

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

**CEFN FFOREST PRIMARY SCHOOL
CEFN FFOREST AVENUE
CEFN FFOREST
NR BLACKWOOD
NP12 3JX**

SCHOOL NUMBER: 676 / 2377

DATE OF INSPECTION: 24 - 28 JUNE 2002

BY

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REGISTERED INSPECTOR: W017669

DATE: 22ND JULY 2002

UNDER ESTYN CONTRACT NUMBER: C/T/193/01P

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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)
AT	-	Attainment Target
CoP	-	Code of Practice
CD-ROM	-	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
LSA	-	Learning Support Assistant
MLD	-	Moderate Learning Difficulties
NAFW	-	National Assembly for Wales
NC	-	National Curriculum
PSHE	-	Personal, Social and Health Education
SDP	-	School Development Plan
SEN	-	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	-	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SMT	-	Senior Management Team
Y	-	Year

CONTENTS

1. CONTEXT.....	1
THE SCHOOL AND ITS PRIORITIES.....	1
2. MAIN FINDINGS.....	1
THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REPORT.....	1
3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS.....	5
3.1 STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING.....	5
3.2 STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN KEY SKILLS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM.....	6
4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL.....	6
4.1 PUPILS' SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.....	6
4.2 BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES.....	7
4.3 ATTENDANCE.....	8
5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION.....	9
5.1 TEACHING.....	9
5.2 ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING.....	9
5.3 CURRICULUM.....	11
5.4 SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND PUPILS' WELFARE.....	12
5.5 PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SEN.....	13
5.6 PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND COMMUNITY, SCHOOLS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS.....	15
5.7 PARTNERSHIP WITH INDUSTRY.....	15
6. MANAGEMENT.....	16
6.1 QUALITY OF SELF-EVALUATION AND PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT.....	16
6.2 LEADERSHIP AND EFFICIENCY.....	17
6.3 STAFFING, ACCOMMODATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES.....	18
7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING.....	19
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS.....	19
PROVISION FOR THE UNDER-FIVES.....	19
ENGLISH.....	21
MATHEMATICS.....	22
SCIENCE.....	23
WELSH SECOND LANGUAGE.....	24
DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY.....	25
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.....	26
HISTORY.....	27
GEOGRAPHY.....	28
ART.....	29
MUSIC.....	30
PHYSICAL EDUCATION.....	31
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.....	31
8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT.....	32
8.1 PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION.....	32
8.2 KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION.....	34
APPENDIX.....	35
A. BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	35
B. SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS.....	35
C. RESULTS OF NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENTS AND PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS.....	36
D. THE EVIDENCE BASE OF THE INSPECTION.....	37
E. COMPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INSPECTION TEAM.....	38

PART 2: THE INSPECTION SCHEDULE

1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

The school is situated in the middle of a large housing estate in the small village of Cefn Fforest near Blackwood. It was formed in September 2000 by the amalgamation of Cefn Fforest Infant and Nursery School with Cefn Fforest Junior School. It comprises the original school building, which dates from the early 1900s, and two separate buildings which house the nursery, infants and Y3/4 classes. There are 486 pupils on roll aged from three to 11, the majority of whom come from Cefn Fforest. Approximately 17% of pupils are on the SEN register, 31 of whom are formally statemented; three of these are in mainstream classes and 28 with MLD are placed in special classes funded by the LEA. The pupil intake covers the full range of ability with the majority coming from neither advantaged nor disadvantaged backgrounds. Almost all pupils in mainstream classes live in the immediate locality. Those attending the special classes are from a wider catchment area, including Fleur de Lys, Risca, Hengoed and Bargoed. Approximately 24% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The majority have participated in pre-school education in local playgroups. 99.8% of pupils come from English speaking homes and 0.2% are from ethnic minority groups, where English is spoken as a second language. No pupils are natural Welsh speakers.

The head fulfilled the role of acting head of the amalgamated school in 2000 and since this academic year has become the head on a full-time basis. Amalgamation clearly brought many difficult resourcing problems both in human and physical terms.

The school has an appropriate range of broad aims and looks to 'make our school a place where children and adults live and learn together with respect, generosity, fun and high expectations.' The GB has agreed a mission statement which is 'Giving our best for ourselves, for each other, for our future.' It has also approved an SDP which highlights the school's short term priorities. These include -

- improving standards in SATs, assessment, recording and reporting, mathematics, reading, ICT and key skills;
- improving KS2/KS3 transition
- improving school self-evaluation.
- improving the general fabric of the junior school buildings.

The school was last inspected separately as an Infant and Nursery school in May 1996 and as a Junior School in November 1997.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

This is a new school amalgamated from two schools in 2000. It is an improving school which has made significant progress in important areas since the last inspection cycle. There are many good aspects to its work and pupils make good progress. It has managed to sustain, and

in many cases improve on, standards since the last inspections of the separate schools, especially during a time when amalgamation brought significant unrest for its staff.

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

Language, literacy and communication skills	Very good
Personal and social development	Very good
Mathematical development	Very good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Very good
Creative development	Very good
Physical development	Very good

- Standards in reception classes are as follows:

Language, literacy and communication skills	Good
Personal and social development	Good
Mathematical development	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Good
Creative development	Good
Physical development	Good

- Standards of achievement overall in the school are around 92% satisfactory or better in the work seen, of which about 43% is good and 13% very good.
- Standards in the different subjects are as follows:

	KS1	KS2
English:		
Speaking	Good	Good
Listening	Good	Good
Reading	Good	Good
Writing	Good	Good
Mathematics	Very Good	Good
Science	Good	Good
Welsh second language	Good	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Good	Good
Information technology	Good	Good
History	Good	Good
Geography	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Art	Good	Good
Music	Good	Satisfactory
Physical education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education	Good	Good

- In KS1 and KS2 the percentage of pupils achieving level four or above in the core subjects is close to the LEA and national averages. Overall, results in the core subjects compare well with those of similar schools.
- Pupils' achievement and progress in key skills across the curriculum are good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The values of caring and mutual respect encouraged by the school are clearly evident. Pupils are provided with structured opportunities to understand religious faiths and to gain an awareness of differing beliefs and customs. Overall, their personal and social skills are well developed and their relationships with peers and adults are good.
- The standard of behaviour is good and attitudes to learning for the significant majority of pupils are good. Most pupils are interested in their work and concentrate well in class; they are courteous and responsible in their actions. The school is a caring and mutually supportive community; however, opportunities to demonstrate initiative are limited.
- Standards of attendance are satisfactory overall. Nearly all pupils arrive punctually in school, allowing lessons to start promptly.
- The quality of teaching overall in the lessons observed is around 87% satisfactory or better, of which about 54% is good and 21% is very good.
- Teachers' preparation for their lessons is generally of good quality. However, there is little detailed medium term curriculum planning in year groups. All teachers demonstrate a sound knowledge and delivery of the statutory curriculum although some show weaknesses in certain foundation subjects. Generally, they display an enthusiasm for their work, know their pupils well and ensure that work is matched to individual abilities.
- Classroom assistants, nursery nurses, parent helpers and students all make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and welfare; they undertake their responsibilities effectively and with great care.
- There is potential for the further development of specialist teaching of certain subjects and for more INSET for teachers and classroom assistants led by curriculum co-ordinators.
- All classes are generally well managed and lessons are orderly; however, very few lessons begin with clearly stated aims and objectives and end with an evaluation of progress. There is little variety in teaching strategies; much of the work is teacher directed and there are limited opportunities for pupils to work independently and at their own pace. Where lessons are unsatisfactory they invariably lack pace, clear direction and empathy with the specific learning needs of all pupils.
- The provision for differentiation is satisfactory, but invariably by learning outcome. Work is not always well matched to individual abilities and more able pupils are not regularly challenged to realise their full potential. Those requiring individual attention in numeracy and literacy, however, gain good support.
- Arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting are satisfactory overall. The school effectively utilises a combination of statutory tests, assessment data and commercial

materials to benchmark pupils' progress. Marking and written feedback, however, is of variable quality. Teachers are accurate in their assessment of pupils' performance, but the knowledge is not always used effectively to support pupils' progress or the promotion of higher standards and expectations for all.

