

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

***CWMCLYDACH JUNIOR SCHOOL
WERN STREET
CLYDACH VALE
RHONDDA CYNON TAFF***

School Number: 674-2080

Date of Inspection: 7-9 June 2004

By

MRS GILLIAN HARRISON

Registered Inspector

Date: 26 July 2004

Under Estyn Contract Number: CT274/03P

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

This Junior school for children aged from seven to eleven years is situated in Clydach Vale, which is an offshoot of the main Rhondda Fawr Valley. The building, which is more than 100 years old, is located in the centre of the village. In recent years the area has seen an increase in unemployment and in the number of transient families and is a Communities First area.

Since the school was last inspected, in 1999, the number on roll has dropped from 185 to 125. Pupils are organised into five mainsteam classes, four of which are mixed age and one single age year 6 class. An additional .5 support teacher enables pupils to be taught in six ability classes for literacy and numeracy.

The school draws its pupils from a mainly economically disadvantaged area, with 46 per cent in receipt of free school meals. A small number of pupils, whose parents have expressed a preference for the school, come from other areas. The intake represents a range of abilities; approximately 30 per cent are identified as requiring special educational needs (SEN) support although no pupils have statements of SEN.

All pupils come from English speaking backgrounds; no pupils are identified as Welsh speakers or as having English as an additional language. There are three pupils looked after by the Local Authority.

The school's mission statement states "Our school should be a happy and caring environment where learning is at the centre of all we undertake". This mission statement is underpinned by a range of appropriate aims which stress the educational, moral and social development of each pupil within a supportive ethos.

Within a comprehensive long-term development plan, the school has adopted a range of targets for the current year, covering aspects of curriculum and assessment, key skills, staff development and premises.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

- Cwmclydach is a good school which provides an attractive and stimulating learning environment for all its pupils. It has a caring ethos and succeeds in supporting and nurturing all pupils, including those with behaviour problems. It is an inclusive school.
- Standards achieved in the National Curriculum (NC) subjects and religious education are as follows:

| Subject | Standard Achieved |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| English | Good |
| Mathematics | Good |
| Science | Good |
| Welsh second language | Good |
| Design and technology | Good |
| Information Technology | Very good |
| History | Good |
| Geography | Good |
| Art | Very good |
| Music | Good |

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Physical Education | Satisfactory |
| Religious Education | Good |

- The school has been successful in raising standards in most subjects since the last inspection.
- Test results at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) indicate that pupils perform better than those in similar schools locally and in Wales as a whole.
- The school has worked systematically to develop the use of key skills across the curriculum. Standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are good. They are also good in numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT).
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school provides and promotes a caring, supportive and welcoming ethos. There is a clear sense of community to which all members contribute.
- Pupils' behaviour is good overall and often very good. Pupils are polite and courteous. They move around the building in an orderly fashion and enter and leave learning areas, assemblies and the dining hall quietly and effectively.
- Good behaviour is underpinned by the positive structures that the school has in place for the management of any aspect of inappropriate behaviour. There are comprehensive and coherent discipline and anti-bullying policies in place, emphasising rewards, praise and encouragement of good behaviour.
- The standard of pupils' attendance and punctuality is unsatisfactory. The school works hard to reduce the number of condoned absences and lateness. The headteacher makes home visits and there is evidence that, with the support of the project attendance officer, levels reached 91.6%. Since the withdrawal of this support, levels have fallen. On the first day of the inspection week 36 pupils were absent.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. In lessons seen, teaching was very good in 11 per cent, good in 66 per cent, satisfactory in 21 per cent and unsatisfactory in some two per cent. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when only 43 per cent was judged to be good or better, 50 per cent satisfactory and seven per cent unsatisfactory.
- Arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting are very good overall. The school has a comprehensive document which provides detailed information and guidance on the school's policy and procedures. These are implemented effectively and consistently. The School Development Plan (SDP) contains development targets for assessment and monitoring procedures designed to continue to raise standards. These are reflected in the individual subjects. The assessment co-ordinator regularly monitors progress towards the achievement of these targets.
- The overall quality, breadth and balance of the curriculum are good. The school's curriculum aims are well reflected in what is planned and delivered and meet statutory requirements. All the prescribed subjects of the NC are provided and the common requirements are met.
- The curriculum is enhanced by visits which provide a stimulus for work in the classroom. Residential visits are undertaken to provide opportunities for outdoor adventure activities and to develop pupils' personal and social skills.
- The school makes good provision for supporting and guiding pupils and for their welfare. The headteacher and staff know the pupils in their care very well and have established a

caring and positive ethos within the school where pupils feel secure, appreciated and valued.

- The school's provision for pupils with SEN is very good. Pupils grow in confidence and make good progress towards the targets set for them. Standards of achievement are good in relation to their ability.
- The school's policy for provision for pupils with SEN is comprehensive and reflects the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice. It is implemented mainly through the setting arrangement for English and mathematics, which ensures that numbers in all teaching groups are low and never more than 16 in the lowest set, thus enabling teachers to spend more time with individual pupils.
- The quality of partnership with parents and the community is good; with schools and other institutions partnerships are very good. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting, the vast majority of parents show appreciation of the work of the school, particularly in relation to the support provided for pupils with SEN, and the approachability of staff.
- Although there is no written policy, the quality of partnership with industry is good. All staff have benefited from industrial placements which enhance their professional development.
- The overall quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is very good. This is reflected in the very good progress made since the last inspection. The school has adopted the locally developed model of self-evaluation as a basis for monitoring the curriculum and all aspects of school life.
- The overall quality of leadership and efficiency is very good. The school has been successful in maintaining its aims and ethos during a period of contraction of both pupils and teachers. It is successful in carrying out its equal opportunities policy and is an inclusive school.
- The governing body is very supportive and members have clearly defined roles, which are linked with subject co-ordinators. They take their roles seriously and visit the school on a regular basis to discuss issues with teachers and as helpers in classrooms.
- The headteacher provides very good educational leadership and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. There is a clear sense of purpose and vision for further developments within the school.
- The staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall; however, the condition of some aspects of the building is cause for concern. The governing body has been made aware of a number of health and safety issues identified during the inspection.
- The school has made very good progress in addressing the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

The standards of achievement are good overall.

