nearby Chirk Castle.
- Older pupils have a well-developed awareness of the cause and effect of historical events and understand that these events are open to differing interpretations. They confidently discuss who were the allies and enemies during World War II and are aware of the evil of radiation sickness and can offer explanations why the American felt that the atrocity of Hiroshima was necessary.

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### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Geography**

Standards of achievement in geography are good at both key stages. All pupils including those with SEN are making good progress. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

#### **Good features**

- Younger pupils are able to recall and use appropriate geographical terminology such as 'mainland', 'island', 'loch', 'lakes', 'rivers' and 'mountains' with increasing precision.
- Key Stage 1 pupils acquire a good range of skills and techniques in using maps and diagrams. They can describe and label the main physical characteristics of an imaginary island.
- In KS2, pupils can locate main towns and cities in the south, mid and north Wales. They understand some of the reasons for the locations of early settlements in Britain. They understand grid references and understand the use of symbols. They know that maps have different scales.
- They make pertinent comparisons listing the similarities and differences between their local areas of Llangollen with the larger city such as Chester and express their personal preferences. They explore and contrast their local area with Lesotho, a developing country.
- Older pupils obtain first-hand information through fieldwork. They survey the problems and the amenities of Llangollen and suggest ways in which the local environment can be improved. They record details of local traffic surveys in graphs and use a questionnaire with family and friends to establish the changes that have occurred in their community during the last few decades.
- They have a good understanding of the water cycle and of the importance of water storage and filtration. They visit the Alwen Environmental Educational Centre and understand processes such as chlorination.
- Pupils explore the character and identity of Wales and its relationship with other people. They understand the importance of tourism for the local economy and the prominence gained for their area by the International Eisteddfod.
- They examine the effect of different weather conditions on human activities throughout the world. They conduct a survey of weather conditions in North Wales over a week and study the attractions and challenges of mountainous areas such as Snowdonia, the Grampians, the Alps and the Himalayas.
- They develop their research and presentational skills very well through the use of information technology in preparing a range of good quality projects.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Art**

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages, and are very good in KS1 of the Welsh Unit. Good quality artwork is displayed prominently in all the classrooms, giving

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prominence to the pupils' efforts and celebrating their achievements. Key Stage 2 artwork has been used to illustrate bookmarks for a dance company and the school won first prize in a Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water competition.

### **Good features**

- Key Stage 1 pupils experiment with different materials and media, and use a variety of techniques to good effect to create drawings in charcoal, pencil and pastel crayons, three-dimensional models, clay tiles and collages.
- In KS1 of the Welsh Unit, pupils confidently work in the style of different artists and can create animal drawings in acrylic paint on canvas. They are able to create collages using bright raised tartan patterned strips.
- Information technology paint programs are used effectively to draw pictures and they can use engraved polystyrene tiles to reproduce repeating border wallpaper patterns, in the Laura Ashley style. Pupils can create pencil drawings of places such as the local church with great attention to detail.
- Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of Clarice Cliff's technique using bold colours, patterns and shapes to produce well-considered examples of their own interpretations of her work.
- In Y5, they can draw a still life sketch, using pencil initially, adding pastel for the individual objects, colour wash for the background and completing their work by using charcoal for the detail.
- Pupils' work is often linked effectively to other areas of the curriculum such as portraits, collages and drawings of Henry VIII in history.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Music**

Standards are good in KS1. In KS2, standards of achievement are good in the Welsh Unit but unsatisfactory in the English stream.

### **Good features**

- Pupils of all ages sing confidently, in tune and with gusto. When they sing in the round they keep good time. Pupils enunciate their words clearly both in Welsh and English.
- Pupils who are learning through the medium of Welsh in both key stages respond well to a well-planned and specific music scheme.
- They make good progress in composing, identifying suitable percussion and vocal sounds to represent aspects of the story, "*Heddwch o'r Diwedd*" and "*Band y Gegin*".
- They perform well in responding to rhythm and singing in accompaniment to traditional dancing. Pupils repeat singing exercises, often with difficult intervals, accurately.
- They appraise their own work and have a good knowledge of different composers and their works. They listen astutely to works by famous composers. In their work on Tchaikovsky's 1812 Festival Overture, older pupils demonstrate very good contrasts in responses, to produce sounds of war. They work with little practice time, in small groups.