- Initiatives by the school to provide parents with regular information about their child's progress are welcomed but these are limited in that the context of this progress is rarely explained in broad curricular terms. Annual written reports are of a satisfactory quality.
- The school offers pupils a broad and balanced curriculum, covering all aspects of the NC. It is supported by a very wide range of quality extra-curricular activities mainly linked to sport, outdoor education, key skills development and the creative arts. Policy documents and schemes of work are in place for all subjects of the NC and some in the core subjects are of the highest quality. A clear homework policy exists, although this is not enforced effectively across both key stages.
- There is a real caring ethos in the school. Provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is good overall; however, the split site arrangements and the open playgrounds limit the effectiveness of security arrangements for pupils and staff.
- Pupils with SEN make steady progress and the quality of provision for them is satisfactory.
- The school's partnership with parents, community, schools, and other institutions is good. Efforts are made to communicate regularly with parents; however, only a small number are linked to the Parents' Association and only a few make a valuable contribution to the daily life of the school.
- Partnership with industry is satisfactory; however, whilst links are beginning to impact positively on the curriculum and cultural opportunities to enhance pupils' learning experiences, they do not yet have a significant impact on teaching development or management procedures.
- Resources and facilities are good overall, although it is notable that the Y3/Y4 classrooms are limited in size and scope. Additionally, there is no school field for competitive games, although a large green space exists on the infants site and the junior playground is used for some competitive sports. A level grassed area in front of the Y3/Y4 classroom block is also used.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for school improvement is unsatisfactory. The school is relatively new and as yet has not built strong procedures and processes to generate an effective culture for self-improvement. The SDP is a satisfactory document for short term development, but medium to long term planning is not evident.
- The leadership of the school provided by the head is sound and her total commitment ensures the school is developing well. She exercises a good overview of day to day school management and has begun to outline short term strategic priorities.
- The SMT to support the head is very small for a school of this size and is limited in its effectiveness. Its role in promoting critical self evaluation of teaching and standards of

learning is not clear. Additionally, there is little evidence of whole school planning by the SMT and in KS2 where a sense of mutual trust and respect between staff, the SMT and the head is not clearly evident. On occasions, staff in KS2 do not always set realistic and challenging goals for school improvement, especially for the more able pupils and lack an ownership of the SDP as a working document.

- Daily routines for the new school are not deeply embedded and separate timetables still exist for both infants and junior schools. The school, therefore, does not yet function as a single educational community.
- Curriculum co-ordination is of variable quality. Planning is generally very sound and in some subjects the design of schemes of work and subject policies are exemplary. However, little or no structured lesson observation occurs and very few opportunities exist for the delivery of specialist teaching and for the direct sharing of best practice between staff.
- The GB is kept informed by the head and is led effectively by its chairperson. Overall, the school benefits from loyal support from the GB, but they have yet to become directly involved in the monitoring and raising of educational standards.
- As a new school it is difficult to monitor progress since the last inspection. However, from an evaluation of the previous inspection reports of both schools there has been clear evidence of real progress in a number of major areas. However, some of the key issues from the last inspection remain to be addressed.
- Overall, the budget is well managed and expenditure is carefully monitored. The school gives good value for money.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Standards of achievement overall in the school are around 92% satisfactory or better in the work seen, of which about 43% is good and 13% very good.

- Standards in the early years and consistently very good in the nursery classes and good in the reception classes across the six areas of learning.
- Standards in English are good overall in the school; the majority of pupils display good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- Standards in mathematics are very good in KS1 and good in KS2; pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding across the ATs of the NC.
- Standards in science are good overall. Pupils in both key stages experience a wide range of experimental and investigative work; however, there is little opportunity for independent study.
- Standards in Welsh second language are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2; the use of incidental Welsh is limited in KS2 and pupils' lack confidence in their use of the language.

- Standards in history, design and technology, information technology, art and religious education are good across both key stages; in music they are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2, whilst in geography and physical education they are satisfactory across both key stages.
- The school's results in NC tests in all three core subjects of the NC in KS2 are similar to local and national norms. Results have improved slightly since the last inspection.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

In key skills across the curriculum standards in, speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and ICT are all good across both key stages.

- Pupils develop good skills in listening and speaking; they listen very attentively to teachers and the more able effectively share ideas and offer critical opinions on various topics.
- A very good range of quality literature and multi-media resources, plus structured use of class reading times, means reading skills are developed effectively. Pupils often read for pleasure and enjoyment. As a result of this confidence in reading, research skills in a variety of subjects are beginning to be developed well. from a variety of media.
- Pupils' writing for a variety of purposes is good; they make sound progress in adapting their writing styles to suit different texts and audiences in most subjects.
- Pupils' abilities in using ICT across the curriculum develop well. Computers and other electronic equipment are used on a regular basis and much work has been done since the last inspection to improve standards in this area. Pupils use CD-ROMs and work on the school intranet and the worldwide web with increasing confidence. They use ICT to supplement their work in a number of ways in a growing range of subjects and become familiar with using the internet to effectively research class topics.
- A policy for key skills is in place and is embedded in a very good curriculum policy document.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

- Collective worship takes place on a regular basis via both whole school assemblies and class prayers. All pupils attend and participate fully; they sing enthusiastically and listen with interest. The use of incidental Welsh is a particularly strong feature in the early years and KS1. Visiting clergy make regular visits and very effectively highlight key spiritual and cultural messages that staff reinforce strongly.

- Relationships are very good and the school values all its pupils and their talents. Teachers and other members of staff provide very good role models.
- Pupils' personal and social skills are highly developed. They express their views with honesty and are always willing to listen and consider the views of others. This social aspect of their behaviour is a strong feature of the school.
- Opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative and take on responsibilities are limited. However, where they exist in class and extra-curricular situations pupils perform their roles with the utmost diligence. The prefect system works very effectively and senior pupils efficiently discharge their general lunchtime duties where they manage younger pupils with care.
- Many opportunities inside and outside the formal curriculum exist for pupils to extend their cultural understanding, notably via the 'Valley' songwriters projects, Caerphilly 'kids opera', singing at the Millennium school proms and a Y6 rock and roll concert. Over 40 pupils take instrumental music tuition and a vibrant school choir with musical accompaniment regularly performs at community events.
- The cwricwlwm Cymreig is addressed through various subjects and the visual profile of Welsh is well developed. Multicultural education is also developed throughout the statutory curriculum and through school routines generally, and a formal policy for multicultural education exists in draft format. Pupils have a growing awareness of racial issues

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Behaviour and attitudes are good throughout the school.

- In class the majority of pupils behave well. They settle down to work quickly, concentrate for appropriate lengths of time and are keen to learn. Where the pace of lessons is slow, a few pupils are restless and inattentive; occasionally this behaviour goes unchecked.
- The school has a positive policy which clearly defines strategies for rewarding good behaviour. Sanctions are applied when pupils cross the boundary of acceptable behaviour. When there are problems, the school works with parents and an agreed programme of targeting a specific behaviour is drawn up. These systems work well in improving behaviour and attitudes and in building the self-esteem of pupils.
- Behaviour in the playgrounds is good. Pupils play well together and older ones in particular gain a great deal of pleasure from using the playground games provided by the school.
- Behaviour in the hall at lunchtime in KS1 is very good. Routines are well established and pupils are looked after well by the supervisors, who are supportive and caring. In KS2, however, pupils are often boisterous and noise levels are unacceptably high.

- The school takes the approach of “*Bullying is not tolerated at this school*”. The policy contains good advice for teachers, pupils and parents. Pupils feel secure and are able to tell an adult, should they feel there is a problem.
- Pupils are polite and staff-pupil relationships are good and sometimes very good.
- Parents are satisfied with the standards of behaviour and discipline set and achieved by the school.
- There have been two fixed period exclusions during the last year.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance levels are satisfactory.

