

INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF
SCHOOL INSPECTIONS ACT, 1996

CYFARTHFA JUNIOR SCHOOL

Gwaelodygarth Lane
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8RE

School Number: 675/2002

Date of Inspection: 4th – 6th May 2004

Mrs. B. A. Jones

REGISTERED INSPECTOR: WO46/15969

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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 the age of eighteen is intended to ease communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local education authorities and to emphasise the importance of continuity.

The term "reception" is applied to the year-group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) who attain the age of five during the academic year. "Year 1" (Y1) is applied to the year-group of pupils who attain the age of six during the academic year and so on to Y13 — the year-group who attain the age of eighteen 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; Key Stage 2 of Y3 to Y6; Key Stage 3 of Y7 to Y9; Key Stage 4 of Y10 and Y11 (which is the final year of compulsory education).

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The following five-point grading scale is used to represent the main judgments in the report:

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

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Cyfarthfa Junior School is situated in the grounds of Cyfarthfa Park, on the northern side of the town of Merthyr Tydfil. The school is on an elevated site adjacent to Cyfarthfa Park and Castle. The school draws pupils mostly from the outer areas of Merthyr Tydfil. The site includes a school field and attractive play areas.

Currently the school has 178 pupils aged seven to eleven. Numbers have increased by approximately 13% over the last four years.

The nature of the intake is described as neither advantaged nor disadvantaged, and it covers the full range of ability. Approximately 16% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Thirty-nine pupils are identified as having some form of special educational needs (SEN) and no pupil has a statement.

Four per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority groups. English is the sole or predominant language for 99% of the pupils, with no pupils speaking Welsh as a first language.

The school consists of seven classes, all of which are taught in mixed age groups. There are three parallel classes for lower juniors and four parallel classes for upper juniors.

The head teacher, staff and governors have a collective vision for the school, which is:

To nurture pupils and staff in an innovative and supportive environment to develop their special abilities.

The school motto is 'Success through perseverance.'

The current school development plan identifies nine targets: They are: -

- To improve standards in reading, spelling and handwriting.
- To further develop the teaching and learning of mathematics.
- To further develop the use of ICT throughout the curriculum.
- To further develop staff expertise in dealing with pupils with SEN.
- To develop a school PSE scheme of work.
- To further improve the internal environment of the school.
- To continue work on developing the theory of multiple intelligence and individual learning styles.
- To ensure assessment procedures in school are developed and extended to all areas of the curriculum.
- To reduce unauthorised absence and late attendance.

The school was last inspected in October 1998.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The Main Findings of the Report

Educational Standards Achieved by Pupils

* During the inspection, standards of educational achievement were good or better in 85% of the lessons or sessions observed, including 26% where they were very good. Standards were satisfactory in 15% of lessons or sessions. No unsatisfactory standards were observed.

* Standards achieved by pupils were:

Subject	KS2
English	Very Good
Mathematics	Very Good
Science	Very Good
Welsh (as a second language)	Satisfactory
Design and Technology	Very Good
Information Technology	Good
History	Very Good
Geography	Good
Art	Good
Music	Good
Physical Education	Good
Religious Education	Good

* End of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results indicate that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected norm of Level 4 or above in English, mathematics and science is well above local and national averages.

* The percentage achieving the higher grade of Level 5 in English and science is also above the local and national averages. The percentage achieving Level 5 in mathematics is well above local and national averages.

* When the results gained by pupils in the Key Stage 2 national tests are benchmarked, they show that the school is in the top 25% of schools in Wales for English, mathematics and science.

* In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils achieve good standards overall in speaking, listening, reading and writing, the application of number and information and communications technology.

Ethos of the School

* The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development. The positive values reflected in the school's motto, vision statement and aims are in evidence in many shared daily experiences. Pupils are encouraged to work together, and to help one another with everyday tasks.

- * Relationships throughout the school are built on mutual trust and respect. Every pupil is equally valued and the school provides a safe and secure environment for staff and pupils.
- * The overall quality of pupils' behaviour in the school is very good and they display a positive attitude to school and their learning. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that their children like attending school and that behaviour is of a high standard.
- * Pupils conduct themselves in an orderly manner in class and around the school. They behave responsibly, showing courtesy and respect for each other and adults alike, and display a good degree of self-discipline.
- * Overall attendance is satisfactory and averages 93% for the last three terms. This is similar to that recorded during the last inspection. Whilst remaining below the national average, it compares favourably with similar schools in the authority. Unauthorised absence is at 0.3%.

Quality of Education

- * The quality of teaching is very good overall. In the classes observed, the quality of teaching was good or better in 85% of the sessions or lessons, of which 44% was very good. Teaching was satisfactory in 15% of lessons or sessions. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed.
- * Learning objectives are explicit in all classes and pupils have a clear understanding of what they have to achieve. Pupils note learning objectives in their books. Work is well matched to pupils' prior attainment and ability, and differentiation is appropriate and good.
- * Teachers demonstrate a high level of commitment to the education of pupils. They use a wide range of teaching techniques and organisational strategies to stimulate and challenge pupils, who respond appropriately. Initiative is encouraged and appreciated resulting in a very good learning climate in which all pupils want to succeed.
- * Teachers have high expectations of pupils, in achievement and behaviour; pupils respond enthusiastically, eager to please and to learn. Consequently the majority of pupils try their best. Pupils talk honestly about their successes and challenges, and demonstrate a great sense of pride in their achievements.
- * The quality of the school's assessment, recording and reporting is very good. The school assessment co-ordinator regularly monitors the implementation of the assessment policy. Assessment in all subjects is consistent and accurate.

- * All subject leaders keep examples of pupils' work and use national exemplification materials to ensure that pupils' work is correctly levelled. Pupils fully understand the concept of success criteria and there is time at the beginning of every session for pupils to reflect on teachers' comments on their previous work and for pupils to make a response in writing when appropriate. In their marking of homework assignments, teachers include comments useful to both parents and pupils.
- * The school has a very good system for analysing pupils' performance. The school sets end of key stage targets and agrees statutory targets with the governing body. A careful study is made of the summary of national results from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and the value added information provided by the local authority. The school constantly reviews its equal opportunities policy to ensure that every pupil has a challenging education programme that meets his or her individual needs.
- * The curriculum provision at the school is very good and enables pupils to learn and develop to the best of their ability. The curriculum is of good quality and is broad, balanced and stimulating. There is a comprehensive range of good quality policies and up-to-date schemes of work, and a strong emphasis on cross-curricular work.
- * The support and guidance provided to pupils is very good. The personal and social guidance programme is firmly based on ACCAC guidelines.
- * Pupils feel very secure in school and are happy with the wide and valuable experiences they gain. Pupils are well known to and very much respected by staff. The portrait gallery in the entrance helps pupils to know the names of all members of staff.
- * The highly structured and effective pupil groupings within every classroom ensure that the appropriate level of work is set and that effective learning support is provided.
- * The school provides very good support to pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The school policy has been revised to take full account of the current Code of Practice for Wales (2002). The school's provision ensures that pupils with SEN have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and achieve to the best of their ability.
- * Overall, a good partnership has been established with parents, the community, and other schools and institutions, with some very good features in some areas.
- * The school has forged effective links with parents, with the prime objective of supporting pupils' personal and academic development. An "open door" policy gives parents many opportunities for informal contact between parents and teachers. Formal parents' evening in the autumn, spring and summer terms allow parents to discuss the curriculum and their child's progress. More than 90% of parents attend the autumn and spring meetings.
- * Overall, good arrangements have been made to establish an effective partnership with industry.

