

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

Coed-y-Brain Primary School

**School Street
Llanbradach
Caerphilly**

School Number: 676/2071

Date of Inspection: 9 – 12 February 2004

Goronwy Morris

REGISTERED INSPECTOR: W160/78283

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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 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

Coed y Brain Primary School is situated in the village of Llanbradach near the town of Caerphilly. The majority of pupils attending the school live in Pwllypant, Llanbradach village, Cwm Las Estate and The Rise. The school caters for pupils from 3 – 11 but also has an intake of pupils aged 7 from the nearby Cwm Glas Infants School. The area is described by the school as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.

There are currently 277 pupils on roll, including 29 who attend the Nursery full-time. The school's intake comprises the full range of ability, 22% of whom are entitled to free school meals with approximately 30% identified as having special educational needs. A statement of special educational needs has been made for 12 pupils. No pupils are identified as having Welsh as their first language.

In addition to the Nursery, pupils in mainstream are grouped into 9 mixed ability classes. There are also two special classes for pupils with speech and language difficulties.

The school is committed to an ethos of continuous improvement and specific targets have been set out in the School Development Plan (SDP) to cover curriculum/raising standards, management, parents and community, premises, governors and pastoral aspects. Challenging targets with regard to pupil attainment have been set for 2004-2006.

The school was last inspected in November 1998.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Coed y Brain Primary School is a school with many strengths. This is reflected in the ethos of the school, the commitment of the headteacher and staff, the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils, the very good specialist provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties and the effective partnerships created with parents and the community. The school succeeds in establishing a caring and welcoming atmosphere where pupils develop as polite, friendly and confident individuals.

- The educational provision for the children under-five is appropriate and successfully promotes the desirable outcomes for children's learning. Standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

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

- In Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) standards of achievement in the different subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) and religious education are as follows:

Subject	KS1	KS2
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Good	Good
Welsh second language	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Good	Good
Information technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	Good	Good
History	Good	Good
Art	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Music	Good	Good
Physical education	Satisfactory	Good
Religious education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

- Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements in the levels of achievement and attainment. Standards have improved in both KS1 and KS2 in science, design technology, geography, history and music and in KS2 in physical education. Standards have been maintained in all other subjects except in art where they have declined.
- Standards in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, and the application of number and information technology across the curriculum are very good in Early Years and satisfactory in both KS1 and KS2.
- In the lessons and work observed, standards of achievement were judged to be very good in 7%, good in a further 57% and satisfactory in 36%. This is an improvement on the last inspection.
- Teacher assessments in 2003 at KS1 indicate that the percentage of pupils achieving level 2, the expected level, is below the national average for Wales. Care needs to be taken in interpreting this data given the size of the class and the inclusion of pupils from the Speech and Language class.

- Overall analysis of the NC assessments at KS2 over the past five years indicates improvement, with an increase in the overall core subject indicator (CSI) for the school, ie the percentage of pupils achieving level 4, the expected level, in English, mathematics and science in combination.
- Test results in 2003 were below the average for schools within a similar range of Free School Meals. The CSI for the school of 58.7%, which includes results from the Speech and Language class, is below that for Wales of 69.9%. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 in the school, however, compares favourably with similar schools.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has a friendly, caring atmosphere and is a supportive community for all pupils. Care and consideration for others is given a high priority in the school. Relationships between pupils and adults and between pupils themselves are friendly and positive.
- The standard of behaviour throughout the school is good. The school has a clear code of conduct that has been successfully implemented to incorporate all aspects of school life and which receives the full support of parents.
- Attendance for the current year is satisfactory at 92.6% and is very similar to that recorded during the last inspection. Although below the national average it compares favourably with other similar schools in the area.
- The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 97% of the lessons seen. It was very good in 9%, good in a further 52% and satisfactory in 36% of lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory in some 3% of lessons. This is an improvement on the last inspection.
- Teachers are experienced, hard working and conscientious. They display great commitment to their school and the children in their care. Evidence of good teaching was seen in all classes. However, the quality of teaching is variable across the key stages. Teaching was consistently good and very good in the Early Years and the Speech and language classes.
- In the best lessons, learning objectives are clearly defined and teachers use a range of appropriate strategies and resources. Lessons progress with good pace and pupils are actively involved in their learning. Good use is made of assessment to ensure that the work is appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. Learning is effectively reviewed at the end of lessons.
- Where teaching is less successful, work is insufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. Lessons are over directed by the teacher and insufficient opportunities are made available for pupils to investigate, solve problems and to take responsibility for their own learning. Teacher introductions are too long, the pace of learning is slow and as a result some pupils lose interest and become easily distracted,
- Assessment, recording and reporting arrangements in the school are unsatisfactory. Work is regularly marked and in some classes annotations provide good feedback to pupils on their strengths and weaknesses. However, the school's marking policy is not consistently applied throughout the school. Assessments are not consistently used to inform teachers'

planning with the result that work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' individual needs and more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.

- The curriculum is of good quality; it is broad, balanced and complies with statutory requirements. Most schemes of work have been revised recently. The school has not yet had the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the new schemes on teaching and learning.
- Good provision is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils. A comprehensive range of policies, including those for child protection, are in place and they provide effective guidance on the safety, health and care of pupils. Pupils are confident in their ability to approach staff if they have any problems. The school council ensures that pupils also have planned opportunities to raise concerns.
- Overall the school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with SEN. Pupils in mainstream classes make satisfactory progress. There is very good specialist provision for pupils with significant speech and language disorders; pupils in the resourced provision make very good progress.
- Good partnerships have been established with parents, the local community, and other institutions. Good information is provided for parents and the school adopts an "open door" policy, with plentiful opportunities for informal contact between parents and teachers. A number of parents and grandparents regularly assist in the classroom and visits to school by members of the community have a significant impact on pupils' learning.
- Partnership with industry is good overall. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world of work has been significantly enhanced by the links made with local companies.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good. A self-critical culture is being established and there is a growing awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The overall leadership and management provided by the headteacher, staff and governors is good. The newly appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the school's needs and provides confident, enthusiastic and sympathetic leadership. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher. There is a positive ethos in the school and a common commitment to raising standards of achievement.
- The role of the curriculum co-ordinators, an issue in the last inspection, is developing well. They have reviewed schemes of work, sampled work in pupils' books and provide positive support for their colleagues. Their impact on the quality of teaching and learning is variable and the school recognises the need to further develop their leadership role in evaluating the standards pupils achieve.
- Members of the governing body are well informed. Regular reports on the progress of the School Development Plan enable them to develop their role as 'critical friends'. They have a good knowledge of the school's finances and spending decisions are carefully evaluated to ensure that they provide value for money.
- The level of staffing is good, with teachers appropriately qualified and deployed

effectively. The accommodation is spacious for the number of pupils on roll. Displays of pupils' work make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and attitudes. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. However, there are deficiencies in the range and organisation of both English and Welsh reading books.

- Significant progress has been made since the last inspection, most particularly in the way the school is led and managed. New systems and procedures have been introduced and teachers have worked hard to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and learning that have resulted in substantial improvements in pupil achievement and attainment.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Standards of achievement are satisfactory or better in all subjects and areas of learning.