- In the 38 lessons, or parts of lessons observed, standards of achievement were judged to be very good in 11 per cent, good in 66 per cent and satisfactory in 23 per cent. These are well above the Welsh Assembly Government's all-Wales targets.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

- The school provides and promotes a caring, supportive and welcoming ethos. There is a clear sense of community to which all members contribute.
- Acts of collective worship comply with statutory requirements and offer pupils meaningful opportunities for the enhancement of spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences.
- During collective worship, pupils listen attentively, sing enthusiastically and participate both orally and musically. Opportunities are taken to enjoy stories, share information and celebrate successes. In classrooms, at the end of the day, a period of contemplative reflection is made available to pupils.
- Through its mission statement and aims, the school successfully promotes a framework for the moral, ethical and behavioural ethos of the school. These values enable pupils to understand and develop a sense of fairness and honesty, respect for themselves and others, their property and possessions.
- Pupils are aware of those less fortunate than themselves both in the immediate community and in the wider world. They raise money for charities, distribute Harvest gift parcels to senior citizens and arrange shoebox collections for orphanages in Moldova.
- Pupils collaborate well and support each other in classroom activities. They exercise mutual respect, care and tolerance when working in classes with pupils of varying ages. They exhibit roles of responsibility when electing fellow pupils to a developing school council. Older pupils are becoming mature young citizens.
- Visitors to the school enrich the curriculum, while visits to places of interest enhance pupils' learning. Pupils develop a deeper understanding of their local heritage and culture when visiting Rhondda Heritage Park and St. Thomas' Church, Clydach Vale. Their spiritual awareness and understanding is further developed by visits from members of local religious denominations. Such experiences develop and extend pupils' understanding of events outside their normal daily life.
- The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is enhanced by visits to St. Fagans and Porthcawl and studies of Welsh artists and composers.
- The school has a policy for racial equality and cultural diversity. Pupils' awareness of other cultural traditions is developed primarily through studies in religious education, history and geography. Pupils develop tolerance and an in-depth understanding of the implications of living in a multi-cultural society.
- There are good relationships with the community and pupils are developing a very good understanding of their responsibilities for the environment.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Pupils' behaviour is good overall and often very good.

- In and around the school, pupils' behaviour is good: they are polite and courteous. Pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion and enter and leave learning areas, assemblies and the dining hall quietly and effectively.

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- In classrooms, pupils display good attitudes to learning and are keen to complete tasks set. This good standard of behaviour makes a significant contribution to the quality of the learning environment.
 - In the playground, children mix well, play happily together and display tolerance and consideration for each other.
 - Good behaviour is underpinned by positive structures for managing inappropriate behaviour. There are comprehensive and coherent discipline and anti-bullying policies in place emphasising reward and praise and encouraging good behaviour.
 - Inappropriate behaviour is dealt with firmly, often with a quiet word from the teacher. More serious offences are referred to the headteacher who deals with them appropriately. The school works closely with outside agencies to modify the behaviour of a small minority of pupils. There have been no exclusions from the school during the last 12 months.
 - Pupils show respect for property and treat the school's resources with care. They are familiar with the rules and the consequences of any misbehaviour.
 - Parents and governors state that they are pleased with the standards of behaviour promoted by the school. Incidents are dealt with promptly, involving parents at an early stage.

4.3 Attendance

The level of pupils' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

- The average rate of attendance over the past twelve months, at 89.82%, is well below the LEA and all Wales averages. Attendance figures overall and the school's targets are adversely affected by the frequent short absences of a small minority of pupils and the increasing number of family holidays in term time, causing disruption to teaching and pupils' learning.
- The school works hard to reduce the number of condoned absences and lateness. The headteacher makes home visits and there is evidence that, with the support of the project attendance officer, levels reached 91.6%. Since the withdrawal of this support, levels have fallen. On the first day of the inspection week 36 pupils were absent.
- Those pupils with frequent short absences are also often late at the start of the day and miss the beginning of lessons. Absences and lateness are closely monitored: the school operates a first day response system and phones home when pupils have not arrived by 9.30am. Regular newsletters remind parents of the need for regular, punctual attendance and the detrimental effects of absence on pupil's learning, but a small number of families are slow to respond.
- Pupils with full and improved attendance and punctuality are rewarded weekly at whole school assemblies.
- Registers are completed meticulously: the school complies with National Assembly of Wales (NAW) circular 3/99, for registering pupils and individual sessions and lessons start on time.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching is good overall. In lessons seen, teaching was very good in 11 per cent, good in 66 per cent, satisfactory in 21 per cent and unsatisfactory in some two per cent. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when only 43 per cent was judged to be good or better, 50 per cent was satisfactory and seven per cent was unsatisfactory.

- Teachers' planning is of a consistently high quality. Learning objectives are clearly identified and, in the best lessons, these are shared with pupils at the beginning and reviewed at the end.
- All teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of what they teach and most bring the subject alive in the classroom through their energetic teaching, using imaginative stimuli to engage pupils.
- Where teaching has shortcomings, these usually result from a lack of excitement and interaction with pupils. They sometimes lack pace and have insufficient challenge to maintain pupils' interest and motivation.
- Most teachers have high expectations of the pupils both in terms of their academic achievement and in their behaviour. Classrooms are well organised with attractive displays to support learning. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to motivate pupils and to reward them for their efforts.
- Teachers make good use of formal and informal assessment to plan suitable tasks for pupils. Books are marked regularly and comments are both formative and informative. Pupils with SEN are well catered for, both through the setting arrangements and by differentiating work at a number of levels.
- All teachers make good use of ICT equipment as a tool for teaching and learning. They use the interactive white-board to model techniques for pupils to use at individual computers and plan specific tasks involving ICT in most subjects.
- Support staff make a valuable contribution in all classes. The support for individuals and groups enables them to access and take a full part in all lessons.
- The school has a structured homework policy, outlining the amount of homework for each year group. Teachers use homework effectively to reinforce skills and knowledge introduced in lessons.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Arrangements for Assessment, recording and reporting are very good overall.

- The school has a comprehensive assessment document which provides detailed information and guidance on the school's policy and procedures. These are effectively and consistently implemented.
- The SDP contains targets for assessment and monitoring procedures designed to continue to raise standards. These are reflected in the assessment of individual subjects. The assessment co-ordinator regularly monitors progress towards the achievement of these targets.

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- Comprehensive assessments of pupils' progress are made regularly in all year groups through a specified schedule of assessment tasks and formal tests. There is a system of pupil, group and school target setting with monitoring and tracking in place. Assessment opportunities are specifically identified in teachers' short-term planning. Pupils' work is marked consistently and day-to-day assessment is good.
 - Moderated portfolios of levelled pupils' work in the core and foundation subjects are used to ensure consistent and secure judgements about pupils' progress and teachers' expectations in each year group and subject area.
 - Very good procedures are in place to assess pupils' work in English, mathematics and science, enabling teachers to plan work at an appropriate level.
 - Teachers keep manageable, cumulative records of pupils' progress in the core subjects. In some subjects, such as information technology, pupils are involved in keeping their own records of achievement.
 - Records of Achievement are used to track pupil progress and to record achievement outside the curriculum.
 - Procedures for assessment at the end of the key stage meet statutory requirements.
 - The school has very good procedures for identifying pupils with SEN. Assessment is used to identify the level of support needed by individual pupils, ensuring the school's commitment to being fully inclusive. Individual Education Plans (IEP's) for pupils with SEN are of very good quality and include appropriate targets which are regularly reviewed and updated.
 - All data gathered from ongoing assessments and standardised tests is thoroughly analysed and translated into targets for improvement at individual, cohort and school level. This information is used to set pupils for English, mathematics, history, geography and religious education. Pupils are involved in setting and evaluating their own targets in the core subjects on a termly basis.
 - Parents are invited to visit the school twice a year in order to discuss their child's progress. They are informed of their child's attainment in all subjects and the school's performance in the Standard Assessment Tests at the end of KS2.
 - Written reports containing information about pupil's progress are completed annually. The school is aware of some shortcomings in the current reporting format and is reviewing this to ensure more detailed information in the individual subjects.