Management

- * The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is very good. The head teacher and the governing body have a strong commitment to raising standards and there is a robust and rigorous self-evaluation culture throughout the school.
- * The head teacher has generated a commitment among staff to critically evaluate their own work through a whole school process of self-evaluation.
- * The head teacher leads the self-evaluation process and involves all teaching staff. The focus of the process is teaching, learning and standards, and the targets in the development plan. Good use is made of data analysis and first-hand evidence to underpin the process.
- * Leadership is very good overall. The head teacher provides very good direction to the work of the school and promotes high standards.
- * The head teacher has a clear sense of purpose for the school. He is confident in the values he promotes and consulted widely with all stakeholders on the school's motto, mission statement and aims. The school has a shared sense of purpose and clear direction, creating a climate that fosters self-esteem and develops individual potential in pupils and teachers.
- * The quality of leadership provided by governors, the head teacher and staff with management responsibilities is very good.
- * Daily routines and administration operate very efficiently and make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school.
- * Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are very good overall, and have a positive effect on standards.
- * Arrangements for teacher induction and continuing professional development are both very good. The head teacher and senior management team ensure everyone has the same opportunity to develop professionally and encourage all staff to be proactive in continually improving their own practice.
- * The school's resources have a very good effect on pupils' standards of achievement across the whole curriculum.
- * The school secretary, the caretaker, the canteen staff, lunchtime assistants and cleaning staff all make very positive contribution to the good quality of school life.
- * The school has recently gained the Basic Skills Quality mark and been successfully granted the Investors in People award for the second time.

Progress since the last inspection

- * Very good progress overall has been made in dealing with the key issues identified during the last inspection. Standards in Welsh in this inspection report are good in Y3 and Y4 and satisfactory in Y5 and Y6, so progress is satisfactory.

Overall the school provides very good value for money.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

During the inspection, standards of educational achievement were good or better in 85% of the lessons or sessions observed, including 26% where they were very good. Standards were satisfactory in 15% of lessons or sessions. No unsatisfactory standards were observed.

- * Standards are very good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, and history. Standards are good in information technology, geography, art, music, physical education and religious education. Standards in Welsh are satisfactory.
- * End of Key Stage 2, National Curriculum test results indicate that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected norm of Level 4 or above in English, mathematics and science is well above the local and national averages.
- * The percentage of pupils achieving the higher grade of Level 5 in English and science is also above the local and national averages. The percentage achieving Level 5 in mathematics is well above local and national averages.
- * When the results gained by pupils in the Key Stage 2 national tests are benchmarked, they show that the school is in the top 25% of schools in Wales for English, mathematics and science.
- * In the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum, in English, girls out perform boys. However in mathematics, and in science, boys out perform girls.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

- * In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils achieve good standards overall in speaking, listening, reading and writing, the application of number and information and communication technology.
- * Pupils listen attentively and concentrate well during lessons and other activities. They respond with commitment and enthusiasm, and carefully carry out instructions. They are interested and eager to learn and to do well.
- * Oral sessions in lessons contribute significantly to developing pupils' confidence in both speaking and listening. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions, to elaborate and explain their thinking. They enjoy responding to questions, which they do without hesitation.

- * Good use is made of reading skills to carry out research, to seek information from a variety of sources, including books, the Internet and CD-ROMs.
- * Writing skills are fully applied across the curriculum. Pupils use a variety of different styles across a broad range of subjects. When pupils do write, the standard of presentation is often good. However, very few classes write in ink.
- * Number skills are fully applied across the curriculum. Pupils use ICT and the application of number when problem solving. They collect data, construct tables and simple spreadsheets, and graph the results. Pupils frequently use ICT to present their findings.
- * Pupils use estimation to predict outcomes, then test their results when using problem-solving approaches in mathematics, science, and design technology.
- * Pupils use their knowledge of number, space, shape and measures in science, design technology, history, geography art and music. They estimate and compare distances, measure, draw to scale, use co-ordinates and four-figure grid references. Pupils also use time lines.
- * When responding to practical tasks and challenging activities, pupils co-operate and communicate well with their peers. They discuss options and collaborate well in both planning and executing tasks.
- * In all subject areas, ICT is available to support pupils' learning. Care is taken in planning to match available IT sources to the content of the lesson. A good range of appropriate sources is available via the Internet, and on CDs. Most classes make maximum use of the opportunities identified in planning.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

- * The positive values reflected in the school's motto, vision statement and aims are in evidence in many shared daily experiences. Pupils are encouraged to work together, and to help one another with everyday tasks.
- * Relationships throughout the school are built on mutual trust and respect. Every pupil is equally valued and the school provides a safe and secure environment for staff and pupils.
- * Pupils' moral development is very good. The head teacher and staff promote positive

values such as respect, honesty, fair play and kindness. All staff work diligently to ensure pupils have a strong sense of responsibility and a clear understanding of right and wrong.

- * Pupils have adopted a responsible attitude to the establishment and operation of the Schools Council.
- * A strong emphasis is placed on social development with pupils collaborating very effectively in group and class work. Pupils value the views and contributions of others. They talk interestingly and politely to visitors and are very helpful.
- * Where pupils undertake specific responsibilities for everyday tasks such as Y6 who have a range of management responsibilities, they do so willingly and sensibly. All pupils are enabled to use their initiative and take full responsibility for undertaking and completing daily tasks.
- * A wide range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities provide regular opportunities for social interaction outside the classroom.
- * The school successfully promotes a clear Welsh ethos. Prominence is given to *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* in a number of subject areas and pupils are aware of the cultural heritage of Wales.
- * Pupils are developing an understanding, and respect for, other faiths and cultures. Cultural diversity is celebrated throughout the school and pupils enjoy learning about the different social and cultural traditions in other countries.
- * Racial equality is promoted successfully through the overall supportive and caring nature of the school, through aspects of the personal and social education (PSE) programme and through the school's effective policies for equal opportunities and racial equality.
- * Collective acts of worship are held daily just before afternoon break. All reinforce the values taught by the school and due attention is given to biblical stories. Representatives from local churches regularly attend and contribute.
- * During collective acts of worship, pupils are given appropriate time for prayer and reflection. The bell for break can, on occasions, interrupt this quiet time.
- * Collective worship complies with statutory requirements.
- * Pupils' response to the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and they take full advantage of the many opportunities offered to them.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

The overall quality of pupils' behaviour in the school is very good and they display a positive

attitude to school and their learning.

- * Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that their children like attending school and that behaviour is of a high standard.
- * Pupils have a clear understanding of the rules that underpin life in the school and respond to them well. The behaviour policy is effectively implemented and receives practical support from the governors and parents.
- * Pupils conduct themselves in an orderly manner in class and around the school. They behave responsibly, showing courtesy and respect for each other and adults alike, and display a good degree of self-discipline.
- * The school's behaviour strategy is being well supported by Y6 pupils, who are given a range of management responsibilities, which they organise themselves. These include corridor duty, music selection and outdoor games supervision. In this way they are able to observe behaviour patterns in the school and take appropriate action when necessary.
- * Strong emphasis is placed on praise and encouragement. Pupils respond well to the system of rewards that are used consistently and purposefully to promote good behaviour and attitudes. Throughout the school there is a strong work ethic, which enhances the standard of teaching and learning.
- * Pupils respond extremely well in lessons and are attentive, confident and motivated learners. They demonstrate good listening skills and are enthusiastic and willing participants.
- * The quality of relationships established in the school is seen to have an important bearing on pupils' opportunities to work co-operatively and responsibly. They quickly distinguish right from wrong, understand the rules in a social environment, and realise the effect their action has on others.
- * No incidents of bullying or other inappropriate behaviour were seen during the inspection.

4.3 Attendance

Overall attendance is satisfactory and averaged 93% for the last three terms. This is similar to that recorded during the last inspection. Whilst remaining below the national average, it compares favourably with similar schools in the authority. Unauthorised absence is at 0.3%.

- * The school fully complies with the statutory requirements for registration. Class details are collated and monitored each week by the head teacher who uses the data effectively to evaluate individual and group trends of absence.
- * The school policy for attendance is clearly explained in a written document, agreed by

the governors, and includes a strategy to achieve success. Most parents have a sound knowledge of its requirements and have been supportive in meeting the objectives. However, a significant minority have not provided the necessary co-operation.

- * Holidays taken during term time further depress the school's attendance rates. Despite the efforts of the head teacher to discourage parents from taking holidays at these times, the number of days lost during term time remains consistently high.
- * Punctuality at the start of the school day is unsatisfactory. Many children arrive after the commencement time for lessons. This often disrupts an otherwise smooth start to the school day. Records are kept of those arriving after 9:10 a.m. Systematic arrangements, however, ensure that pupils arrive at individual lessons during the day on time. This maximises teaching time and is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching.
- * Very good support is received from the education welfare officer, who regularly examines registers and makes home visits when necessary.
- * The school complies fully with attendance requirements set out in the National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99, *Pupil Support and Social Inclusion*.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching is very good overall.

