

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

**YSGOL GYMRAEG BRYNMAWR
STRYD Y BRENIN
BRYNMAWR
BLAENAU
GWENT
NP23 4RG**

SCHOOL NUMBER: 677/2307

DATE OF INSPECTION: 17TH – 20TH MAY 2004

BY

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REGISTERED INSPECTOR: W248/17717

DATE: 21ST JULY 2004

UNDER ESTYN CONTRACT NUMBER: C/T/202/03P

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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:

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE REPORT IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER :

ACCAC	-	Awdurdod Cymwysterau Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru (The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales)
CoP	-	Code of Practice
CDROM		Compact Disk Read Only Memory
EBP	-	Education Business Partnership
EWO	-	Education Welfare Officer
GB-		Governing Body
ICT	-	Information and Communications Technology
IEP	-	Individual Education Plan
INSET	-	In-Service Education and Training
KS	-	Key Stage
LEA	-	Local Education Authority
NAfW	-	National Assembly for Wales
NC	-	National Curriculum
NQT	-	Newly Qualified Teacher
PSE	-	Personal and Social Education
PTA	-	Parent-Teacher Association
SDP	-	School Development Plan
SEN	-	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	-	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SMT	-	Senior Management Team
Y	-	Year

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PART 2: THE INSPECTION SCHEDULE

1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Ysgol Gymraeg Brynmawr, the only school in Blaenau Gwent offering Welsh medium education, is located on three sites on the outskirts of the town. The building near to the main road houses KS1 pupils; the KS2 building is on a site a short distance away across a playground and up some steps. Nursery provision is on a separate site. There are 310 pupils on roll at present, a figure which includes 42 part-time and five full-time nursery children.

The school has an extensive catchment area, comprising the whole of Blaenau Gwent, and a high percentage of pupils travels on school buses but some come from the town itself. According to the school, around 75% of pupils come from residential areas that are neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged and the remaining 25% come from an economically disadvantaged area. 21% are registered as being entitled to free school meals. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language; 0.3 % come from an ethnic minority background. There are 34 pupils on the SEN register and two have statements. The school has a support class organised by the LEA. During the inspection, there were two supply teachers at the school.

The school's aims are to:

- offer a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the requirements of the NC;
- present the curriculum through colourful and homely working conditions in a happy and safe environment;
- ensure that every child attains his/her potential in literacy and numeracy;
- foster an awareness of the Welsh language amongst the pupils;
- offer a Welsh ethos inside and outside the school including extra-curricular activities;
- ensure that pupils are confident in both languages by the time they are eleven years old;
- foster links with parents and the community;
- ensure that pupils co-exist and work co-operatively and respect individuals, property and the environment;
- foster positive behaviour and expectations.

The school's priorities for this year are to:

- raise reading standards at the lower end of KS2;
- revise science and refine the scheme of work and ensure regular investigative work;
- develop aspects of information technology including developing teachers' specialisms, monitoring provision across the school and introduce Broadband;
- develop the use of the Interactive Whiteboard for SEN pupils;
- develop a School Council.

The school was last inspected in April 1999 and was awarded a Basic Skills Quality Mark in October 2001.

The school's motto is 'Dysgu gorau, dysgu byw'.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Ysgol Gymraeg Brynmawr is a happy and successful school. Despite the fact that the classes are scattered across three sites, the team spirit that exists amongst the teachers and pupils is a praiseworthy aspect of the school. Pupils' high standard of behaviour and natural courtesy is memorable.

- The quality of the educational provision for its under-fives, taken overall, is appropriate to their needs and they make good to very good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- Standards in the six areas of learning for under-fives children are as follows:

	Nursery	Reception
Language, literacy and communication Skills	Very good	Good
Personal and social development	Very good	Very good
Mathematical development	Very good	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Very good	Very good
Physical development	Very good	Good
Creative development	Very good	Very good

Overall, standards across the school are satisfactory or better in all the work observed, including about 67% which is good and approximately 16 % which is very good.

Standards in NC subjects and religious education are as follows:

Subjects	KS1	KS2
Welsh	Good	Good
English	Not applicable	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good
Design and technology	Good	Good
Information technology	Very good	Good
History	Good	Satisfactory
Geography	Good	Good
Art	Very good	Very good
Music	Good	Good
Physical education	Good	Satisfactory
Religious education	Good	Satisfactory

- In key skills, standards are very good in speaking, good in speaking, reading and writing and satisfactory in numeracy and ICT across the school. For the under-fives standards are

good in language and numeracy and satisfactory in ICT.

- Pupils' moral and social development is very good and their spiritual and cultural development is good. Care is taken to ensure that all the elements of worship are evident during assemblies and pupils response to the provision is good. They have a sound understanding of right and wrong and they know the importance of behaving considerately, fairly and in a caring manner. They take their responsibilities at school seriously and their social skills are stimulated by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Welsh language and culture are given a prominent place in the life and work of the school, but pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and traditions is rather limited.
- Behaviour and attitudes are very good. Pupils are friendly and no anti-social incidents or bullying were seen during the inspection; they have an enthusiastic attitude to their work.
- Attendance is satisfactory with an attendance rate of 92.5 % during the last three terms. The school conducts registration promptly and parents are contacted immediately to establish the cause of absences. Sometimes, pupils arrive late and disrupt the flow of lessons.
- Across the school, teaching is at least satisfactory or better in around 94 % of the lessons observed, including about 54% which is good and approximately 22 % which is very good. Where teaching is good and very good, teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects, plan lessons in detail and methodically and set clear objectives. They build well on pupils' existing knowledge. Where teaching is satisfactory and sometimes unsatisfactory, planning is weak and scant attention is paid to subject skills. Expectations are not always high enough.
- Assessment, recording and reporting are satisfactory. Although the school has a policy for these aspects and sets targets, implementation across the school is inconsistent. A detailed analysis is made of pupils' attainments in both key stages, but assessment is not effectively used to ensure appropriate differentiation of work for pupils. Generally, annual reports to parents comply with statutory requirements.
- The quality of the curriculum is good; it is broad, balanced and relevant. Most of the schemes of work are good; they provide guidelines for learning and teaching and they are easy to interpret. Short term plans however do not offer sufficient detail with regard to differentiation especially in the mixed age classes. There are good cross-curricular links, but skills development in some subjects is unclear especially in KS2. Good use is made of teachers' expertise. Provision for the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is a prominent feature and very good provision is made for PSE. Awareness of citizenship, diversity, sustainable development and health education is very successfully developed. However, the school does not have a policy for key skills. Homework is regularly provided; the level of work is appropriate but pupils are sometimes put under heavy pressure.
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare is good. Teachers take good care of pupils who in turn feel confident about discussing any worries they have. Procedures for protecting and safeguarding children are good, and arrangements for contacting parents, if children have an accident, are appropriate. The buildings are on a scattered site and the distance between them is a cause for concern. At present, the school has insufficient provision for

pupils with physical disabilities.