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- Pupils who learn through the medium of English make good progress in KS1. In their work on Vivaldi's "Winter", pupils listen very constructively to the music and compose imaginative sounds to depict the winter landscape alternating long and short, and high and low sounds, effectively.
  - They give sensible reasons why they like the music extract and why certain sounds are appropriate.
  - Key Stage 2 pupils are making satisfactory progress in learning about music from different cultures.
  - Many capitalise on the instrumental tuition offered in recorder, flute, violin and brass. Those who do play an instrument demonstrate keen interest and are making at least satisfactory progress.

### **Shortcomings**

- Key Stage 2 pupils in the English-medium classes do not compose, perform or appraise music to a satisfactory standard. They have limited skills.

### **Physical education**

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2. Pupils are provided with opportunities to participate in a variety of team games including soccer, rugby, netball, athletics and cricket. Links have been established with Dragon Sports and the girls' soccer team has won the North Wales championships.

### **Good features**

- Key Stage 1 pupils are appropriately dressed for gymnastics and are familiar with warm up and cool down routines.
- They are confident in performing different ways of travelling using hands and feet, turning and jumping both on the floor and on benches.
- They show increased control over their bodies and work well individually and respond appropriately to the set tasks.
- They are developing and awareness to observe each other and to refine their performance.
- In KS2, pupils are able to respond to music through dances, by using rhythmic responses and contrasts of speed, shape, direction and level.
- Pupils are able to play games together in a sporting manner.
- Evidence and statistics show that over 90 per cent of KS2 pupils meet the requirements of the NC in swimming.

### **Shortcomings**

- Key Stage 2 pupils' ability to evaluate the quality of their own performance in dance and to refine and improve is underdeveloped.
- Pupils' skills and ability to invent games and plan strategies to outwit an opponent are underdeveloped.

### **Religious education**

Standards of achievement are good overall in KS1 and in KS2 (Welsh-medium), and satisfactory in KS2 (English-medium).

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## Good features

- As they proceed through the school, pupils develop a good knowledge of Bible stories and a sound understanding of Christian beliefs and practices.
- They know the importance of celebrations and festivals in their lives and in other faiths such as Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. Pupils interpret symbols of Christianity and their studied religions well.
- Pupils understand that New Testament parables have meaning for their own lives. Most pupils confidently express their own feelings and those of others.
- Key Stage 1 pupils role-play well the rites of passage in their own lives such as Christian baptism and marriage.
- They visit places of worship regularly and are developing a good awareness of the importance of their community.
- Key Stage 2 pupils appreciate the value of different opinions. For example, early in the key stage pupils analyse various contemporary responses to Jesus.
- Older pupils know the importance of the Bible and Qu'ran to Christianity and Islam.

## Shortcomings

- Older pupils in the English-medium stream do not record their religious education work in sufficient depth or breadth.

# 8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

## 8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

Overall, satisfactory progress has been made in dealing with the key issues identified during the last inspection. These were:

### Key Issue 1

**Improve standards in technology in both key stages, and in science and Welsh second language in KS2.**

Standards of achievement in design and technology and science are now good in both key stages. However, the standards achieved in Welsh as a second language remain unsatisfactory in KS2. This is satisfactory progress overall.

### Key Issue 2

**Raise standards in the subjects where achievement is satisfactory by addressing the shortcomings identified.**

There has been good progress in raising standards in Welsh as a first language, history, geography and art in both key stages; music, physical education and religious education in KS1, and in all six areas of learning in nursery and reception. Shortcomings have not been fully addressed in Welsh as a second language, information technology and music in KS2 but overall the school has made good progress.