In the classes observed, the quality of teaching was good or better in 85% of the sessions or lessons observed, of which 44% was very good. Teaching was satisfactory in 15% of lessons or sessions. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed.

- * Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is very good and has a significant impact on pupil achievement.
- * Teachers use their subject expertise to produce comprehensive schemes of work, all written to a clear, common format.
- * Schemes include the policy, a curriculum map, and units of work. Good attention is given to the progression of key skills, common requirements, and assessment. The action plan produced by the subject leader identifying future developments for the subject is included. Schemes are arranged over a two-year cycle.
- * Teachers plan together, using a common format, to ensure pupils of the same age have access to the same curriculum. Plans are very detailed and contain objectives, links to previous lessons, strategies for achieving the objectives, key skills, and details of differentiation.

- * Teachers pay significant attention in their planning to addressing the particular learning styles of pupils. The effectiveness of lesson planning is very good.
- * Learning objectives are explicit in all classes and pupils have a clear understanding of what they have to achieve. Pupils note learning objectives in their books. Work is well matched to pupils' prior attainment and ability and differentiation is appropriate and good.
- * Most sessions start with a whole class approach and end with a plenary. Such sessions are valuable, However, in a small minority of classes, working in this way can take up a significant part of the lesson, reducing the opportunities for pupils to engage in independent and differentiated learning experiences.
- * Teachers demonstrate a high level of commitment to the education of pupils. They use a wide range of teaching techniques and organisational strategies to stimulate and challenge pupils, who respond appropriately. Initiative is encouraged and appreciated resulting in a very good learning climate where all pupils want to succeed.
- * Relationships among pupils and between teachers and pupils are very good. Teachers throughout are patient, honest, and appreciative of contributions from pupils. They give clear explanations and ask appropriate and challenging questions.
- * Teachers have high expectations of pupils, in achievement and behaviour; pupils respond enthusiastically, eager to please and to learn. Consequently the majority of pupils try their best. Pupils talk honestly about their successes and challenges, and demonstrate a great sense of pride in their achievements.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The quality of the school's assessment, recording and reporting is very good.

- * The school assessment co-ordinator regularly monitors the implementation of the assessment policy. Assessment in all subjects is consistent and accurate. All subject leaders keep examples of pupils' work and use national exemplification materials to ensure that pupils' work is correctly levelled. Pupils fully understand the concept of success criteria and there is time at the beginning of every session for pupils to reflect on teachers' comments on their previous work and for pupils to make a response in writing when appropriate. In their marking of homework assignments, teachers include comments useful to both parents and pupils.
- * The school makes very good use of the work of individual pupils and groups to promote higher standards. Lesson plans make clear the expected outcomes for each lesson and careful notes are produced on every individual pupil who has not achieved the expected level. This information is effectively used in the planning of subsequent lessons.

- * The arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' achievement and progress are very good. All lessons have clear learning objects, which are duly noted in pupils' exercise books. In plenary sessions pupils reflect on whether the objectives have been successfully met. Targets are set for all years in mathematics and English and these are reviewed annually. In other subjects, pupils are encouraged to set their own personal targets and older pupils to review their targets regularly with their peers. This encourages pupils to co-operate effectively in groups and to feel confident about sharing evidence of their progress. The school's use of subject portfolios assists staff to have the same level of expectations across the curriculum.
- * The school's reporting procedures are good and sometimes very good. Parents are pleased with the detailed record of progress, which the school provides regularly. Each term parents have an opportunity to meet with teachers. Parents are provided with a termly update of the main areas of study for the class/group, which are much appreciated by parents.
- * Reports on core subjects are very detailed although they do not always give targets for further improvement. Reports on other subjects in the National Curriculum and religious education are very much subject-related and indicate the intimate knowledge that the teachers have of each pupil. There is also an opportunity for parents to record any comments that they wish to make. Reports for pupils in Y6 provide details of the levels achieved by pupils in the national tests.
- * The school has a very good system for analysing pupils' performance. The school sets end of key stage targets and agrees statutory targets with the governing body. A careful study is made of the summary of national results from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and the value-added information provided by the local authority. The school constantly reviews its equal opportunities policy to ensure that every pupil has a challenging education programme that meets his or her individual needs.

5.3 Curriculum

The curriculum provision at the school is very good and enables pupils to learn and develop to the best of their ability. The curriculum is of very good quality and is broad, balanced and stimulating. There is a comprehensive range of good quality policies and up-to-date schemes of work and a strong emphasis on cross-curricular work.

- * The school fully meets statutory requirements. The organisation and timetabling of teaching time is good and meets WAG recommendations. Over the academic year, the school provides pupils with the full range of National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Members of the governing body have specific subject and aspect responsibilities and often provide teachers with valuable support. There are very good and wide-ranging extra-curricular activities provided during the lunch hour and after school, which enhance pupils' all-round development. There are good opportunities for games, athletics, singing, playing musical instruments and ICT, pottery and science clubs. Many visits are made to local churches, libraries, museums, farms and theatres.

- * The school co-operates closely with its associated secondary school to provide Y5 and Y6 pupils with an effective weekly programme of short sessions in French in discretionary time, often delivered through structured role-play and action songs.
- * There is a clear key skills policy and the quality of the planning for delivering key skills is very good. Every individual lesson plan gives details of opportunities, through which common and subject specific skills can be developed. Pupils' ICT skills have benefited greatly from the recently-installed good quality equipment, the school's IT suite and the careful integration of IT work into many subject areas including PE.
- * All pupils have an opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the culture, history and environment of Wales. A school eisteddfod is held biennially and acts of worship regularly include Welsh hymns and songs. Through subject areas especially geography, religious education, and history, pupils become familiar with Mary Jones and her Bible, Christmas customs in South Wales such as the *Mari Lwyd*, and the contribution of Lady Charlotte Guest of Cyfartha to translating Welsh texts such as the *Mabinogi*.
- * There is a comprehensive policy and very detailed scheme of work for personal and social education. The provision, which is good, is underpinned by the school's inclusion policy. The use made of circle time to develop pupils' social, moral and empathetic skills is very effective. There is a school policy on sex education, which is delivered as part of the school's personal, social and health education programme, and through science and physical education. Drug education is delivered as part of the healthy lifestyle curriculum and is often the subject of class discussions especially in Y5 and 6. The school nurse makes a valuable contribution to both sex and drug education programmes. The school participates in the National Healthy School standard scheme.
- * The school curriculum provision succeeds in ensuring equality of access and equal opportunity for all pupils and currently there are no pupils for whom the NC is modified or disapplied.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

The support and guidance provided to pupils is very good. The personal and social guidance programme is firmly based on ACCAC guidelines.

- * Pupils feel very secure in school and are happy with the wide and valuable experiences that they gain. Pupils are well known to and very much respected by the staff, and the portrait gallery in the entrance helps pupils to know the names of all members of staff. The links the school has with the local community police, fire service representatives and school nurse, and the guidance they provide for the pupils assists them in developing a responsible social attitude.

- * The highly-structured and effective pupil groupings within every classroom ensure that the appropriate level of work is set and that effective learning support is provided. The school has well-documented procedures for dealing with such matters as educational visits, illness and methods of contacting parents. There is an effective anti-bullying policy. When incidents of bullying occur, which is infrequent, they are dealt with appropriately and without delay. The parents feel that the school is a very caring institution in which their children feel valued and secure.
- * Pupils have very realistic personal expectations, which they express confidently. These are based in part on the frequent, detailed and valued teacher assessments of pupils' achievements and the regular self and peer assessments undertaken by pupils themselves. Pupils feel respected as individuals and appreciate the role played by the school council in developing their understanding of both responsibilities and privileges which comes with any democratic process.
- * The school has up to date and clear policies and procedures to ensure pupils' well-being and personal safety.
- * Teachers are well aware of the current child protection procedures and report any cause for concern they might have to the head teacher who is the 'named person' with special responsibility for child protection.
- * The very close links formed with the associated infants' and secondary schools ensure that the transition processes from one key stage to another are both effective and efficient.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The school provides very good support to pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

- * The school policy has been revised to take full account of the current Code of Practice for Wales (2002). The school's provision ensures that pupils with SEN have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and achieve to the best of their ability.
- * The head teacher is the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) who manages the school's SEN provision well. There are 37 pupils on the SEN register, 20 following a school action programme and the others supported at the school action plus stage. The SENCO or the language support teacher regularly attends primary SEN cluster group meetings and there are regular whole staff in-service training sessions to ensure that all members of staff are up to date with SEN issues.
- * The school follows the LEA's criteria for school-based action. There are very good strategies to ensure early identification of individual educational and behavioural needs using end of KS1 screening tests, a careful scrutiny of reports received from pupils' previous educational establishments, and appropriate and rigorous in-school assessment procedures. The school has established an effectual programme of learning support.

