

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

CHIRK INFANT SCHOOL

CHAPEL LANE

CHIRK

WREXHAM

School Number: 665-2144

Date of Inspection: 18-21 February 2002

by

MRS S M BARNES

Registered Inspector

Date: 11 April 2002

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Pupils mainly come from the town of Chirk on the English border. The school occupies a spacious site adjacent to playing fields in the middle of the town. The area is described as being neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. No pupils came from Welsh speaking homes. A small proportion are from ethnic minority homes. At the time of the current inspection two per cent of the pupils were receiving support in English as an additional language (EAL). At the time of the last inspection there were 155 full-time pupils on roll and 41 nursery age pupils attending for five morning sessions per fortnight. Currently the school has 169 pupils on roll between the ages of three and seven, with 34 part-time nursery children attending either during the morning or the afternoon. The intake is described as covering the full ability range. There are currently 47 pupils with special educational needs (SEN). One pupil has a statement of SEN. Since the previous inspection the school building has undergone extensive refurbishment. This resulted in there being no access to the hall for approximately one year and for one year before that the hall had to be used as a classroom. During the inspection, three of the four classes at Key Stage 1 (KS1), were taught by newly qualified teachers, two of whom were providing maternity supply cover for absent permanent staff.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Chirk Infant School is a very warm, welcoming and friendly school with a very significant number of good features. Staff and governors have worked hard to create a school, which offers good quality education and a good ethos.

The educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate and promotes the desirable outcomes for children's learning. Standards achieved in the nursery and reception classes are good in all areas of learning and children make good progress.

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

- In KS1, standards of achievement in the different subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) and religious education are as follows:

English	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good
Science	Good
Welsh second language	Good
Design and technology	Good
Information technology	Good
History	Good
Geography	Good
Art	Good
Music	Satisfactory
Physical education	Satisfactory

Religious education	Good
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- Standards achieved are satisfactory in all lessons observed and in 59 per cent they were good. There has been an improvement of standards in mathematics, science and design technology since the last inspection. At that time they were judged to be satisfactory and currently they are good. Standards are also good in information communication technology (ICT), religious education, geography and history.
- Standards were unsatisfactory in music, this has improved and they are now satisfactory. Standards are also satisfactory in English, and physical education.
- Results of the national tests in mathematics in 2001 were in line with the average. Eighty-nine per cent of pupils attained at least level 2 and of those 33 per cent attained the higher level 3. Results in tests in English were broadly average in that 82 per cent of pupils attained at least level 2. However, a lower than average proportion (10 per cent) attained the higher level 3. In writing, no pupil attained level 3, compared to nine per cent nationally. In reading, forty-one per cent attained level 3, compared to 30 per cent nationally and in the English spelling test, 48 per cent attained level 3.
- Results of teacher assessments in science indicated more pupils than nationally attained at least level 2, 95 per cent compared with 88 per cent. However, no pupils were assessed as attaining level 3 compared with 21 per cent nationally.
- Pupils with SEN and those with EAL achieve appropriate standards in all subjects. There are no significant variations in achievement between particular groups of pupils in relation to their age, ability, ethnicity or gender. The school is socially and academically inclusive.
- Children under five in the nursery and reception classes have good opportunities to develop and apply skills of literacy, numeracy and the use of ICT fully throughout the day. Standards are good.
- In applying their skills across the curriculum, pupils achieve good standards in numeracy and ICT and speaking and listening and satisfactory standards overall in reading and writing. However, a significant minority do not achieve fluency and expression in reading and do not produce sufficient imaginative and extended written pieces of work.
- The quality of the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The high standards noted by the previous inspection have been maintained. The school effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies held daily, provide suitable opportunities for reflection and the development of spiritual awareness.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to learn about Wales and Welsh culture. The whole range of visitors and trips the school makes enable pupils to have a good awareness of Welsh artists and traditional arts and occupations. The curriculum for religious education and geography effectively provides pupils with knowledge of the wider world and the richness and diversity of British life today.
- The school has effective procedures to promote good behaviour and to eliminate bullying, sexism, racism and other discrimination. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall as a result.