- The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good and sometimes very good. There is good co-operation between the SENCO, class teachers and assistants, and parents. IEPs are regularly revised. Parents of children with SEN are very happy with the school's provision for their children and pupils make appropriate progress. The guidance of the SEN support teacher, who also undertakes the role of SENCO, is valuable.
- The school's partnership with parents and the community is good and with schools and other agencies, it is very good. Parents are given a range of information and they receive regular details about the term's events. However, the prospectus and annual report of the GB to parents do not fully comply with statutory requirements. They are generous when the school indicates it has specific needs. There is close co-operation and very good transfer arrangements with the Welsh secondary school which works closely with the cluster of schools that feeds it. Services offered by the LEA are fully utilised.
- Partnership with industry is good. A good effort is made to create links with industrial companies in the area and the school receives sponsorship from local companies and makes visits to places in the community.
- The quality of self-assessment and planning for improvement is good. The school has an effective self-assessment document which evaluates every aspect of school life. Targets are effectively set and county and national data are used to measure the school's performance. However insufficient priority is given to monitoring the quality of learning and teaching.
- Leadership and efficiency are good. The head plays a key role in nurturing the friendly relationships and the sense of belonging which is apparent amongst the staff. A number of subject co-ordinators lead their subjects very actively. The SDP identifies appropriate priorities and the GB supports the head well. Performance management procedures are in place and INSET provision is effective.
- Staffing is good. Teachers have appropriate qualifications and nursery and classroom assistants are well used and, as a result, they make a valuable contribution to the quality of educational provision. Ancillary staff serve the school well.
- Overall accommodation is satisfactory. Although it is adequate for the number of pupils, the site is split and steep, and moving between buildings during inclement weather is uncomfortable. The building's shortcomings are a major obstacle to enabling the school to function as one community. Attractive displays of pupils' and adults' work make a significant contribution to enriching the learning atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils themselves treat their environment with respect.
- Resources for all subjects are good although there are shortcomings in information technology where the equipment is old.
- Progress since the last report has been good and the school offers very good value for money.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Overall, standards across the school are satisfactory or better in all the work seen, including around 67% which is good and approximately 16 % which is very good.

- For the under-fives, standards are at least good, including some 33% which are very good.
- In the nursery classes, children make very good progress in the six areas of learning. In the reception class, they make very good progress in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development and good progress in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development and physical development.
- In KS1, standards are satisfactory or better in all the work observed, including around 65% which is good and 25% which is very good. They are very good in art and information technology and good in Welsh, mathematics, science, design and technology, history, geography, music, physical education and religious education.
- In KS2, standards are satisfactory or better in all the work observed, including around 61% which is good and approximately 6 % which is very good. They are very good in art and good in Welsh, English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information technology, geography and music. They are satisfactory in history, physical education and religious education.
- According to 2003 teacher assessment, the percentage of pupils in KS1 who attained level two and above was slightly higher than the national and county core subject indicators.
- In the 2003 national tests, the percentage of pupils in KS2 who attained level four and above in core subjects was higher than national figures although the teacher assessment was lower. No LEA comparison can be made for Welsh at each level as this is the only Welsh-medium school in Blaenau Gwent but the figures for the other three core subjects are higher than the average for the LEA.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

- Pupils' standards in key skills across the curriculum are very good in listening, good in speaking, reading and writing and satisfactory in numeracy and ICT.
- Appropriate opportunities are provided for under-five children to adapt and improve their developing skills in literacy and numeracy and ICT across the six areas of learning. Each child attains good standards in language and numeracy and satisfactory standards in ICT.
- Pupils listen very well to teachers' presentations and respond appropriately, showing a good command of terminology and phrases to their work across the curriculum. KS1 pupils respond well when speaking in whole-class discussions, group activities and role-play. In KS2, pupils' ability to speak correctly and fluently is developing well in Welsh and English. They acquire an increasing command of vocabulary and terminology

appertaining to their studies in subjects such as science, history, design and technology and art.

- A good many pupils read correctly and meaningfully. They use a variety of reading materials well in their work across the curriculum. They access information from different sources and in KS2 they make good use of the school's library. However, their use of the internet and CD-ROMs to search for information is limited.
- Pupils write in a variety of forms for a number of purposes. They are able to adapt their style to suit different subjects and audiences. Overall, the standard of handwriting and the quality of the presentation of pupils' work varies from satisfactory to good. Although examples of extended writing were seen in some subjects, this aspect is not developed sufficiently across the curriculum. The work is guided by an excessive use of worksheets.
- Pupils have a sound knowledge of number processes and handle numbers appropriately in their mental work and when recording on paper. However, their numeracy skills are not developed with enough consistency through investigative tasks in science, history and geography.
- Examples were seen of pupils using available ICT resources effectively in some classes, but generally pupils are given insufficient opportunities to enable them to refine and develop their skills as they engage in work across the subjects. Initial steps in the use of the interactive whiteboard are laying the foundations for further development.
- Pupils with SEN achieve standards which are generally good according to their age and ability as they undertake work across the curriculum in speaking, listening, numeracy and ICT.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Pupils' moral and social development is very good and their spiritual and cultural development is good.

- An appropriate timetable has been arranged for collective worship on a departmental basis or within individual classes. Care is taken to ensure that all elements of worship are given prominence and pupils have opportunities to take a prominent part in some of them. Time is regularly set aside during assemblies for pupils to meditate. Their response to the school's provision is good.
- The school promotes high moral standards. Pupils have a sound understanding of right and wrong and know the importance of behaving considerately, fairly and in a caring manner. They display respect and courtesy to their teachers, fellow pupils and visitors. The school's behaviour, equal opportunities and PSE policies indicate the importance of adhering to the highest principles and values. Pupils take part in fund raising activities in support of good causes and charities.
- Pupils' social skills are enhanced by means of an extensive range of extra-curricular

activities, visits and competitions in which they participate. They work well together in pairs and in groups and share resources and ideas with their fellow pupils very well. The school's Eco council and the officers take their responsibilities seriously and discuss matters which are of interest to them intelligently. The school has good links with the local community and this again contributes to their personal and social development.

- The Welsh language and culture has a prominent place in the school's life and work and a high percentage of pupils take part in Urdd activities. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is promoted in subjects such as history, art, geography and music, but pupils knowledge of other cultures and traditions and racial awareness is somewhat limited.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good.

- Pupils show natural courtesy and a kind nature and this helps to make the school a happy and orderly community.
- Pupils' enthusiastic attitude towards their lessons promotes the school's efforts to maintain and raise standards.
- In less formal situations and during play, goodwill and friendship are displayed and no anti-social conduct or bullying was observed.
- The school has a comprehensive policy with regard to behaviour; parents expressed satisfaction with standards achieved.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance rates are satisfactory with an average of 92.5% of pupils being present during the past three terms.

- The school undertakes registration promptly and registers are correct and complete with parents' letters recorded and kept.
- Where there is an unexplained absence, the school makes an effort to contact parents during the morning to establish the cause.
- Despite the school's ongoing efforts to improve, punctuality is generally satisfactory but a minority sometimes arrive late and disrupt the flow of lessons.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

- Across the school, the standard of teaching is satisfactory or better in around 94% of the lessons observed, including about some 54% which is good and approximately 22%

which is very good.

- In the under-five classes, teaching is satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed including around 45% which is good and 45% which is very good.
- In KS1, teaching is satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed, including around 64% which is good and about 27% which is very good.
- In KS2 teaching is satisfactory or better in around 88% of lessons observed, including about 55% which is good and 6% which is very good.
- Where teaching is good and at times very good, teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects and areas of learning. They plan lesson activities in detail and in an orderly manner. They set clear objectives for pupils at the start of the lesson and ensure that these are implemented effectively. Through skilful questioning, they build well on what pupils already know and what they can do. They effectively reinforce the content of their teaching in the plenary at the end of the lesson.
- When teaching is good and at times very good, teachers also use a good range of teaching techniques and make use of a variety of resources and teaching aids. The good variety of activities provided creates enthusiasm and interest in the work amongst pupils.
- In each one of the classes, the relationship between teachers and pupils is a warm and happy one and promotes pupils' motivation and learning. Classroom assistants contribute well to the quality of learning and teaching.
- Where the standard of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes unsatisfactory in a minority of lessons in KS2, planning is weak and limited attention is given to ensuring that subject skills receive adequate attention. Lessons objectives are not clearly shared with pupils and insufficient attention is paid to differentiation; as a result, higher ability pupils are not extended and those of lower ability do not have sufficient attention. Expectations are insufficiently high and consequently some pupils underachieve.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is satisfactory.