- The educational provision for the children under-five is appropriate and successfully promotes the desirable outcomes for children's learning. Children in early years make very good progress in all six areas of learning.
- In both KS1 and KS2, pupils' standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics are satisfactory. Standards in science are good.
- In the non-core foundation subjects, standards are good in both key stages in design technology, history, geography and music and in physical education in KS2. Standards are satisfactory in both key stages in Welsh as a second language, information technology, art and religious education and in physical education in KS1.
- In the lessons and work observed, standards of achievement were judged to be very good in 7%, good in a further 57% and satisfactory in 36%. This is an improvement on the last inspection.
- Teacher assessments in 2003 at KS1 indicate that in English 57% of pupils reached Level 2 or above in reading and writing. In mathematics 67% of pupils achieved level 2 or above and the results for teacher assessment in science showed that 77% of pupils achieved Level 2 or above. These are below the national average for Wales. The low number of pupils achieving level 2+ (the expected level) continues to be a cause for concern for the school. However, care needs to be taken in interpreting this data given the size of the class and the inclusion of pupils from the Speech and Language class.
- Overall analysis of the NC assessments at KS2 over the past five years indicates improvement with an increase in the overall core subject indicator (CSI) for the school ie the percentage of pupils achieving level 4, the expected level, in English, mathematics and science in combination.
- Test results in 2003 indicate that 64% of pupils achieved level 4 or above in English, 67% in mathematics and 81% achieved level 4 or above in science. This was below the

average for schools within a similar range of Free School Meals. The CSI for the school of 58.7% is below that for Wales of 69.9%. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 in the school, however, compares favourably with similar schools.

- Pupils with SEN in mainstream classes make satisfactory progress; pupils in the resourced provision make very good progress.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

Standards of achievement in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and the application of number and information technology across the curriculum are very good in Early Years and satisfactory in both KS1 and KS2.

- The under-fives have good opportunities to apply and improve their developing skills of early literacy, early numeracy and the use of ICT within and across the six areas of learning.
- In KS1, pupils readily answer questions posed by their teachers and are learning to discuss and share their ideas in groups. Many speak clearly and are developing their vocabulary appropriately.
- Pupils in KS2 are generally confident and able to answer questions posed. Their responses often lack detail and they are not consistently encouraged to answer more fully and develop their ideas.
- Pupils ability to listen to others and respond appropriately develops satisfactorily as they progress through the school. Opportunities are missed to develop their skills further. The use of tape recording and language centres for example, is underdeveloped.
- In KS1, reading develops satisfactorily. In most cases pupils read clearly and accurately. However, their understanding of the material they are reading is variable across subject areas. The skills of extracting appropriate information from simple texts is not fully developed.
- Pupils in KS2 read with increasing confidence and accuracy. They understand how to use books and other texts to extract information but do not have sufficient opportunities to use these skills to improve their learning. Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure but their access to good quality fiction and non fiction is limited.
- Writing skills develop appropriately as pupils progress through the school. They develop satisfactory skills in spelling and punctuation and older pupils are able to write for a variety of purposes. They do not, however, write at length sufficiently. In particular, they do not use their writing skills enough in recording what they have learned.
- There is satisfactory use and development of numeracy skills in a range of curriculum areas. Pupils use their skills to present numerical data in the forms of graphs, charts and tables. Pupils' skills in number are not used to good effect throughout the curriculum and their skills in interpreting data are underdeveloped.

- Skills in ICT are satisfactory. Pupils in KS1 use the word processor to present their written work and to generate graphs. They are confident in the use of familiar software.
- Older pupils are able to enter, edit and modify text and create good visual images and effective designs. More able pupils are sometimes given the opportunity to use ICT to gather information from a variety of sources. The planning undertaken to allow practice in skills in ICT and in their use to enhance learning varies between classes.
- Pupils with SEN in the mainstream achieve satisfactory standards in key skills. Pupils within the language resources achieve good standards in speaking, reading, writing and numeracy.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has a friendly, caring atmosphere and is a supportive community for all pupils.

- In Early Years, children's personal and social development is very good. Effective relationships are established between adults and children in both nursery and reception classes.
- Care and consideration for others is given a high priority throughout the school. Relationships between pupils and adults and between the pupils themselves are friendly and positive. Responsible attitudes and good behaviour are encouraged at all times.
- Pupils are polite and friendly and very welcoming to strangers. They understand the difference between right and wrong. They are encouraged to have respect for others, for themselves, for property and the environment.
- The school has drawn up a policy on fostering racial equality, and the right of equality of opportunity for all individuals is an integral part of the school's approach
- Pupils realise that there are others less fortunate than themselves and contribute willingly to a number of charities such as Save the Children, Comic Relief, Cancer Research and the British Heart Foundation.
- There are clear systems in place for rewards and sanctions with the emphasis on promoting good behaviour. Measures are in place to reward pupils who make a positive contribution to school life.
- Inter-school competitions, extra-curricular activities and school visits promote pupils' social awareness. Pupils co-operate well in class and play together successfully.
- Well-planned and meaningful arrangements for the daily act of Christian collective worship contribute well to the ethos of the school. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their own and others' values and beliefs. Opportunities are taken regularly to reward pupils for their efforts and contributions to school life, to develop their self-esteem. Pupils make a valuable contribution to these occasions.

- Other religions are studied in religious education. However, opportunities for pupils to increasingly understand a diversity of religious beliefs, attitudes, and social and cultural beliefs are limited.
- Although prominence is given to the Welsh dimension within the curriculum and pupils are aware of the cultural heritage of Wales, their knowledge of other areas of Wales is limited.
- Pupils' knowledge of their locality is good and is significantly extended by well-planned educational visits. Discussions with regard to local issues enhance the pupils' understanding of and respect for the environment.
- Pupils respond positively to the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are happy in school and are very welcoming and polite to visitors.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

The standard of behaviour throughout the school is good. The school has a clear code of conduct that has been successfully implemented to incorporate all aspects of school life and which receives the full support of parents.

- Children co-operate well in both nursery and reception classes and respond positively to new experiences.
- Throughout the school, teachers adopt a calm, quiet, but firm approach to discipline and act quickly to prevent any misbehaviour from developing. Appropriate procedures are in place to deal with bullying or any form of misconduct, but rarely need to be employed.
- Most pupils respond extremely well in lessons and are attentive, confident and motivated learners. Whilst most demonstrate good listening skills and are enthusiastic and willing participants, a minority find it difficult to maintain concentration for the duration of lessons.
- A clear policy has been drawn up on rewards and sanctions. The presentation of awards for high standards of behaviour was seen to good effect during celebration assembly.
- Meals are taken in a calm, pleasant, civilised atmosphere. Pupils are highly conscious of the good manners expected of them and co-operate well with the catering staff and midday supervisors.
- Play-times are friendly social occasions, with pupils of different ages and both sexes playing harmoniously with each other in well supervised surroundings.
- All pupils have equality of opportunity. Pupils say that they are confident that they can approach staff and that any anxiety will be dealt with fairly. There is a happy, caring ethos within the school.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance for the current year is satisfactory at 92.6 per cent and is very similar to that recorded during the last inspection. Although below the national average it compares favourably with other similar schools in the area.