- Attendance levels of above 90% in both key stages were recorded in the three terms prior to the inspection. Unauthorised absences for the same period were low.
- Attendance for KS2 in the summer term, however, dipped to below 90%, mainly due to parents taking their children on holiday during term time. Most, though, seek permission and do not withdraw their children for more than the 10 days permitted. However, learning missed during this time often cannot be made up before the start of the next academic year.
- Attendance in the nursery and reception was again around 90%. Much work is done by the nursery staff to encourage parents to bring their young children to school regularly, in order to establish good habits from the start of a child's school career.
- Certificates are given for full attendance at the end of each term but the school has no other system of rewards for improving attendance, either by class or for individual pupils.
- The school has not set a target for improving attendance and records show that levels have remained constant around 90% over the last few years. Statistics at present are not analysed or collated centrally, since each key stage maintains its own files; a computerised system is not used.
- The school has an appropriate attendance policy and parents are informed of their duties and responsibilities. Information, however, is not formally given about what constitutes an authorised or unauthorised absence.
- The school works with the EWO, but it is not always possible to get an immediate response, because of the pressures on the service in the area.
- Registers are taken in the morning and afternoon. Uniform codings are used and all the registers are totalled to date. There is, however, some unacceptable looseness in the system; for example, during the inspection, afternoon registration did not always take place. The school, therefore, does not fully comply with the NAFW guidelines for the taking and reporting of attendance.
- Most pupils arrive at school on time and latecomers are noted in the registers.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in most of the lessons observed. In around 54% of the lessons it is at least good and in about 21% it is very good. However, there is some that is of variable quality, especially in KS2.

- Teachers generally prepare lessons well and ensure that appropriate learning materials and resources are ready and available for pupils. Learning objectives, however, are not always clearly outlined at the beginning of lessons.
- Lessons are not always well paced and, therefore, do not promote the development of a positive learning environment. In the best practice, however, notably in Y3/Y4/Y6, pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding progressively and at a good pace.
- A very limited variety of teaching strategies are used, although there are examples of consistently good practice across the school. Much of the work is teacher directed and there are limited opportunities for pupils to work independently and to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Questioning techniques and group learning exercises are sometimes successfully used in KS1 and KS2. However, problem solving, collaborative group work and individual research are only a notable feature of the learning environment in KS1, some Y3/Y4 classes and a few Y5/Y6 classes.
- Teachers know pupils well and relationships are very positive. However, they do not always provide ready praise and encouragement. Additionally, the quality of diagnostic feedback to pupils is of variable quality. Best practice demonstrates teachers' demands for high expectations of all pupils, the need for accurate and neat written work and the importance of pupils developing critical thinking and creativity.
- Teachers have a sound knowledge of the statutory curriculum, but their subject knowledge in some foundation subjects can vary. In the best practice, teachers' knowledge and exposition are outstanding.
- Lessons generally cater appropriately for the learning of all pupils of differing abilities and interests and in the best practice ensure the full participation of all.
- Classroom assistants and nursery nurses provide very valuable assistance to promote pupils' learning, especially in the MLD classes. However, guidance from class teachers to aid these assistants and parent volunteers is of variable quality and lacks uniformity.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment, recording and reporting are satisfactory overall.

- Within the context of the recent amalgamation of nursery, infant and junior schools, the new school has taken steps to build on the good practice identified in the infant school

whilst addressing the key issue on assessment identified in the previous inspection report for the junior school.

- There is evidence of good practice in assessment, recording and reporting in the early years and across both key stages.
- The staff and GB have agreed an assessment policy, which reflects best principles and practice. However, the procedures are at an early stage of implementation. *****
- There is evidence that teachers undertake a substantial amount of assessment. The LSA, nursery nurses, classroom assistants and other professionals contribute to the assessment process.
- Schemes of work identify opportunities for assessment and the majority of teachers evaluate their planning, but the effectiveness of this in informing future plans is variable.
- In the best practice teachers include specific learning outcomes in their planning and share these with pupils in a variety of ways; additionally, best practice is also evident in the concluding parts of lessons, when they are used effectively to involve pupils in assessing their own progress towards meeting the learning intentions.
- Half-termly targets are displayed in a variety of ways in classrooms but not always shared effectively with pupils. In the best practice pupils, including some of those with SEN, talk about the targets and know how to improve.
- Teachers keep a wide variety of records including reading progress, pupils' work and video and audio recordings. Reading records include a well structured proforma, which is completed by both teachers and support LSAs. However, Comments in reading records are not always sufficiently diagnostic to indicate the way forward and a significant number of pupils are not aware of how to improve their reading.
- The school has analysed progress and trends from baseline assessment, benchmarking information, local and national data. Using the results of termly standardised tests, the school and the LEA language support teacher effectively identify pupils who would benefit from additional language support.
- In the best practice pupils' work is marked regularly and comments are related to specific learning outcomes and provide clear guidance for improvement. However, in some cases, pupils' work is only marked periodically and the quality and usefulness of the comments are variable.
- Pupil profiles are designed to reflect the child's overall progress and attainment; they are at an early stage of development. Additionally, a new format for pupil profiles has been introduced.
- Focused assessment tasks are an integral part of the schemes of work in English, mathematics and science; evidence of assessment in other subjects is less well developed.
- Reporting to parents takes place twice a year and parents receive a written report in the summer term. These conform to statutory requirements and some contain detailed and

informative comments, clear subject specific targets and an indication of the way forward. Some of the reports, however, are more generalised and parents consider that the terminology used does not always convey a clear picture of their child's attainment. In some examples targets for future development are too broad.

- Compliance with, and implementation of the assessment policy, remains variable and inconsistent across the whole school. The procedures and practice outlined in the policy are not always managed effectively by all teachers, especially in the quality of recording.
- There has been no opportunity for monitoring by the designated subject co-ordinators and subjects. This is because they have no non-contact time and there are only limited opportunities to deliver staff development and disseminate good practice.
- Strategies for involving pupils in self-assessment and target setting are under-developed although teachers are trialling a range of strategies.
- IEPs contain targets, which are not always used effectively to monitor the progress of individual pupils. Comments from parents and pupils are not recorded in the review process and literacy targets in the IEP are not always reflected in reading records.

5.3 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory; it is appropriately broad and provides depth and balance.

- The curriculum for the under fives is based on the Desirable Outcomes for Childrens' Learning. Overall, it provides children with a good range of experiences. However, provision for some areas of learning for under fives in reception classes does not maximise children's' potential.
- The school's curriculum policy clearly outlines aims and expectations and provides very good guidance for staff.
- The curriculum for KS1 and KS2 is broad and balanced and cross-curricular links are evident in a number of subjects, most notably in science, geography, history, ICT and art.
- Homework is set regularly. However, although a home school agreement sets out homework expectations, systems and practice are not applied consistently across the school and, therefore, this does not always reinforce learning.
- Policies and schemes of work are in place for all NC subjects and religious education. Year planning groups help to foster curriculum development and some in the core subjects are of the highest quality. At present, curricular provision is not being consistently monitored to guarantee that all NC subjects are taught with sufficient rigour and quality in order to ensure progressive development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Planning incorporates opportunities for the inclusion of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. There is a whole school plan for the development of key skills across

the curriculum, based mainly on LEA and published schemes of work; however, the reference to key skills in teachers' planning is too generalised.. Effective strategies for the recording and monitoring of progress in key skills are yet to be put in place.

- Pupils' PSHE is incorporated into the curriculum, based on the ACCAC guidelines, but is at an early stage of implementation. Regular visits from health education officers add to the curriculum and are reflected in pupils' overall knowledge and understanding and their attitudes and behaviour.
- All pupils have equal access to all aspects of the NC and school activities. Although differentiation for pupils of varying abilities is not a consistent feature of the planning in all classes. However, overall, pupils' specific needs are well catered for and individuals are well supported. There are no pupils for whom the NC is modified or disapplied.
- There is satisfactory indirect monitoring and reviewing of the NC subjects. However, direct monitoring of teaching quality and curriculum development does not occur in any systematic manner.
- The work of curriculum co-ordinators is developing; separate co-ordinators exist for each key stage in each subject. Whilst this is helpful in sharing the workload it does not allow for the most efficient monitoring of the subject across the school.
- Pupils' knowledge of local culture and the heritage of Wales is developed satisfactorily. Visits to the locality and to specific places of historical interest, associated with topics studied, give pupils valuable first hand experiences. Major events of the local community and aspects of the curriculum Cymreig feature satisfactorily in curriculum provision, although opportunities for cross-curricular teaching in this respect are not fully exploited.
- Extra-curricular activities greatly enhance the quality of the curriculum. These are many and varied in number and include sports teams, outdoor education, participative sporting events, cultural activities, music practice and many special events and visits. This is notable feature of the life of the school.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

Support and guidance given to pupils is good.