- The school has a policy for assessment, recording and reporting and sets targets but its implementation across the school is inconsistent.
- Under-fives are appropriately assessed as teachers keep field notes of daily progress and compare them against criteria in the early years LEA baseline.
- There are satisfactory systems for monitoring and evaluating progress and achievement in KS1 and KS2. Standardised tests are administered in Welsh, English and mathematics and these assessments ensure that there is a clear picture of each pupil's achievements. However, progress is not regularly assessed in science and there is no similar structure for assessing the foundation subjects.
- Files have been developed for each pupil recording their work which include examples of

completed work but they are not rigorously evaluated.

- The school complies with statutory requirements for NC assessment. Systems for assessing pupils with SEN are good and the SENCO and class teachers use the information appropriately to set targets in the IEPs.
- Pupils' attainments in core subjects are analysed in detail in both key stages and individual targets are set in each case. However, assessment is not used effectively to ensure that work is appropriately differentiated in order to promote challenges and progress.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and conscientiously. However, standards of marking across the school are inconsistent. Not every teacher includes comments which give further guidance to pupils as to how to improve their work.
- Parents visit the school formally twice a year to discuss their child's progress and there is an opportunity for them to do so informally at any time.
- Generally, annual reports to parents include the necessary information and comply with statutory requirements. They give a rounded picture of a child's development, although there is a tendency to refer to that which has been studied rather than to report on progress. However, they do offer comments which identify steps to be taken for improvement.

5.3 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good; it is broad, balanced and relevant.

- Appropriate policies are in place for the under-fives' areas of learning and NC statutory subjects.
- For the under-fives schemes of work based on the Desirable Outcomes, are detailed and offer a wealth of practical activities which foster curiosity. Teachers of three and four-year-old children plan together effectively and ensure progression and parity of experiences for their pupils.
- The majority of schemes of work for NC subjects and religious education are detailed and provide good guidelines for teaching and learning. Those which use the same format include clear teaching objectives and are easy to interpret. Short term plans are detailed but they do not offer sufficient detail with regard to how to differentiate for pupils of different ages and abilities especially in mixed aged classes.
- Cross-curricular links between a number of the subjects are good. However, as a number of subjects are studied through language, skills' development in them is unclear, especially in KS2.
- Teachers are exchanged in a number of subjects across key stages and this ensures good use of individuals' expertise.
- The provision for the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is a prominent characteristic of the provision and numerous visits to the community and across Wales enrich pupils' awareness of their

heritage and contemporary Welsh life.

- The school's provision for PSE is very good. Prominent attention is given to the dangers of smoking and drugs and guidance is provided as to how personal problems are shared. Pupils develop an awareness of citizenship by means of School Council activities and by taking charge of the fruit shop. The school has been an active and successful Healthy School for several years.
- The school has been innovative as an Eco School and sustainable development is given a prominent place by reducing waste, shredding paper, recycling and saving energy.
- The diversity of European life is presented to pupils through the school's numerous contacts with other schools in Europe; however their awareness of matters relating to race and ethnic minorities is less developed.
- Pupils at the upper end of the school benefit from French lessons as part of a project operated jointly with Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw.
- The school does not have a policy for introducing key skills.
- The school's extra-curricular provision is very good. It includes musical activities and team games which are open to boys and girls. Y6 pupils have residential experiences in Llangrannog.
- The school offers an intensive programme of homework for all pupils. Although parents are happy with the level of work, the frequency of it and associated expectations cause them some concern.
- The curriculum is socially inclusive and every pupil has full access to it.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

Provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is good.

- Care given to pupils by school staff is very good and pupils in turn have plenty of confidence to discuss any worries they may have. In line with their parents' views they state that they enjoy attending this school.
- The school ensures that pupils' school life is positive, healthy and successful; every effort is made to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities. The school uses appropriate procedures to recognise their efforts and the School Council encourages pupils to discuss every aspect of school life with the staff.
- Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken for visits made by pupils including competitions and educational excursions.
- The school has a sex education policy and provision is appropriate. In the main, school staff undertake the teaching of this, which is included as a part of the PSE programme.

- Very good use is made of visits by the nurse, the police, St John's First Aid Brigade, the dentist and many other agencies.
- Pure bottled water is available and pupils are free to drink it during lessons.
- Child protection procedures, which includes a policy, are very good. The head is responsible for these; she and her deputy have been trained to deal with safety problems. Everyone who works in the school has been investigated and approved by the police as suitable persons to work with children.
- A number of staff have been trained in first aid. Emergency boxes are kept in every department of the school including the nursery unit. Injuries suffered by pupils during school hours are recorded and arrangements for contacting parents, if necessary, are appropriate.
- A fire drill is held every term and a note is kept of this. The school's electrical equipment has recently been examined by a specialist.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN

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

- The school has an updated SEN policy, which complies with statutory requirements, and a comprehensive scheme of work.
- The school employs a full-time qualified support teacher who also operates as the SENCO and who has half a day of non-contact time per week to complete administrative work and to hold assessment tests.
- The SENCO directs the work undertaken by the teaching assistants, who give very good support to the two pupils who have SEN statements and others on the register.
- The SENCO gives reports on the latest developments in the field of SEN to the GB and the governor who has responsibility for SEN supports the work well.
- There is good co-operation between class teachers, support assistants and parents in preparing and revising the IEPs; copies of these are provided for every teacher. The SEN list is updated every month and the IEPs are revised twice a year. Detailed notes are kept of pupils with SEN.
- The support class makes a valuable contribution to SEN. Very good assistance in one-to-one sessions is given to Y2 pupils who are thought to be underachieving. Help with spelling is provided for Y4 and Y5 pupils and language and numeracy support is given to some Y6 pupils. Results from regular tests show that they all benefit very much from this assistance.
- Regular evening meetings are arranged specifically for parents of children with SEN and the SENCO is at hand to discuss their development during the usual parents' evenings.

- The school receives effective assistance from the county psychologist and from an advisory teacher who visits the school to observe and support.
- Transfer arrangements between the school and the secondary school for pupils with SEN are good and the SENCO maintains close links with her counterparts in the group of schools that feed Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw and other schools in the LEA. The SEN provision in the school benefits from the close co-operation that exists between the SENCO and ACCAC and the Wales Dyslexia Project.
- Parents of pupils with SEN are highly satisfied with the school's provision for their children, and pupils make appropriate progress.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

Partnership with parents and the community is good and with schools and other agencies it is very good.

- Parents indicated through the pre-inspection questionnaires and meeting their confidence and satisfaction with the standard of education and the values provided for their children in the school.
- The school prepares a very good range and depth of information for parents on their children's education and development; in addition to the handbook and the annual report of the GB and two open evenings, there is consistent liaison through pupils, a termly list of pupils' study topics and a calendar of the term's events. Neither the school's prospectus nor the GB's annual report however fully comply with statutory requirements.
- Parents are willing to assist with extra-curricular activities and are generous when the school has specific needs.
- The PTA holds social functions, which strengthen links between its school, parents and the community, and raises money towards pupils' education.
- The school visits the church termly to attend services and takes part in concerts there and the vicar comes to the school occasionally to talk to pupils.
- Pupils participate in local celebrations and go to an old people's home to sing. They sing carols at Christmas on the town square. The school is represented on local town councils, and the Gwent Theatre Company visits the school occasionally.
- There is close co-operation with Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw, and transfer arrangements are structured. Meetings are held at different levels, both management and curricular, schemes of work are shared and teachers are exchanged between Y6 and Y7. Y6 pupils make several visits to the school and a booklet is produced for them to explain the nature of its transfer arrangements.
- The school works with the Secondary School and the primary school cluster as part of a successful French language project. Links with other primary schools are good in sporting

and cultural activities through the Urdd.