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- Overall attendance is good and at 96 per cent for the autumn term in 2001, is similar to that recorded during the last inspection and is above the national average. The level of unauthorised absence is minimal and reflects the rigid control of attendance the school adopts. No exclusions have been recorded during the current academic school year.
 - The quality of teaching is good overall. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Good teaching was observed in 59 per cent of lessons. On occasions very good teaching was observed.
 - Overall work is well matched to pupils' abilities and prior attainment. However, there is room for an even better match in some lessons. Marking and assessment is very good in some classes and is well used to plan work to match individual pupils' needs. However, this high quality marking and assessment does not happen in all classes. In addition, older and more able pupils do not always know what is the next step to improve their work and achieve even higher standards.
 - The curriculum is good for nursery and reception children and at KS1. This broadly reflects the findings of the previous report. Curriculum areas are all well-planned. Virtually all policies and schemes of work have been reviewed and provide a good basis for teachers' planning.
 - The headteacher and staff give good academic and pastoral support to pupils. They provide sound advice and guidance for all pupils on personal and school related issues and are successful in ensuring the care and welfare of pupils. Sound policies have been drawn up on matters such as behaviour, discipline, equal opportunities, drug awareness and the prevention of bullying. Very good arrangements are in place for child protection.
 - Provision for pupils with SEN is good overall, and they are well supported in their work.
 - A good partnership has been established with parents, the local community, and other institutions. The school has developed a strong bond with parents. A high regard for this partnership was expressed in the pre-inspection meeting and also in the responses to the questionnaire, although a minority said they would like even more information. Parents in return are clearly respected by the school and made to feel welcome and valued. Valuable parental assistance is provided with a number of activities including design and technology, reading, school trips, library and administrative tasks.
 - Overall the school's partnership with industry is good and has improved considerably since the last inspection. The development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of industry and the world of work has been enhanced by the relationship, which the headteacher and deputy have established with local companies.
 - The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good. The headteacher and staff meet regularly to discuss the curriculum. Schemes of work and policies have all been updated in recent months.
 - The leadership of the school is good and has resulted in a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher knows her pupils and colleagues well. She has a good overview of the school and, together with the deputy, has a good level of awareness of what the school needs to do to continue to improve. Relationships are good and there is a very positive ethos, which pervades all aspects of school life.

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- Informal procedures are in place to monitor teaching and learning, and the headteacher has a suitable knowledge of the strengths of her staff. However, as yet, there is no regular, formal evaluation of the quality of teaching, with criteria set, in all subjects to help the dissemination of good practice.
 - The quality of staffing, accommodation and resources is good overall. The accommodation is very good and has a very positive effect on the quality of education the pupils receive.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Standards achieved are satisfactory in all lessons observed and in 59 per cent they were good. There has been an improvement in standards in mathematics, science and design technology since the last inspection. At that time they were judged to be satisfactory and currently they are good. Standards were unsatisfactory in music, this has improved and they are now satisfactory.

- Children in the nursery and the two reception classes achieve good standards in all six areas of learning for children under five.
- Standards are currently good in mathematics, science, design and technology, ICT, religious education, geography and history.
- Standards are satisfactory in English, music and physical education.
- Results of the national tests in mathematics in 2001 were in line with the national average. Eighty-nine per cent of pupils attained at least level 2 and of those 33 per cent attained the higher level 3.
- Results in tests in English were broadly average in that 82 per cent of pupils attained at least level 2. However, a lower than average proportion (10 per cent) attained the higher level 3. In writing no pupil attained level 3, compared to nine per cent nationally. In reading 41 per cent attained level 3, compared to 30 per cent nationally and in the English spelling test, 48 per cent attained level 3.
- Results of teacher assessments in science indicated more pupils than nationally attained at least level 2, 95 per cent compared with 88 per cent. However, no pupils were assessed as attaining level 3 compared with 21 per cent nationally.
- Pupils with SEN and those with EAL achieve appropriate standards in all subjects. There are no significant variations in achievement between particular groups of pupils in relation to their age, ability, ethnicity or gender.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

Standards pupils attain in applying their skills across the curriculum are satisfactory overall.

- Children under five in the nursery and reception classes have good opportunities and develop and apply skills of literacy, numeracy and the use of ICT fully throughout the day. Standards are good.
- Skills in speaking and listening are good throughout the school. Pupils listen carefully with concentration and take part in discussions eagerly.

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- Skills in reading and writing are satisfactory. Suitable opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to use their skills to research work and to write about the things they find out.
 - Pupils at KS1 make good progress in developing numeracy skills and the standards they attain are good. Pupils use mathematics skills effectively to support learning in other subjects, such as science.
 - Skills in ICT are good. Pupils use computers confidently to help them in their work in other subjects, such as mathematics and science. They control the mouse with accuracy. They use listening stations to support developing literacy skills well.
 - In subjects such as geography and religious education they make correct use of vocabulary linked to that subject.
 - Investigative and experimental skills are appropriately developed in science and design technology.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The quality of the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The high standards noted by the previous inspection have been maintained.

- The school effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies held daily, provide suitable opportunities for reflection and the development of spiritual awareness.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn about Christian and other beliefs. They learn about Islam and Judaism as well as learning stories from the Bible. As a result, they develop a good knowledge and insight into the values and beliefs of others and the importance of faith in the daily lives of people today.
- Pupils are effectively taught the difference between right and wrong. They treat other people and equipment with respect.
- The school effectively encourages pupils to work together collaboratively and take responsibility for their actions. The "Helper of the Day" award provides all pupils with the opportunity to exercise initiative and take part in helping as a member of the school community.
- Relationships are good and pupils work together well. The school effectively promotes racial equality.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to learn about Wales and Welsh culture. The whole range of visitors and trips the school makes enables pupils to have a good awareness of Welsh artists and traditional arts and occupations.
- The curriculum for religious education and geography effectively provides pupils with knowledge of the wider world and the richness and diversity of British life today.
- The school enables pupils to become caring citizens. They support charities at home and abroad and demonstrate consideration for each other.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Overall, the quality of pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. The majority of pupils behave well.