- There is a real caring ethos in the school.
- Teachers and support staff know pupils well, the majority of whom are happy at school. Staff supervise them satisfactorily and are mindful of their safety, particularly when crossing the road at lunch time.
- Appropriate policies and procedures have been agreed between the head and the GB, including sex education, health education and racial equality.
- PSHE is further enhanced through timetabled circle time sessions. The designated co-ordinator for PSHE has disseminated useful materials for piloting during these sessions. This is at an early stage of implementation and teachers have yet to have staff

development on circle time to maximise its potential and to monitor the PSHE framework across the curriculum.

- The school gives due regard to equal opportunities through relevant policies and practices including consideration of gifted and talented pupils and boys' underachievement. This has resulted in the adoption of appropriate teaching and learning strategies.
- Good liaison with the school nurse, visits from the police and fire service and a road safety after school club make a significant contribution to the health and safety of pupils.
- Arrangements for child protection conform to statutory requirements; the head is the designated member of staff responsible.
- Appropriate procedures are in place for the administration and supervision of medicines to pupils.
- There are good transition arrangements in place between KS2 and KS3 and pupils feel well prepared for the comprehensive school.
- There are identified members of staff for first aid and the school has arrangements in place to ensure that all staff have relevant training in this.
- There are good links with external support services such as the speech and language therapist. At times, pupil records and progress are inhibited by delayed access to appropriate professionals.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN

The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory.

- There are currently 83 pupils on the SEN register from nursery to Y6, 47 of whom are recorded under School Action and 36 under School Action Plus. No pupils are disapplied from the NC.
- The school hosts three LEA SEN classes for 31 pupils with MLD. 28 of these pupils have statements of SEN. Relationships between staff and pupils in the units are good.
- The school's policy for SEN is in accordance with the revised CoP and in line with NAFW guidelines. There is a designated link governor for SEN, who is well placed because she works in the school.
- The GB states a commitment to an inclusive approach and the school's monthly focus meetings discuss issues, including SEN/MLD. An extra member of staff has been secured recently and class assistants provide good support to SEN pupils.
- The head acts as SENCO, but the co-ordination of SEN is shared between her, a KS1 teacher, teachers in the SEN classes and the LEA language support teacher, who assists mainstream class teachers and gives advice on strategies and writing IEPs. SEN teachers

also undertake mainstream responsibilities, including co-ordinating PSHE and other teaching commitments. However, this team approach is at an early stage of development.

- Pupils in the MLD classes have opportunities for inclusion with mainstream pupils for assemblies, as well as physical education, music and some geography and history lessons. They are also involved in year group visits, field trips, outdoor pursuits, peripatetic music lessons, ICT, computer clubs and folk dancing.
- Whole school schemes of work include reference to provision for SEN, but are refined further by teachers in the units. In the best practice sessions take account of individual learning needs, with an appropriate emphasis on practical experiences and experiential learning. Visits to the synagogue in religious education or cookery, where maths is placed in context, enable pupils to achieve good standards.
- Support assistants generally provide good support and work well as part of a team. At times, however, the best use is not made of their time.
- Pupils in mainstream are screened by the language support teacher and make good progress when withdrawn for additional support. She liaises with the class teacher and together they monitor pupils' progress. However, the processing of IEPs does not always provide evidence of this progress or the way forward.
- IEPs contain targets, which are not always used effectively to monitor the progress of individual pupils. Comments from parents and pupils are not recorded in the review process and literacy targets in the IEP are not always reflected in reading records.
- There are three pupils in mainstream classes with statements and they receive good support including that provided by classroom assistants, who work closely with class teachers. They experience a high level of inclusion and make very good progress. Other children are sensitive to their needs and provide good role models.
- Pupils with SEN make steady progress, but equal opportunity of provision cannot be assured, because of the variable teaching quality and the structure that underpins SEN.
- The lack of monitoring of the MLD classes does not ensure parity of experience.
- The processing of IEPs, including termly monitoring and review, is at an early stage of development and has yet to be monitored and refined, to ensure pupils make maximum progress relative to their individual needs.
- The MLD classes have limited space and equipment, although effective and imaginative use is made of existing resources in the majority of cases. Additionally, the provision for pupils in the MLD unit in the lower school does not effectively meet their learning needs, although the school has recently provided additional resources to enhance their learning, including the provision of an outdoor play area and access to infant resources, if required.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

The school's partnerships are good overall.

- A new prospectus has been produced and this fully meets legal requirements and gives parents good information about the life and routines of the school. Parents are also kept well informed about general matters through regular school newsletters.
- Few parents attend the GB's annual meeting with parents; the report meets legal requirements.
- A Friends of the School Association has recently been re-established and in a short time has raised a significant amount of money. Events are very well supported, although only a few parents actually sit on the committee.
- Community links are strong. Members of the local community are involved in the life and work of the school and residents help by carrying out carpentry work and maintaining the school gardens. Parents too are encouraged to help their children with home-school reading and other shared activities in connection with English, maths and music.
- The school holds a "transfer day" at the end of the summer term when all Y6 pupils spend time in their new class with their new teachers. Incoming nursery children also visit the school with parents.
- Links with the comprehensive and other primary schools in the area are very good.
- The school has a formal partnership with a teacher training university and takes students on work placements. Pupils from the comprehensive also attend on work experience.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

Links with industry are satisfactory.

- The school has developed a good link with the Groundwork Trust, linked to KS2 science and geography.
- In KS1 pupils visit local shops and the post office in connection with their studies.
- Local businesses help with sponsorship, for example raffle prizes, and provide materials to help the school with design and technology. Other local industries display pupils' art work in their premises on a regular basis.
- The school works closely with the local EBP.
- There is a policy, which is part of the broader policy for links with parents and the community, but this is underdeveloped and does not specify or give guidance as to where and when links with businesses would be appropriate to further pupils' and staff learning.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

Self-evaluation and planning for improvement are unsatisfactory.

- The school uses a very limited range of procedures to evaluate standards and the quality of provision. The use of assessment data to identify set measurable targets for further improvement is at an early stage of development and does not yet inform teaching strategies.
- No first hand evidence of the quality of teaching exists to inform practice and help raise standards.
- Priorities for development have been identified and agreed and are appropriate to the immediate needs of the school. These tend to be broad cohort targets linked to reading, writing, numeracy and key ICT skills, and are not converted into specific target setting for classes or specific groups of pupils. Additionally, many of these priorities have not been owned by staff and the organisational climate to support school improvement is not in place.
- Governors are involved in shaping the school's broad aims and objectives. However, the GB have not been involved in the evaluation of standards in the school and in the overall educational provision. The head and governors are now working closely together in order to effect improvements in general school provision, most notably in learning support.
- Formal mechanisms for self-evaluation are not clearly evident and constructive evaluative reports to and from the head and SMT are not a feature of school management. The head takes the major managerial role and responsibility with respect to school evaluation. The other members of the SMT are not significantly involved in informing development planning. Additionally, full reporting to the GB is only a recent feature. As a result, there is not an open and thorough declaration and detailed evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- There has been no opportunity for monitoring by the designated subject co-ordinators and subjects. This is because they have no non-contact time and there are only limited opportunities to deliver staff development and disseminate good practice.
- There is satisfactory indirect monitoring and reviewing of the NC subjects. However, direct monitoring of teaching quality and curriculum development does not occur in any systematic manner.
- Policies and schemes of work are in place for all NC subjects and religious education. Year planning groups help to foster curriculum development and some in the core subjects are of the highest quality. At present, curricular provision is not being consistently monitored to guarantee that all NC subjects are taught with sufficient rigour and quality in order to ensure progressive development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.

- The SDP is a sound document for identifying short term needs; however, it does not serve as a clear foundation for further achievement in the medium and long term. Additionally, the identification of substantive educational priorities that will raise standards and help produce a self-critical culture for school improvement are not firmly embedded in the SDP.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

Leadership and efficiency are satisfactory overall.