- The school is in partnership with a teacher training university and receives nursery nurse students from other colleges in South Wales.
- Police officers come to the school regularly to talk about the dangers of drugs and about safety in general.
- The school makes full use of relevant services offered by the LEA and receives regular visits from its officers and experts.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

Partnership with industry is good.

- The GB has made a good effort to create partnerships with industrial companies in the area.
- The school operates a scheme whereby pupils order and sell fruit at school, collect the money and deposit it in a local bank.
- Teachers attend EBP courses occasionally at the Glasgoed centre.
- The school has received free computers and a whiteboard from a local company and sponsorship for sports clothing from a nearby shop.
- The youngest pupils visit a nearby farm and the oldest ones visit industrial locations to reinforce curricular work.
- A bakery and a recycling company have paid visits to the school.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

Overall, the quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good.

- The school has a valuable self-evaluation document that includes clear aims and objectives, which expresses a fair judgement on all school procedures; it evaluates quality of provision in every aspect of school life, as well as appraising standards achieved by pupils.
- The process of development planning and setting quantitative and qualitative targets is effective. Appropriate use is made of county and national data in order to compare aspects of the school's performance with other similar schools. Tests, NC tasks and teacher assessments are suitably analysed and targets are set to improve learning and teaching standards.

- Subject leaders conduct an annual audit to collect information about any areas where there are a lack of resources. Their findings are used to inform the school's annual materials purchasing programme. However, up to now, there are no arrangements to enable co-ordinators or the head to monitor the quality of teaching and this is identified in the self-evaluation document as an area in need of development.
- The school has an appropriate SDP which indicates priorities which have been costed. Teachers and the GB are aware of the SDP which is revised at the end of the year. They evaluate the SDP annually and new targets are set to remedy any perceived weaknesses.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

The quality of leadership and efficiency is good.

- The head plays a key role in nurturing the friendly relationships and the sense of belonging which is apparent amongst the staff.
- Responsibilities are appropriately distributed between members of the SMT and they make an effort to meet regularly to ensure contact between different departments at the school.
- The school has a range of policies, which give guidelines with regard to school management procedures.
- Co-ordinators' responsibilities have been appropriately allocated. Recent staff changes have caused some difficulties in relation to subject responsibilities.
- Staff meetings are held regularly; they are helpful in ensuring clear lines of communication and in overcoming difficulties that arise on a scattered site.
- Members of staff have appropriate job descriptions which identify their responsibilities clearly.
- A NQT is inducted effectively by a teacher who teaches the same age-group.
- A mentor, who was appointed recently to establish a partnership with a teacher training university, is fulfilling her responsibilities effectively.
- The GB gives the head good support and is keen to see the school succeed.
- Performance management procedures have been established and responsibilities for their effective implementation have been allocated.
- Although this is the only Welsh-medium school within the LEA, INSET is appropriate as teachers make use of the services of a neighbouring LEA; information is cascaded back to other teachers on a regular basis.
- The school day proceeds efficiently and the full-time administrative officer works closely with the head to ensure very effective daily arrangements.

- The school gives very good value for money.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

Staffing and learning resources are good. Overall, the building is satisfactory.

- There is a sufficient number of teachers to support the number of pupils on roll.
- Ancillary staff, such as the secretary, the caretaker, kitchen staff, cleaners and lunchtime supervisors provide a valuable service to staff and pupils. The school is kept very clean and tidy.
- The contribution made by the teacher who supports SEN and other pupils is valuable and effective.
- The adequacy of buildings and rooms for the number of pupils is good, as the school has two halls, a gymnasium and a separate dining hall. Good use is made of every part of the accommodation. However the buildings are located on a site which is split and steep and moving between them during wet and severe weather is uncomfortable and inconvenient for staff, pupils and visitors. The site is not adapted for pupils with physical disabilities.
- The external and internal condition of some of the buildings is a cause for concern for staff, governors and parents as rain causes dampness on the walls and cracks in walls. These were discussed with the head and GB during the inspection.
- All the staff make active and resourceful efforts to overcome the difficulties associated with the building and the sites, and also to maintain good standards. The building's shortcomings are a major obstacle to enabling the school to function as one community.
- An appropriate discrete play area has been created for nursery children outside their classroom but the play areas for the remainder of the school are restricted. There is no playing field, but a garden has been created between the two main buildings which enhances the environment.
- The playground for the youngest pupils slopes and water flows into the building during wet weather. A considerable effort has been made to enhance the outside environment by painting walls and providing tables and chairs for the pupils. The location of the KS1 building opens directly onto the main street and the escorting of full-time nursery children across a street to the dining hall causes concern. However, teachers and adults take exceptionally good care of the children and the school's safety procedures are effective.
- Attractive displays of pupils' and adults' work make a substantial contribution to enriching the learning environment throughout the school. Pupils also treat their environment with respect.
- By and large the supply of teaching resources is good for all curricular subjects. However, there are shortcomings in some areas, such as information technology where several computers are over five years old.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

The quality of the educational provision for the under-fives taken overall is appropriate to their needs and they make good to very good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

Nursery

Language, literacy and communication skills

Standards are very good.

Good features

- Children who are three listen very well and respond correctly to language patterns regularly used during class activities. They understand the content of a simple repetitive story. They begin to offer correct answers to questions and are able to name colours and parts of the body. They identify with characters in their favourite stories. They discuss books correctly and they begin to follow the plot of a story by looking at pictures and making predictions by looking at the cover. They use a variety of equipment successfully to make marks on paper.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Personal and Social Development

Standards are very good.

Good features

- Children are happy as they arrive at school and leave their parents. They immediately join in classroom activities and interact confidently with adults and their friends. They are able to play on their own and join happily in-group activities. They make sensible choices as they move between activities and concentrate for extended periods. They understand the need for fair play for all and that, at times, everyone has to wait their turn. They look after their property and understand the need to dress appropriately for some activities. They socialise well as they play in the playground outside and are aware of the need to look after classroom toys and to tidy up after their activities.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Mathematical Development

Standards are very good.

Good features

- Children recognise numbers up to five and can count spots on a number of ladybirds and indicate which is the smallest set. They recognise and name two dimensional shapes confidently. They begin to become familiar with mathematical language and the concepts of capacity and volume as they fill and empty apparatus in the sand and water. They understand the role of money as they use it in the shop and become familiar with basic measurement terms such as 'long' and 'short'.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Standards are very good.

Good features

- Children realise that some objects float and some sink in water. They have a good knowledge of a number of small animals; they know their names and understand several of their characteristics and their habitat. They display curiosity as they look at the class' snail farm. They understand what plants need to enable them to grow as they learn about a gardener's work. They know the names of farm animals and when drawing them, they display a good awareness of their appearance. They realise that there are different types of materials and can indicate those made from wood. They are aware of what they can do with the computer.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Physical development

Standards are very good.

Good features

- Children can handle writing equipment, paint and, glue and can stretch and roll clay

effectively; they can mix ingredients competently as they make a cake. They can thread a card to show which colours correspond and can handle jigsaw pieces and board games dexterously. They handle large wooden blocks very well as they build towers. They use equipment appropriately to smooth and collect sand and to pour water. They develop a range of skills very effectively, such as pushing and pulling as they steer bikes and prams and as they climb and slide on large apparatus.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Creative Development

Standards are very good.