- The school has good, clear policies on behaviour and discipline. The rules are simple and are displayed in the classrooms. Pupils are regularly reminded of the school's expectations for good conduct.
- The majority of pupils are courteous and well mannered and have a positive attitude towards their work. However, a very small minority of pupils within each class are inattentive and lacking in self-discipline and on occasions this adversely affects the ability of other pupils to concentrate on their tasks.
- The school has policies on equal opportunities and bullying and during the inspection no instances of bullying were observed.
- There is a happy, caring ethos within the school.

4.3 Attendance

Overall attendance is good and at 96 per cent for the autumn term in 2001, is similar to that recorded during the last inspection and is above the national average. The level of unauthorised absence is minimal and reflects the rigid control of attendance the school adopts. No exclusions have been recorded during the current academic school year.

- The school fully complies with the statutory requirements for registration. Class details are collated and monitored each week by the headteacher who uses the data effectively to evaluate individual and group trends of absence.
- The school policy for attendance is clearly explained in a written document having been agreed by the governors and which includes a strategy to achieve success. Most parents have a sound knowledge of its requirements and have been very supportive in ensuring that its objectives are met. However a small minority fail to provide the necessary cooperation.
- Parents inform the school at the earliest opportunity if a child is to be absent and there are sound systems to record details. Procedures are established for dealing with situations of absence without notification and also for children returning to school after long periods of absence. The school management have effective methods of dealing with such situations and these ensure as little disruption as possible to pupil education.
- Punctuality at the start of the school day is satisfactory although a small number of pupils were observed arriving after the commencement time for lessons. Arrival time for individual lessons is good and ensures maximum teaching time and consequently is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching is good overall. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be at least satisfactory and sometimes good.

- Good teaching was observed in 59 per cent of lessons. On occasions very good teaching was observed.

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- Teaching in the nursery is consistently good. It is well planned and effectively covers all areas of learning for young children. As a result, children achieve appropriately high standards in their learning.
 - Teaching in the two reception classes is good overall. It is always at least satisfactory and usually it is good. On occasion it is very good.
 - Teachers in the early years have a good knowledge of the needs of young children and are effectively supported by well-qualified support assistants. The quality of teaching in early years has a very positive effect on the standards young children achieve.
 - Teaching of pupils with SEN is good and as a result they make good progress towards their targets and achieve well.
 - Teaching at KS1 is always at least satisfactory and it is good overall in those classes taught by permanent members of staff. Lesson planning is good and is well linked to the schemes of work for all subjects and ensures continuity of progression in pupils' learning.
 - Teachers, particularly those who are permanent staff members, use a good range of teaching techniques to make lessons effective. They make good use of ICT to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects.
 - Teachers all show at least satisfactory expectations of pupils' behaviour and application to work. The expectations of permanent staff are appropriately high.
 - Overall work is well matched to pupils' abilities and prior attainment. However, there is room for even better match in some lessons. Marking and assessment is very good in some classes and is well used to plan work to match individual pupils' needs. However, this high quality marking and assessment does not happen in all classes. In addition, older and more able pupils do not always know what is the next step to improve their work and achieve higher standards.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

On the whole, the quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good.

- Assessment and recording for the under-fives are good. Regular assessments are made of the children's achievements and detailed records kept of their development in the six areas of learning. The reports to parents convey all the necessary information clearly and concisely.
- Baseline assessments are conducted on the under-fives in accordance with the Local Education Authority's (LEA) procedures. Appropriate use is made of the results in order to identify at an early stage pupils who have specific needs.
- In KS1, class teachers keep careful records of assessments, which provide a clear indication of pupils' progress in the core and foundation subjects.
- The school uses a variety of commercial and school produced tests, including regular reading tests, in order to keep track of each pupil's development.
- Teachers' short-term plans include opportunities for assessments and are linked to NC requirements. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to use these assessments to plan work to closely match the needs of individual pupils.

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- Pupils' work is regularly marked but constructive comments on how to improve on the quality and content of the work are not always included. Pupils have not been set personal targets and therefore do not play a sufficiently active part in the process of assessing their own progress.
 - Profiles are maintained for every pupil. They contain the annual reports and samples of pupils' work in the core and foundation subjects. Also included are the half yearly assessments, which are used by the staff during their consultations with parents.
 - Pupils with SEN are assessed appropriately and in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice.
 - The annual reports to parents are based on "comment banks" produced by school staff. They conform with the statutory requirements and are of good quality. They provide useful information and observations on each pupil's progress and also indicate the next step in the child's educational development.
 - During the school year parents are invited into the school for two formal consultations with the staff and at the end of the summer term are given the opportunity to discuss their child's annual report with the teachers. The school has an open door policy for parents.

5.3 Curriculum

The curriculum is good for nursery and reception children and at KS1. This broadly reflects the findings of the previous report.