5.3 Curriculum

The overall quality, breadth and balance of the curriculum are good. The school's curriculum aims are well reflected in what is planned and delivered.

- The curriculum meets statutory requirements. All the prescribed subjects of the NC are provided and the common requirements are met. The school has a policy for key skills and successfully identifies appropriate opportunities for their development.
- Clear policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects of the NC, religious education and personal and social education. Curriculum maps and short-term plans clearly outline the content to be taught and ensure continuity and progression across the year groups.
- Religious education is taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. Good attention is given to pupils' personal and social education, including sex education.

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- The overall amount of teaching time is broadly in line with Welsh Assembly Government recommendations. All subjects are timetabled and a suitable amount of teaching time has been allocated to each of them.
 - The school effectively addresses the issue of mixed-age classes through a two-year planning cycle. This is delivered through a setting arrangement in some subjects.
 - The school provides a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities. Some are led by the teachers in the school, while others are funded and delivered by outside agencies such as “Dragon Sports”. These clubs are well attended and are successful in reinforcing the school’s taught curriculum.
 - The curriculum is enhanced by visits which provide a stimulus for work in the classroom. Residential visits are undertaken to provide opportunities for outdoor adventure activities and to develop pupils’ personal and social skills.
 - The school is part of the Eco school initiative and is involved in a local project to recycle materials. Pupils are aware of their environment and are learning to take care of it.
 - The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is well represented in subjects such as art, music, history and geography. Good use is made of incidental Welsh throughout the school day. Pupils benefit from visitors to the school such as local artists, musicians and historians. They study the events of local history and changes that have affected life in the Rhondda Valley.
 - A visiting instrumental teacher and the *athrawes fro* enhance the school’s provision in music and Welsh. The school also benefits from the regular services of a locally retired teacher who is an accomplished pianist.
 - In line with its equal opportunities policy, the school is successful in providing equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.
 - The school is aware of the needs of more able and talented pupils and caters for them by differentiating the curriculum. When necessary, materials and resources are borrowed from the local secondary school to support this provision. There are no pupils for whom the NC is modified or disapplied.
 - Homework is set in line with the school’s policy and is matched to the needs of pupils, reinforcing the work introduced in lessons.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils’ Welfare

The school makes good provision for supporting and guiding pupils and for their welfare.

- The headteacher and staff know the pupils in their care very well and have established a caring and positive ethos within the school, where pupils feel secure, appreciated and valued.
- Pupils’ needs and subsequent requirements are identified at an early age. All aspects of pupils’ progress are monitored closely by staff. Academic achievement, and progress in personal development, behaviour and attendance are regularly discussed by staff, with pupils and, where appropriate, with parents. Teachers and pupils share high but realistic expectations of their performance.
- The school has a policy and programme for personal and social education. There is a positive approach to behaviour management and a policy for rewarding effort, good conduct, achievement and attendance. Pupils are taught the principles of living a healthy lifestyle, the dangers of drug abuse and the need for road safety.

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- Sex education is taught mainly through science and the Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme at an appropriate level for the age of the pupils. The school nurse visits to speak to older pupils on more specific aspects of their development.
 - Child protection procedures are well established. Staff are alert to the issues and have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities.
 - There are effective measures and appropriate policies in place for the elimination of all forms of oppressive behaviour, including bullying and racism. These procedures are understood by pupils, staff, governors and parents. No incidents of bullying were observed during the inspection.
 - Appropriate health and safety policies are in place and staff are familiar with the procedures relating to them. All members of staff have been trained in First Aid and the designated teacher has received additional training on specific issues. Arrangements for the supervision of pupils before school, during breaks and at lunchtime are good.
 - Concern for ensuring the health and safety of pupils is apparent in the range of associated policies that are implemented throughout the school. Regular checks are made in order to identify potential dangers occurring to the school buildings and grounds.
 - A number of safety issues were identified during the inspection and drawn to the attention of the governing body. Some of these issues were identified at the time of the last inspection.
 - There are appropriate procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils and staff in the event of fire. Fire drills are carried out termly and reported to governing body. All accidents are reported and logged in an accident book.
 - There are very good transition links between the feeder infant schools and with Tonypany Community College to which pupils later transfer. These provide effective support and develop pupils' confidence and sense of well being when they move from one phase of education to another.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN

The school's provision for pupils with SEN is very good. Pupils grow in confidence and make good progress towards the targets set for them. Standards of achievement are good in relation to their ability.

- The school's policy for provision for pupils with SEN is comprehensive and reflects the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice. It is implemented mainly through the setting arrangement for English and mathematics, which ensures that numbers in all teaching groups are low, and never more than 16 in the lowest set, thus enabling teachers to spend more time with individual pupils.
- Within classes, work is carefully planned and differentiated to match the needs of all pupils and further supported by support staff and adult volunteers.
- A wide range of tests is used effectively to identify specific difficulties and to track the progress made by pupils. The data is carefully recorded and used purposefully to provide appropriate learning activities for all pupils. Individual programmes such as "Catch Up" are in place for those with the greatest needs.
- The school currently identifies 34 pupils as having SEN (30%). Of these, 18 are at the "School Action" stage and 16 at the "School Action Plus" stage; no pupils have a

statement of SEN. One pupil has an IEP for medical reasons and has specific equipment to support his needs.

- Individual educational plans are drawn up for each pupil and reviewed on a termly basis. These plans contain suitable targets in literacy and numeracy and, when necessary, for behaviour.
- All pupils with SEN are fully integrated into the life and work of the school. Strong emphasis is placed on the development of self-esteem and confidence.
- Parents of pupils with SEN are kept informed of their children's progress on a regular basis and are encouraged to attend review meetings.
- The headteacher personally undertakes the role of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). She undertakes this role with interest, enthusiasm and efficiency.
- The link governor for SEN, identified by the Governing Body, regularly visits the school and is fully aware of the issues that need to be addressed.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

The quality of partnership with parents and the community is good, with schools and other institutions partnerships are very good.

- In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting, the vast majority of parents show appreciation of the work of the school, particularly in relation to the support provided for pupils with SEN, and the approachability of staff.
- The quality of written information for parents is good. Regular newsletters and other communications keep parents well-informed about activities and events.
- Home/school tasks, for example for St David's day and notifications of educational visits, help to keep parents informed about topics and subjects being taught.
- The school prospectus issued to new parents is informative and meets the requirements of NAW circular 14/01. The GB annual report to parents has a few minor omissions and as such does not meet the requirements of NAW circular 15/01. All parents sign the home/school agreement.
- Although there is no formal parent teacher association, a significant number of enthusiastic parents in the "Helping Hands" group raise generous funds for the school and assist in practical activities, for example with school productions and transport. The money raised is used to purchase resources such as musical instruments and information technology equipment.
- A small number of adults, including governing body members and a retired teacher, make positive contributions to the life of the school. They provide very good quality support in classrooms, for example with reading, geography and history as well as organising the lunchtime singing club and choir that contributes significantly to developing confidence and standards achieved by the pupils. Social occasions and celebrations are open to invited members of the community and are very well attended.
- The school plays an active part in the community, for example pupils take part in the annual four-mile run organised by the community development officer. Pupils go out into the community to entertain, for example the choir sings in the senior citizens centre and in church.