- Unauthorised absence is particularly high at 1.6 per cent and mostly results from a lack of co-operation from a minority of parents and holidays taken during the term without proper formal notification.
- The school fully complies with the statutory requirements for registration. Class details are monitored and collated on a weekly basis and the headteacher uses the data to evaluate individual and group trends of absence.
- Most parents contact the school at the earliest opportunity if a child is absent from school and the secretary records the reason. Effective procedures are established for dealing with pupils returning to school after lengthy absence. The methods adopted ensure as little disruption as possible to their education.
- The school's policy for attendance is clearly explained in a written document, which has been agreed by the governors and although it includes a strategy for success, a target is yet to be set. However, despite the many efforts to reduce absenteeism, there has been no significant improvement in attendance.
- Punctuality at the beginning of the school day and at the start of individual lessons is good with only the exceptional late arrival after commencement time. Systematic arrangements ensure that pupils arrive for individual lessons on time. This maximises teaching time and is having a positive impact on the quality of learning.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 97% of the lessons seen. It was very good in 9%, good in a further 52% and satisfactory in 36% of lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory in some 3% of lessons. This is an improvement on the last inspection.

- Evidence of good teaching was seen in all classes. However, the quality of teaching is variable across the key stages. Teaching was consistently good and very good in the Early Years and the Speech and Language classes.
- Teachers are experienced, hard working and conscientious. They display great commitment to their school and the children in their care. They know their pupils well and adopt a calm, quiet approach to class management Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- Teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach is good. The school has recently introduced a uniform format for planning which is stored electronically. Whilst there

have been clear benefits, particularly in terms of providing an agreed whole school structure, the process has yet to impact consistently on the quality of teaching and learning in all classes. The staff recognise the need to review and evaluate as the process becomes embedded.

- Generally, teachers set high expectations in terms of pupil behaviour and the vast majority of pupils respond accordingly. There are, however, occasions where insufficient challenge is set for more able pupils.
- The contribution of Support staff is highly valued by teachers. They have a positive impact on the pupils' learning.

In the best lessons:

- learning objectives are clearly defined and teachers use a range of appropriate strategies and resources,
- lessons progress with good pace and pupils are actively involved in their learning,
- assessment is used to inform teacher planning and the work is appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils,
- opportunities are sought to develop cross-curricular links and to foster the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT,
- learning is effectively reviewed at the end of lessons.

Where teaching is less successful:

- classroom activities are not linked closely enough to the learning objective, and tasks are insufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils,
- lessons are over directed by the teacher and insufficient opportunities are made available for pupils to investigate, solve problems and to take responsibility for their own learning,
- teacher introductions are too long, the pace of learning is slow and as a result some pupils lose interest and become easily distracted,
- the development of ICT skills is insufficiently planned for.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment, recording and reporting arrangements in the school are unsatisfactory.

- Accurate and consistent assessments of pupils' achievements are used in the nursery and reception classes to effectively nurture development towards the desirable outcomes.
- Work is regularly marked but the school's marking policy is not consistently applied throughout the school, although, in some classes, annotations provide good feedback to

pupils on their strengths and weaknesses. In KS2, pupils are set individual targets in English and mathematics. However, in some instances, these are too broad in nature.

- Individual record of achievement folders are kept which include annotated work in English and science, mathematics test papers, results of reading tests and the pupil's annual report. There is no evidence of records being kept for the foundation subjects or of pupils' progress and achievements in personal and social skills.
- The progress of pupils with SEN is regularly reviewed and takes account of the SEN Code of Practice.
- Assessments are not consistently used to inform teachers' planning with the result that work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' individual needs and more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Reports to parents comply with statutory requirements and provide information on pupils' achievements and some guidance for further improvement. Parents are invited to attend regular Parents' Evenings.
- Baseline tests are carried out in the Early Years and there are regular standardised tests in English and mathematics. The results of these and the Statutory Assessment Tests are used as part of the school's self-evaluation procedures and to inform target setting. The recently introduced tracking arrangements have helped to identify pupils who benefit from additional support in focussed withdrawal groups.

5.3 Curriculum

The curriculum is of good quality; it is broad, balanced and complies with statutory requirements. The quality of the curriculum for the under fives is very good.

- Children in Early Years receive a very good, well-balanced curriculum which is relevant to their needs in all areas of learning.
- Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and offer guidance to staff about aims and objectives.
- Most schemes of work have been recently revised. The school has not yet had the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the new schemes on teaching and learning.
- The curriculum includes all NC subjects and religious education. Appropriate time is allocated to each one. Whole school planning for key skills is in the early stages of development. All schemes of work identify opportunities to utilise key skills but application is variable.
- Pupils are taught in separate year groups in KS1. There is a combination of single and mixed age classes in KS2. Planning over a two-year cycle ensures continuity and progression in the mixed age groups.

- Curriculum provision is effective in ensuring that all activities are socially inclusive and there is equality of opportunity for all.
- The school has a clear homework policy which is currently under review. When homework is set, it supports pupils' learning. A number of parents are unclear regarding the arrangements for homework.
- There are good arrangements for the provision of personal and social education both through whole school planning and through teaching across a number of subjects. The school has an appropriate sex education policy, arrived at following extensive consultation with parents, staff and governors.
- The planning and provision of the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is satisfactory.
- Links with the feeder infants school are developing well. There are good links with the feeder high schools and this ensures continuity and assists progression.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a range of extra-curricular activities, and very good use is made of educational visits to support pupils' learning. Strong links with the community and the support provided by parent volunteers enrich pupils' learning experiences.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

Good provision is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils.

- A comprehensive range of policies, including those for child protection, are in place and they provide effective guidance on the safety, health and care of pupils.
- Teachers know their pupils well and relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils are confident in their ability to approach staff if they have any problems. The school council ensures that pupils also have planned opportunities to raise concerns.
- Fire alarms, emergency lighting systems and fire extinguishers are regularly tested and fire drills are carried out at least once a year. Pupils are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire.
- All staff have received first-aid training and three members of staff are fully qualified First Aiders.
- Pupils are suitably supervised during break times and lunchtime and the door security systems prevent unrestricted access into the school buildings.
- A system is in place for staff to record specific concerns relating to pupils but there is insufficient monitoring of pupils' academic, personal and social development.
- The governing body has taken a responsible attitude to health and safety but some aspects of the policy are out of date and the document requires a review. Potential hazards have been listed and the level of risk in each case has been assessed and prioritised.

- The nominated health and safety representative and caretaker carry out regular checks of the premises, record details of non-compliance, and ensure that the appropriate action is taken. However, the scrutiny of inspection needs to be more rigorous and also to ensure that similar assessments are carried out for all out-of-school activities and in different subject areas.
- The headteacher is aware of the outstanding issues noted during the inspection and a corrective action plan has already been implemented.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Overall the school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with SEN. Pupils in mainstream classes make satisfactory progress. There is very good specialist provision for pupils with significant speech and language disorders; pupils in the resourced provision make very good progress.