- There is suitable whole school planning for the development of key skills in English. Development of skills in numeracy and in ICT, are good.
- Curriculum areas are all well-planned. Virtually all policies and schemes of work have been reviewed and provide a good basis for teachers' planning.
- Arrangements for the pupils' personal and social education are good. There is an effective policy in place which is implemented well. Provision for sex education and equality of opportunity are good. The school is socially inclusive and care is taken to ensure that the curriculum and other school activities provide equality of access and opportunity.
- There is suitable provision for extra-curricular activities to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils have appropriate tasks to perform at home such as reading and these have a beneficial effect on the progress they make.
- The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. There is appropriate emphasis on all areas of learning and the desirable learning outcomes for young children are planned effectively.
- The curriculum at KS1 is broad and effectively balanced. Statutory requirements are met and there is appropriate provision for pupils from all groups.
- The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is effectively integrated into other subjects. Good use is made of opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge of Wales and Welsh culture.
- The curriculum for pupils with SEN is good and they are effectively supported in their learning.
- The curriculum for pupils with EAL is good and promotes swift integration.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

The headteacher and staff give good academic and pastoral support to pupils. They provide sound advice and guidance for all pupils on personal and school related issues and are successful in ensuring the care and welfare of pupils.

- Sound policies have been drawn up on matters such as behaviour, discipline, equal opportunities, drugs awareness and the prevention of bullying. Most have been successfully implemented.
- Very good arrangements are in place for child protection. The headteacher is the designated member of staff for this area and has ensured that colleagues are fully aware of procedures and responsibilities. Careful attention has been paid to statutory requirements and guidance from the LEA.
- The induction of children entering the school is sensitively handled. Pupils are taught in a warm, caring environment providing a good atmosphere for learning. A well-planned programme ensures that, at the end of Y2, pupils make a smooth transition to the junior school.
- Pupils' educational progress and personal development are monitored on a regular basis. Record keeping is satisfactory but there are areas of inconsistency. Good arrangements are made for discussions with parents.
- A comprehensive policy and well-documented procedures have been produced on health and safety. The headteacher carries out regular assessments of risks in consultation with the governing body and details are properly recorded. The recently extended building includes a security alarm system, safety door locking arrangements and metal security fencing which surrounds the areas of child access.
- Pupils with special needs receive good support. Progress is well monitored and outside agencies provide suitable guidance.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN

Overall the quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good.

- Forty-seven pupils are identified as having SEN. Of these one is statemented.
- The arrangements for identifying and monitoring pupils' needs are effective and take into account the requirements of the Code of Practice.
- Pupils' individual education plans are drawn up by the SEN co-ordinator and the class teachers. These include suitable learning objectives, which appropriately match pupils' needs and are kept under regular review. Detailed records are kept of pupils' development.
- Pupils are systematically monitored by the headteacher, in her role as SENCO. They are integrated into all class activities and careful planning ensures that they are provided with tasks which match their individual needs and abilities.
- Liaison with parents is good and they are informed regularly, both formally and informally, of pupils' progress.
- The governors with responsibility for SEN are interested and involved in SEN matters.

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- Learning resources are appropriate, effectively used and are well organised and maintained.
 - Links with the LEA and other outside agencies are good.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

A good partnership has been established with parents, the local community, and other institutions.

- The school has developed a strong bond with parents. Home visits are made before children start in the nursery and reception classes. A high regard for this partnership was expressed in the pre-inspection meeting and also in the responses to the questionnaire. Parents in return are clearly respected by the school and made to feel welcome and valued.
- Valuable parental assistance is provided with a number of activities including design and technology, reading, school trips, library and administrative tasks. The Friends of the School have not attended meetings in great number but have been very supportive in raising funds to assist the school. Recent purchases of equipment for mathematics, televisions and video recorders and resource materials throughout the school has enhanced learning.
- Formal communication with parents is good. The headteacher sends out regular newsletters, which are informative and appreciated. Insufficient information, however, is provided about matters such as the curriculum and homework to satisfy the requirements of a significant minority of parents. Development plan objectives and the subsequent results of the action plans are well known to parents.
- The governors' report to parents complies with the statutory requirements. Policies for all aspects of school life are implemented by effective liaison between the governors, parents and the overall results demonstrate the quality and usefulness of these arrangements.
- Pupils are encouraged to participate in community projects and to develop personal awareness of environmental issues. Links with the National Trust at Chirk Castle, Erddig and also those with the Lighthouse Association have been particularly successful in extending pupil knowledge of the curriculum. Evidence of the benefits received from such links are clearly visible in the classrooms.
- Liaison with the junior school is very good. Arrangements are made for pupils in Y2 to visit and for staff in the junior school to visit Chirk Infant School. A well-established system ensures that transfer is smooth and efficiently handled.
- Good partnership arrangements have been made with teacher-training establishments, including the North-East Wales Institute of Higher Education. Students undertake regular placements at the school. During the inspection students from Yale College were providing effective support for the early years teachers. The school also takes work experience pupils from local secondary schools and colleges. Current arrangements the school has with the co-ordinators of the associated training organisations ensures that best practice is achieved.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

Overall the schools' partnership with industry is good and has improved considerably since the last inspection.