- Educational visits and visitors help to enhance learning, for example pupils' skills in netball and athletics are enhanced through working with the play development officer who runs lunchtime and after school clubs. Year 6 pupils benefit from residential visits to an international college where they take part in outdoor pursuit activities which help develop their team building and problem solving skills.
- The school supports charities and pupils are aware of people less fortunate than themselves locally and in the wider community.
- There are very good links with the neighbouring infant school and the receiving secondary school. Pastoral and curriculum links are well established. Procedures for bridging the gap between KS1 and KS2 are thoughtfully planned and implemented. A teacher is in charge of KS2/KS3 transition. Schools share joint in-service training and Y7 teachers take lessons in English and mathematics in the summer term. Year 6 pupils undertake cross-phase projects in the core subjects and media work.
- There are good links with surrounding colleges of further education and the Rathbone foundation. The school provides training and work experience for classroom support assistants and secondary students. As yet, there is no formal partnership with an initial teacher training institution although a student teacher will be placed in the school during the Autumn term.
- There are good links with outside agencies as the need arises.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

Although there is no written policy, the quality of partnership with industry is good.

- All staff have benefited from industrial placements which enhance their professional development.
- Visits and visitors help to raise the pupils' awareness of the world of work both past and present. For example, pupils have worked with professionals such as artists and weavers to make the Children's Tapestry of Hope, which was displayed in Westminster Abbey. All pupils are involved in the mini-enterprise award scheme which helps to develop their business acumen and team building skills. Pupils benefit from professional coaching, for example in football and rugby and work with professional dancers in the nearby community centre.
- The Healthy Schools initiative is in the early stages of development. Pupils take turns to run the healthy tuck shop and order stock.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

The overall quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is very good. This is reflected in the very good progress made since the last inspection.

- The school has adopted the locally developed model of self-evaluation as a basis for monitoring the curriculum and all aspects of school life.
- The process of self-evaluation is firmly established and used to identify areas to be further developed and to set appropriate targets within the SDP.
- The current SDP is a useful, clearly-written document setting out priorities for improvement for the current year and outlining developments for a three year period.

Progress in meeting targets is discussed by the whole staff and necessary adjustments made on a regular basis.

- Regular reports by the headteacher keep the governing body well informed about the work of the school.
- Curriculum co-ordinators, together with the headteacher, monitor classroom practice on a rolling programme. The outcomes are used to prepare detailed plans for improvement in individual subjects, which are linked with staff development and training needs.
- Much hard work has been undertaken to address the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection, which has resulted in raising standards in a number of subjects.
- The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark and is working towards achieving Investors in People status.
- The school has a wealth of data, which it uses to track pupil performance. The results of standardised tests and teachers' assessments are used to formulate targets for individual pupils as well as year groups.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

The overall quality of leadership and efficiency is very good.

- The school has been successful in maintaining its aims and ethos during a period of contraction of both pupils and teachers. It is successful in carrying out its equal opportunities policy and is an inclusive school.
- The governing body is very supportive and members have clearly defined roles, which are linked with subject co-ordinators. They take their roles seriously and visit the school on a regular basis to discuss issues with teachers and as helpers in classrooms.
- The headteacher provides very good educational leadership and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. There is a clear sense of purpose and vision for further developments within the school.
- Enthusiasm and vitality are prominent features of the headteacher's leadership style: these are successfully conveyed to both staff and pupils.
- Very good relationships exist at all levels, with staff working purposefully together as a team.
- Most curriculum co-ordinators provide a good lead within the subjects for which they have responsibility and give practical support and advice to their colleagues.
- The budget is monitored on a quarterly basis by the governing body and suitable consideration is given to ensuring value for money. The decline in pupil numbers means that decisions need to be made to make savings within the current financial year.
- Day-to-day administration is smooth and efficient, with the school operating as a well-ordered community.
- The school complies with most statutory requirements and observes guidelines set by the National Assembly for Wales.
- The school provides good value for money.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

The staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall; however, the condition of some aspects of the building is cause for concern.

- The school has an appropriate number of teaching and non-teaching staff. They are appropriately qualified and deployed effectively.
- Each member of the teaching staff has a job description outlining responsibility for one or more areas of the curriculum. Classroom support assistants also have generic job descriptions outlining their duties.
- All teaching staff are given opportunities to participate in in-service training which contributes well to their skills and confidence. Information from courses is disseminated to other members of staff and the in-service training programme reflects identified school and staff needs linked to priorities within the SDP.
- Teachers have accessed a number of grants on an individual, school and cluster basis. These have been used to fund developments in SEN, music, PSE and speaking and listening.
- Staff appraisal is in place as part of the Performance Management process. Team leaders have been identified and established and training for staff has been provided.
- Peripatetic teachers attend the school to teach violin and Welsh. This has a positive impact on the pupils' learning and standards achieved.
- Classroom support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. There is good support from the ancillary staff and the day-to-day administrative tasks are carried out very efficiently by the school secretary. A number of parents and adult helpers also support the school by helping in class and raising funds.
- Attractive and stimulating displays throughout the school enhance the learning environment and have a positive effect on standards of achievement. They are informative, reflecting and supporting pupils' learning and indicating the value teachers place on pupils' achievements.
- Accommodation is good overall, classrooms are spacious, and there is a hall, library and ICT suite; however, the poor condition and disrepair of a small number of wooden window frames and crumbling masonry pose a health and safety hazard and are cause for concern. The school has no access for disabled pupils, staff and/or members of the public.
- Outside hard-standing facilities are adequate and are shared with the adjoining infant school. The area, however, is inclined and can pose difficulties in the promotion of physical activities, including game skills.
- Resources for learning are of good quality and quantity and are regularly updated and expanded. They are well-used, successfully managed and accessible to staff. Their use has a positive effect on the standard of achievement of pupils. The ICT suite is time-tabled for use on a daily basis. Subject co-ordinators audit provision of resources and review these in relation to SDP priorities.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

English

Standards of achievement in English are good.