Good features

- Pupils role play as scientists realistically when they use magnifying glasses to observe small animals and play the role of a shopkeeper and a customer appropriately in the classroom shop. They paint effectively using a brush and use a number of other techniques, such as blowing paint, printing and gluing wool and paper as they create collages. They create animal models from junk. They use a computer paint program to make effective pictures of a variety of animals and use dough to make models of them. They use chalk effectively to draw pictures on the pavement outside. They sing enthusiastically and understand the need to maintain intonation and correct pronunciation. They understand how to play a number of untuned instruments.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Reception

Language, literacy and communication skills

Standards are good.

Good features

- Children who are four develop a good vocabulary in Welsh as they contribute to class discussions about farmyard animals. They make an effort to give correct answers to questions that are relevant to their experiences and their activities. They display increasing confidence as they express simple opinions when discussing likes and dislikes. They use location vocabulary appropriately and articulate correctly as they recall a number of nursery rhymes and sayings. They discuss books correctly and begin to realise that there are a number of different types of books. They rapidly gain an understanding of how books work and begin to behave as readers. A number of them can read words and simple sentences, use picture clues to decode words and several form letters correctly and under-write familiar sentences in a story effectively.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Personal and Social Development

Standards are very good.

Good features

- Children understand that keeping class rules is important so that they may enjoy their activities. They accept responsibilities such as tidying up at the end of a session and look after their property well. They display a readiness to listen, concentrate and share. They understand the effect of physical exercise on their hearts and they realise that personal hygiene is important. They make sensible decisions as they move around their activities. They conform well during school collective worship sessions where their conduct is praiseworthy. They move sensibly around the school and communicate well with adults and are eager to please and to receive praise. They can discuss their feelings openly as they talk about times in their lives when they are lonely.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Mathematical Development

Standards are good.

Good features

- Children can count forwards and backwards as far as ten and above. They can indicate the smallest number in a sequence and can correspond a digit with its symbol. They discuss numbers confidently as they play games in a group and are aware that there are masculine and feminine forms for some simple numbers in Welsh. They understand the concept of adding figures and achieving correct totals. They can recognise and form simple sequences based on colour or shape. They have a good knowledge of all the two-dimensional shapes and some three dimensional ones and use them to describe and compare objects. They use coins sensibly and understand their role in buying and selling. They understand mathematical vocabulary such as 'longer', 'shorter', 'heavier' and 'lighter' in their correct contexts. They can tell the time on the hour.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Standards are very good.

Good features

- Children understand that the four seasons have different characteristics; they can indicate the differences between them and how they affect the world around them and the clothes they wear. They can indicate the days of the week in correct order and they can name which day it is today and tomorrow. They have a very good knowledge of small animals and they can name and describe ones that live on a farm. They display curiosity as they study different types of feathers. They have a very good knowledge of what plants need to grow. They understand that there are different materials and they indicate those objects that are made of metal and wood. They understand that water becomes ice when it is frozen and they observe the patterns on a snowflake very carefully. They become very aware of smells around them as they compare chocolate and fish and they have a good knowledge of the process of making a cake. They begin to realise that the world is full of different people and that they have varied ways of worshipping. They develop a good knowledge of the Christian life and they can name the festivals that are important to Christianity.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Physical Development

Standards are good.

Good features

- Children develop good skills as they move about the hall in formal physical education lessons. They display a good awareness of space as they make different shapes with their bodies and travel in different ways including dragging and crawling. They send and catch beanbags very competently and balance them on different parts of their bodies. They can dress and undress independently at the beginning and end of a session. They hold writing and painting equipment correctly and they discuss board games well. They can build a fire engine for example using small blocks and they handle large blocks competently. They use items of apparatus in the sand and water tub appropriately as they fill and empty them and manipulate threads and thread them successfully.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Creative Development

Standards are very good.

Good features

- Children use a range of media well as they work with paint, pencil, glue materials, paper and buttons to make a scarecrow puppet. They use a number of techniques effectively such as paint-blowing and printing. They experiment with different blue tones to create attractive plates which imitate Spode china and they use a Picasso picture as a stimulus for painting their own versions of cockerels. They use a computer program effectively to draw realistic pictures of farmyard animals. They sing several number and language songs and traditional nursery rhymes. They display an awareness of rhythm and beat and they make a good attempt to intonate clearly as they try to keep in tune. They display an awareness of dynamics as they sing loudly and quietly. They can handle a number of untuned instruments and name them. They role play sensibly in the class shop and farm.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Welsh

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils at the lower end of KS1 listen well to teachers' presentations and consequently develop a quick understanding of the language. They display confidence as they answer questions and participate in simple discussions.
- Across KS1, pupils have an extensive vocabulary and use a range of language patterns correctly. They can discuss the structure of a piece of poetry and the characteristics of a story and express their opinions clearly about the events and the characters in a story.
- KS1 pupils use role play situations very well and learn standard and technical language in relevant contexts.
- In KS1, the majority of pupils use a number of reading strategies sensibly and display from their expression and intonation, an understanding of the subject. A number can scan in order to find parts of speech successfully. They begin to notice that there are different types of books as they look at factual books and historical stories. They have a good knowledge of book terminology and display confidence in its use.
- Across KS1 pupils understand that there are several types of writing as they describe a visit, write a story, devise a recipe and create portraits and an information booklet.

- In KS1 pupils become aware of the structure of a poem as they discuss couplets and words which rhyme. They compose interesting poems about their first day at school and bonfire night.
- KS1 pupils' knowledge of language is develops well as they use adjectives, past tense and dictionaries to place words in alphabetical order.
- In KS2, pupils speak clearly and naturally. Their vocabulary and constructions expand in line with their ages and abilities. They discuss and speak confidently with their peers in circle time sessions and speak appropriately during whole school collective worship sessions in front of pupils, staff and parents. They can give clear explanations and a number ask questions confidently and voluntarily give extended answers.
- In KS2, pupils' reading skills develop well in line with their age and ability. They indicate the important elements in books and give appropriate reasons for their favourite extracts; they can analyse a subject.
- Pupils at the lower end of KS2 understand the correct format for a number of types of writing as they create invitations, letters and post cards and when they devise the beginnings and endings of stories.
- At the upper end of KS2, pupils create work of a good standard as they write self-portraits, diaries, a drama script, an article displaying empathy with the subject, a story which displays an understanding of narrative and dialogue and a piece expressing an opinion about school uniform. They have a good awareness of the role of paragraphs.
- In Y6, pupils compose impressive poems which portray succinctly the effects of drugs on individuals.
- Pupils across KS2 use dictionaries purposefully to check their work and use thesauri well to extend their vocabulary.
- KS2 pupils develop a good awareness of language conventions and rules of grammar, for example in Y6 they develop a knowledge of what causes a mutation.
- Spelling develops appropriately across both key stages.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings but a number of pupils across the school do not pay sufficient attention to neat handwriting.

English

Standards are good. English is only taught formally in KS2.

Good features

- Pupils across the key stage develop good oral skills as they discuss a variety of literary

subjects, including poetry and when reporting back at the end of lessons.

- The majority of pupils read well and develop skills consistently as they read out loud in group sessions and during regular opportunities for reading quietly on their own. They explain the subject well and predict stories sensibly. They respond well to work based on a class novel as they understand the essential elements for making a story readable; they identify with the work of some of most well known children's authors. They gather information from factual books well.
- At the lower end of the key stage pupils can write a purposeful letter to a friend from another country presenting interesting facts about their lives. They devise interviews with Guy Fawkes, list instructions on how to make sandwiches, draft appropriate advertisements and write succinctly inside speech bubbles.
- At the upper end of the key stage pupils write diaries, pop articles and express opinions on environmental matters. In Y6 they use newspaper articles purposefully as a stimulus for structuring their own articles.
- Spelling and knowledge of language develops well; pupils learn spelling patterns and use pronouns and conjunctions properly.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, but pupils' responses to tasks are sometimes short and closed.