- The school has regard to the SEN Code of Practice for Wales. This is reflected in the SEN policy document. There are a number of minor omissions in the document of which the school is aware.
- The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) maintains the school's SEN register and has good links with parents and various support services.
- There are currently 69 pupils on the school's SEN register. Twelve (12) have statements of special educational needs; 11 are in the resourced provision, 1 pupil is in mainstream. Eighteen (18) pupils are at school action and 39 at school action plus.
- All pupils on the register have individual education plans (IEPs) which are devised by the classteachers. IEPs identify the targets to be achieved and are reviewed termly. Parents are encouraged to participate in the reviews. The targets are not consistently produced as a result of detailed and specific assessment, and provision does not allow sufficient specific teaching to address the needs outlined.
- The LEA provides additional support for a number of pupils through the provision of a language support teacher. The pupils are selected by the LEA through an annual screening of reading scores and pupils receive the support for a complete school year. IEPs are devised and shared with classteachers.
- Within the mainstream classes pupils with SEN have a level of differentiated work and parent volunteers provide good support for some groups within classes. Resources and activities are planned in order to allow pupils access to the curriculum. This is, however, not consistent throughout the school.
- The school's procedures for annual reviews of statements of special educational need satisfy statutory requirements.

LEA-funded Resourced Provisions

The school's two specialist provisions cater for pupils with significant speech and language disorders.

- Most pupils have a statement of special educational needs and all pupils are placed in the resource by the LEA after consultation with the school and with parents.
- Pupils in the resource make very good progress. The pupils' needs and progress are systematically assessed and teaching is carefully matched to their needs. Language development is emphasised throughout all aspects of the curriculum, which is broad and balanced.
- Careful consideration is given to individual needs and every opportunity for integration into mainstream classes is taken. Integration is two way. A number of pupils from mainstream classes benefit from specialist teaching in the resource.
- Support staff are deployed effectively and work consistently and diligently with pupils within the resource and when they are in mainstream classes. Speech and Language Therapists and Assistants support the teachers and pupils and give guidance on targets and provision.
- Pupils join in with all the activities of the school and other pupils' attitudes are positive and constructive.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

Good partnerships have been established with parents, the local community, and other institutions.

- Good information is provided for parents. Regular newsletters deal with items such as activities, action plan updates and dates for the diary. The home-school agreement agreed with parents of children in Reception receives effective support from parents throughout all school years.
- The school adopts an "open door" policy, with plentiful opportunities for informal contact between parents and teachers. Additionally two formal evening meetings are arranged for discussing the subjects taught and pupils' progress. Parents are not given details of the curriculum at the start of the academic school year.
- A number of parents and grandparents regularly assist in the classroom and provide valuable support in areas such as reading, mathematics and arts and crafts.
- Considerable support is received through the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), whose core of dedicated workers organise regular fund-raising activities to provide extra resources for pupils. The new computer suite is an example where the school has benefited from this extra funding.
- The governors' report to parents and the prospectus both comply with the statutory requirements for content. Policies for all aspects of school life are implemented by

effective liaison between the governors, school and parents, and the overall results demonstrate the quality and usefulness of these arrangements.

- The school has developed very good links with the community. Senior citizens regularly visit the school to talk about their experiences of World War 2 and other interesting topics.
- Pupils are invited to the local bowling club where members are keen to teach them the skills of the game. ‘New Deal’ community services provide manpower resources to re-establish the nature area after vandalism, paint perimeter fencing and enhance the external seating area.
- A strong link has been established with the local chapel and pupils have produced a CD of Christmas songs to be sold to the community in an effort to help the restoration programme for the chapel. Ministers from the various denominations participate in morning assembly. Pupils have sung alongside the Aber Male Voice Choir and the Caerphilly Ladies Choir at concerts.
- Effective liaison takes place with other schools in the area. Transfer to secondary education is well planned. Links are especially strong with the Lewis schools and cluster meetings result in enhanced transition practices. Heads of the schools discuss pastoral information and arrange for pupils to take part in a variety of activities across the curriculum.
- Good partnership arrangements have been made with the teacher-training establishments including Ystrad Mynach College. Students undertake regular placements at the school. The school also takes work experience students from the local secondary school. Termly meetings with the Headteacher of the feeder infants school helps to co-ordinate events and exchange information. Cluster group meetings with other local schools support the development of joint policies.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

Partnership with industry is good overall

- Pupils’ knowledge and understanding of industry and the world of work has been enhanced by the links made with local companies.
- Pupils visit a large supermarket to research methods of costing goods and recording the origin of their source. The results of the visits directly support the teaching of mathematics and geography. Literacy skills are also being enhanced by oral and written communication with this and other companies’ management.
- Good financial and other support has been received from a local bank and a national food chain. A travel agency provides valuable encouragement by providing token awards to the children in the infants Speech and Language class. Beneficial contributions are made by visitors to the school, who talk to the children about their occupations and experiences.

- Good relationships are established with the Education Business Partnerships. Staff visits to industry and the visit to the school by the Scientific Clown are heavily subsidised by the organisation.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good.

- A self-critical culture is being established and there is a growing awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a common commitment to the raising of standards of achievement.
- The self-evaluation report is comprehensive and draws on many sources of evidence including the views of parents and pupils.
- Data is effectively analysed and used to inform development planning as well as to set ambitious targets for improvement.
- Curriculum leaders are beginning to monitor their subject areas through the scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and resources and also through informal discussions with staff. There are insufficient opportunities for the monitoring of subject areas through the observation of lessons and the evaluation of standards achieved by pupils.
- Self-evaluation procedures are effectively used to identify the priorities for improvement as set out in the school development plan.
- The school development plan sets out clearly the actions to be taken and reflects all aspects of school life under the headings Curriculum/Standards, Management, Parents/Community, Premises, Governors and Pastoral. The actions are costed and success criteria, personnel involved and realistic timescales are included.
- Progress on the actions contained in the school development plan are regularly monitored and evaluated by staff and governors. Individual governors are linked to subject areas and many governors make regular visits to the school.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

The overall leadership and management provided by the headteacher, staff and governors is good.

- There is a positive ethos in the school. The school succeeds in establishing a hard working atmosphere which is caring and welcoming and where pupils develop as polite and friendly individuals.

- The newly-appointed headteacher has a clear vision of the school's needs and provides confident, enthusiastic and sympathetic leadership. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher. The recent re-awarding of the Investors in People Award attests to the school's continued commitment to this aspect of its work.
- The role of the curriculum co-ordinators, an issue in the last inspection, is developing well. Responsibilities have been re-negotiated and have resulted in new agreed job descriptions. Co-ordinators have reviewed schemes of work, teacher plans and sampled work in pupils' books. They manage a budget and target expenditure in areas identified by their own evaluations. They provide positive support for their colleagues and identify training needs. However, their impact on the quality of teaching and learning is variable. The school recognises the need to embed the above practices and to further develop their leadership role in evaluating the standards pupils achieve.
- A Performance Management (PM) Framework has been introduced and performance objectives agreed. Classroom observations by the Head and deputy and interim reviews have taken place. Although in its early stages, the experience has been a positive one for all concerned. The Head recognises the potential benefits of involving more staff in the process.
- Staff meetings are well documented and indicate purposeful activity. All staff who support learning in the classroom have a positive effect on standards.
- Members of the governing body are well informed and take a keen interest in the school's work as members of sub-committees that deal with curricular issues as well as administrative and managerial issues. Governing Body meetings are productive and well managed. Regular reports on the SDP and PM have enabled governors to develop their role as 'critical friends'.
- Visits to school by members of the governing body enable them to judge for themselves the success of initiatives being undertaken. They have a good knowledge of the school's finances and adopt a prudent approach. Appropriate priorities for spending are established which are linked to the school development plan. Spending decisions are carefully evaluated to ensure that they provide good value for money.
- Administrative procedures and daily routines are effective. The Headteacher and staff are accessible and approachable and the secretary, caretaker, cleaners and mid-day staff all make a positive contribution to the running of the school and the pupils' well being.
- The school complies fully with statutory requirements and Welsh Office guidance.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

The quality of staffing and adequacy of accommodation are good; there are sufficient resources to provide a broad curriculum.