### Key Issue 3

**Develop a comprehensive assessment policy, reconsider current assessment procedures, and take steps to link assessment outcomes with curriculum provision.**

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The school's assessment policy is not yet fully embedded in whole-school practice but effective systems are being developed and gradually introduced. This is satisfactory progress.

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#### **Key Issue 4**

**Improve the efficiency of management structures, and produce a coherent SDP which identifies curriculum requirements and links them to the available budget.**

A coherent SDP has been produced but, due to staffing problems, a number of targets have not been fully addressed. However, plans are in hand for reviewing the SDP and restructuring systems. Under the circumstances, this is satisfactory progress.

#### **Key Issue 5**

**Develop the monitoring role of the head, deputy head and all subject co-ordinators in order to improve the consistency of the curricular provision and set targets for improving standards.**

Progress is unsatisfactory. The school does not have a formal system in place for regular and rigorous monitoring of standards in teaching and learning.

### **8.2 Key Issues for Action**

The governors, headteacher and staff now need to:

- Raise standards of achievement in Welsh as a second language in KS2 and in music in KS2 (English-medium). Also, address the shortcomings in other subject areas identified in the report.
- Develop formal and consistent monitoring procedures for teaching and learning.
- Continue to develop a consistent assessment and recording system for all subjects across the school and improve the consistency and quality of marking.
- Involve all school stakeholders in the process of self-evaluation and in the regular reviewing and evaluating of the targets set in the SDP.
- Ensure the planning, delivery and development of the key skills across the curriculum by utilising the good practice already established in the Welsh Unit.
- Improve pupils' punctuality at the start of the school day.

## APPENDIX

### A. Basic Information About the School

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Name of School      | Ysgol Bryn Collen                      |
| School type         | Bilingual Primary School               |
| Age-range of pupils | 3 – 11 years                           |
| Address of school   | Pengwern<br>Llangollen<br>Denbighshire |
| Post-Code           | LL20 8AR                               |
| Telephone Number    | 01978 861125                           |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Headteacher          | Mr Alwyn Ellis Williams                          |
| Date of appointment  | September 1992                                   |
| Chair of Governors   | Mr Chris Parrot                                  |
| Registered Inspector | Merfyn D Jones                                   |
| Dates of inspection  | 19 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> January 2004 |

### B. School Data and Indicators

| <i>Number of pupils in each year group</i> |         |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
|--|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Year group                                 | N (fte) | R  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 | Y6 | Total |
| Number of pupils                           | 12.5    | 35 | 29 | 33 | 37 | 43 | 43 | 48 | 280.5 |

| <i>Total number of teachers</i> |           |           |                            |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
|                                 | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time equivalent (fte) |
| Number of teachers              | 12        | 2         | 13                         |

| <i>Staffing information</i>   |        |
|---|--------|
| Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes) | 20.6:1 |
| Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes                        | 3:1    |
| Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes           | 26     |
| Teacher (fte) : class ratio   | 1:1    |

| <i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i> |      |      |      |              |
|---|------|------|------|--------------|
|   | R    | KS1  | KS2  | Whole school |
| Spring 2003   | 93.7 | 93.6 | 94   | 93.95        |
| Summer 2003   | 93.9 | 93   | 88.2 | 92           |
| Autumn 2003   | 95   | 96.6 | 95.8 | 95.84        |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals             | 16 |
| Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection | 2  |

## C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public Examinations

### KEY STAGE 1

| National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2003 |                    |          | Number of pupils in Y2: 33 |   |    |    |    |   |
|--|--------------------|----------|----------------------------|---|----|----|----|---|
| Percentage of pupils at each level               |                    |          |                            |   |    |    |    |   |
|  |                    |          | N                          | W | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4 |
| ENGLISH:   | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                          | 0 | 11 | 69 | 20 | 0 |
|  |                    | National | 0                          | 4 | 13 | 63 | 20 | 0 |
| WELSH  | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                          | 0 | 0  | 83 | 17 | 0 |
|  |                    | National | 0                          | 2 | 11 | 64 | 23 | 0 |
| MATHEMATICS                                      | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                          | 0 | 10 | 66 | 24 | 0 |
|  |                    | National | 0                          | 2 | 11 | 63 | 24 | 0 |
| SCIENCE  | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                          | 0 | 5  | 85 | 10 | 0 |
|  |                    | National | 0                          | 2 | 10 | 66 | 22 | 0 |