Mathematics

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils of all abilities and in every year respond well to mental mathematics sessions. They remember a wide range of work completed in previous lessons.
- Pupils make good use of a variety of resources including problem solving packs and a range of mathematical games to develop their skills.
- KS1 pupils make good use of computer programs to extend their understanding of mathematics.
- In KS1 pupils use appropriate mathematical vocabulary such as zero and estimate, and expressions such as 'less than' and 'more than'.
- In KS1, pupils, understanding of place value is good. Y1 pupils can count confidently in twos and to 50 in fives correctly. They understand the difference between adding numbers forwards and backwards. They can explain simply the different methods they use to arrive at their answers.

- The majority of Y2 pupils have a good understanding of the relationship between number and methods of calculation. They recognise two dimensional shapes and many can describe the characteristics of three dimensional ones correctly. They can tell the time correctly on an analogue clock and understand which letters are symmetrical. Their understanding and use of measuring is good.
- In Y3 and Y4, pupils use an extended vocabulary including sequences and multiples. They can count forwards and backwards in fives up to a thousand. They understand how to use calculators to check their answers. They can explain the use made of the figure zero to describe temperature. The less able reinforce their number knowledge by using dice games.
- In Y5, pupils can use written column methods to add units, tens, hundreds and thousands up to ten thousand.
- Y6 pupils can use diagrams, graphs and mathematical notation effectively. They have a sound knowledge of how to devise graphs on paper and can use axes with accuracy. They can understand how to use computer programs to create various types of graphs.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings but a minority of the less able KS2 pupils are unfamiliar with the terminology of instructions and little use is made of computer programs to reinforce their mathematical ability.

Science

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- In both key stages, pupils develop good investigative and experimental skills and have a sound understanding of a fair test and can predict results effectively.
- Pupils across the school use scientific vocabulary to describe their observations and handle scientific apparatus safely and in a sensible manner.
- In KS1, pupils have a sound knowledge of the characteristics of living things and the conditions which are essential for plants to grow. They can name the parts of the body and list healthy foods correctly. They are familiar with everyday items of apparatus that use electricity and understand the fundamental principles of an electrical circuit. They can name the features of a good range of materials and describe simply how they change.
- KS1 pupils are aware they have senses and use them to create an awareness of the world around them. They devise simple investigations to develop their understanding of the five senses further. They record results in an organised manner using simple tables, graphs and diagrams.

- In KS2 pupils extend their understanding of the investigative process and can conduct an experiment confidently and report back on their findings.
- Y3 and Y4 pupils have a good knowledge of the role of teeth and the importance of looking after them.
- In Y5 and Y6 pupils display good observation, prediction and questioning skills, and create a test to prove or disprove a hypothesis.
- Across KS2 pupils' understanding of life processes and living things develops well. They understand the need for an adequate and varied diet to maintain health. They know that the heart acts as a pump and what the effects of physical exercise and rest are on the heart rate.
- In line with their age and ability pupils' knowledge across KS2 of forces is sound. They know that magnets exert forces which attract and repel.
- Good quality displays in the classrooms and the corridors in the school effectively reinforce pupils' knowledge of the subject.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings but pupils' ICT skills are not used sufficiently to write observations, use databases and record results.

Design and technology

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1 pupils speak confidently about the designing and making process and display a good understanding of its sequence and appropriate steps they need to take.
- KS1 pupils recognise the properties of various materials and their suitability for different products, such as which fabric would be best for making curtains for Harri Llwyd's house.
- As they devise a model of a face with moving parts, Y1 pupils cut, assemble and join materials well.
- KS1 pupils can evaluate their products effectively and suggest ways of making further improvements. They make good use of construction toys and equipment and simple mechanisms.
- When making a T-shirt, Y3 and Y4 pupils develop their knowledge of the design and making process by choosing suitable materials for the task, creating a plan and devising a suitable pattern to be decorated and then designed.

- Y4 and Y5 pupils create flowerpots from clay, dough and papier maché; they discuss and exchange design ideas on paper and choose the best design. They adapt finishing techniques and note strengths and weaknesses; they test their products for effectiveness and then make the necessary adaptations.
- Y5 and Y6 pupils collect information and consider some features of yoghurt carefully. They respond to the requirements of the brief that has been set, and investigate aspects such as pupils' likes of the different types, including taste and colour. Hygiene is considered before evaluating the process and the yoghurt.
- Evidence from previous work shows that older pupils in KS2 have designed and made Christmas cards with moving parts effectively.
- KS2 pupils work well together and listen fairly to their fellow pupils' contributions. They respond sensibly to ideas offered by others. They can make and justify decisions taken to decorate or present finished products.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, but overall, KS2 pupils' modelling and control skills are undeveloped.

Information Technology

Good features

Standards are very good in KS1 and good in KS2.

- The vast majority of pupils in both key stages handle computers independently with confidence. They can produce, store and save work confidently.
- Pupils at the lower end of KS1 control software to dress a teddy bear and they can load a program from external sources such as CD-ROMs.
- Pupils across KS1 make good use of a word processing program and work effectively on computers as individuals and in pairs to extend their literacy and numeracy skills.
- KS1 pupils can use a specialist program to create databases, draw pictures, produce graphs and give instructions to guide a roamer.
- In KS2 pupils make good use of scanners and printers to produce attractive projects. They use e-mail as a means of communicating with other schools.
- In KS2 pupils make good use of CD-ROMS and the internet to look for information. They use programs for presenting information in a transitional course with the comprehensive school. They are aware of the importance of inputting correct information and data, in order to extract valid and reliable answers.
- A number who attend the computer club develop further skills by making good use of

software to create artwork and to print pictures they have taken with digital cameras. From time to time they submit efforts to Eisteddfod competitions.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings but the development of information technology skills is inhibited by old and ineffective machines.

History

Standards are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages have a good awareness of chronology. They understand the function of time lines, which are evident in classrooms and corridors, and they can discuss them intelligently.
- Y1 and Y2 pupils benefit from listening to visitors who talk about their early life in the school and in Brynmawr. They draw comparisons with the present by making effective use of artefacts and pictures appertaining to the school during the reign of Victoria.
- Through their study of the life of O.M. Edwards, Y2 pupils appreciate how learning and teaching methods have changed and they understand the reason for the use of the Welsh Not, the abacus and the cane. Their awareness of the past is furthered by means of visits to Ysgol Maestir in St Fagans.
- Across KS1 pupils make good use of stories about famous people including some from Wales, such as Caradog, St David, Mari Jones and Lady Llanofor.
- In KS2 direct experiences presented to pupils are extended and expanded. Visits to places of historical interest such as Big Pit, Castell Henllys and Caerleon extend and enrich their understanding and awareness of history.
- KS2 pupils have an increasing knowledge of the Celts. They can describe their clothing and their pottery, their favourite foods and furniture in their houses.
- Y3 and Y4 pupils' understanding of life in Victorian times develops satisfactorily as they study working conditions in the coal mines. They use a range of sources in order to discover more about the lives of people at that time, such as rich and poor people.
- KS2 pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of life in Wales in Roman times. They use a range of sources in order to discover more about people's lives, such as their clothes, lifestyles, food and weather. ICT is used to research and convey historical information.

Shortcomings

- KS2 pupils do not record their knowledge and understanding in a sufficiently extended

form and their comprehension of the causes and consequences of some events and changes that are studied, are not developed sufficiently.