Good features

- Most pupils listen attentively to instructions and explanations given by teachers and respond enthusiastically to questions.
- During planned activities to promote speaking and listening, they work well in pairs and small groups, listening carefully to one another and using vocabulary relevant to the task.
- By the end of the key stage, older pupils use their speaking skills well in role-play and in drama activities to explore ideas in preparation for poetry writing. They understand the technique of “freeze frames” and use this effectively to describe and consolidate their ideas.
- Pupils with SEN read words from given lists and copy these into appropriate sentences. They read simple books at their ability level and show understanding and enjoyment. They read out their own written accounts to the class with confidence.
- Throughout the school, there is good development of poetry writing. Pupils are aware of the effect of adjectives and alliteration from an early stage and many use these techniques effectively in their own writing.
- Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and audiences. They produce instructions for others, setting out their work clearly using bullet points and write letters to friends and family members describing activities they have undertaken.
- Descriptive writing develops well and, by the end of the key stage, many pupils use vocabulary imaginatively to create a desired effect. Ideas are often sustained and developed in interesting ways using more complex sentences within paragraphs.
- Most pupils are aware of the drafting process and, with the aid of writing frames, they plan their work effectively before embarking on a final draft.
- Handwriting develops well and most pupils use a joined, clear and fluent style. By the end of the key stage pupils use punctuation, including speech marks, accurately and present their work to a high standard. Good use is made of word processing for the final publication of some work.
- Pupils enjoy studying books and explore characters and situations orally and in writing. Most read for enjoyment and show good comprehension and understanding of the texts they read.
- They use a good range of non-fiction books to locate information so as to extend their knowledge and understanding of the topics being studied. They are aware of the main features of books and can use a contents and index page and know that a glossary can be used to explain unfamiliar words.

Shortcomings

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- In some classes, extended writing is restricted by the nature of the tasks set.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement in mathematics are good throughout the school.

Good features

- Younger pupils have a good understanding of place value which they use confidently to solve mental and written calculations involving the four rules of number. Pupils are able to differentiate between odd and even numbers and establish a rule for doing so.
- All pupils use a range of practical activities, apparatus and resources to enhance their understanding and knowledge of number, including mathematical vocabulary cards and number fans.
- Most pupils have good recall of number facts, identifying and using number sequences and patterns when solving numerical problems. Mathematical games are used effectively to reinforce multiplication and pupils confidently describe the strategies used in their calculations. Pupils count on accurately in various units, starting from randomly selected numbers.
- Appropriate mathematical vocabulary is used and pupils identify and name common two and three-dimensional shapes. They identify lines of symmetry accurately and demonstrate these on regular shapes by folding, drawing lines or by using mirrors.
- Older pupils extend their knowledge of the number system and deal confidently with the addition and subtraction of positive and negative numbers in work related to temperature. They confidently order larger numbers, work with fractions, mixed numbers and decimals and extend this to work in percentages. Pupils understand the nature of decimal fractions and convert fractional amounts from one form to another.
- Pupils understand the principles of measurement. They use appropriate units of measure for length, volume, area and capacity accurately. They understand the rules for finding the area and perimeter of regular and irregular shapes and the volume of regular, three-dimensional solids.
- By the end of the key stage, pupils create nets of solid shapes and construct hexagonal and triangular prisms with confidence. They name acute and obtuse angles and work with accuracy and confidence with directions, including simple angular motion, before moving onto using grid references, co-ordinates and compass points.
- Older pupils sort two-dimensional shapes using appropriate mathematical language and terminology. They show a good understanding of the effect of rotating figures through right angles and accurately construct a range of different rectangular shapes from a given number of centimetre squares. Pupils accurately record the properties of a range of four-sided figures.
- Pupils' investigative work shows evidence of systematic application of strategies. They use tally charts, pie graphs, bar charts, line graphs and frequency charts to collect and compare information, which they display and interrogate with understanding. Older pupils accurately construct bar graphs to represent their height and weight. They interpret information referencing footballers, buses and money spent at a tuck shop, illustrating their understanding of the mode, median and mean.
- A good understanding of the basic principles of probability is developed and calculators and ICT are used appropriately to develop mathematical skills.

Shortcomings

- Not all pupils develop instant recall of number facts.

Science

Standards of achievement in science are good.

Good features

- Pupils show a good understanding of living processes in their study the life-cycles of humans, plants and animals. Through their investigations, younger pupils understand the conditions that stimulate seed growth, representing their results accurately in pictorial form. They label parts of a flowering plant accurately, know their functions and understand the processes of photosynthesis.
- Pupils explore what is meant by a healthy diet, exhibiting a good understanding of the processes of the human body and the relationship between the quality and balance of a diet and healthy living on growth.
- Older pupils develop a good knowledge of the effect of exercise on their hearts and pulse rates and tabulate their results with accuracy. In Y4/5, pupils accurately name and describe the functions and positions of the major organs of the body, such as the heart and lungs, and demonstrate a sound knowledge of the skeletal system and its functions.
- Younger pupils develop an understanding of the relationship between animals' diet and their teeth. Pupils in Y3 name and differentiate between incisors, molars and canine teeth and accurately explain their specific functions. In Y4, pupils classify animals into herbivores, carnivores and omnivores accurately, and develop correct use of keys in more detailed classifications.
- Pupils know the different properties of materials and their importance in determining the suitability for a given purpose. They understand that some are natural while others are man-made, some are absorbent or impermeable, transparent or opaque and that there are thermal and electrical insulators and conductors.
- Through their investigations, pupils develop a good understanding of the insulation properties of various materials and their effect on water when heated. They accurately measure temperatures using a probe and record their results as line graphs with the use of ICT.
- Pupils in Y6 conduct experiments and understand that materials exist in various states and that some changes to these states can be temporary and reversible, whilst others are permanent and irreversible. They know how particle size and stirring affects the speed of dissolving, make predictions and record the results accurately in graphical form.
- Through exploration, pupils understand that light travels in straight lines and that it can be reflected by using mirrors or blocked by placing objects in its path. Pupils in Y4/5 experiment with changes in the length of shadows during a day and draw accurate conclusions about the nature of day and night and the seasons.
- Across the key stage, pupils have a good knowledge of electricity and circuits. They know that circuits need to be complete and unbroken for electricity to flow. Pupils demonstrate their knowledge by constructing circuits in parallel and series, incorporating buzzers and switches and identifying a range of possible reasons why they might fail to operate.

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- Pupils understand that sound is produced through vibration and that some materials conduct it well while others muffle it. In Y3/4 and later in Y6, pupils understand that the pitch of a sound is affected by the length of a vibrating column, or by tension in a string and apply this knowledge to extend their understanding of how musical notes are produced.
 - Throughout the school, pupils have a good understanding of a fair test. They confidently discuss and record their investigations, explaining which aspects are to be kept constant and which are to be changed. They understand the meaning of “variable” and apply their awareness of the nature of scientific enquiry with effect during their many investigations.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Welsh second language

Standards of achievement in Welsh are good.