- The development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of industry and the world of work has been enhanced by the relationship, which the headteacher has established with local companies.
- A link with a company involved in the publishing of educational material has given pupils an opportunity to plan and write news stories, trial worksheets and gain experience in the process of constructing a magazine. Representatives of other companies have visited the school and pupils have participated in project work, problem solving and industrially linked schemes.
- Local organisations have provided cash grants, which the school has used to improve the environment. An amphitheatre has been constructed in the school grounds whilst work on creating a dragon out of a tree by a wood carver is ongoing. In the garden area pupils and members of the local community have planted bulbs, plants and bushes.
- Staff development through links with industry is satisfactory and the school is in the process of introducing guidelines for the provision of industrial placements for teachers. Relationships are not fully established with the Training and Enterprise Councils, and the potential benefits of any links, is being reviewed by the school's management.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good. The headteacher and staff meet regularly to discuss the curriculum. Schemes of work and policies have all been updated in recent months. The whole process is effectively based on the assessment of areas for improvement. Suitable steps are being taken to build on achievements and extend procedures for self-evaluation.

- Useful policy documents have been produced for all areas of the curriculum. This includes a useful booklet for newly qualified teachers and staff new to the school.
- Schemes of work have been effectively reviewed for all areas and provide good guidance for teachers to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' work. Standards of planning and evaluation are good overall.
- The school development plan (SDP) is a thorough document that appropriately notes who will be responsible for each development and what the cost will be and how success will be evaluated. The targets are realistic and appropriate to moving the school forward.
- Informal procedures are in place to monitor teaching and learning, and the headteacher has a suitable knowledge of the strengths of her staff. However, as yet, there is no regular, formal evaluation of the quality of teaching, with criteria set, in all subjects to help the dissemination of good practice.

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- Detailed job descriptions identifying responsibilities have been agreed and staff training is linked appropriately to both the needs of the school and the staff concerned.
 - Appropriate procedures are in place to develop skills in literacy and there are good procedures for the development of numeracy skills.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

The leadership of the school is good and has resulted in a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher knows her pupils and colleagues well. She has a good overview of the school and, together with the deputy, a good level of awareness of what the school needs to do to continue to improve. Relationships are good and there is a very positive ethos, which pervades all aspects of school life.

- The quality of leadership is good. The headteacher ably supported by her deputy and the governing body ensure clear educational direction for the work of the school.
- The aims of the school are appropriate and known to all. The school has a sense of purpose and school development is suitably linked to the promotion of those aims.
- Routine organisation and administration are good.
- The role of the curriculum co-ordinators is developing appropriately despite unavoidable staff absence.
- Financial management is very efficient and funds are used very well to provide a good quality of education for all pupils. Grants and other funds are used effectively to enhance teaching and learning.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is well organised and well managed.
- Suitably strong emphasis is placed on the safety and welfare of pupils. Statutory requirements are met and due regard is paid to National Assembly for Wales guidelines.
- Overall the school is a happy, well-organised and well ordered community.

6.3 Accommodation and Learning Resources

The quality of staffing, accommodation and resources is good overall. The accommodation is very good and has a very positive effect on the quality of education the pupils receive.

- The school has eight full time teachers, including the headteacher without class responsibilities. During the inspection period there were three newly-qualified supply teachers taking three of the four classes in KS1.
- The school is appropriately staffed for the number of pupils on roll.
- All permanent members of staff possess job descriptions, which include curricular responsibilities. Their monitoring roles are at present underdeveloped.
- Arrangements for the professional development of staff are satisfactory. Teachers have attended a suitable range of in-service training (INSET) courses and the school is well supported by the LEA advisory team. One such course is an early years accredited course, which nursery and reception teachers have completed.
- The two nursery assistants, and the support worker, who work with the under-fives, are highly experienced and make praiseworthy contributions to the general development of the children.
- The school secretary provides effective administrative support and ensures the orderly running of the school. She is also fully involved in school life and gives freely of her time.

- The lunch-time supervisory staff, together with the catering staff, caretaker and cleaner all contribute effectively towards the smooth day-to-day running of the school.
- Generally, the quantity and quality of resources are appropriate for teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- The accommodation is very good and is used appropriately to meet pupils' needs. There are attractive displays of good quality around the school and both inside and outside the school building, staff have successfully created a stimulating learning environment for the pupils.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

Currently the educational provision for the under-fives taken overall is appropriate and successfully promotes all of the desirable outcomes for children's learning. Standards achieved in the nursery and reception classes are good in all six areas of learning. Outdoor play is effectively integrated into daily routines. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when overall standards and quality were appropriate and adequately promoted the goals for pupils' learning. The activities were judged to be challenging and children often make good progress as a result. However, outdoor play was insufficiently integrated into daily routines.

Good features

Physical Development

- Children hold pens and pencils with comfortable grip and use them with appropriate skill.
- They confidently manipulate scissors and glue sticks.
- They mould clay and dough into shapes to represent burgers and chips.
- Nursery children clap and tap in time to music. They play outside sharing toys well.

Communication, Language and Literacy

- Higher attaining nursery children attempt to write their own name, others sometimes make marks on paper, (a large proportion have speech and language difficulties).
- Higher attaining children copy writing they have told their teacher to write down.
- They listen to short stories with interest, looking at books, tell the story with regard to the pictures.
- Reception children understand that written text conveys meaning and more able children read simple texts confidently.
- Reception and nursery children know and regularly use a range of simple Welsh words and phrases. Joining in with rhymes and songs in Welsh with obvious enjoyment.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- Children plant seeds and bulbs and watch how they grow.
- They celebrate the changing seasons and note different festivals associated with them such as Easter, Divali and Christmas.
- They learn about changing weather, look at the effects of frost and the patterns it makes. They play with snow, noting its feel and taste and the changes that occur when it is brought into the classroom.
- They look at different fruit and vegetables, scooping out pumpkins to see the seeds and taking cabbage apart comparing the outer and inner leaves.