Geography

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Youngest pupils in KS1 understand the features of the school location and can create a plan of it. They know the significance of the school's logo, which reflects the valley's industrial past.
- Following a visit, Y2 pupils know about the features of their local town. They know what types of shops and supermarkets are located there and what services are available to its residents.
- KS1 pupils have an increasing understanding of the relationship between people and their environment. They can discuss what they know using geographical terms capably and they can explain what type of locality they prefer, such as coastline or mountainous land.
- Y2 pupils can compare the jobs of people in their area with the work and tasks of characters on an imaginary island in Scotland. They can describe land use, employment and roles.
- KS1 pupils know about the character and identity of Wales and its interrelation with other people, as well as with a range of countries and continents. They use atlases and a globe-atlas confidently while studying the location of countries and continents.
- Following on from fieldwork in Crickhowell, KS2 pupils understand the characteristics of the river Wye. They collect evidence of its characteristics by gathering information directly and taking digital photographs. They watch a video which follows the river's course and make notes and relevant comments. They know key vocabulary to describe aspects of a river's journey, such as source, waterfall, channel and estuary. They use simple spreadsheets to present the data.
- Y4 pupils are used to identifying important locations on a map of Wales. They can understand grids and follow instructions as to how to travel to different places.
- By means of interviews with acquaintances and friends, Y4 pupils have experience of collecting information about customs in their locality and how they have changed with the passage of time.
- KS2 pupils understand the work of recycling materials as part of a scheme and know about the nearby local landfill sites.
- Y5 and Y6 pupils discuss their comparative study of Wales and St Lucia well. They know that the aspirations of western countries and fruits such as bananas, have affected the rain forest and the island's marsh forests and polluted the sea. They can justify their arguments and points of view by making sensible use of their resources.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings but there is insufficient study and discussion of the characteristics of the weather and the influence of temperature on produce, and little use is made of equipment to measure the temperature of the seasons.

Art

Standards are very good in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils develop effective painting and drawing skills as they use paint, pencil and a variety of other media. They understand that there is a variety of media they can use.
- KS1 pupils mix colours and notice the importance of primary colours. They can indicate colours which convey warmth and cold.
- KS1 pupils' sketching skills develop very well, as they create the effect of fur on a teddy and observe texture in fruits.
- KS1 pupils work very effectively in textiles, as they create work using Archimoldo's pictures of fruits and vegetables as a stimulus.
- KS2 pupils' art language develops very well as they look at and use the work of Peter Pendergast and Sir Kyffin Williams as stimuli. They familiarise themselves with the elements of colour, line, tone, shape and texture, as they experiment with different shades of green to create very good landscapes.
- After looking at pictures by Kadinsky and Giardelli, KS1 pupils understand how to use shapes to create images for example when they create a very good series of concentric circles.
- In their work on ceramics KS1 pupils create very attractive tiles, which show a good awareness of pattern, texture and colour.
- In Y3 and Y4 pupils develop a good understanding of repetitive and random patterns as they create and print an exploding pattern.
- In Y3 and Y4 pupils look at paintings by Van Gogh, Monet, Katsishka and Hokusai as stimuli to create attractive pictures with shading; they create billowy, still, quiet and calm effects on sea spray.
- Pupils across KS2 look at the work of Paul Klee and Van Gogh. According to their age and ability, they draw ideas from them before creating effective portraits of their friends.

They appreciate the importance of studying size and location of facial details and how to create appropriate expression and tone.

- At the upper end of the school, pupils develop imaginative ideas as they create African masks of a very high standard, giving good attention to colour and tone. They also develop an awareness of the diversity of art when they take part in a workshop to create relevant animal shapes and pictures.
- In Y6, pupils develop a good understanding of pattern by printing them in two colours before creating ones in the style of William Morris.
- The respect and prominence given to pupils' art work in exhibitions around the school fosters positive attitudes and enthusiasm and helps to develop very good skills.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Music

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- The school has a high profile in music in the community and pupils regularly practise their skills in local events and national competitions.
- Across the school listening skills in music develop continually, as pupils work and play to the accompaniment of a variety of music; they become aware of the effect of music on their feelings. They use a computer music program regularly.
- KS1 pupils sing enthusiastically. They can sing a number of traditional lullabies, counting songs and tunes which reinforce language patterns. They understand the importance of maintaining intonation using dynamics to convey meaning. They enjoy creating movements to interpret the melodies.
- KS1 pupils can identify a number of different untuned instruments and they can describe the best way of playing a number of them. They begin to understand how to play a musical pattern whilst reciting a poem and they create a performance of the poem in groups. They perform to the remainder of the class and discuss how the presentation can be improved.
- Y2 pupils create an effective graphic score and interpret the folk song 'Si Hei Lwli Mabi'; they also compose a very effective accompaniment to the story of 'The Giant of Gilfach Fargoed'.
- KS1 pupils work effectively to create a musical picture of a poem about fish.

- In Y3, pupils can sing 'Hwp awen Cadi ha' in tune showing increasing control of breathing, dynamics, sentence construction, pitch and duration. They can play a range of instruments effectively as a group and use appropriate playing techniques. They discuss and evaluate the work intelligently. They are able to hold their part well as they split into groups to sing a round.
- In Y3 pupils work well as they compose a drone on a pentatonic scale. They play ostinato and pentatonic melodies in an effective call and reply mode on instruments using appropriate techniques; they establish a good awareness of beat and rhythm.
- At the upper end of the school pupils develop an awareness of the diversity of music as they interpret the African melody Banua; they use the call and reply mode as they sing and create instrumental accompaniment. Y6 pupils become aware of the importance of beat and musical pattern when they create effective rap compositions.
- Across the key stage, a number of pupils' musical skills develop well in the Choir Club and when they receive harp, cello, trumpet, violin and clarinet lessons.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

Physical education

Standards are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2.

Good features.

- In both key stages, pupils warm up and cool down in an appropriate manner. They respond rapidly and effectively to instructions and work well as individuals and in groups.
- Across the school, pupils' awareness of space is good and their control over their movements is satisfactory. They begin to be aware of the effect of exercise on their bodies and the way it leads to an increase in the heart rate.
- Pupils in Y1 investigate different ways of improving and developing their physical skills. Their confidence and control develops well, as they practise different ways of throwing and catching a ball.
- Y2 pupils warm up appropriately to practise ball-striking skills. They work well in groups to develop and refine a variety of ways of sending and travelling with a ball.
- Across KS1 pupils evaluate their own and others' performances and they adapt their movements in line with the observations made.
- KS2 pupils respond in a disciplined manner to their teacher's instructions and control their bodies by extending them and 'growing' slowly.
- Y4 and Y5 pupils learn the correct technique for throwing, catching, bowling and batting.

They display satisfactory evaluation and improvement skills through small team activities. They work well together and are aware of the result of their activities on others.

- Y5 and Y6 pupils respond well to challenging instructions. They display satisfactory control as they handle a ball whilst moving. They work well in groups, in order to develop and practise a variety of ways of sending and travelling with a ball using a racket.
- KS2 pupils are developing skills in regular swimming lessons and the school states that the vast majority attain the NC standard expected of eleven-year-olds.
- KS2 pupils' skills are developed further when they take part in inter-school sports competitions and extra-curricular activities in football, rugby, swimming and netball.

Shortcomings

- In KS2, pupils do not have sufficient control over their techniques and movements when they undertake activities, and their skills when they evaluate their own and others' work, are not developed adequately.

Religious education

Standards are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2.