- * Every pupil on the special needs register is provided with an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) jointly prepared by the SENCO, the pupil's class teacher and the school's part-time language support teacher. There is very good liaison with parents who are fully involved in their children's educational programmes. Pupils who do not make progress at the School Action stage are placed on School Action Plus. At this stage, supplementary assistance by external specialists is available to pupils.
- * In line with the school inclusion policy, pupils with SEN are taught mainly, though not exclusively, in mainstream classes, where they are ably supported by learning assistants, and sometimes by the language support teacher. The language support teacher also tutors small groups of pupils with SEN for literacy and numeracy. These groups, of approximately four pupils, are usually withdrawn in the afternoon over a six-week period, with one pupil having one-to-one attention. These short half-session periods are well planned and are very effective. The withdrawal periods are carefully rotated so that pupils do not miss the same lessons every week.
- * The IEPs clearly set out the nature of the pupil's educational needs and the short-term targets set for or by the pupil, and outline the teaching strategies and the provision to be made to address their educational and behavioural needs. There are clear targets for improvement, and the review and monitoring processes are carried out termly.
- * All members of staff have copies of pupils' IEPs in their classes and these are effectively used for lesson planning. Non-contact time is arranged to ensure that teachers have adequate time to complete IEPs and Individual Behaviour Plans (IBPs).
- * The school works very closely with parents to support pupils' learning and has effective links with outside agencies such as the LEA's SEN advisory teacher, the advisory teacher for speech and language, the advisory teacher for dyslexia, the educational psychologist and representatives of local health and social services.
- * The school governor with responsibility for SEN keeps the governing body well informed on SEN issues and ably monitors the implementation of the school's SEN policy.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

Overall, a good partnership has been established with parents, the community, and other schools and institutions, with some very good features in some areas.

- * The school has forged effective links with parents, with the prime objective of supporting pupils' personal and academic development.
- * An "open door" policy gives parents many opportunities for informal contact between parents and teachers. Formal parents' meetings in the autumn, spring and summer terms allow parents to discuss the curriculum and their children's progress. More than 90% of parents attend the autumn and spring meetings.

- * Regular newsletters keep parents informed on forthcoming events and on progress relating to issues in the development plan. The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents fully comply with statutory requirements. Progress reports include comprehensive details on pupils' achievements but tend to lack specifically defined targets.
- * Parents provide classroom help by listening to readers, assisting with group activities and with art.
- * The 'Friends of Cyfarthfa' is run by a small number of dedicated and supportive parents. Through its many fund-raising events the school has been able to purchase playground equipment, dicta-phones, digital cameras and outside benches.
- * Pupils are encouraged to participate in community projects and to develop a personal awareness of environmental issues. They regularly visit the local museum in Cyfarthfa, view the old furnaces and machinery and evaluate how life has evolved in the area as part of the '*Cwricwlwm Cymreig*'.
- * Representatives of the fire brigade, ambulance service and police force visit the school to talk to children and to give practical demonstrations of their skills.
- * The school has a good link with St David's church. The vicar visits the school, participates in assembly and reads stories to the pupils. Pupils also attend the church for special services.
- * Very good arrangements have been made with teacher-training establishments including UWIC in Cardiff. Students undertake regular placements at the school and gain valuable teaching experience. An effective system of mentoring is in place.
- * Effective liaison takes place with other schools in the area. Very good links with Brecon Road Infants School and Cyfarthfa High School have been established, with joint closure days dedicated to the curriculum transition arrangements between Years 2 and 3 and the cluster initiative assessing curriculum requirements for Years 5 to 8 to accommodate the mixed classes.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

Overall, good arrangements have been made to establish an effective partnership with industry.

- * The school does not yet have a written policy document on links with industry. A practical strategy is currently in operation and producing beneficial results.
- * A major banking organisation has agreed to match restricted funding and the school benefited by refurbishing the library area and purchasing more new books.
- * Visits to a large supermarket provide opportunities for pupils to evaluate the source and cost of a variety of imported food products. The projects support mathematics and

geography in the classroom. As a result of pupils' visit to the National Assembly of Wales building, the reports written and the communication with the organisation enhance literacy skills.

- * A number of local shops support the school by sponsoring fund-raising events.
- * Links with the Education Business Partnerships have provided opportunities for teachers to visit work places and obtain work-packs, which are used in the classroom as aids to support subjects.
- * Benefits from the links established to date are clearly evident in the classroom.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is very good. The head teacher and the governing body have a strong commitment to raising standards and there is a robust and rigorous self-evaluation culture throughout the school.

- * The head teacher has generated a commitment among staff to critically evaluate their own work through a whole school process of self-evaluation.
- * The head teacher leads the self-evaluation process and involves all teaching staff. The focus of the process is teaching, learning and standards, and the targets in the development plan. Good use is made of data analysis and first-hand evidence to underpin the process.
- * The school makes very good use of data analysis to identify how well the school is performing overall, and the progress made over the last five years. Data is also used to demonstrate the value added by the school, any gender differences and the progress made by individual pupils.
- * The use of assessment data to identify and set specific and measurable targets for further improvement is well developed.
- * First-hand evidence is collected through systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures, based on the current inspection framework. The process involves the Senior Management Team in reviewing whole school issues, and subject leaders in reviewing their subjects.
- * The self-evaluation process is regular and continuous, resulting in comprehensive and useful reports that identify the sources of evidence used, the good points, areas for development and priorities for the coming year.
- * This coherent strategy for self-evaluation ensures that standards, teaching and learning are rigorously analysed and assessed on a regular basis to enable improvements to be made.
- * Subject leaders' confidently use data analysis and common criteria for making judgements relating to classroom performance. Their involvement in the self-evaluation process has contributed significantly to their knowledge and understanding of their subjects, of teaching and learning, and what is necessary to raise standards of achievement in their subject.
- * As a result of self-evaluation, subject leaders produce detailed curriculum development plans for their subjects that inform the school development planning process.

- * Progress towards achieving targets set out in the development plan, is reported on a termly basis. The head teacher and the governors make very good use of self-evaluation reports to identify quantitative and qualitative targets for strategic and school development plans.
- * The views of stakeholders are sought as part of the self-evaluation process. They are informed of the school's targets set out in the school development plan and are regularly updated on progress.
- * The success of the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement strategies is evidenced by the continued improvement in standards.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

Leadership is very good overall. The head teacher provides very good direction to the work of the school and promotes high standards.

- * The head teacher has a clear sense of purpose for the school. He is confident in the values he promotes and consulted widely with all stakeholders on the school motto, mission statement and aims. The school has a shared sense of purpose and clear direction, creating a climate that fosters self-esteem and develops individual potential in pupils and teachers.
- * The governing body has a clear overview of all aspects of the school. The head teacher reports on curriculum development at every full meeting and the governing body also receive regular inputs from subject leaders. All governors hold subject or aspect responsibilities and regularly visit the school.
- * The finance committee of the governing body meets regularly ahead of the full meetings. They receive termly budget updates, and effective procedures are in place to enable major spending decisions to be evaluated.
- * The budget and the GEST allocation are planned, managed and monitored by the head teacher; spending priorities are clear and appropriately linked to the school's educational objectives as set out in the development plan. The accounting is very efficient, and all spending is carefully monitored.
- * The last audit report was September 1999. The overall standard of administration was considered good. At that time, there were 17 recommendations, all with immediate effect. The recommendations have been implemented.
- * A small management team consisting of the head teacher and deputy head teacher plus one representative from KS 2 meet fortnightly. Communication throughout the school is very good.
- * The deputy head teacher works closely with the head teacher to ensure high standards of teaching and learning, and is a good role model for teaching.