### CORE SUBJECT INDICATOR: Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in English or Welsh (first language), science and mathematics:

| by Teacher Assessment |    | by Test    |     |
|-----------------------|----|------------|-----|
| In School:            | 92 | In School: | N/A |
| In Wales:             | 79 | In Wales:  | N/A |

| National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results:2003 |                    |          | No. of pupils in Y6: 19 |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |   |
|---|--------------------|----------|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|---|
| Percentage of pupils at each level              |                    |          |                         |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |   |
|   |                    |          | D                       | A | F | W | 1 | 2 | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6 |
| English   | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                       | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 17 | 48 | 32 | 0 |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 17 | 46 | 30 | 0 |
|   | Test/Task          | School   | 0                       | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 13 | 33 | 45 | 0 |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 12 | 41 | 38 | 0 |
| Welsh   | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                       | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 33 | 67 | 0  | 0 |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 16 | 50 | 29 | 0 |
|   | Test/Task          | School   | 0                       | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 33 | 67 | 0  | 0 |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 18 | 51 | 28 | 0 |
| Mathematics                                     | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                       | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 17 | 61 | 19 | 0 |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 19 | 47 | 28 | 0 |
|   | Test/Task          | School   | 0                       | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 18 | 57 | 19 | 0 |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 19 | 43 | 30 | 0 |
| Science   | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                       | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 19 | 54 | 24 | 0 |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 13 | 50 | 33 | 0 |
|   | Test/Task          | School   | 0                       | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 70 | 11 | 0 |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 47 | 38 | 0 |

| <b>CORE SUBJECT INDICATOR: Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, English and Welsh</b> |      |                |      |
|---|------|----------------|------|
| <b>by Teacher Assessment</b>  |      | <b>by Test</b> |      |
| In the school   | 71   | In the school  | 64   |
| In Wales  | 69.6 | In Wales       | 68.1 |

- D Pupils who are exempted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum  
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence  
F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence  
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

## **D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection**

- The inspection team of five inspectors, including the lay inspector, was at the school for a total of 14 inspector days.
- During this time, all teachers were visited and all classes were seen. A total of 74 sessions, part sessions or interactions were inspected and a wide range of pupils' work was scrutinised. Inspectors talked to pupils about their work and life in the school, and listened to them reading their own work and extracts from class reading books.
- The full range of documentation made available by the school was scrutinised. Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors, teachers, teaching assistants, other staff and pupils.
- Pre and post-inspection meetings were held with governors and staff, and 19 parents attended a pre-inspection meeting with inspectors. Questionnaires completed by 35 parents were also analysed.

## E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

| <b>Inspector</b>     | <b>Type</b> | <b>Aspect Responsibilities</b>   | <b>Subject Responsibilities</b>  |
|----------------------|-------------|--|--|
| Mr M D Jones         | RgI         | The school and its priorities<br>Main findings<br>Standards of achievement in subjects and areas of learning<br>Standards of achievement in key skills across the curriculum<br>Teaching<br>Self-evaluation and planning for improvement<br>Leadership and efficiency<br>Progress since the last inspection<br>Key issues for action | mathematics<br>Welsh first language<br>Welsh second language<br>information technology |
| Mr D Treharne        | Team        | Provision for pupils with SEN<br>Behaviour and attitudes   | English<br>history<br>geography  |
| Mrs M Meredith-Jones | Team        | Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development<br>Staffing, accommodation and learning resources  | early years<br>design and technology<br>music<br>religious education                   |
| Mr R G Williams      | Team        | Assessment, recording and reporting<br>Support, guidance and pupils' Welfare   | science<br>art<br>physical education   |
| Mr J James           | Lay         | Attendance<br>Partnership with parents, the community, schools and other institutions<br>Partnership with industry   |  |

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