Good features

- Pupils respond appropriately to simple commands and incidental phrases. They answer simple questions accurately and enthusiastically.
- In lower key stage 2, pupils communicate by copying correctly and by writing simple phrases from memory. They write accurate descriptions of themselves, including the clothes they are wearing.
- Pupils play games in pairs and small groups, asking and answering simple questions about what they like and what they can do. They read words and sentences accurately from flash cards and use these in various combinations to vary the questions they ask. They can answer simple questions confidently in a positive or negative form.
- Within some of the teaching packs, pupils use big books to develop their recognition of words and reading skills. By the end of the key stage, they read with confidence and fluency.
- Pupils use a computer program to match verbs accurately to appropriate pictures. Working in pairs, they create story books using an ICT package. They write a good range of sentences to describe pictures and develop a story. They are able to read their stories to the class with confidence and accuracy.
- Older pupils write simple dialogues between two or more characters and extend their ideas by using suitable connectives to join two shorter sentences.
- By the end of the key stage, some pupils can ask and answer questions in the past tense using the short form of the verb. They write accurately about what they have done and use the third person to describe a friend.
- Good use is made of incidental Welsh in most classes and pupils are able to read the labels around the school. Most pupils develop good pronunciation and intonation.
- Pupils use their knowledge of Welsh to undertake simple surveys which they record in table form. They produce a timetable for the week, writing the subjects correctly in Welsh.
- Pupils know a range of Welsh songs which they sing with enthusiasm. They develop a positive attitude towards learning and using the language.

Shortcomings

- There is little use of incidental Welsh in some classes and pupils do not therefore develop sufficient fluency.

Design and technology

Standards of achievement in design and technology are good.

Good features

- Pupils throughout the school undertake a range of design and make tasks. Their work shows evidence of appropriate, labelled planning and evaluation.
- Competent use is made of a variety of tools and pupils understand the need to ensure safety when using equipment, following teachers' instructions carefully.
- Younger pupils understand the nature of stiff and flexible sheet materials and undertake focused tasks to design and make a picture frame. They draw up simple design specifications and make a plan of how to produce their frame. They evaluate their final product and give reasons for the changes they would like to make.
- Pupils generate ideas to ensure that their designs meet a range of different needs. They investigate sheet materials and tubular constructions to determine which are most suitable for making a desk-tidy. They evaluate their products to determine whether they are fit for the intended purpose.
- Pupils learn to join materials and successfully use rivets and double-sided tape to make puppets from card and paper.
- Older pupils disassemble slippers to find out about their construction. They use specific vocabulary such as *template, design and prototype* accurately during their investigations and consider *materials, purpose, buyers and cost* when designing their own.
- Suitable links are made with other subjects and pupils use their knowledge of electrical circuits in science effectively to design and make masks and quiz games with parts that light up.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of various food preparation techniques. They use their own experiences to evaluate existing, commercially produced cereal bars and understand how to combine components to create a high energy bar. In their evaluations, they consider issues such as taste and appearance and make sensible suggestions for improvements.
- Collage work, using different fabrics and textiles to create textures, is an outstanding feature within the school. Pupils competently combine materials and use sewing and weaving techniques to create colourful end products which are of a very good standard.

Shortcomings

- There is little evidence to suggest that pupils use simple mechanisms to produce different types of movement.

Information technology

Standards in information technology are very good. The regular use of the ICT suite enables all pupils to practise their skills on a regular basis.

Good features

- All pupils use information technology equipment confidently and competently in a wide range of curriculum subjects.

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- Pupils' work shows continuity and progression across the school. Pupils in all classes use ICT appropriately to support their learning. They are involved in assessing their own work and keep detailed records of their progress in the various strands of IT.
 - Younger pupils create words and pictures using a touch screen or computer keyboard with some help. They understand that they can make changes to their work and use their skills to word process simple poems.
 - As they gain in competence, they can move the cursor on the screen, delete words, save, reload and print work. Older pupils can change font size, type and colour. They can place an image on a page and change its size and position and copy text or images from one software package and place it in another. In the best examples, pupils combine graphics and frames with text to form a page and use a variety of tools effectively to create different effects in their work.
 - All pupils are able to use e-mail and send and receive messages within the school. Older pupils demonstrate very good skills when keeping an address book, adding attachments to a message and sending a carbon copy to another address.
 - Pupils have opportunities to use the internet and use their skills competently to research places being studied in geography. They understand the purpose of a search engine and older pupils select information needed for different purposes, check its accuracy and competently organise and prepare it in a form suitable for processing using ICT.
 - Throughout the school pupils make good use of databases to store information. They can interrogate a data base and display the information accurately as a graph or chart. Older pupils understand the need to store data and have a good understanding of the difference between a text field and a numerical field, and know how data can be sorted.
 - Very good use is made of spreadsheets in all classes. Older pupils use spreadsheets to explore patterns and relationships and make simple predictions about the consequences of their decision making. They compare their use of ICT with other methods.
 - Pupils use multimedia effectively to present work in a range of subjects. In the best examples, pupils demonstrate very sophisticated skills using star presentation to join slides, adding music and varied backgrounds to create different effects.
 - Pupils develop their modelling skills very well through the use of logo, using the screen turtle. By the end of the key stage, they can superimpose a number of shapes in order to create complex shapes and patterns, such as a flower head. They understand how to use the "repeat" command to investigate shapes, and can edit simple procedures so that they can make a shape bigger or smaller.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

History

Standards of achievement in history are good overall.

Good features

- Pupils show a good awareness and understanding of life in the past by handling and discussing an appropriate range of artefacts, photographs and maps, visiting places of historical interest, questioning visiting speakers and interviewing older people to gain information about events in the past.

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- Pupils develop a good sense of chronology through the study of primary and secondary sources of evidence, making comparisons and undertaking valid historical investigations. By gathering information, on a specific aspect, they develop an understanding of a period in time.
 - Pupils' historical enquiry skills develop well. They use a good range of sources, including ICT, to investigate life in the past and to determine their reliability. Older pupils demonstrate these skills well by examining a range of historical source material on the Tonypany Riots to establish the difference between fact and fiction. They express their opinions clearly, both orally and by using writing frames to produce eyewitness reports.
 - Younger pupils develop a very good range and depth of historical knowledge and understanding of life during the Second World War. They recall and organise historical information gathered during visits by local residents to talk about rationing and ration books, air raid shelters and evacuees. They present their findings to a good standard through a broad range of activities, including extended writing, pictorial and graphical representation. Pupils examine artefacts, such as a gas mask and ration book, and understand how children's lives were different during the war.
 - Attractive displays of work in history and visits to places of historical interest contribute significantly to pupils' knowledge and understanding. Younger pupils accurately recall facts about Rhydyar Cottages at Saint Fagans, and Llancaiach Fawr Manor House. Older pupils use role-play to demonstrate their knowledge following visits to Caerleon Roman Museum and Rhondda Heritage Park.
 - Pupils are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and can discuss many features of the history of their locality, in particular the Clydach Flood disaster, the Tonypany Riots of 1910, and the rise and demise of the coal industry in the Rhondda Valley.
 - Younger pupils accurately recall a number of facets of life in Stuart times, comparing the lives of the rich and poor, while older pupils possess a good knowledge of life in Celtic and Roman times, comparing Bouddica and her army with the Celtic way of life.
 - Visits to local churches, interviews with local residents, together with census scrutiny, allow pupils to develop their skills of historical enquiry. They ask relevant, historical questions, associate artefacts with the appropriate period and make appropriate use of a range of resources to help them understand change.