Personal and Social Development

- Nursery children learn to share and take turns during snack sessions and when they prepare for play or music lessons.
- Reception children listen to each other quietly and politely and take turns well, they concentrate well.
- They relate well to other children and adults. They are co-operative and respond well to the routines of the classroom.

Mathematical Development

- Reception children count in English (and Welsh).
- Nursery children share out fruit for snack.
- Reception children sort objects and match them to similar ones.
- Nursery children stack drinking cups according to colour and name simple shapes such as 'circle' and 'square'.
- Nursery children count to three in English and Welsh.
- Reception children count reliably to six.

Creative Development

- Children in the nursery learn to mix paint and apply it carefully to achieve different effects.
- Nursery and reception children sing with enthusiasm.
- Nursery children play in the hospital using imagination when "phoning home."
- Reception children use their imaginations effectively when playing in the restaurant or using small world toys.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

English

Standards of achievement in speaking and listening, reading and writing are satisfactory. Pupils make sound progress in relation to their age and abilities. The standards noted at the time of the last report have been maintained.

Good features

- Most pupils listen quietly to the teachers' presentations and in general demonstrate understanding of what is being presented. The majority can speak quite confidently in informal situations. The more able pupils use good vocabulary when discussing various aspects of their work.
- Younger pupils are developing a sound knowledge of phonics and the majority of the older pupils are able to use their phonic skills successfully to tackle unknown words. The more able pupils read their story-books accurately and with understanding and are able to discuss the actions of some of the characters and to express an opinion on the story line.
- Pupils are making appropriate progress with their writing skills. Younger pupils form letters, words and simple sentences with support while many Y2 pupils are beginning to write more independently. A small minority write well using different sentence structures within their writing. Their spelling of familiar words is usually correct and they make correct use of capital letters and full stops.
- Pupils' handwriting is progressing well and their letters are accurately formed and are consistent in size.
- Pupils with SEN and EAL make appropriate progress.

Shortcomings

- A significant minority of pupils do not read with fluency and expression and they have limited understanding of the text.
- A significant minority lack the skill and confidence to write independently and the more able do not produce sufficient amount of imaginative and extended pieces of work.

Mathematics

Standards in mathematics are good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, which judged them to be satisfactory.

Good features

- Suitable inclusion of investigative and experimental work has resulted in pupils attaining appropriate standards in this area of work.
- Pupils take part in a suitable range of investigations. They produce good block and bar charts as a result noting eye colour, favourite toys etc. Pupils have suitable skills in sorting items for different criteria.
- They construct practical Carroll diagrams using hoops to sort materials in work linked to science.
- They have a good understanding of bi-lateral symmetry. Their work includes good links to numeracy and information technology. They make symmetrical pictures using computers.

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- Pupils have a good understanding of pattern in number including using cuisenaire rods. They count forwards and back confidently and older pupils size rods accurately. They note patterns in mathematics such as odd and even and use this to help them in their computation.
 - Pupils have a good developing knowledge of the properties of two and three dimensional shapes.
 - Pupils of all abilities and from all groups, including those with SEN and EAL make appropriate progress in developing their skills and understanding in mathematics.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Science

Standards in science are good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils know about the needs of living things. They look carefully at what different plants such as daffodils and potatoes need to grow. They continue to make good use of the environment in their learning.
- They can name different parts of the body. They learn about senses and conduct experiments on taste, for example.
- Pupils understand the properties of different materials and compare and contrast their features. They experiment to find out which materials would provide an effective waterproof covering, they look at everyday uses for common materials and they sort materials into sets in work linked to mathematics.
- They understand electricity and learn how to make a simple circuit with batteries. They draw their own diagrams to show what they have done and label the parts correctly.
- Pupils learn what things are powered by electricity in daily life and how to avoid accidents around the home.
- They learn about light sources and compare natural sources such as the sun with man made sources, comparing the power of different torches to light a darkened room.
- Pupils investigate the movement of different shapes and toy vehicles down a ramp in work linked to mathematics. They have suitable understanding of a fair test.
- Pupils have suitable skills in devising their own fair tests and interpreting the results.
- Statutory requirements are fully met.
- Pupils of all levels of ability and from all groups including those with SEN make steady progress and achieve appropriate standards in their learning.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop skills in speaking and listening, numeracy and ICT in science lessons.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.



Welsh second language

Standards of achievement are good overall. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils know a variety of words and phrases associated with the class theme and are able to recall key words in greeting, commands and instruction. In Y2, pupils respond well in role-play situations and make appropriate use of the phrases learnt.
- They know how to respond to questions about themselves and their pronunciation and intonation is generally good.
- They can sing simple songs and rhymes which help consolidate the language patterns learnt and they show great enthusiasm for the work and the learning process.
- They are able to read and write familiar words confidently and with understanding.
- They respond well to the incidental use of Welsh within the school.