- The level of staffing is good and teachers are appropriately qualified and are deployed effectively. The staff have access to relevant in-service training which is linked to the school development plan and to teachers' individual needs.

- There are appropriate induction procedures in place for new staff and for newly qualified teachers. Procedures for teacher appraisal are in place and the school fulfils its statutory duty with regard to performance management.
- The accommodation is spacious for the number of pupils on roll. The school is kept in a clean condition and the contribution of the caretaker is much appreciated. Displays of pupils' work make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and attitudes.
- Learning resources are satisfactory overall. The school has recently set up an ICT suite and all classrooms have PCs. The library is used weekly but the range and organisation of reading books both in the library and in classrooms is not conducive to pupils' learning. There are insufficient reading materials in Welsh.
- The school makes very effective use of the local environment as well as visits to places of educational interest; visitors to school share their knowledge and experience, and work with pupils to extend their skills.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

The educational provision for children under five is appropriate and successfully promotes the desirable outcomes for children's learning. Children in the Early Years make very good progress.

i. Language, Literacy and Communication Skills

Standards achieved in language, literacy and communication skills are very good.

Good features

- Children in both the Nursery and Reception are given a wide range of experiences which successfully promote the development of early literacy skills.
- They use a developing vocabulary with increasing fluency to express thought and convey meaning to the listener and co-operate confidently in role play.
- Children enjoy books and handle them correctly. Nursery children can recognise and match sounds and know that print runs left to right. They hold writing implements correctly and are able to correctly recognise and write many sounds. They are able to tell a story from pictures and predict the end of a story.
- Reception children can read books, know their sounds, can build simple words and are developing a good visual vocabulary. They are able to write their own name as well as simple words.
- There is good use of incidental Welsh and the children have a good recall of Welsh words and phrases.

ii. Personal and Social Development

Children's personal and social development is very good.

Good features

- There are effective relationships established between adults and children and most of the children greet and speak to visitors confidently.
- Children co-operate well in both the nursery and reception classes. They are able to work independently and remain on task commensurate with their age. Most can work as part of a group and they happily seek help when needed.
- Nursery children are able to take off and hang up their own coats unaided and they demonstrate independence in selecting activities or resources.
- Routines are well established in both the nursery and reception classes and children know what is expected of them. They are happy and secure in their environment and show an interest in the activities. They are aware of the need to keep resources in the correct place and are able to tidy up.
- Children respond positively to new experiences and show an eagerness to explore new learning.
- Most children are able to take turns and share fairly and show a growing sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others.

iii. Mathematical Development

Children's mathematical development is very good.

Good features

- Good use is made of mathematical language in a variety of contexts. Children are provided with a good range of practical activities including sand, water, matching and sorting games.
- Children in both the nursery and reception classes are able to recognise and create patterns. They are able to compare, sort, match, order, sequence and count familiar objects. They are introduced to graphical representation.
- Most nursery children are able to count confidently to ten, are able to recognise some numbers and understand the concept of 'more' and 'less'. Reception children are able to add and subtract simple numbers practically and record what they have done.
- Nursery children are able to recognise simple shapes and colours including those in the outside environment. Reception children have a good knowledge of shape including some of their properties.

- Reception children understand and use the language of weighing such as heavy, light, heavier, lighter and the same weight as. They are able to apply the concept of more and less than to their weighing activities.

iv. Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is very good.

Good features

- Children are provided with a range of stimulating activities both inside and outside the classroom to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Children in both the nursery and reception classes are able to talk confidently about their environment and their families. They show an understanding of the work some people do and show an awareness of the purposes of some features of the area in which they live.
- Their knowledge and understanding is enhanced by visits to such places as The Bear Factory, Tescos and Barry Island. Photographs are well used to reinforce what has been learned on such visits.
- They have a basic understanding of the seasons and are able to recognise similarities, differences and change. Children are able to sequence events.
- Nursery children are able to talk about their observations and ask questions as to why things happen and how things work. Reception children record some of their observations.
- Children in both nursery and reception classes take part in smelling and tasting activities and are aware that some foods change when heated or cooled through the making of such things as cakes and jellies.
- Children explore materials both natural and man-made through the collection and sorting of objects often displayed around a theme such as the seaside or precious things.
- Children make regular use of the computers and are adept at using the mouse. Many are able to move around within simple programs.

v. Physical Development

Children's physical development is very good.

Good features

- Children in both nursery and reception classes experience a wide range of activities including the use of outdoor equipment such as wheeled toys and climbing frames. They can pedal and push and pull confidently and are able to manoeuvre around obstacles, changing direction when necessary.

- Children move confidently with increasing control and co-ordination. They are able to walk on hands and feet both on the ground and across a bench. They are able to run and jump, move backwards and forwards and have a good awareness of space.
- Children are given a wide range of activities to develop their fine motor control and show good skills in the use of scissors, pencils, crayons and brushes.
- Tools and malleable materials are well used and children develop appropriate control when rolling, moulding and cutting. Construction equipment is also well used to develop manipulative skills.
- Children are taught the correct and safe way to use tools, equipment and materials.

vi. Creative Development

Children's creative development is very good.

Good features

- Children in both the nursery and reception classes enjoy singing and are given opportunities to experiment with sound including the playing of percussion instruments. In the reception class they are able to sort the instruments according to the sound they make.
- Children in both classes are given a range of experiences with different materials, media and textures including collage, printing, sewing, weaving, observational drawing and computer graphics.
- Children know their colours and are able to make sensible choices as to what colours and materials to use.
- Children in the nursery enjoy role play and develop their own scenarios when playing in the home corner, dressing up or in the 'badger's home'.
- Reception children are able to discuss their work and readily comment on the work of other children.

Shortcomings

No significant shortcomings were observed.