Shortcomings

- The use of ICT is underdeveloped to support historical enquiry.

Geography

Standards of achievement in geography are good.

Good features

- Pupils develop sound knowledge and understanding of local, Welsh and world geography. They develop the geographical skills of mapping and enquiry as they progress through the school and use a developing range of maps and plans, making good use of symbols and co-ordinates to identify key features.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to their work. They listen carefully and respond well to questions associated with geographical tasks. They develop their skills well when comparing Clydach Vale with Porthcawl, working together and accurately identifying natural and man-made features, using aerial photographs.

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- Across the key stage, all pupils undertake field trips within the local community and develop a good knowledge and understanding of geographical features. They extend their knowledge through studying the contrasting area of Porthcawl. They identify similarities and differences between the areas, using old and new maps and writing in detail about the changes which have occurred. Younger pupils use templates as viewfinders to isolate specific views and use appropriate vocabulary to accurately describe notable physical features.
 - Younger pupils conduct traffic surveys by setting up speed cameras outside the school, recording and interpreting the results accurately. They understand the human influence on physical features in Tonypany by interviewing people in the town and making comparisons with features in Porthcawl.
 - Following fieldwork in the local community, younger pupils make good attempts at mapping their route from home to school and from school to Tonypany. Older pupils follow map and ground routes, estimating accurately and comparing distances with good understanding of scale. They use four figure grid references accurately and understand symbols to pinpoint features in preparation for a visit to Pembrokeshire.
 - Pupils investigate the proliferation of household waste and its destination. They discuss the problem of its disposal and understand its effect on the environment. They offer informed opinions and views with regard to the Nantygwyddan Tip issue.
 - Older pupils undertake an in-depth study of India, in particular the village of Kesharpur. Over a period of time, they gain knowledge and understanding of the human and physical features of Kesharpur by comparing and contrasting houses, schools and landscape with those in Clydach Vale. They investigate Kesharpur's location and compare the size of India with Britain and Wales. They compare the "day in the life of" pupils in Kesharpur with their own, by looking at village maps, accurately identifying similarities and differences.
 - Through discussion and study of tropical rainforests, pupils understand the effects of their destruction and the possible consequences to the global community. They understand the consequences of deforestation in Kesharpur and note the changes that occur as a result of the forest returning.
 - Older pupils formulate ideas and opinions about sustainable development issues; they have a clear understanding of the individual's responsibility for the environment and understand the interrelationship within the wider world in terms of global citizenship.

Shortcomings

- Pupils are not always confident in posing or exploring geographical questions independently.

Art

Standards of achievement in art are very good.

Good features

- All pupils keep a sketch book to record information on visits and to investigate and experiment with various techniques. These form useful working documents and are used well within the preparatory stages of painting and drawing processes.
- Younger pupils make detailed observations and sketches of facial features before embarking on drawing portraits. Their final results reflect the detailed observations made in preparation for the end product.

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- Art techniques are used effectively to illustrate aspects of other subjects such as history. For example, pupils research Tudor and Victorian monarchs, paying attention to their costumes, jewellery and posture. They make good use of light and dark tones to achieve contrasts in their final compositions.
 - While studying the works of famous artists such as Vincent Van Gogh pupils demonstrate very good control of tools and techniques to create effects. They use lines, size and lightening of colour effectively to distinguish shapes and show distance.
 - In their study of Monet, older pupils experiment with different consistencies of paint, tissue and “marvin” to achieve texture and to create the effect of reflection on water. Their final compositions show mastery of the techniques and they produce work of a very good standard.
 - Pupils study Welsh artists such as Josef Herman and Augustus John in some detail and develop an understanding of their style. They make good copies of some works, such as Augustus John’s portrait of his sister Gwen, while investigating the effects of pencil and charcoal and comparing the effects.
 - Within their study of the local area, pupils observe features at first hand and effectively investigate colour, shape and pattern. They produce thumbnail sketches before completing their compositions, demonstrating an understanding of a range of media, including crayons, pastels, pencils and paint. They competently mix colours in paint and pastel to achieve the particular shades they want.
 - At all levels, pupils use specific vocabulary and understand terms such as *enlarge*, *texture*, *colour* and *detail*. They talk confidently about their work and have a good understanding of the process leading to a final composition and select suitable materials and media to create the effects they want.
 - Several local artists visit the school to demonstrate their particular style and technique. As a result of these demonstrations, pupils practise skills such as dabbing, rolling and dragging and absorb them effectively into their own paintings.
 - Pupils use their ICT skills to good effect to experiment with colour, pattern and texture. They can create a stamp which they repeat to produce a wrapping paper design. Photographs are used effectively and pupils know how to change the size to suit the purpose. They can overlap coloured images to create new colours and effects.
 - The properties of clay are explored effectively by rolling, marking, pinching and cutting. Pupils use this knowledge competently to develop three-dimensional work, making pots, which they display to good effect alongside other objects in an attractive arrangement.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Music

Standards of achievement in music are good.

Good features

- Pupils know a good range of songs and hymns and sing with enthusiasm. Older pupils can sing songs in two parts, maintaining their individual lines well.

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- Through their investigations, pupils learn about the sounds made by a range of percussions instruments. They can name both tuned and untuned instruments and know how to play them.
 - Following examples by teachers, pupils are able to imitate, memorise, internalise and recall musical patterns. They are aware of pitch and can identify whether the melody goes up or down. They accurately repeat short phrases composed and played by a partner.
 - Older pupils respond to poems, discussing the mood and selecting instruments to produce a similar effect in music. They are able to organise their ideas well and handle a range of instruments competently to achieve a desired effect. They work well as groups, discussing their work and making sensible suggestions for improvement.
 - Pupils perform group compositions to a good standard using their knowledge of pitch, texture and tempo to create moods and contrasts. They are able to record their compositions as graphic scores.
 - Throughout the school, pupils have opportunities to listen to professional musicians and appraise their work. They enjoy these occasions and learn about how to perform to an audience.
 - A small number of pupils learn to play the violin. They make good progress and are enthusiastic about learning the instrument.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not always control tone and dynamics when singing.

Physical Education

Only one games lesson was timetabled during the inspection period. Scrutiny of teachers' plans, photographs and other documentation indicate that standards are satisfactory.

The school benefits from involvement in an extensive range of sporting clubs and extra-curricular activities, some of which are funded and organised by outside agencies.

Good features

- Pupils are eager to participate in lessons and most bring the necessary clothing to perform safely.
- All pupils experience a broad range of physical activities throughout the school.
- Pupils develop their gymnastic skills through a range of progressive activities including; balancing, rolling, jumping involving apparatus, floor work and weight on hands activities. The more advanced pupils sequence their movements to a good level.
- Games skills are developed through a range of activities in the hall and on the yard. Pupils make good use of small apparatus and play a variety of games in small teams to a satisfactory level.
- Pupils participate in weekly swimming lessons and in local galas. They take part in local sporting competitions at which they are quite successful.