Shortcomings

- In Y1, pupils do not play a sufficient part in role-play situations or in singing simple rhymes to consolidate their learning of new language patterns.

Design and technology

Standards in design technology are good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils take care in their designs and consider carefully which are the most attractive as when they designed badges for school or crowns to wear to the ball. They evaluate their designs effectively.
- They plan their work in detail, listing what equipment and resources they will need and planning how to add interest to models in the form of moving parts, for example when pupils made models of the 'Iron Man' linked to literacy work.
- Models are made and finished well, designs are followed carefully and pupils work hard to ensure that the finished product is fit for its purpose.
- Pupils build and make models with construction toys that show their thought about what the finished product needs to look like and to do.
- They work with a suitable range of materials, including cutting rigid card and learning to mould clay to make very interesting stepping stones for the garden.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Information technology

Overall, standards of achievement are good. The high standards noted by the previous inspection have been maintained.

Good features

- Pupils are generally confident and competent in their use of computers. They acquire a range of information technology skills using the keyboard and the electronic mouse. Pupils in Y2 are able to load, save and print their own work.
- Information technology is developing as a natural part of classroom activity. Pupils use a range of programs to reinforce their language and number skills.
- Pupils use software programs effectively, covering aspects of word processing and data handling. They learn to handle information and are able to record results in the form of simple graphs.
- Pupils are becoming competent in the use of a floor robot and beginning to understand simple control systems.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

History

Standards of achievement are good. The high standards noted by the previous report have been maintained.

Good features

- Pupils are developing an appropriate understanding of differences between past and present and are beginning to formulate simple ideas about sources of evidence. They actively participate in interviews with senior members of the school staff talking about their memories of school a 'long time ago'.
- Pupils have good recall of their visit to the Victorian school at Llangollen. They are able to write about the experience and to talk about the differences between aspects of education then and now.
- Their visit to Chirk Castle has been a useful stimulus for them bringing to life their own local heritage and has had a positive impact on their understanding of chronology.
- Pupils are aware of the contributions made by famous people in the past through listening to stories and looking at pictures.
- More able pupils are making good progress in developing a sense of chronology.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Geography

Standards in geography are good. The high standards found at the time of the previous inspection have been effectively maintained.

Good features

- Pupils develop a good knowledge of their immediate environment and its features.
- They study their classroom and its layout and learn to make simple plans which include the use of a key.
- They read maps of the area and note important physical and man made features.
- They develop a suitable understanding of the position of Chirk in relation to Wales and the rest of the United Kingdom.
- More able pupils learn the positions of the capital cities of the United Kingdom and mark them on a map.
- Pupils effectively compare and contrast the geography of the area with that of a coastal town. They learn about life in other countries, when looking at the life of children in schools in Albania. They have also had a talk about life in Australia by Australian teachers.
- Statutory requirements are fully met and pupils of all abilities and from all groups make suitable progress in their learning and achieve suitable standards.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Art

Standards of achievement are good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils use an appropriate range of materials to create paintings, drawings, prints and collage work of good standard.
- Pupils learn how to mix paints and to express their ideas openly and freely. They make good use of a range of materials to represent their ideas.
- They make good progress in their understanding of shape, pattern, texture and colour. They draw imaginative pictures using paint, pencil, pastel and charcoal.
- They have studied and talked about the work of Lowry and created their own pictures reflecting his unique style. They have also had the opportunity to see local artists at work and this has broadened their experiences.
- Their 3-dimensional model of 'The Iron Man' and their cross stitch work is of a high standard.
- Their work is attractively displayed throughout the school.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Music

Standards in music are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be unsatisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils know a variety of hymns and songs and they sing them tunefully.
- Pupils' awareness of basic rhythm is developing satisfactorily.
- In Y2, pupils recognise many of the percussion instruments and are able to group them according to how they are played. They are beginning to understand that symbols can be used in music to represent sound.
- Pupils are being introduced to the recorder as their first musical instrument. They hold the recorder correctly and use the correct fingering. They are able to play simple tunes using the notes A and B.

Shortcomings

- Pupils are at an early stage in their appreciation of musical composition and their evaluation and appraisal skills are underdeveloped.

Physical Education

Standards in physical education are satisfactory. This reflects the findings of the previous report. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils have suitable opportunities for partnered and collaborative work. However, the lack of access to the school hall during the recent refurbishment has had a negative effect on standards of climbing and balancing using apparatus in gymnastics, particularly for the older pupils.

Good features

- In dance, pupils know simple steps to folk dances. They respond to beat and perform the moves together with obvious enjoyment.
- In gymnastics, they have suitable awareness of space, moving around the hall with developing confidence. They consider different ways of travelling and rolling and work with concentration and collaborate appropriately. They move around the space controlling movement effectively and avoiding contact with others.
- They have appropriate awareness of patterns in movement. They put a series of movements together to form a simple sequence of actions, balancing on different parts of their body and holding the shapes for several seconds.
- In games lessons, such as short tennis, pupils demonstrate their co-operation with each other in hitting and retrieving a ball. They have appropriate skill in catching and throwing with direction and developing skills with a racket to move a ball on the floor to a partner.
- Pupils of all levels of ability and from all groups make at least satisfactory progress in developing their skills in lessons.