- The school does not yet operate effectively as a primary school; a single school culture and community is not evident.
- The head has developed an appropriate mission for the school with specific aims and broad objectives. The short term educational needs and priorities for the school have been identified. These are clearly laid out in a yearly SDP, but have not been properly embedded across the whole school and are not owned by all staff.
- The head exercises appropriate day to day management and administration of the school, ably supported by two secretaries who are based separately on the junior and infant sites. The SMT at present is very small for this size of school. Some management roles are not carried out effectively and overall the management structure and administrative framework is somewhat disjointed
- There is not yet a clear team approach to the management of the school, nor is there a staff community that works for each other. The communication system and general environment in KS2 is not built on trust and mutual respect. The head has worked hard to try to build a positive single school culture, but has not met with full support from all staff. A clear sense of common purpose is not yet clearly evident in the school.
- There are no real shared values and norms about teaching quality, learning expectations and relationships between staff and between staff and pupils in KS2.
- The GB is well informed on most matters and has a very positive approach to the school's progress and development. It does not, however, as yet, have a clear sense of how to promote educational standards and sustain school improvement.
- Daily routines operate efficiently on each school site. However, the lack of a unified school day for both sites does present operational problems, not least in the ability for pupils and staff to work across sites and share facilities and expertise.
- The school makes very good use of its accommodation and the head and GB have worked hard to upgrade the physical environment and learning resources on both sites. However, best use is not being made of all staff and some of their professional expertise is not being exploited to help achieve higher educational outcomes.
- The current budget is well managed and controlled by the head and approved through the GB. It is suitably prioritised via the SDP; expenditure is carefully monitored and evaluated.

- A staff appraisal and personal development system has been introduced, but is not effectively focused and has not had time to impact on teachers' knowledge and skills or the raising of standards.
- The school complies with all statutory requirements and takes good account of all government guidelines.
- The school gives good value for money.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall.

- The school is staffed by the head, 21 qualified teachers, seven nursery nurses and two classroom assistants; all are suitably qualified and experienced. They work together effectively and overall provide a good level of commitment to the school. Additionally, a small number of parental volunteers give valuable assistance to pupils.
- All teachers have job descriptions and are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Classroom assistants and nursery nurses have limited job descriptions.
- Although not all teachers' subject skills and knowledge are effectively deployed, many staff provide extensive support for extra-curricular activities.
- Members of the LEA peripatetic music service provide very valuable and high quality support on a regular basis.
- Resources and facilities are good overall, although it is notable that the Y3/Y4 classrooms are limited in size and scope. Additionally, there is no school field for competitive games, although a large green space exists on the infants site and the junior playground is used for some competitive sports. A level grassed area in front of the Y3/Y4 classroom block is also used.
- The accommodation in all the buildings is in very good condition and is maintained to the highest standard of cleanliness by the caretaker and his support staff. Very good use is made of indoor facilities to create an attractive and stimulating environment with displays of pupils' work being a significant feature.
- The Nursery accommodation is a very good facility for such young children; space is plentiful and well managed; the outdoor play area and resources are highly appropriate. However, provision of outdoor play equipment in reception classes is limited.
- The library area, situated in the KS2 main building, supplements class libraries and is reasonably well stocked and effectively used by most teachers and pupils.
- Areas for refurbishment and repair are identified in the SDP and are acknowledged by the GB.

- A wide range of quality resources across most areas of the curriculum are used effectively to support learning and this has a positive effect on raising standards.

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 children make good to very good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

Standards of achievement in the early years are very good in the nursery classes and good in reception classes across the six areas of learning.

Nursery pupils (aged 3 – 4 years)

Good features

- Many children display poor communication skills on entering the nursery, but the emphasis on developing their skills in speaking and listening through a range of appropriate experiences enables them to make very good progress; they discuss their play confidently. They show an interest in books and handle them competently; many can recall and retell events from favourite stories, such as, the adventures of Elmer. They begin to recognise initial sounds. Early writing skills develop well through a range of play and structured activities; older children write independently. All are introduced to the Welsh language and respond confidently to simple greetings.
- Children are polite and confident; they relate well to each other and to adults. They play together co-operatively and take turns and share resources well. They are increasingly independent and move confidently between activities. They respond well to new experiences and readily seek and offer help. They understand the need to care for living things, for example, when planting bulbs. They increasingly take responsibility for their own hygiene.
- Children can sort, match and sequence familiar objects; they make and copy simple sequential patterns with objects and pictures. They count to 20 and recognise numerals to 10. They use appropriate mathematical language to compare and describe size, weight and capacity in practical situations. They can recognise and name simple two dimensional shapes and some of their properties; they identify simple three dimensional shapes and begin to develop an understanding of simple fractions.
- Practical activities and first hand experiences enhance children's knowledge and understanding of the world. They talk confidently about many aspects of their environment, their homes and their families. They are introduced to the life cycle and understand that plants need water and light to grow. Their understanding of the concept of past and present is fostered appropriately in relation to their growth and development;

they understand about the different jobs people do. They are willing to make choices and to use the computer and listening centre well to support their learning.

- The well equipped outdoor play facility enhances children's physical development. They use wheeled vehicles and other outdoor equipment with care and increasing skill. Their fine motor skills develop well; they handle a wide variety of small tools and equipment with increasing control.
- Children play imaginatively in role play situations, both indoors and outdoors, even when not supervised by an adult. They recall a number of songs and rhymes in English and Welsh that they sing tunefully; they are able to represent rhythm using percussion instruments. They are introduced to a wide range of art and craft techniques; they make choices about colour and medium, and enthusiastically discuss their choices and the finished product.

Reception children (aged 4 – 5 years)

Good features

- Children listen intently and speak confidently; they ask questions and offer opinions readily. They make good progress in early reading skills; they follow a story in print, begin to build simple words phonetically and know many sounds of the alphabet. They discuss books enthusiastically and accurately. Early writing skills develop well; children form letters correctly and make good progress in independent writing. They develop an increasing vocabulary of Welsh words and phrases.
- Children are polite and confident and engage in conversation readily. They play together co-operatively, share and take turns and are willing to offer help to each other. They readily form relationships with adults. They become increasingly independent in selecting appropriate activities in free play and confidently ask for help when needed. Many are able to dress themselves and all are responsible for their own hygiene. They understand the need to show care and respect for living things, for example, planting sunflowers.
- Children's understanding of number develops well. They can count to 50 and recognise the numerals; older ones can add two numbers to 10 and recognise coins to 10p. They begin to understand ordinal numbers. Their mental mathematical skills are appropriately fostered through regular practice. They can name simple two dimensional and three dimensional shapes and interpret data represented in simple graphs. They use mathematical language of length, weight and capacity confidently and appropriately in practical situations.
- Children develop a good understanding of the features of the seasons and the concept of time in relation to the sequence of events of their normal day. They become increasingly aware of a number of the features in their locality, for example, when visiting the local post office. They become more knowledgeable of the world of work through visitors, such as the policeman, fireman and members of the community, who further enhance their understanding. Simple scientific concepts, such as sources of light, are readily understood and children are able to discuss the purposes of Christian celebrations, such as

Easter. They confidently use computers and listening centres with increasing skill to support their learning.

- Children move with increasing control in a variety of ways, displaying an awareness of space both indoors and outdoors. They reflect increasing competence as they use small equipment for activities such as marking, drawing and writing and when using art materials.
- Children recall a number of songs, rhymes and hymns; they use percussion instruments appropriately. They play imaginatively when engaged in role play situations, such as the Pizza parlour, and produce pictures with increasing detail using a range of media

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, but further opportunities for children to use outdoor play equipment for energetic play and to enable them to explore and experiment with indoor resources, would help them to make greater progress.

English

Standards are good in both key stages.

- The majority of pupils in both key stages listen well in class and take part in class discussions with enthusiasm. Most are confident in asking and answering questions. They develop their collaborative oracy skills when, for example, discussing advertisements and expressing strong views. Role play and presentations also facilitate speaking and listening skills, although at times opportunities to develop discussion are limited by too much teacher direction.
- Pupils read with confidence to the whole class and together when sharing big books. The majority of older, more able pupils read with a sound degree of accuracy and understanding. They are able to self-correct. They begin to infer and deduce meanings from underlying themes and show empathy and understanding for characters. They understand the meaning of plot and themes and can describe their favourite characters.
- Pupils experience a good range of activities in their language work across all key stages. Pupils respond well to a variety of texts including, film scripts, persuasive texts and advertisements, work linked to other subjects, including information retrieval, internet research, and reports of visits. They also write in a number of forms, with clear progression through the scheme of work. Creative writing time is allocated weekly and this facilitates the development of extended writing skills.
- Pupils read, understand and write letters for a range of purposes, including writing to younger pupils and writing to request information. They understand the difference between formal and informal writing.
- Poetry writing features strongly across both key stages. Younger pupils enjoy writing rhymes and riddles and a significant number have been successful in having their work

published. Standards are enhanced by a poetry day involving a visiting poet. There is good attention to the work of Welsh poets.