Shortcomings

- Not all pupils demonstrate sufficient control in dribbling, sending and receiving a ball, nor do they always undertake sufficient practice to consolidate individual skills.

Religious Education

Standards of achievement in religious education are good.

Good features

- Pupils make good progress through the religious education curriculum which meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Younger pupils learn about the life of Jesus and become familiar with stories from the Bible, including the stories that Jesus told.
- Pupils develop a sound understanding of Christian beliefs and practices. They understand that there is a cycle to the Christian calendar and that it is marked by festivals such as Christmas and Easter. Pupils learn about Holy books and understand that, for Christians, the Bible is very important.
- Pupils extend their knowledge of the special places in religion by visits to local places of worship. They begin to learn the specific vocabulary that is used to describe the main features, signs and symbols of a Christian place of worship.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and practices are enhanced by visits from local clergy.
- Pupils develop an awareness of other cultures and have good knowledge and understanding of the ceremonies and festivals of some other world religions. Younger pupils develop their knowledge of the Islamic faith by learning about Muhammad and the Qur'an.
- Older pupils learn about Judaism by listening to stories from the Torah. As a result they develop a good understanding of significant features relating to the Jewish faith.
- Through making and handling specific artefacts such as Mezuzahs and Muslim prayer beads, pupils understand some customs of world religions.
- Pupils demonstrate their social, moral and cultural skills in practical ways through their behaviour, responsibilities and attitudes to everyday life in school. They demonstrate care of the environment and explore the relationship between humans and other living creatures. They recognise that throughout the world there are many people in need.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not have opportunities to enhance their knowledge of major world faiths through visits to a Mosque or Synagogue.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

The school has made very good progress overall in addressing the key issues raised by the last inspection.

The school's post inspection action plan was based on four key issues:

- **ensure that investigative and experimental work is securely embedded within science;**

The school has made good progress in addressing this issue. The scheme of work for science has been rewritten to ensure that experimental and investigative work is included and monitoring ensures that they take place.

- **provide a greater number of opportunities for pupils to use literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, especially in work concerned with investigation and research;**

The school has made good progress in addressing this issue. Schemes of work in all subjects now identify opportunities for the development of key skills. Monitoring procedures have improved and ensure that these skills are taught. Pupils have developed the ability to carry out research independently.

- **improve the library provision;**

The school has fully addressed this issue. Outdated books have been removed from the library and £2,500 spent on replacing the stock. Shelving has been re-arranged and labelled to indicate the ability and interest level of books. Tables and chairs have been arranged to enhance the area, and displays of pupils' work make the area colourful and interesting.

- **integrate within the SDP the numerical targets identified for future development;**

The school has fully addressed this issue. All targets set within the SDP are quantifiable and measurable.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school now needs to:

- maintain the current good and very good standards by addressing the shortcomings identified within the report;
- share the current good practice and teacher expertise to ensure the continued raising of standards and quality of teaching;
- continue to develop strategies to improve attendance;
- ensure that the Governing Body annual report to parents and end of year reports to parents meet statutory requirements.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

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|---------------------|---|
| Name of School | Cwm Clydach junior |
| School type | County |
| Age-range of pupils | 7-11 |
| Address of school | Wern Street, Cwm Clydach, Rhondda Cynon Taf |
| Post-Code | CF40 2BQ |
| Telephone Number | 01443 433005 |

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Headteacher | Mrs Susan Ellison |
| Date of appointment | September 1997 |
| Chair of Governors | Pastor David Jones |
| Registered Inspector | Gillian Harrison |
| Dates of inspection | 7-9 June 2004 |

B. School Data and Indicators

| <i>Number of pupils in each year group</i> | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Year group | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 | Y6 | Total |
| Number of pupils | 34 | 32 | 30 | 29 | 125 |

| <i>Total number of teachers</i> | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
| | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time equivalent (fte) |
| Number of teachers | 6 | 1 | 6.5 |

| <i>Staffing information</i> | |
|---|------|
| Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes) | 25:1 |
| 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> | | |
|---|-------|--------------|
| | KS2 | Whole school |
| Term 1 | 87.4 | 87.4 |
| Term 2 | 90.48 | 90.48 |
| Term 3 | 91.6 | 91.6 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection. | 0 |
|---|---|

C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2003

| National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: in the school 2003 and nationally 2002 | | | Number of pupils in Y6: 44 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|----------|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|---|
| Percentage of pupils at each level | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | D | A | N | B | W | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| English | Teacher assessment | School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 32 | 41 | 18 | 0 |
| | | National | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 17 | 46 | 30 | 0 |
| | Test/Task | School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 32 | 46 | 0 |
| | | National | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 12 | 41 | 38 | 0 |
| Mathematics | Teacher assessment | School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 18 | 41 | 34 | 0 |
| | | National | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 19 | 47 | 28 | 0 |
| | Test/Task | School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 14 | 39 | 41 | 0 |
| | | National | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 19 | 43 | 30 | 0 |
| Science | Teacher assessment | School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 36 | 50 | 0 |
| | | National | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 13 | 50 | 33 | 0 |
| | Test/Task | School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 41 | 50 | 0 |
| | | National | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 47 | 38 | 0 |

| 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: | 59 | In the school: | 75 |
| In Wales: | 71 | In Wales: | 70 |

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under sections 364 and 365 of the Education Act 1996.
 A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence.
 N Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence.
 B Pupils not entered for tests because they are working outside the levels of the tests.
 W Pupils who are "working towards" level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for level 1.

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors over a three day period. The report is based on evidence from:

- observation of 38 lessons, or parts of lessons;
- pre-inspection meetings with staff, governors and parents;
- scrutiny of teachers' plans, assessment records and co-ordinators' portfolios;
- scrutiny of pupils' books in all subjects;
- listening to a representative sample of pupils reading;
- discussions with groups of pupils to ascertain their knowledge and understanding of subjects and to seek their views of the school;
- interviews with the teaching staff about their roles and responsibilities;
- discussion with the head teacher;
- analysis of 24 questionnaires completed by parents;
- observation of pupils' behaviour in lessons, in and around the school at break times, lunch times and before and after school;

- attendance at school assemblies and acts of collective worship;
- observation of extra- curricular activities;
- post-inspection meetings with the headteacher, staff and the governing body.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

| Inspector | Type | Aspect Responsibilities | Subject Responsibilities |
|------------------|-------------|--|---|
| Gillian Harrison | Rgl | Context, Main Findings, Standards of Achievement Key Skills, Quality of Teaching Curriculum SEN, Self-evaluation Leadership and efficiency Progress since the last inspection Key Issues | English Welsh Design and Technology Information Technology Music Art |
| Martyn Davies | Team | Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development Behaviour and attitudes Assessment, recording and reporting Support guidance and pupils' welfare Staffing accommodation, and learning resources | Mathematics Science History Geography Physical Education Religious Education |
| Caterina Lewis | Lay | Attendance Partnerships with parents and the community Partnership with industry | |

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