English

Standards of achievement in English are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, most pupils listen attentively and speak in a range of contexts both in small groups and whole class situations. They make good progress in using a developing vocabulary.
- In KS2, pupils contribute satisfactorily to class discussions and the majority show satisfactory progress in the acquisition of listening skills. They respond appropriately to instructions and can discuss purposefully when working in small groups or pairs.
- Many pupils in KS1 read simple text with fluency and accuracy. They use their knowledge of phonics and contextual clues to read unfamiliar words, self-correcting if necessary. They understand what has been read and are able to make sensible predictions.
- In KS2, pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy and extend their range of strategies for reading. They read a widening range of text and are able to discuss what has been read. They are able to use books as sources of information.
- In KS1 pupils are beginning to write independently on a variety of subjects. They use their knowledge of phonics, common letter strings and simple spelling patterns when writing and have some knowledge of punctuation.
- In KS2, pupils write for a variety of purposes and in a variety of forms including poetry and plays. Spelling on the whole is good and pupils have an understanding of word families, use and know the meaning of suffixes and prefixes and are able to use dictionaries. More able pupils are able to correctly punctuate their work and use paragraphs.

Shortcomings

- Pupils in KS2 have insufficient guidance on how to progress their reading skills.
- Standards in pupils' handwriting and presentation are not consistent within and across the key stages.
- In KS1, writing skills are underdeveloped and pupils do not write at sufficient length.
- In KS2, there is insufficient independent creative and imaginative writing of quality or of any length. English exercises learned out of context are not developed through their application in subsequent work.
- In both key stages, pupils do not use information technology sufficiently to enhance and extend their written work.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement in mathematics are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in the Speech and Language units make good progress appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- In KS1, pupils gain a satisfactory understanding of the basic rules of number and are able to perform computation tasks with an appropriate degree of accuracy.
- The majority have a sound recall of number bonds and use their knowledge effectively to solve practical problems.
- They gain appropriate understanding of common 2 and 3 dimensional shapes and are able to describe some of the standard measures they meet in their everyday lives.
- In KS2, the majority of pupils have a clear understanding of place value in tens and units and show a good understanding of the four rules of number.
- Pupils in years 3 and 4 add 2 digit numbers effectively. They count on multiples of 10 and demonstrate satisfactory recall of 2, 3, 4 and 5 timetables.
- The majority of pupils in year 5 correctly calculate times using both analogue and 24 times.
- Pupils in years 5 and 6 respond well in mental mathematics sessions. More able pupils are able to recall multiplication and division facts with accuracy and their grasp of the four rules and the relationship between them is good.
- Pupils are increasingly confident when dealing with fractions. Younger pupils are able to recognise halves and quarters with older pupils able to place fractions in order of size and identify equivalent fractions.
- Throughout the key stage pupils develop a sound understanding of space and measures. Pupils' can describe the properties of 2D and 3D shapes and use appropriate mathematical language to discuss their attributes.
- Year 6 pupils are able to identify lines of reflective and rotational symmetry on a variety of shapes. They calculate areas and perimeters, mostly using correct mathematical language when talking about their work.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in data handling and are able to interpret different graphs. There are several good examples of pupils in year 6 using written work to explain their working and answers.

Shortcomings

- Generally, pupils' recall of basic number facts and strategies for undertaking mental calculations is insecure.
- Problem-solving opportunities are not progressively developed to stretch the more able, and opportunities for pupils to demonstrate investigative abilities independently are limited.
- Presentation of pupils' work in mathematics is inconsistent in quality. A minority of pupils do not consistently take sufficient care in displaying their work.
- Pupils make insufficient use of ICT in their mathematics.

Science

Standards of achievement in science are good in both key stages. Pupils acquire good knowledge and understanding of scientific principles.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils know the difference between living and non-living things and can compare objects and living things they observe.
- They understand that plants need light and water to grow and can recognise and name the main parts of a plant.
- Pupils build simple circuits and draw and label them correctly. They understand that a circuit will not work if there is a break in the flow of electricity.
- In KS2, pupils further develop their knowledge and understanding of physical processes, e.g. they can build circuits from diagrams and through investigation divide materials into conductors and insulators.
- Pupils' understanding of light and sound develops well. They know that light travels from a source and that we see objects because light travels from them to our eyes; they understand that sounds are made when objects vibrate.
- Older pupils can explain how the heart works and why pulse rates vary according to different levels of exercise.
- More able pupils can devise their own investigations. They work safely and co-operatively in groups and are able to record their findings accurately.
- As pupils progress through the school they are increasingly able to understand and describe what a fair test is. Their knowledge, use and understanding of scientific vocabulary develops well.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills in using IT equipment and software to monitor changes and to present scientific information are underdeveloped.

Welsh Second Language

Standards of achievement in Welsh as a second language are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Both the staff and pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to the Welsh language and standards are improving. The use of incidental Welsh has a positive impact on pupils' awareness, enjoyment and understanding of the language. Pronunciation and intonation is good overall.
- In KS1, pupils make steady progress in understanding and speaking familiar everyday vocabulary and phrases. They listen carefully and respond appropriately to instructions, greetings and commands.
- Pupils are able to read words displayed within the classrooms and write simple words to complete worksheets.
- In KS2, pupils are able to respond to simple questions about themselves and the weather. They have a widening vocabulary and demonstrate the ability to use more than one tense.
- Pupils are able to write words, phrases and simple sentences using correct spelling. More able pupils are able to read simple books with understanding.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' ability to read a range of text independently is underdeveloped in both key stages.
- In both key stages, pupils have insufficient opportunities to write independently to reinforce what has been learned orally.
- The use of ICT, including listening centres and computers, is underdeveloped.

Design and Technology

Standards of achievement in design and technology are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages select and use a range of tools, materials and techniques to design and carry out projects.

- In KS1, pupils talk about their design ideas enthusiastically and, using their knowledge and understanding of how materials behave, are able to make simple decisions about their ideas.
- They are able to measure, mark out and cut a range of materials using appropriate tools and techniques appropriate to their age. Their skills in assembling and joining materials and components are well developed.
- In KS2, pupils consider appearance and function when designing and understand that a product should meet a need and be fit for purpose. They understand the need to clarify the requirements of the task in hand and to evaluate design ideas as they develop.
- They produce imaginative designs and select appropriate materials, equipment, tools and techniques when making a product. They know how simple mechanisms can be used to produce movement.
- In both key stages, pupils effectively apply knowledge from other subjects such as art and mathematics when designing and making. They apply appropriate finishing techniques to good effect.
- Pupils show a good understanding of health and safety issues when using equipment, tools and materials.

Shortcomings

- No evidence was seen of the creating, testing, modifying and storing of instructions to control events.
- Pupils have limited skills in independently researching information sources to generate ideas for products.

Information Technology

Standards of achievement in information and communications technology are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- The computer suite is timetabled and used to good effect to develop pupils' skills. Pupils are confident in their use of computers and most have good keyboard, mouse and on-screen skills.
- In both key stages, pupils use their skills in a variety of contexts and in a range of curriculum areas.
- They are able to produce pictures and designs using computer generated graphics and know how to change the colour and size of fonts.

- In KS1, pupils are able to enter data to create a graph and use word-processing skills to change prose format into poetry format and to improve the punctuation of text.
- In KS2, pupils are able to combine text and graphics to good effect, enter data to produce a variety of graphical forms and interrogate the internet. They are able to select, save and print out required information.
- Pupils in years 5 and 6 use search engines appropriately to access information from the internet to support learning in other subjects. More able pupils have created multimedia presentations to share their findings.