Shortcomings

- Older pupils do not have a well-developed knowledge of how to handle apparatus and put it out quickly and safely.

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- Many older pupils lack confidence and skill when climbing and balancing on larger apparatus.

Religious Education

Standards of achievement are good. The high standards noted by the previous report have been effectively maintained.

Good features

- Pupils' knowledge of the more familiar Bible stories is developing well.
- They have a good understanding of the main Christian festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest. They are aware of the function of prayer and have produced their own prayers.
- Pupils know of some of the practices and traditions of other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism and have written about them.
- They are able to express their thoughts and feelings about themselves and others. They understand the importance of friendship and that this should extend to the wider community both local and worldwide.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection and the school is in a good position to continue to improve still further.

The key issues for improvement highlighted by the previous report were:

- improve standards in music and the identified shortcomings in creative writing and the investigative elements of mathematics and science:- there has been satisfactory improvement in this issue.
- extend the role of the curriculum leaders so that their work has a more direct impact on standards in the school:- there has been satisfactory improvement in this issue.
- produce a more cohesive assessment, recording and reporting policy that is directly linked to a greater understanding about the required levels at various stages in order to raise standards:- there has been good improvement in this issue.
- improve the quality of the learning environment at KS1 in order to create more space and increased opportunities for interaction between teachers and pupils:- there has been good improvement in this issue.
- introduce a more focused approach to planning for the provision for under five pupils:- there has been good improvement in this issue.
- produce a more cohesive SDP:- there has been good improvement in this issue.
- In addition there have been improvements in standards in mathematics, music, art, design and technology, Welsh second language, and science.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order to raise standards further the school needs to:

- Monitor teaching formally, with criteria set for observation, to disseminate good practice within the school.
- Ensure the good marking and use of assessment in some classes is implemented throughout the school. Sharing targets for improvement with older, more able pupils.
- Raise standards in subjects which, while satisfactory overall, have some shortcomings.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Chirk Infant
School type	LEA maintained
Age-range of pupils	3-7
Address of school	Chapel Lane Chirk Wrexham
Post-Code	LL14 5NF
Telephone Number	01691 773497

Headteacher	Miss C Jones
Date of appointment	September 1984
Chair of Governors	Mrs S Winson
Registered Inspector	Mrs S M Barnes
Dates of inspection	18–21 February 2002

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>					
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Total
Number of pupils	17	50	46	56	169

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	8	-	8

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	25.3:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	17:2
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>			
	R	KS1	Whole school
Spring 2001	94	93	93.5
Summer 2001	94	93	93.5
Autumn 2001	94	93	93.5

<i>Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection</i>	0
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C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2001

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2001		Number of pupils in Y2: 39						
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	18	72	10	0
		National	0	4	13	62	21	0
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	18	36	46	0
		National	0	4	13	54	29	0
	Task/Test	School	0	0	21	38	41	0
		National	0	3	13	53	30	0
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	8	13	79	0	0
		National	0	5	13	70	12	0
	Task/Test	School	0	8	13	79	0	0
		National	0	5	10	75	9	0
EN: Speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	3	87	10	0
		National	0	3	11	63	23	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	10	79	10	0
		National	0	2	9	60	29	0
	Task/Test	School	0	0	10	56	33	0
		National	0	2	6	56	36	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5	95	0	0
		National	0	2	10	67	21	0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in English, mathematics and science in combination

In the school:	82	In Wales:	81
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- 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.
- W Pupils who are "working towards" level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for level 1.

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

- The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors, over a period of three and a half days.
- Pre-inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and governing body.
- Four parents attended a meeting to give their views of the school.
- Seventy-four questionnaire responses were analysed and summarised.
- All documentation submitted by the school was analysed and discussed, including the SDP, policy and curriculum documents and teachers' planning files.
- Pupils were observed as they arrived and departed from school and during the midday and other breaks.
- At various times during the day, inspectors took the opportunity to talk to pupils and to discuss their work.

- Forty-three lessons or part-lessons were observed.
- Pupils were heard reading and were examined in their knowledge and understanding of English, Welsh, science and other subjects.
- A wide range of pupils' written and other work was examined in all classes.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' work with class teachers and examined assessment records.
- Discussions were also held with the staff.
- The work of pupils with SEN was examined.
- Documents relating to the financial management of the school were discussed.
- Budget figures were examined.
- Attendance and pupil records were inspected.
- Inspectors attended acts of collective worship.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Mrs S M Barnes	RgI	Context; Main findings; Educational standards achieved by pupils; Teaching; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Curriculum; Leadership and efficiency; School improvement	early years mathematics science design and technology geography physical education
Mr S Roberts	lay	Attendance; Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions; Partnership with industry	
Miss J Davies	team	Behaviour and attitudes; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Assessment, recording and reporting; Provision for pupils with SEN; Accommodation and learning resources	Welsh second language English information technology history music art religious education

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