- * Subject leaders are very effective and clearly identify the way forward for the subject, and help determine the priorities for school development planning.
- * The quality of leadership provided by governors, head teacher and staff with management responsibilities is very good.
- * Daily routines and administration operate very efficiently and make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school.
- * Overall the school provides very good value for money.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are very good overall and have a positive effect on standards.

- * The school has a sufficient number of teaching and non-teaching staff who hold appropriate qualifications; there is a reasonable match of teacher qualifications to the subjects they teach and their role in the school. There are 8.4 teaching staff, including the head teacher. They are very well deployed in delivering the curriculum, and full use is made of their respective subject knowledge to enhance pupils' experiences. There is a good mix of age and a wide range of experience among the staff.
- * Out of the 8.4 teaching staff, 6.4 have been appointed to their present posts within the last four years. The head teacher has been in post for 2 years and was acting head for two years prior to his appointment.
- * Of the current staff, only three, including the head teacher and deputy head teacher, were employed at the school at the time of the last inspection.
- * The school employs two learning assistants, who are deployed appropriately.
- * Arrangements for teacher induction and continuing professional development are both very good. The head teacher and senior management team ensure everyone has the same opportunity to develop professionally and encourage all staff to be proactive in continually improving their own practice.
- * Arrangements for teacher induction and support for all new staff, (currently including one Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)), and those new to their roles, are very good as is provision for the continuing professional development of all staff. Teachers are encouraged to attend county-based in-service training and all staff have an up-to-date continuing professional development file. Staff meet regularly for collaborative curriculum and lesson planning meetings where subject and teaching expertise is shared.
- * The head teacher and senior management team, together with others in their cluster

group of schools, have made good use of GTCW grants to engage in joint professional development activities on multiple intelligences and pupil behaviour. The impact of these initiatives is evident throughout the school. Pupils know and understand their preferred learning style, addressed through teachers' planning, and pupils in Y6 manage behaviour throughout the school responsibly.

- * The school carries out annual professional development reviews, and performance management arrangements are fully in place.
- * There are good resources for all subject areas and they are very good in English, mathematics, history, geography and ICT. There is a very good supply of dictaphones, digital cameras (both still and video), and they are effectively used across the curriculum by teachers and pupils, especially in history and PE.
- * The school's resources have a very good effect on pupils' standards of achievement across the whole curriculum.
- * The school secretary, the caretaker, the canteen staff, lunchtime assistants and cleaning staff all make very positive contribution to the good quality of school life.
- * The quality of the learning environment is very good and the six main classrooms are of adequate size. All classes are below the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) target of 30 pupils. However, one of the classrooms, which was previously used as a school library, is still rather small although the mixed-age class it contains has only 16 pupils. There are good school displays that celebrate pupils' achievements in many subjects including art.
- * On the whole, the accommodation has a very positive effect on pupils' standards of achievement. The school buildings and the surrounding play areas are in good condition. Most classrooms are well resourced and good attention has been given to making the school a safe environment for educating pupils. Some concerns on health and safety were drawn to the school's attention. Parents provide classroom help by listening to readers, assisting with group activities and with art.
- * Standards of cleaning are very high and there is no litter problem. The spacious hall, which is using as a dining area, is cleared in good time before the beginning of the afternoon session.
- * The school has recently gained the Basic Skills Quality mark and been granted the Investors in People award for the second time.
- * The school has co-operated with the LEA in preparing a plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (Part 4) 2004.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards Achieved by Pupils

English

Standards in English are very good. Standards in speaking and listening are consistently good. They are good and often very good in reading and in writing.

Good Features

- * Most pupils in the key stage speak and ask questions clearly and with increasing confidence. Pupils of all abilities listen very well and most can communicate information effectively both orally and in writing.
- * They collaborate well on shared tasks in pairs and in small groups. Pupils can discuss features of characters in their reading books that they like and dislike and can justify their points of view. Many can explain and relate what types of books they prefer and some can name their favourite authors. Some make very effective use of the local library.
- * Most have a very good understanding of punctuation and read with good expression. Pupils produce their own vocabulary books and make good use of dictionaries and thesauruses. They make use of spellcheckers when using word-processing packages. They can use prefixes and suffixes correctly. Older pupils use paragraphs when introducing a new subject or idea and link their sentences together coherently.
- * Pupils have a secure understanding of the differences between standard and non-standard English. Most know how to vary their writing styles according to the intended audience and understand what formal and informal types of writing mean. They are familiar with using a wide range of writing styles including preparing newspaper reports and writing short informal e-mails.
- * Most pupils can reorganise and present recounted information clearly and accurately within a set framework. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and benefit from the use of word games to reinforce their vocabulary and spelling.
- * When retelling stories, the more able have a well-developed grasp of chronology. They understand and make accurate use of the present, future and past tenses and use regular and irregular verbs correctly. Older pupils use interviewing techniques effectively and appreciate the importance of using open questions. They record their interviews on audio cassettes and digital video cameras and discuss how they could improve their interviewing techniques.
- * All pupils take care with the preliminary planning of their written tasks using such strategies as graphic organisers and mind maps. They take care with the standard of their presentation and regularly revise and redraft their work often making effective

use of word processing.

- * Pupils' handwriting is legible and older pupils use joined-up writing effectively. They understand lesson objectives and can discuss what success criteria they use, in self-evaluating their work.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings. However, pupils often still write in pencil until their final year.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement across all the programmes of study in mathematics are very good.

Good Features

- * Pupils in Y3 and Y4 have a clear understanding of the sequences, patterns and relationship of numbers up to 1000. They have a good understanding of the addition and subtraction process in number and money, including place value. Pupils comprehend multiplication and division through their knowledge of tables, and many are able to see the relationship between the processes.
- * Pupils identify shapes correctly, and classify them according to criteria such as the number of right angles. They have a good knowledge of polygons and can visualise 3D shapes from 2D drawings. Pupils know that angles are measured in degrees and can draw, measure and order angles to 180 degrees. They understand and use the 8 compass directions, rotation, symmetry and reflection.
- * Pupils estimate and measure using metric measures and time. They use, read and write standard metric units and know the relationship between units of mass.
- * Pupils are able to solve mathematical problems and puzzles and recognise and explain patterns and relationships. The more able respond to "What if?" questions.
- * Pupils solve problems by collecting and representing data in tables and charts; they construct and interrogate bar graphs, scatter graphs, block graphs and line graphs.
- * In Y5 and Y6, pupils have a very good understanding of the properties of numbers, and are confident in using negative and square numbers, and finding square roots. They can identify factors, multiples and prime numbers. Pupils use fractions, decimals and percentages and understand their equivalence.
- * Pupils demonstrate their knowledge and understanding by using metric measures and time, space and shape components, and data in problem-solving activities. They accurately convert mathematical problems expressed in words into mathematical notation by identifying the information and using an appropriate strategy to solve the problem.

- * Pupils use reasoning, logic and acting out to identify patterns and relationships that help them solve mathematical puzzles. They read the problem carefully then think and identify what they are really being asked.
- * Pupils use a variety of strategies to solve problems. They report, record and share their solutions. In class discussion, they confidently articulate their chosen strategy using a good range of mathematical vocabulary.
- * Pupils also solve problems by handling data. They read and interpret statistical data, presented in a variety of forms. They confirm the meaning of statistical terms through oral work, and calculate the mode, mean and range of set data.
- * Throughout the school, pupils record their thinking and their methods. They show their processes and explain their workings to the class.
- * Pupils throughout the key stage, use appropriate mathematical language across all the programmes of study. They recall previous work in great detail, and can explain why they have favourite areas within mathematics and how they enjoy challenges.
- * Pupils consolidate and extend their understanding and learning of mathematics through IT applications, selected from a wide range of sources clearly identified in the scheme of work. In particular, pupils make good use of the Internet.
- * Pupils in Y4 and Y5 developed their skills of logic, deduction and problem-solving strategies as “Maths Detectives” to solve clues during the Timezone Maths Workshop, as part of the school’s links with business and industry.
- * Strategies such as “Mathematician of the Week” have had an impact on pupils’ confidence in mathematics and on standards.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Science

Standards of achievement in science are very good.