Shortcomings

- Lessons in the computer suite are generally over teacher directed with the result that pupils have insufficient opportunities to exercise sufficient autonomy in their choice of ICT. Their ability to work independently to explore and solve problems is underdeveloped.
- Pupils' skills in drafting, editing and re-drafting composition on screen are underdeveloped.

History

Standards of achievement in history are good in both key stages.

Good features

- In both key stages pupils' interest and awareness of the past is stimulated through using a wide range of approaches and resources. Their chronological awareness develops well across the key stages. Pupils demonstrate an increasing knowledge and understanding of the past and how it has helped shape and fashion the present.
- Visits are a regular and important feature of pupils' work and visitors to school make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. This gives them a good sense of the passage of time.
- In both key stages good use is made of primary and secondary sources including artefacts, memorabilia and books to help pupils gain a feel for the periods they study.
- In KS1, work is made accessible and interesting for pupils by focusing on aspects within their understanding, eg. how shopping has changed. Good use is made of photographs with pupils encouraged to note the characteristics of the past and present. They ask informed questions and make sensible judgements based on their observations.
- Pupils compare household chores and equipment such as washing and cleaning from 50 years ago with modern habits and devices. These experiences enable pupils to develop a firm understanding of how changes occur over time, and their understanding of the lives of people and children in the past is enhanced.
- In KS2, historical activities are enriched by the contribution of other areas of the curriculum, most notably art.

- Pupils in year 3 make informed judgements based on an ‘archaeological’ examination of first-hand evidence. This work contributes significantly to their developing skills of historical enquiry.
- Pupils in years 3 and 4 have a broad knowledge of many aspects of the lives of the Celts. They have considered in detail the way people lived including, for example, their clothes, food, religion and ways of travelling around.
- Pupils in year 4 develop their understanding of how things change over time by studying printing and writing through the ages.
- Older pupils show a good understanding of life in Tudor times and are able to explain the reasons behind historical events like the Armada. Some of the work in year 6 with regard to life in Tudor times is of a particularly high standard. Pupils’ writing displays that they are able to empathise sensitively with peoples of the past.
- The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is promoted by focusing on events which relate specifically to Wales. Pupils display a good knowledge of the local area. Local visits are well used to develop a sense of the past.

Shortcomings

- Although pupils experience history in a variety of ways and are interested in what they learn, their ability to investigate historical topics independently is underdeveloped.

Geography

Standards of achievement in geography are good in KS2. No lessons were observed in KS1 but examination of previous work and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that standards are good in KS1 also.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 draw simple plans and maps and learn to use symbols and keys. They draw plans of their classroom and treasure maps and label them correctly.
- They have a developing knowledge of their local area. Pupils observe and collect information in their village. Pupils in year 2 conduct traffic surveys and can explain why the main road has more traffic than the road which passes the school.
- Their knowledge and understanding of places is further developed by field visits. More able pupils can compare and contrast their village with coastal areas they have visited.
- In KS2, pupils further develop their enquiry skills. They use aerial photographs to identify and locate features in the local area and are able to accurately describe land use. More able pupils can explain some of the processes that have led to the village’s development.

- Pupils have a developing sense of place. They are able to describe the main features of their village and where it is in relation to other villages, towns and cities in the surrounding area.
- In their investigations of environmental change, older pupils can identify the ways in which people can affect the environment. In their study of the local park, pupils identify litter problems, can suggest how to solve them and are aware it is everyone's responsibility. On a global level they can describe some of the causes and effects of pollution on planet Earth.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' mapping skills are not fully developed. They do not make sufficient use of ordnance survey maps and atlases.

Art

Standards of achievement in art are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages talk about their own work and describe the processes they have used to produce pieces of artwork. They are increasingly able to discuss their work in relation to other artists, for example, Lowry, Van Gogh and Welsh artists such as Cedric Morris.
- Pupils in KS1 make good progress in their understanding of shape, pattern and colour and in drawing sketches. They draw and paint from observation including self-portraits and shells, and use a variety of materials to produce collage work.
- In KS2, pupils can describe and make comparisons between their own work and others' and successfully produce work in a variety of styles using pencils, paint and textiles.
- They investigate the natural environment and record from observation. Pupils in year 3 draw flowers and show an ability to mix colours well to match tone. Year 6 pupils' sketching and shading skills are well developed; they produce good line drawings of objects such as shoes.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills in planning and making objects in three dimension are underdeveloped.
- Pupils' knowledge of the art, craft and design of different cultures is limited.

Music

Standards of achievement in music are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages sing tunefully and rhythmically, giving appropriate attention to pitch and dynamics. They sing confidently and with expression in both Welsh and English during lessons and in acts of collective worship.
- A wide range of instrumental tuition is available for pupils including brass, woodwind and strings. These opportunities have a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve.
- In KS1, pupils know a wide range of counting songs, action songs and hymns. They can name and play a wide range of untuned percussion instruments to accompany their singing. They are developing good clapping rhythms and can keep a steady beat. They are able to express an opinion using appropriate vocabulary.
- In KS2, pupils listen to a broad range of music including music from different cultures and can recognise and describe the main characteristics. They discuss and evaluate music, including their own compositions. They co-operate well and maintain a steady beat when producing a group composition.
- In year 3, pupils write appropriate lyrics to a given rhythm to accompany a previously learned melody.
- Pupils in year 5 explore and use a widening range of sound sources which they create, select and organise to evoke specific emotions, for example, to describe a journey through space. They understand the impact of changing sound levels and discuss ways of improving their compositions.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' ability to record their own compositions graphically is at an early stage of development.
- Pupils currently make insufficient use of ICT as an aid to composing.

Physical Education

Standards of achievement in physical education are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages understand the importance of warming up properly before undertaking exercise. They develop a good understanding of the effects of exercise in their bodies.
- In KS1, pupils are developing a good awareness and a sense of space and direction. They demonstrate an appropriate range of balances, twists and movement.

- In year 1, pupils listen carefully to instructions and show good skills when they perform a sequence of movements to represent the use of historical artefacts such as wash dollies and mangles.
- In year 2, pupils use space appropriately, spin and jump safely and move around, on/off, under/along apparatus successfully.
- Pupils in KS2 show an increasing range of skills and improved body control.
- During games sessions, pupils in year 3 demonstrate good use of space. They work well in pairs and in small groups as they develop good throwing and catching skills.
- Pupils in year 5 display good body control as they demonstrate a range of line and circle Welsh folk dances. They co-operate particularly effectively and take pride in their performance.
- In year 6, pupils set out basic apparatus safely in the hall and respond imaginatively using their own ideas as they travel over, on or around the mats, benches and apparatus. They are able to balance effectively and devise their own balances and a variety of movements which they build into simple sequences.
- Outside on the yard, pupils in years 5 and 6 demonstrate good skills in throwing, catching, dribbling and shooting. When working in pairs and small groups, they co-operate well and support each other as they practise their skills.
- No swimming sessions were observed during the inspection. A rota for swimming lessons is in place and the indications are that pupils make appropriate progress.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities for sports. These experiences make a valuable contribution to pupils' developing skills.