- In KS1 pupils make books and write personal diaries. They write stories with a moral and make good use of writing frames. They make booklists and write book reviews. They develop an awareness of sentence structure and use their reading to help locate capital letters and full stops. They develop in confidence as writers and are encouraged to check their writing to ensure that it makes sense.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of grammar and can identify verbs, adjectives and adverbs.
- Pupils develop a range of strategies for decoding and spelling words and learn to look-cover-write-say from an early age. However, high scores in spelling tests do not always apply to written work.
- Pupils are able to research information for themselves and have a good understanding of the use of a thesaurus, the index, fiction and non-fiction.
- Pupils make good use of the new school, class and mobile libraries and read for both information and pleasure. Some, however, are not always challenged sufficiently and a number do not read beyond fiction. The school library is not yet a lending library.
- Handwriting and presentation develops well. Standards in these aspects are not consistent across the curriculum.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, but reading records and home-school links are not always fully utilised.

Mathematics

Standards are very good in KS1 and good in KS2.

Good features

- In both key stages pupils make good and often very good progress in their understanding of number. The attention paid to developing their competence in mental arithmetic is demonstrated by their increasing use of a range of calculating strategies, particularly in KS1.
- In KS1, pupils develop a very good understanding of place value to 100 and beyond; older pupils add and subtract one and two digit numbers to 100 accurately and confidently. In Y2 pupils can explain number patterns, recognise odd and even numbers and use multiples of two, five and ten accurately; they confidently round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. Pupils calculate mentally using an appropriate range of strategies, such as doubling and halving; they explain their thinking with increasing confidence. They

represent data in simple tables and graphs and recognise decimals in the context of time and money.

- Pupils in KS1 also recognise simple two and three dimensional shapes and classify them according to their properties. They recognise angle as a measure of turn and link analogue time to simple fractions. They measure with increasing accuracy using non-standard and standard measures of length, weight and capacity and their estimation skills develop well.
- Pupils in KS2 continue to make good progress in number work; they develop an increasingly secure understanding of place value. By the end of the key stage they multiply and divide numbers and decimals by 10, 100 and 1000; they use all four number operations with decimals to two decimal places. They understand equivalence between fractions, decimals and percentages, using calculators where appropriate.
- Pupils in KS2 recognise and classify an increasing variety of two and three dimensional shapes. At the end of the key stage they measure angles accurately, identify all the symmetries of shapes, and calculate area, perimeter and volume. They use a range of frequency tables and diagrams to construct accurate graphs and use the language of probability accurately.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings, but in some classes in KS2 further opportunities to develop pupils' mental calculating strategies would increase their competence and confidence.

Science

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good Features

- Pupils have a good background knowledge across the different ATs of the NC; they respond to questions quickly and confidently, but not always thoughtfully.
- With respect to scientific enquiry across both key stages, pupils work well in partner work or small group situations; they observe test protocols properly and are aware of the scientific processes of prediction and evaluation. They are also familiar with the concept of a fair test and the need to control test variables. They generally undertake scientific investigations with care, giving appropriate importance to completing their work.
- In most classes work is recorded neatly in an appropriate format, although labelling diagrams is sometimes poorly executed and rarely follows any clear guidelines.
- In KS1 pupils do good work in understanding life processes; they gain sound awareness of human nutrition, health and growth, as well as basic mechanics and forces. They also conduct a range of experiments on plants and animals and are able to make effective predictions and assumptions about how animals survive in their various habitats. Additionally, they produce some good written work and make quality displays, which

show their understanding of light and dark, sound, forces and movement, and the uses of electricity.

- In KS2 work is continued effectively into knowledge and understanding of light and shadows, magnetic forces, rocks, minerals, soils and the characteristics of materials; they also learn about electrical circuits, habitats, physical health and the planets. Y5/Y6 pupils in particular, show sound awareness of seasonal and periodic changes linked to from the movement of the planets and of how forces work in action in a number of environments.
- In Y3/Y4 pupils produce good visual work linked to health, and their overall awareness of basic anatomy and physiology is very good, especially the structure and function of the human body. They are also able to articulate the importance of healthy teeth and healthy eating.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding in science develops well in both key stages and it is interesting to see the way they apply this knowledge to other subject areas, notably to mathematics, art, design and technology and especially geography. The Y4 fieldwork study of Cefn Fforest is a very good example of cross-curricular work between science, geography and design and technology, which produces scientific understanding of high quality.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, but, some tasks provided for KS2 pupils are insufficiently challenging and do not always sufficiently promote pupils' understanding of scientific concepts. Additionally, some pupils' evaluation skills in KS2 are underdeveloped. Little work is done in repeating experiments to check results and carry out comparative analysis.
- Across both key stages science is taught almost exclusively through class lessons. Little attention to differentiation occurs other than through use of commercial worksheets, and, as a result, there are few opportunities for pupils to plan and conduct their own experiments and to research independently. Recorded work tends to be very similar between pupils and the more able are often unchallenged.

Welsh second language

Standards are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2.

Good Features

- In KS1 pupils listen and respond with enthusiasm to greetings, commands and stories. They volunteer information about themselves and speak confidently, with good, intelligible pronunciation.
- Pupils in KS1 participate exuberantly in a range of oral activities; they display a good command of sentence patterns and a wide range of vocabulary. They know various songs in Welsh, such as "Heno, heno, hen blant bach", "Mi welais jac y do".

- Pupils at this level contribute effectively to class books of their own, writing appropriate words, phrases and basic sentences, illustrated with detailed drawings. They write simple scripts, describing an imaginary visit to the doctor, which contain lively and enchanting dialogues.
- Counting skills develop well. By the end of KS1, pupils can count up to twenty in Welsh, whilst some know the names of higher numbers such as *cant*. They can recognise familiar words and phrases on stimulating displays and in attractive and well presented Welsh corners of the classrooms.
- The role of *helpwr heddiw* develops well throughout the key stage.
- At the lower end of KS2, pupils know the names for various parts of the body and can count well in Welsh.
- Listening skills are generally good throughout the school, with pupils often giving considered answers to visitors' questions.
- At the upper end of KS2 some of the more able pupils often write scripts and stories in Welsh.
- Teachers throughout the school make every effort to promote the *cwricwlwm Cymreig*. There are regular visits to local places of interest, the school ensures that St. David's Day is celebrated appropriately, and there is sufficient evidence to show that the Welsh dimension is actively promoted within other subject areas.

Shortcomings

- Too little incidental use is made of the language, particularly in KS2.
- Many pupils in KS2 lack confidence in using their speaking skills and insufficient emphasis is placed on improving reading skills.
- Pupils' writing is underdeveloped in KS2.

Design and technology

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good Features

- Pupils in both key stages have regular experiences in designing and making. They develop their skills through focused practical tasks.
- In KS1 pupils show growing familiarity with a range of materials, tools and techniques, and a developing understanding of the processes associated with designing and making. They make greeting cards and moving calendars, which show a clear progress in the acquisition of craft skills.

- Younger pupils create colourful Christmas stockings, puppets and moving vehicles.
- In Y3, pupils design and make very effective pneumatic monsters, which are displayed prominently in classrooms and in the corridors.
- Y4 pupils design and create a range of products, which include Christmas cards and salt dough models for St David's Day.
- Older pupils in Y6 produce Christmas cakes, ice cream sundaes, colourful soft toys and ingenious varieties of fairground models. In one impressive Y6 lesson, pupils surveyed exemplary models which their peers had produced and enthusiastically set about designing their own versions of fairground rides. Y6 pupils have also completed detailed and meticulous records of their "Technology Day" at the nearby comprehensive school.
- Pupils collaborate well in pairs and groups, helping each other in practical ways and sharing ideas thoughtfully.
- There are some good examples of evaluative design and technology processes across the school.
- Although the two co-ordinators were only recently appointed, they are making significant contributions to standards of achievement in this subject.