Good Features

- * Pupils in Y3 and Y4 know that sounds are made when objects vibrate and that these vibrations are not always visible. They experiment to try to make vibrations visible.
- * Pupils use a ‘slinky’ to demonstrate how sound waves move through the air. They create models to demonstrate that sound does not travel in a straight line but is all around.

- * Pupils compare the different sound wave patterns made by quiet and loud sounds, and high and low pitched sounds; they identify the respective change in the shape of the waves, as the different sounds are projected from the computer on to the large screen.
- * Pupils can describe the differences between the properties of materials and how these differences are used to classify substances as solids, liquids and gases.
- * Pupils use the processes of filtering and evaporation to separate salt, sugar and sand. Through their investigations, pupils deduce that by increasing the heat, they increase the rate of evaporation. Pupils use scientific terms accurately.
- * Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the life processes of humans. They understand the importance of a healthy diet, clean water, fresh air and exercise.
- * Pupils recognise the role of the heart in a healthy lifestyle, and can describe its function; the more able pupils can draw detailed diagrams of the heart, with accurate labelling of veins, arteries and valves.
- * In Y5 and Y6, pupils name the parts of a flowering plant accurately and can describe their various functions in pollination. In groups, pupils invent their own story peg to recall the names and functions of the flowering plant and to perform a short play demonstrating pollination, to the rest of the class.
- * Pupils develop their scientific enquiry skills progressively over the Key Stage. They understand the control of variables and the notion of fair testing.
- * Pupils communicate their findings in science in a variety of ways such as talking about their work, through drawings, charts and graphs. They record their observations accurately using a range of methods and provide good explanations for what they find.
- * Pupils identify simple patterns from their recorded measurements, and in peer and class discussion, pupils use scientific language appropriately.
- * Pupils make very good use of their numeracy and IT skills to support their work in science.
- * The use of optional assessment materials has a significant impact on standards.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Welsh

Standards of achievement in Welsh are satisfactory overall. They are good in Y3 and Y4 and

satisfactory in Y5 and Y6.

Good Features

- * Most pupils use good pronunciation and intonation and speak with increasing fluency and confidence.
- * Pupils have an expanding vocabulary. Pupils of less ability enjoy using word search and word games to consolidate and expand their vocabulary. Pupils know their primary colours and numbers up to 20 in Welsh and they understand commands such as *Sefwch*, *Eisteddwch*. There is good use of incidental Welsh in PE in all year groups.
- * Pupils respond to questions in positive and negative forms such as *Ydw/Ydy* and *nac ydw/nac ydy*.
- * Pupils know the name of the main parts of the body and accurately label their drawings.
- * They know the names of the main meals of the day and can express their likes and dislikes of foods, using phrases such as *Rydw i'n hoffi*. They relate details about their brothers, sisters and parents.
- * Pupils explain how they feel using a limited range of phrases. They compose and perform dialogues, which they carefully rehearse, and perform in front of their peers.
- * Pupils have a good range of vocabulary to describe leisure pursuits.
- * Pupils tell the time on an analogue face clock. Most know the days of the week and are familiar with the Welsh names of various European countries.
- * Pupils can read simple texts such as their booklet on *Y Tywydd*.
- * The more able write short paragraphs in the third person describing a person's experiences on holiday and the less able can copy details about holiday pursuits accurately from picture boards. They enjoy compiling a simple weather forecast.
- * Pupils question their peers and use the information gleaned to compile a group survey on pupils' likes and dislikes.
- * Through listening to audio and video cassettes pupils are becoming familiar with regional accents.
- * Pupils sing Welsh songs and hymns in acts of worship.
- * Older pupils have a good understanding of the past, present and future tenses and have a good range of vocabulary and phrases to describe prevailing weather conditions.
- * The emphasis placed on local history and well-known Welsh legends and stories

ensures that pupils have a developing knowledge of Welsh culture.

Shortcomings

- * There is insufficient progression as pupils move up the school. With the older years there is insufficient emphasis on reading Welsh texts and pupils' spelling is often insecure.
- * The use of incidental Welsh is inconsistent in registration periods, and the range of phrases, commands and instructions does not increase sufficiently as pupils move up the school.
- * Pupils are given translations immediately following Welsh instructions and therefore feel they need make little effort to further their understanding of Welsh. The use of written Welsh on the white board such as the date needs to be consolidated.

Design and Technology

Standards of achievement are very good in design technology.

Good Features

- * Pupils in Y3 and Y4 use pre-designed worksheets to encourage them into the design, make and evaluation process. They work collaboratively to map their ideas, identify the materials, and set out the main stages to produce a model that can light up. They apply their knowledge and understanding of battery-operated circuits and switches to illuminate their models.
- * Pupils investigate pop-up books and create their own simple mechanism to be included in a story-book. They discuss how they will use the mechanism, and the designs and finishes for their product. Pupils replicate the mechanisms, the majority demonstrating good cutting, pasting and manipulative skills.
- * Pupils further develop their designing skills when they evaluate containers and use the information to generate their own ideas. They use mind maps to identify the design criteria and draw sketches appropriately labelled to identify the materials to be used and to convey what they plan. Pupils make a variety of containers such as pencil holders and purses. They evaluate their work with the help of pro-formas.
- * In Y5 and Y6, pupils have evaluated and researched simple musical instruments. They follow the design, make and evaluate process to construct simple instruments. They carefully choose their materials and methods of joining, and appreciate the need for strength as well as appearance. Pupils apply appropriate finishes. They evaluate the success of their instruments and identify how they can be improved.
- * Pupils design and make a fairground ride, with rotating parts using a pulley and drive system. They draw detailed and well-labelled plans of the pulley and map their ideas

for the ride, with a partner. Pupils also draw neat, labelled diagrams of the rides and construct cardboard prototypes. Pupils had help to connect the motor light and buzzer to the interface box, then they created and saved their own programmes to control their fairground rides.

- * Older pupils recall previous work on cams and their movement. They know three types of cam and can accurately describe them and the movement they produce. Pupils have previously produced cardboard prototypes of cams and in groups they map their design ideas for a toy with moving parts, fit a younger child.
- * Most pupils record their initial group design in books, with one person from each group retreating to the ICT suite to use a cad programme for design. Pupils produce very good diagrams, identifying the type of cam to produce the intended movement; they consider a range of materials and evaluate their fitness for purpose and for safety.
- * Pupils make very good use of information technology in design and technology.
- * The consistent application of the design, make, evaluate process linked to problem-solving approaches has a significant impact on pupil standards.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Information Technology

Standards of achievement in information technology are good overall.

Information technology is taught as a discrete subject once a week. Evaluation of standards in information technology is informed by direct observation of IT lessons, of pupils using information technology in subjects, displays of work, subject portfolios and records of pupils' achievements and progress in information technology skills.

Good Features

- * All pupils have regular and easy access to computers in their classroom and in timetabled arrangements for the computer suite. They are confident and able in using information technology as an integral part of learning.
- * In Y3 and Y4, pupils engage in a comprehensive and progressive programme of learning new IT skills. They regularly self-assess and identify their own targets for improvement. Pupils then apply their newly-acquired skills in the full range of subjects.
- * In the computer suite, pupils demonstrate their skills in communicating and handling information by cutting and pasting to reorder a sequence of events. Pupils can open

text files, apply their skills, using use both icons and edit, to place statements in alphabetical order, and save their work in their own file.

- * Portfolios and records of pupils' work demonstrate their skills in e-mail. Pupils exchange e-mails with a school in St Lucia. Most pupils can open and read emails. They can reply, edit a reply and send an attachment using text and image.
- * Pupils use a simulation programme to test predictions and can say why a simulation is better or worse than a real situation.
- * Pupils in Y5 and Y6 use spreadsheets to carry out calculations and to draw graphs. They can enter text labels and numerical data into cells, and change that data. Pupils enter formulae into a spreadsheet and many can use the SUM formula for longer calculations, and can explain the effects of changing data in a spreadsheet.
- * Pupils control simple devices such as lights and small motors using a control box. They apply what they have learned in design technology and science.
- * Pupils use the Internet to interrogate large databases and to interpret information so that they can own it for themselves and interpret it with others. They find appropriate information and copy text and pictures for others to view.
- * Pupils in Y6 research the Internet for information on the Mary Rose, to create computer-generated presentations for younger pupils. They recall how to annotate slides and demonstrate the use of the slide sorter. Pupils know how to have two programmes running and how to minimise one page.
- * Pupils retrieve previous work, select information and present it in bullet points. They annotate slides written during history and import pictures from the hard disk. Pupils use presentation programmes and source sites simultaneously to continue creating their presentations.
- * During plenary sessions, pupils use the slide show function to evaluate their presentations; they note any amendments.
- * Key Stage 2/3 transitional topics have a positive effect on pupils' standards in information technology.