Good features

- As part of their discussion about people who help others, Y1 pupils can explain how different people support them in the school community.
- Pupils in KS1 appreciate the role of adults within the school community. They know about the work of Christian leaders such as William Booth, and his contribution to helping the poor and needy.
- Pupils in KS1 learn about the work of the Salvation Army from a visitor to the school. They understand why people contribute to charitable institutions such as Oxfam.
- In KS1 pupils make contact with faith communities in their locality by visiting local churches.
- In Y3, pupils know about different versions of the Bible. They can recall key facts about the story of the Creation in the Old Testament. They can relate accurately the story of Moses' birth and the importance of the Ten Commandments. They can explain that neither the Old nor the New Testament is the work of one author. They are familiar with stories about the life of Jesus and the content of some of the less familiar parables.
- Y4 pupils know facts about the life and work of William Morgan as the translator of the Bible into Welsh. They know that he was a learned man and understand that he made a very substantial contribution to keeping the language alive. They visit a local church and create Mothers' Day greeting cards and hats to celebrate Easter.

- Y5 and Y6 pupils develop search skills for information in a variety of media including the internet. They know the importance of Guru Granth Sahib to the Sikhs; they are familiar with their distinctive clothing and their symbolism. They can explain the significance of the five Ks and the way they demonstrate respect for the sacred book.
- The scheme of work is based on the LEA's agreed syllabus.

Shortcomings

- In KS2 insufficient opportunities are given to pupils to discuss stories and to express their opinions and their knowledge of the worship and prayer rituals of other religions is, at times, uncertain.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

Overall, there has been good progress in the six key issues noted in the last report.

- 1. maintain the good standards achieved in a substantial number of subjects and remedy the shortcomings in subjects where standards are satisfactory at present;**
 - During the present inspection, it was judged in KS1 that standards have been maintained in Welsh, mathematics, design and technology, history, geography and music. They have improved in science, information technology, art, physical education and religious education.
 - In KS2, standards have been successfully maintained in Welsh, mathematics, geography, information technology, music, physical education and religious education. They have been raised in English, science, design and technology and art. Although history was good in the last report, it was judged that standards on this occasion were satisfactory.
- 2. ensure that KS2 pupils have adequate opportunities to develop fully their understanding and skills in every aspect of NC programmes of study, art, physical education and religious education;**
 - During the inspection, very good development of pupils' design and technology skills was seen; development of physical education and religious education skills was less obvious.
- 3. revise the way provision is arranged for pupils with SEN in order to improve pupils progress in their learning;**
 - Since the last inspection a support class for pupils with SEN has been established and special support has been given to pupils with behaviour problems. A timetable has been compiled to make provision for less able pupils and procedures have been established in accordance with the CoP 2002. In the inspection this time it was judged that the provision is good and that elements are very good.

4. **provide more detailed information in the annual reports to parents about the performance of pupils in the foundation subjects;**
 - Meetings have been held to look at good practice when writing reports and to determine an appropriate format in order to comply with statutory requirements. It was judged on this occasion that the reports now comply with statutory requirements.
5. **take the necessary steps to improve the exterior environment of the school.**
 - The school responded to this matter by getting rid of unsightly old buildings on the school's land. The School Council has been collecting ideas with regard to improving the visual aspects of the environment, and seats and picnic chairs have been placed around the campus. It was judged during the current inspection that the school has done what it can to transform the building but it is showing signs of deterioration in several places.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school needs to:

1. raise standards in history, physical education and religious education in KS2 and respond to the shortcomings indicated in the other subjects;
2. develop procedures for monitoring the quality of learning and teaching;
3. develop further the school's assessment procedures;
4. develop a key skills policy and ensure consistency of provision;
5. ensure that the school's prospectus and the annual report of the GB to parents comply with statutory requirements;

Key Issue 2 is already a priority in the school's self-evaluation document.

The inspectors would like to thank the head, staff, pupils, parents and governors of the school for their welcome and co-operation during the inspection.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Ysgol Gymraeg Brynmawr
School Type	Community
Age-Range of Pupils	3-11
Address of School	King St Brynmawr Blaenau Gwent
Post Code	NP23 4RG
Telephone Number	01495 310735

Headteacher	Mrs R. Williams
Date of Appointment	September 1999
Chairman of Governors	Mr R. Withey
Registered Inspector	Mrs E. Betts
Dates of Inspection	May 17-20 2004

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of Pupils in Each Year Group</i>									
Year Group	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of Pupils	42	57	35	45	31	30	35	35	310

<i>Number of Teachers</i>			
	Full time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	12	0	12.0

<i>Staffing Information</i>	
Pupil:teacher ratio, excluding nursery and special classes	26
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	23
Class sizes excluding nursery and special classes	27
Teacher:class ratio	1:0

<i>Percentage Attendance for Three Complete Terms Prior to the Inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School
Term 1	89%	93%	94%	92.5%
Term 2	93%	92%	94%	93%
Term 3	89%	91%	94%	91.3%

Number of Pupils Excluded during Twelve Months prior to Inspection	0
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C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2003			Number of Pupils in Y2: 32						
Percentage of Pupils at Each Level									
			D	A	W	1	2	3	4
WELSH	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	13	63	25	0
CY: Oral	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	9	66	25	0
CY: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	6	34	50	9	0
CY: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	9	41	50	0	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	3	13	72	13	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	6	81	13	0

Percentage of Pupils Attaining at least Level 2 in Mathematics, Science and English (or Welsh as a First Language) according to Teacher Assessment			
In the school:	87%	In Wales:	79%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under sections 364 and 365 of the Education Act or who, in the case of Tasks/Tests, were absent.
- A Pupils who have failed to register a level on account of absence
- W Pupils who are "working towards" level 1, but have not yet achieved the necessary standards for level 1.

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2003			Number of Pupils in Y6: 48										
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	52	19	0
		National	0	0	3	0	0	1	6	16	45	31	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	45	39	0
		National	0	2	2	1	0	0	4	12	38	40	0
Welsh	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	47	14	0
		National	1	0	2	0	0	1	4	18	51	25	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	47	22	0
		National	1	2	0	2	0	0	2	15	50	28	0
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	39	20	0
		National	0	0	3	0	0	1	4	19	46	30	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	60	20	0
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	4	18	42	33	0
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	64	14	0
		National	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	13	49	35	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	56	33	0
		National	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	9	48	39	0

Percentage of Pupils Attaining at least Level 4 in Mathematics, Science and either Welsh (First Language) or English			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	60%	In the school:	79.2%
In Wales:	70%	In Wales:	71%

- D pupils who have been disapplied under sections 364 and 365 of the 1996 Education Act.
A pupils who have failed to register a level on account of absence
N pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
B not registered for the test as they are working outside the test levels
W pupils who are "working towards" level 1, but who have not yet achieved the necessary standards for level 1.
n tests that do not include these levels
n/a not applicable

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

- The school was inspected over a period of four days by a team of four inspectors. The registered inspector was in the school for four days, two other professional inspectors for three days and the lay inspector for two days.
- Detailed attention was paid to school documentation before the inspection.
- Sixty seven lessons or parts of lessons were inspected.
- Discussions were held with pupils in the classes and during break times.
- Formal interviews were held with members of staff who had curricular and management responsibilities.
- Detailed attention was paid to pupils' work by looking at a sample of books in every subject across both key stages and the under-fives' classes.
- Twenty parents were present in the pre-inspection meeting. 19 questionnaires were returned and 94.21% of the replies were positive.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

NAME	ASPECTS	SUBJECTS
Mrs E Betts	1. The School and its priorities 2. Main Findings 5.3 Curriculum 6.2 Leadership and efficiency 8.1 Progress since the last report 8.2 Key Issues for action	Early Years Welsh English Art Music
Mr G Morris	4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes 4.3 Attendance 5.6 Partnership with parents and the community, schools and other organisations 5.7 Partnership with Industry	
Mr D Treharne	6.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning 5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' Welfare 5.5 Provision for pupils with SEN 6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement	Mathematics Information technology Geography Religious education
Mr O Phillips	3.2 Key skills 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 5.1 Quality of teaching 5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting 6.3 Staffing, accommodation and resources	Science Design and technology History Physical Education