Shortcomings

- In KS1, a small minority of pupils lack the self-control necessary to ensure that apparatus is set out safely. Pupils' ability to express their own movements and responses to various stimuli is limited.
- In both key stages, pupils do not sufficiently observe and evaluate the performance of others in order to improve their own performance.

Religious Education

Standards of achievement in religious education are satisfactory in both key stages in accordance with the LEA agreed syllabus.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 know the main Christian festivals and why they are celebrated. They can relate a number of stories from the Old and New Testament.
- Their knowledge of the way Christians worship is enhanced by links with the local church. Pupils in year 2 are able to describe the special things they saw during their visit, for example, font, cross, stained glass windows. More able pupils are beginning to understand the significance of ceremonies such as Christenings.
- In KS2, pupils are aware of the main principles of other faiths such as Judaism and Islam and further develop their understanding of the significance of prayer. Their learning is reinforced by the use of artefacts such as the Muslim prayer mat.
- They understand the need for rules, for the need to be fair to others and develop an appreciation of people who play an important part in their lives such as parents and teachers.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' knowledge of faiths other than Christianity is narrow. They are unable to compare aspects of other faiths with those that are familiar to them.
- They rarely reflect on the meaning or how it might feel for other children to celebrate religious rituals in the Christian and other faiths.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

Following an inspection in the autumn of 1998, the previous inspection report identified 6 key issues for action covering the need to:

1. improve the quality of leadership and management;
2. improve assessment to ensure the work is matched appropriately to the abilities of all pupils;
3. improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs within the main school;
4. identify strengths and weaknesses when marking pupils' work to assist pupils' understanding of how improvements can be achieved;
5. enable subject leaders to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and standards of achievement in the subjects for which they have responsibility;
6. develop effective systems to ensure the safety and security of pupils.

Since the last inspection

1. The appointment of a new headteacher in 2002 has led to a significant improvement in the quality of leadership and management at the school. The overall leadership and management provided by the headteacher, staff and governors is now good.
2. The school's assessment policy has been revised and there is evidence of accurate and consistent assessments being used to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' abilities. This is particularly evident in Early Years and in the Speech and language units. Assessments, however, are not consistently used to inform teachers' planning. This results in work not always matching pupils' needs. This remains a key issue for improvement.
3. SEN provision in mainstream classes is now satisfactory. The school has regard for the SEN Code of Practice for Wales. Pupils with SEN have a level of differentiated work and parent volunteers provide good support for some groups within classes. Resources and activities are planned in order to allow pupils access to the curriculum. This is, however, not consistent throughout the school.
4. An agreed marking policy has been designed to lead pupils on in their learning. However, it is not consistently applied throughout the school. Although in some classes annotations provide good feedback to pupils on their strengths and weaknesses, there is room for further development in this area.
5. Curriculum co-ordinators are beginning to monitor their subject areas through the scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and resources and also through informal discussions with staff. The school recognises the need to embed the above practices and to further develop their leadership role in evaluating the standards pupils achieve.
6. The governing body has taken a responsible attitude to health and safety. Potential hazards have been listed and the level of risk in each case has been assessed and prioritised. The security of the buildings is of a high standard. The headteacher is aware of some issues noted during the inspection and a corrective action plan has been implemented.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order to build on the significant improvements made since the last inspection the school needs to:

1. raise standards in those aspects and subjects identified as satisfactory overall;
2. ensure that the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are progressively developed across the curriculum;
3. make better use of assessment to ensure that the needs of all pupils are fully met;
4. evaluate the impact of the recently introduced planning process on the quality of teaching and learning
5. enhance the leadership role of the curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the standards achieved by pupils in their area of responsibility.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Coed-y-Brain Primary School
School type	Community school
Age-range of pupils	4+ to 11+
Address of school	School Street Llanbradach Caerphilly
Post-Code	CF83 3LD
Telephone Number	02920852513

Headteacher	Mr. M W Morgan
Date of appointment	2000
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mrs Debra Williams
Registered Inspector	Goronwy Morris
Dates of inspection	9 – 12 February 2004

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	14.5	26	26	25	44	35	47	45	262.5

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	11	2	12

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	25.7:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	7.3:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	3.5:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25.7
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	92	93	94	93.8
Term 2	85	88	92	91.4
Term 3	92	94	93	92.4

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.	1
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C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2003			Number of pupils in Y2: 30						
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	A	W	1	2	3	4
English	Teacher assessment	School			7	37	30	27	
		National			4	14	63	20	
English: Reading	Teacher assessment	School			3	37	30	30	
		National			4	14	55	27	
English: Writing	Teacher assessment	School			10	37	40	13	
		National			5	14	69	11	
English: Speaking and Listening	Teacher assessment	School			3	20	50	27	
		National			3	12	63	22	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School			3	30	47	20	
		National			3	11	63	24	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School			3	20	47	30	
		National			2	10	66	22	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English (or Welsh as a First Language) according to Teacher Assessment			
In the school:	57%	In Wales:	80%

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

NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2003								Number of pupils in Y6: 47				
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School					2	7	26	41	24	
		National			1		1	6	16	44	31	
	Test/Task	School		2				6	28	33	31	
		National		2	1	1		5	12	39	40	
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School										
		National										
	Test/Task	School										
		National										
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School					2	5	26	41	26	
		National		2	1		1	4	18	45	39	
	Test/Task	School		2				9	22	41	26	
		National		2	1	1		4	18	42	33	
Science	Teacher assessment	School					2	2	15	50	31	
		National			2			2	12	48	35	
	Test/Task	School						4	11	59	26	
		National		2				1	9	48	39	

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:	63%	In the school:	58.7%
In Wales:	69.3%	In Wales:	69.9%

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

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	22%
Number of pupils excluded during the 12 months prior to inspection	1

Appendix D

The Evidence Base of the Inspection

The school was inspected by a team of four inspectors who were in school for a total of 14 inspector days.

Observation notes were made from 60 teaching sessions or activities. Discussions took place with governors, parents, teachers, support and ancillary staff, volunteer helpers and pupils from all teaching groups. Samples of work from each class, covering the whole curriculum, were looked at and noted.

In addition, the inspection team examined policies, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings, financial reports, school reviews and plans and the school development plan. Evidence from a pre-inspection meeting with the governing body was taken into account. Similarly there was a separate meeting attended by the parents of 16 pupils and views also expressed in the 88 questionnaires completed.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Team Members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr. G. Morris Registered Inspector	Mathematics History Music Physical Education	Context. Main Findings. Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Quality of Teaching. Leadership and efficiency. Progress since the last inspection Key Issues for action
Mr S. Roberts Lay Inspector		Behaviour and Attitudes Attendance Partnerships with parents and Community, Schools and other Institutions Partnerships with Industries
Mrs G. Cottrell Team Member	Areas of Learning for Under-Fives English Technology Information technology Welsh 2 nd language,	Main findings Assessment, Recording and Reporting. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare. Self-evaluation and school improvement.
Mrs A. Neal Team Member	Science Geography Art Religious Education	Main findings Standards achieved in Key Skills across the curriculum Curriculum Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs Staffing, accommodation and Learning Resources

The inspection team would like to thank all parents, governors, staff and pupils for their assistance and co-operation at all stages of the inspection.