Shortcomings

- * Pupils currently do not use IT for musical compositions.
- * In a small minority of classes, classroom computers are underused.

History

Standards of achievement in history are very good.

Good Features

- * Pupils understand the importance of using a range of sources and the significance of primary and secondary sources. They appreciate the importance of basing their findings on reliable evidence.
- * Pupils benefit from visits to local and national museums and other places of historical interest. They have a good understanding of the prominent place of their locality in the Industrial Revolution.
- * They know about the contribution made to Welsh culture by local characters such as Lady Charlotte Guest and the eminent composer Dr Joseph Parry.
- * Through their studies, pupils evaluate the negative as well as the positive aspects of life in past eras and are aware how people were exploited and endured a poor standard of living.
- * Pupils have a developing understanding of chronology and display a strong sense of enquiry. They consider history through a well-planned structure, which emphasises the importance of asking questions such as why, when and how.
- * Pupils have a wide knowledge about life in the Tudor period and have visited and are familiar with the characteristics of buildings of that period. They are aware of the difference in the size, quality and the amenities in the homes of the wealthy and the primitive facilities available to the workers. They know about the effects of WWII and the evacuation of children and families from the larger cities.
- * Pupils in Y3 and Y4 recall a significant amount of facts about life under Henry VIII and many accurately recount considerable details about the six wives. Pupils organise their work well and most can place these queens in the correct chronological sequence.
- * The more able pupils undertake extension exercises to develop empathy with the characters they have studied and can offer explanations why it was that Henry divorced and beheaded his wives.
- * Older pupils work as history detectives deducing facts from archaeological artefacts such as those discovered on the Mary Rose.
- * Pupils enjoy and are actively encouraged to interpret historical facts, speculating on the original uses of 'mystery' artefacts. They make skilled use of available evidence. They measure artefacts and discuss the properties of various materials from which they are made and speculate why it was that they were constructed out of those particular materials. They work collaboratively and effectively in groups and record their findings accurately and neatly.
- * Pupils gather evidence from a wide range of sources that include reference books, and CD-ROMs. They make expert use of search machines to locate relevant information on

the Internet.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Geography

No lessons were observed in Y3 and Y4. However, examination of pupils' books and portfolios of pupils' work indicates that standards of achievement in geography are good through the key stage.

Good Features

- * Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of their own locality. They can identify geographical patterns such as the main urban features of their town and the normal climatic conditions.
- * Pupils understand basic symbols and the use of keys and co-ordinates in their map work. They follow directions and estimate and calculate distances.
- * Pupils use Ordnance Survey maps on CD-ROMs. They undertake practical work such as constructing a model of an island, using layers of plasticine to show contours.
- * Pupils use geographical vocabulary such as preservation, protection, corals reefs, swamps and rainforests.
- * Older pupils compare and contrast two localities, their own well-established and historical locale with its castle, viaduct and industrial furnaces and the leisure-based and continually developing Cardiff Bay development.
- * Pupils in all year groups enjoy fieldwork in the immediate locality and have opportunities to come to their own conclusions using evidence that they have collected and through the well-planned classroom presentations they receive on distant countries and continents.
- * Pupils have a developing understanding of environmental problems and areas that are under threat. They are familiar with the possibility of species such as St Lucian parrots, lizards and plants becoming extinct due to the exploitation of their natural habitats in equatorial forests.
- * Pupils examine the problems of soil erosion and understand how the marketing of products demanded by the affluent western countries affects development in developing countries e.g. banana plantations in St Lucia.
- * Pupils plan their written tasks using a mind map that shows the salient facts that need to be included in their final reports.

- * Pupils prepare statistical information and use graphs to support their arguments and conclusions.
- * Pupils make good use of ICT. They word process and redraft their work and use clipart to improve the quality of their presentations. Pupils use digital cameras to record evidence on their geographical visits and gain relevant information from web sites.
- * Pupils use agreed success criteria to self evaluate their completed tasks.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Art

Standards of achievement in art are good overall and very good at the end of the key stage.

Good Features

- * Pupils in all years make good use of their sketchbooks and often develop their work in pairs.
- * Pupils make good use of the opportunities to use different media such as charcoal, oil pastels, metallic, crayons and soft pastels.
- * In their drawings pupils explore light, mid and dark tones and experiment with mixing primary and secondary colours.
- * From observation pupils draw a vase of flowers using felt pens, and fruit and leaves, using pastels. They create a series of observational drawings of parts of vehicles, and various plants; they also draw plants and flowers from memory.
- * Pupils paint good self-portraits, helped by a visit to Cyfarthfa Gallery to look at portraits by professional artists; they paint appealing portraits in the style of famous artists such as Van Gogh.
- * Pupils visit nearby streets and sketch houses and local streets. Using the local area they prepare rubbings on concrete walls, leaves and inspection covers.
- * In small groups, pupils plan and design chairs; they produce drawings of chairs that reflect a person's character. Less able pupils make innovative use of clipart to convey ideas.
- * Pupils undertake cross-curricular assignments such as painting a coral island linked to their work on St Lucia in geography.
- * Older pupils explore the works of eminent artists such as Hockney, Turner and

Lowry. They can relate how Hockney makes artistic use of blue and uses straight lines to good effect in his work.

- * Pupils can discuss the work of L.S. Lowry and his use of matchstick people in industrial scenes. They are familiar with the artist's characteristic use of pastels and oil. From prints, pupils explore Turner's seascapes and discuss how that artist succeeded in portrayed movement in his paintings.

Shortcomings

- * There is insufficient attention to Welsh artists or paintings on Welsh themes.
- * The creative use of two-dimensional and three-dimensional artefacts is not fully developed.

Music

Standards of achievement in music are good.

Good Features

- * Pupils work well in small groups to compose short pieces. They maintain a steady beat using hands, follow simple musical scores using pictures, and use a variety of tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments.
- * Pupils use the pentatonic scale to compose their own question and answer rhythms, which they progressively develop into an ensemble, with an accompanying drone. They perform their compositions to the class, discuss their composition and identify what they would do to improve it.
- * Working in groups, pupils in Y6 use a selection of tuned, and un-tuned percussions instruments and vocal sounds to create a visual picture of an aspect of a fairground. The performance of each group is taped and replayed to encourage critical appraisal and advice to improve overall performance.
- * Pupils in groups perform together as a class ensemble under an appointed conductor. Pupils can maintain a beat, follow a simple score and maintain a part. Pupils continually appraise and evaluate their contribution, and the class composition.
- * Pupils make good use of musical and video recordings of their performance to appraise and evaluate their work.
- * Pupils throughout the school show enjoyment of the music of famous composers. Pupils in Y6 make weekly selections of music to be played in the connecting corridors.
- * Singing makes a considerable contribution to morning assemblies. Pupils sing with

enjoyment, keeping a steady rhythm and pitch. Most pupils engage in singing with enthusiasm and collective enjoyment, particularly in two and three-part songs and hymns.

- * Pupils have peripatetic instrumental tuition in violin, cello and guitar. Pupils in these groups, together with pupils using tuned percussion and recorders, regularly perform in assemblies and celebrations. Performances and concerts make a good contribution to the development of their skills.

Shortcomings

- * Pupils have insufficient opportunities to appraise the work of famous composers.

Physical Education

Standards of achievement in physical education are good. No outside games or swimming were observed during the inspection period. However, there is good evidence that the five areas of activities are provided during the school year.