Information technology

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages are offered a wide range of opportunities to handle text, images, numbers, graphs, sound and music via ICT. They show a developing ability to organise and re-organise written and numerical data through ICT; they also are able to store and retrieve information successfully and sort information using computers.
- More able pupils in KS2 show an ability to analyse material using ICT and present and communicate information on computer, especially via the use of PowerPoint.
- Pupils in KS1 make good progress in developing basic keyboard skills and mouse control.
- KS2 pupils satisfactorily extend their word processing skills to print out poems and written work; there are examples of computer-generated artwork in both key stages.
- The school benefits from a computer suite in KS2 with twelve computers used on a timetabled basis.
- Pupils in KS2 make good use of CD-ROMs to support their work, for example, in science, Welsh and geography.

- Effective use is made of programmes to support pupils with SEN.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings, but some pupils in KS2 have limited experiences in using ICT as a medium to analyse and critically evaluate data and to present knowledge and information from group work situations in non-traditional ways.

History

Standards are good in both key stages, with some very good features in KS2.

Good Features

- Pupils throughout the school demonstrate a progressive development of chronological awareness. They have a clear understanding that asking and answering questions is at the heart of history. They ask a range of questions during the course of their investigations and research work.
- Pupils in both key stages present their findings clearly and knowledgeably, both orally and in writing. The capacity to share ideas and discuss opinions in paired, group or class activities is a distinct feature of the best history lessons.
- Pupils in KS1 are able to sequence events and stories accurately, and they develop a good sense of chronology when they study homes old and new and “changes as we get older”. They produce good time lines and study a wide range of topics and famous people, including Guy Fawkes and Mary Jones and her Bible.
- In Y3 pupils produce stimulating work on the Celtic people with detailed descriptions of Celtic homes and villages. In one very good observed pupils begin to compile research information on the Romans in preparation for their visit to Caerleon.
- In one Y4 class pupils have completed well researched projects on the Tudors, which are proudly displayed in the classroom.
- At the upper end of the school the Victorian period and the Second World War are used effectively as the basis for historical research.
- Pupils of all abilities effectively use a range of sources to gather appropriate information. This is particularly evident in a Y6 class, which makes the best possible use of census material, and in Y5 classes, where members of families and the local community are encouraged to contribute to projects on the Second World War. A striking feature of work in this area is the use of enquiry and investigative methods to enhance pupils’ learning experiences.
- Work in KS2 is recorded in a variety of forms and demonstrates good links with other subjects in the curriculum.
- Visits to the locality, Caerleon, St Fagans and Llancaiach Fawr are all used very well to raise standards in history.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, but pupils' progress and standards are sometimes limited by the overuse of worksheets.

Geography

No geography lessons were observed during the inspection. From scrutiny of evidence and discussion with pupils and staff standards are judged to be satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the local area is well developed in both key stages.
- In KS1 pupils develop geographical skills through maps, plans and visual and written accounts. They produce weather records using appropriate symbols and begin to understand the water cycle.
- Younger pupils in KS2 achieve good standards in their detailed study of Cefn Fforest and a contrasting locality in Wales. They apply a good range of geographical skills, including fieldwork and mapping skills. They can describe and offer explanations for geographical patterns observed, such as land use and transport. They are able to compare and contrast this with changes in their local area.
- In Y4 a study of daily life in a West African township further enhances pupils' ability to compare and contrast localities.
- By the end of KS2 pupils are able to offer explanations for the different ways in which human activity affects the environment. They further develop their geographical skills by comparing their locality with a contrasting seaside town.

Shortcomings

- While there is a range of work of a geographical focus in both key stages, investigations are rarely fully developed and pupils' knowledge is often insecure.
- In KS2 pupils' ability to pose relevant questions, to identify geographical patterns, particularly with regard to environmental change, and to offer explanations through a thorough understanding of geographical process are underdeveloped.
- The scheme of work provides insufficient guidance for teachers to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Art

Standards are good in both key stages.

- In KS1 pupils are encouraged to experiment with a wide range of materials and a variety of techniques to produce pictures, collages, cards and book illustrations and to apply their skills in art across the curriculum.
- Pupils in KS1 develop good observational skills; for example, they draw a poppy and relate this to their knowledge and understanding of plants from their work in science. They take time to record key features in detail.
- Pupils in KS1 have experiences of three dimensional art; for example they make thumb pots in clay, experimenting with a variety of shapes. They plan their designs for their pots on paper and give reasons for their final choice of pattern and colour.
- In KS2 in the best practice pupils' sketchbooks are used well. They undertake self-portraits and compare these to the work of others such as Picasso. They experiment with line drawing and they are able to organise and combine shapes and colour to create patterns.
- Pupils are encouraged to look carefully and accurately and, as a result, they achieve good results in their movement drawings.
- In Y4 there are good links with the history topic of the Tudors as an excellent stimulus for exploring the technique of pouncing, using a needle, and evaluating the work of other portrait artists of the period.
- Similarly in Y5 pupils have opportunities to design stained glass windows using iridescent paints, having discussed photographs of the windows seen during their visit to the synagogue.
- By Y6 the most able pupils achieve a high level of creativity and thoroughly explore ideas.
- Work across the key stages involves the study of celebrated artists, including Rousseau, Van Gogh, Paul Klee, William Morris and Laura Ashley. Welsh artists and African art are visibly displayed around the school.
- The revised scheme of work for art emphasises the importance of pupils understanding, modifying, reviewing and revisiting their work and this approach was evident in the majority of lessons observed.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, but limitations of time and space sometimes prevent opportunities for evaluating work.

Music

Standards are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2.

Good Features

- The quality of singing is good. Younger pupils sing tunefully and enthusiastically; older ones respond sensitively to music, display good posture and clear diction and demonstrate proper control of dynamics and pitch.
- Pupils in KS1 develop a good awareness of rhythm and make confident use of their voices, bodies and various instruments to create musical sounds. They also distinguish between high and low sounds and recognise a variety of musical instruments.
- In one very good lesson in Y4 pupils created appropriate sounds to match graphics and descriptive words in a poem. They used correctly a range of musical terms, such as crescendo, diminuendo and allegro to describe various aspects of their learning.
- The careful application of listening skills often enables pupils to compare differences and similarities in songs and to express their personal preferences orally.
- There is enthusiastic participation in the school orchestra; pupils develop an appropriate repertoire of tunes that accompany school assemblies.
- There is a devoted school choir that contributes to extra-curricular activities. Members of the choir pitch their voices accurately and show good control of breathing, diction, phrasing and dynamics.
- Due attention is paid to singing and performing on occasions, such as St David's Day, and older pupils have participated in the Valley Songwriters' Project and performed in the Caerphilly Kids Opera held in St David's Hall, Cardiff and in the Royal Albert Hall.
- Peripatetic teachers visit the school to teach a range of instruments to a significant number of pupils.

Shortcomings

- Work in the upper part of KS2 often fails to provide sufficient challenge for pupils and, as a result, their skills are not always developed to the full.
- There is little evidence available to indicate that pupils consistently appraise their work.

Physical education

Standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils participate enthusiastically in both lessons and games. They respond to instructions and directions promptly and sensibly. They follow rules and work together effectively in partner work and team play situations.
- All aspects of the NC are fully covered in each key stage, including games, gymnastics, dance and athletic activities; pupils also undertake an intensive swimming course and experience outdoor and adventurous activities at a residential camp in KS2.
- Pupils in all classes help to get out and put away equipment safely and sensibly.
- Teachers follow school routines in relation to the structure of lessons and the supervision of health and safety. Appropriate support is given in most lessons to the physically less able.
- There is a very wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities, most notably in soccer for both boys and girls, cross country and netball. These activities are well supported by pupils and make a valuable contribution to their skill development and fitness.
- Individual pupils and school teams have been successful in a number of sports, notably soccer and girls and boys' athletics. Local parents and staff provide skilful assistance in these activities and matches are regularly played with local schools.

Shortcomings

- Pupils in both key stages do not always demonstrate an ability to be able to plan effectively and evaluate their physical activity.

Religious education

Standards are good in both key stages.

- Pupils follow a broad programme of studies based on the LEA agreed syllabus for religious education, which is suitable to their age and level of understanding. Additional religious education activities are undertaken as part of seasonal festivals and in acts of collective worship.
- The majority of pupils demonstrate a good understanding of Christian festivals and celebrations. They are aware of the importance of prayer in worship. They develop their knowledge of some of the main religions, such as Judaism and Islam, and can explain religious ideas and practices.
- In Y2 pupils demonstrate that they understand the meaning of baptism and how babies are welcomed into the church. They have a sense of awe and wonder when looking at special

objects, particularly when they are able to relate these to their own experiences. They name and understand the significance of the artefacts associated with baptism, such as holy water, the Bible, the cross and the font. They ask searching questions and begin to understand the significance of the symbolism, such as a candle representing light.

- Pupils listen to religious stories such as the Good Samaritan. Younger pupils are able to sequence the story whilst older ones begin to recognise the signs that tell us that someone is a Christian. Through participation in role play, they explore how being a Christian influences peoples' behaviour.
- In Y4 pupils are able to make comparisons between Christianity and Islam, naming key features and understanding special places and features.
- Y5 pupils have a good understanding of Jewish terms and are able to link ideas together in a variety of ways. They name the Ark as the main feature in the synagogue and know that the Torah scrolls are kept in the Ark. They talk about the layout of the synagogue and relate their discussion to their visit.
- By Y6 pupils develop a sound knowledge and understanding of people less fortunate than themselves. They write and publish prayers, which demonstrate that they are able to discuss and reflect, for example, on the holocaust and understand the significance of prejudice and discrimination.
- Understanding in both key stages is enhanced greatly when supported by field trips to places of worship such as the local church, a mosque or a synagogue, and by visits to the school by a local minister.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

The school has only recently been created, being an amalgamation of the local infant and nursery school and the junior school. Their individual inspection reports from 1996 and 1997 identified twelve key issues for action. They indicate that the newly amalgamated GB should pay particular attention to:

Junior School

- improve standards of achievement in history, information technology and music, together with aspects of Welsh and art and weaknesses in other subjects where they exist;
- improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise levels of expectations, where they are low;
- continue to improve and develop the management and curriculum responsibilities of staff and ensure greater monitoring of standards by the head and governors;
- create a balanced curriculum ensuring there is sufficient teaching time for all NC subjects and religious education;

- complete whole-school schemes of work ensuring that attention is paid to all aspects of the NC programmes of study and religious education, so that planning allows pupils to make progress in the required knowledge, skills and understanding;
- continue to develop assessment in the core subjects and improve assessment and marking in the foundation subjects;
- introduce precise and measurable targets in the SDP;
- ensure that statutory requirements related to the completion of attendance registers and the content of the school prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are adhered to.

Nursery and Infant School

- the role of the curriculum co-ordinators is strengthened to enable them to become actively involved in monitoring and evaluating standards of achievement;
- that a more systematic approach is adopted to recording on-going assessment;
- that existing good practice in using assessment to plan new work is extended to ensure a consistent whole-school approach;
- that issues of registration and pupil absences are addressed effectively.

Through the implementation of a detailed SDP that focuses on short term targets, there is evidence of improvement in many of the above issues. Shortcomings still exist, however, with respect to:

- improving standards in subjects;
- developing the role of the subject co-ordinators and ensuring their involvement in monitoring the curriculum and raising standards and teaching quality;

Only since amalgamation, has real headway been made to address the key issues in both schools and to encourage school improvement.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order to build upon the progress it has made since the appointment of the head to the new primary school, the school needs to:

- respond immediately to those key issues still outstanding and raise standards in those subjects deemed to have shortcomings;
- develop a culture of self-evaluation, especially with respect to the effective monitoring of teaching quality and the sharing of best practice, in order to help raise standards in teaching and the quality of learning;
- review the size, roles and responsibilities of the SMT, so that it can begin to work more effectively with the head to foster a community of mutual support and critical self-evaluation and ultimately to highlight clear medium and long term goals that raise educational standards.

The inspectors wish to express their thanks to the governing body, head, staff, parents and pupils of Cefn Fforest School for their co-operation and assistance before and during the inspection.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Cefn Fforest Primary
School type	LEA maintained
Age -range of pupils	3 - 11 years
Address of school	Cefn Fforest Avenue Cefn Fforest Blackwood
Post-Code	NP12 3JX
Telephone Number	01443 830449 (Junior) 01443 830602 (Infant)

Headteacher	Mrs J Dunn
Date of appointment	September 1992 (infant school) September 2000 (amalgamated primary school)
Chair of Governors	Mrs L Price
Registered Inspector	Mr P Treadwell
Dates of inspection	24 - 28 June 2002

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	25.5	58	56	58	62	76	85	66	486.5

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	22	0	22

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	24:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	13:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	6:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25.3
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Term 1	88.9	91.4	92.4	91.7
Term 2	89.2	91.4	89.3	90
Term 3	90.8	93.7	92.05	92.3

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.	Nil
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C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2001

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2001			Number of pupils in Y2: 59						
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	A	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5	2	80	14	0
		National	0	0	4	13	62	21	0
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5	3	76	15	0
		National	0	0	4	13	54	29	0
	Task/Test	School	0	0	5	2	81	12	0
		National	1	0	3	13	53	30	0
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5	2	88	5	0
		National	0	0	5	13	70	12	0
	Task/Test	School	0	0	5	2	92	2	0
		National	0	1	5	10	75	9	0
EN: Speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5	0	73	22	0
		National	0	0	3	11	63	23	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	3	3	76	17	0
		National	0	0	2	9	60	29	0
	Task/Test	School	0	0	3	2	68	27	0
		National	0	0	2	6	56	36	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	2	3	81	14	0
		National	0	0	2	10	67	21	0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school:	93%	In Wales:	81%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under sections 364 and 365 of the Education Act 1996 or, in the case of the Task/Test were absent.
A Pupils who have failed to register a level due to absence
W Pupils who are working towards level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for level 1.

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2001

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2001							Number of pupils in Y6: 82						
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	0	0	8	2	10	25	38	15	0
		National	0	0	1	n/a	0	1	6	19	48	25	0
	Test/Task	School	0	6	10	0	0	0	10	13	46	15	0
		National	0	2	2	0	n	n	4	14	47	31	n
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	8	0	0	2	4	10	23	34	19	0
		National	0	0	1	n/a	0	1	4	19	47	28	0
	Test/Task	School	0	12	2	0	0	0	13	8	40	25	0
		National	0	2	1	1	n	n	4	19	42	32	n
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	4	2	0	4	0	8	11	42	29	0
		National	0	0	1	n/a	0	0	3	15	52	29	0
	Test/Task	School	0	6	4	0	0	0	5	10	48	27	0
		National	0	2	0	1	n	n	2	13	51	31	n

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	56%	In the school:	60%
In Wales:	68%	In Wales:	68%

These figures include the 12% of MLD pupils i.e. pupils working at below the 2nd percentile.

- 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
- N Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
- B Pupils not entered for tests because they are working outside the levels of the tests.
- W Pupils who are working towards level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for level 1
- n tests do not cover these levels.
- n/a not applicable.

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

The inspection took place over five days, five inspectors were involved and 116 sessions were observed. During this time all teachers were visited, all classes seen and all subjects of the NC inspected.

Discussion with pupils to ascertain their knowledge of curriculum areas and their attitude to learning took place on a regular basis. Pupils' work across the age and ability range was examined systematically and the school provided the inspection team with a comprehensive record of pupils' work and other school activities.

Discussion also took place with the head and staff, including non-teaching staff, to establish their specific responsibilities and professional perspectives. School documentation was examined and a detailed discussion took place with the head and support staff concerning financial matters.

The views of parents and governors were received and analysed. 71 parents' questionnaires were returned; 92% of the responses were positive.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

NAME	ASPECTS	SUBJECTS
Mr P Treadwell	1.The school and its priorities 2.Main Findings 3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning 3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum 6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement 6.2 Leadership and efficiency 6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 8.1 Progress since the last inspection 8.2 Key issues for action	Science Information Technology Physical Education
Mrs R Boardman	4.2 Behaviour and attitudes 4.3 Attendance 5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions 5.7 Partnership with industry	
Mrs P Evans	5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting 5.4 Support, guidance and pupils welfare 5.5 Provision for pupils with SEN	English Art Religious Education
Dr D Evans	4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 5.1 Teaching	Welsh second language Design and Technology History Music
Mrs J Stevens	5.3 Curriculum	Early Years Mathematics Geography