Good Features

- * Pupils prepare for and recover from activities appropriately and pay careful attention to all instructions. They wear appropriate clothing and adopt good posture when taking part in activities.
- * Pupils have a secure and developing knowledge of the benefits of exercise and of adopting a healthy life style and a balanced diet.
- * Pupils develop and consolidate skills and techniques effectively and illustrate good control. To perfect performance, they revisit movements such as rolls and jumps in their weekly sessions.
- * Pupils make good use of space and illustrate correctly such basic shapes as arch, dish, pike and star.
- * They lift, place and carry equipment and apparatus safely.
- * Pupils observe the conventions of fair play, healthy competition and good sporting behaviour as individuals and team members.
- * Pupils enjoy their opportunities to perform both creative and folk dancing.
- * Pupils constantly revise and refine their movements such as rolling and plan extended and interesting dance movement sequences.
- * Pupils regularly self-assess their performance and very good use is made of digital video cameras for detailed evaluation of individual and group performance. They

regularly identify targets for personal improvement.

- * Pupils enjoy the recently developed link programme with the associated secondary school through the PESS (PE and School Sports) Centre.
- * Pupils respond well to the very good use of incidental Welsh for commands and instructions.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings

Religious Education

Standards of achievement in religious education are good overall, with some very good standards in some Y5 and Y6 classes.

Good Features

- * The scheme of work accords with guidance from the local standing advisory council for religious education. Pupils show interest in and enthusiasm for the subject.
- * Pupils are making steady progress in developing an understanding of Christianity and knowledge of the symbolisms of the beliefs of Christianity and other faiths.
- * Pupils seek to identify the character of Jesus by identifying similarities and differences in four pictures of Jesus by different artists. They use a pro-forma to write about the character depicted in each picture.
- * Pupils know about Christian customs and special festivals such as Christmas and Lent.
- * Artefacts and information technology are used effectively to teach pupils about the beliefs and traditions of religious faiths.
- * Priests visit the school to talk about their special clothing and about the custom of Baptism, and pupils make visits to places of worship. They are aware of the significance of the palm cross to Easter and the significance of the rosary to the Roman Catholic believers. Older pupils can explain the different versions of the Bible.
- * Pupils are taught to respect the beliefs and customs of others. Older pupils understand the importance of Muhammad to Islam and can compare and contrast the prophets Jesus and Muhammad. They use the Internet to search for information on Ramadan.

- * Pupils are beginning to appreciate how following a religion involves faith and personal commitment.
- * Pupils learn about the stories of the Old Testament such as the escape from Egypt and the Ark of the Covenant. They know the Old Testament is written in Hebrew and appreciate its importance to the Jewish faith.
- * Pupils are becoming more spiritually and morally aware through their learning in RE.

Shortcomings:

- * In some classes, there is too strong a focus on writing and drawing to the detriment of discussion and understanding.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the Last Inspection

1. Focus on raising standards in Welsh, IT and design technology to match the good standards achieved in the other subject areas.

Improvements in design technology and information technology are noted in the subject section of the report. Standards in design technology are very good, and in information and communications technology they are good.

Progress is very good.

The school has taken significant steps to address standards in Welsh. A subject leader for Welsh has been appointed who has raised the profile of learning and teaching in Welsh throughout the school. Standards are regularly monitored as part of the school's self-evaluation cycle. The school has invested in additional equipment and books for the teaching and learning of Welsh, and Welsh is an annual feature in the school's training and development plan.

The timetable has been amended to ensure that Welsh lessons are given more frequently across the week and each lesson now focuses on a specific skill. The subject leader for Welsh teaches Years 3 and 4. However, she has assisted the advisory service in developing material for transition between Key Stages 2 and 3.

Progress is satisfactory and good in the lower years.

2 Define the brief and the areas of responsibility of all members of the senior management team in order that their role is clear to all involved in school management.

There have been significant staff changes since the previous report. The senior management team now has three members including the head teacher. All have appropriate job descriptions identifying their curricular and management roles. Evidence from the inspection is that the senior management team works very well.

Progress is very good.

3 Continue to maintain the rate of improvement already being achieved in order to realise the goal of achieving a school of excellence.

The end of key stage results have steadily improved since the last inspection, reaching a high this year. 94% of pupils gained Level 4 or better in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Further analysis of results is reported under Section 3 of this report. Judgements on aspects and subject standards in this report indicate significant improvements.

Progress is very good.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school now needs to:

- * improve standards of achievement in Welsh in Years 5 and 6;
- * disseminate the very good practice in teaching and learning in most classes to all classes so that the pace, challenge, engagement and differentiation maintain and improve the current high standards of pupil achievement;
- * address those shortcomings in subjects where they are noted in the report.

The inspection team would like to express their warm appreciation of the co-operation, assistance and welcome they received from the head teacher, staff, governors, parents and pupils of the school.

APPENDIX A

Basic Information about the School

Name of School	Cyfarthfa Junior School
School Type	LEA
Age-Range of Pupils	7 – 11 years
Address of School	Gwaelodygarth Lane Merthyr Tydfil
Post Code	CF47 8RE
Telephone Number	01685 723640

Headteacher	Mr. Owen Morgan
Date of Appointment	1st April 2002
Chairman of Governors	Councillor Brendan Toomey
Registered Inspector	Mrs. B.A. Jones
Dates of Inspection	4th – 6th May 2004

APPENDIX 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					41	41	41	55	178

<i>Total Number of Teachers</i>			
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time Equivalent (fte)
Number of Teachers	8	1	8.4

<i>Staffing Information</i>	
Pupil : Teacher (fte) Ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	21.2: 1
Pupil : Adult Ratio in Nursery Class	
Average Class Size (excluding nursery)	25.4
Teacher (fte) : Class Ratio	1.2: 1

<i>Percentage Attendance for Three Complete Terms Prior to the Inspection</i>					
	N	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School
Term 1				91.06	91.06
Term 2				93.16	93.16
Term 3				93.99	93.99

Number of Pupils Excluded during Twelve Months prior to Inspection	0
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APPENDIX C

Results of National Curriculum Assessments

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2003								Number of Pupils in Y6: 34						
Percentage of Pupils at Each Level														
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	
English	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	47	38	0	
		National	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	16	45	31	0
	Test/Task	School	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	53	44	0
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	5	12	38	40	0
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	47	38	0	
		National	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	4	19	46	30	0
	Test/Task	School	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	38	56	0
		National	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	4	18	42	33	0
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	56	38	0	
		National	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	49	35	0
	Test/Task	School	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	56	44	0
		National	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	48	39	0

Percentage of Pupils Attaining at least Level 4 in Mathematics, Science and English (or Welsh as a First Language)			
By Teacher Assessment		By Test	
In the School:	88%	In the School:	94%
In Wales:	71%	In Wales:	70%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
 A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
 N Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence.
 B Pupils who have not been 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

National figures relate to results for 2003.

The majority of eleven-year-old pupils are expected to attain Level 4.

APPENDIX D

The Evidence Base of Inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors over a period of three days.

- Pre-inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and governing body.
- 7 parents attended a meeting with two members of the inspection team.
- 90 questionnaires were returned, analysed and summarised.
- All documentation submitted by the school was analysed and discussed, including the school development plan, and policy and curriculum documents.
- Pupils were observed as they arrived and departed from school and during the midday and other breaks.
- At various times during the day, inspectors took the opportunity to talk to pupils and to discuss their work.
- 39 lessons or parts of lessons were observed.
- Pupils were heard reading and were examined in their knowledge and understanding of English, mathematics, science and other subjects.
- A wide range of pupils' written and other work was examined in each class.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' work with class teachers and examined assessment records.
- Discussions were also held with the head teacher, subject leaders and other staff.
- The work of pupils with special educational needs was examined.
- Minutes of meetings and documents relating to the financial management of the school were discussed.
- Budget figures were examined and discussed with the head teacher.
- Attendance and pupil records were inspected.
- Inspectors attended acts of collective worship.

APPENDIX E

Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Team Member	Subject Responsibilities	Aspect Responsibilities
Mrs. B.A.Jones	Maths Science Design and Technology Information Technology Music RE	The School and its Priorities Main Findings Standards of Achievement in Subjects and Areas of Learning Standards of Achievement in Key Skills across the Curriculum Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Teaching Self Evaluation and Planning for Improvement Leadership & Efficiency Progress since the Last Inspection Key Issues for Action
Mr. D. Treharne	Welsh (as a second language) English History Geography Art Physical Education	Main Findings Assessment, Recording and Reporting Curriculum Support and Guidance Special Educational Needs Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources Key Issues for Action
Mr S. Roberts		Behaviour and Attitudes Attendance Partnership with Parents, the Community, Schools and Other Institutions Partnership with Industry Key Issues for Action