

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

**Ysgol Cynradd Derwenfa**

**Queen Street  
Leeswood  
Mold  
Flintshire  
CH7 4RQ**

**School Number: 664/2092**

**Date of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2002**

**Registered Inspector:**

**Mr. M. T. Ridout: W/180/78730**

**Under ESTYN contract number: T/225/01P**

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## **CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES**

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

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

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

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

## **GRADE DESCRIPTIONS**

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

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



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## 1. CONTEXT

### **The school and its priorities**

Ysgol Derwenfa is a community primary school catering for boys and girls aged three to eleven years. The school was previously inspected in October 1996. There are 168.5 full-time equivalent pupils on roll, including twenty-seven attending the nursery part-time. A part-time teacher and nursery nurse teach the nursery class. There are 14 children in the reception class who are taught by a full-time teacher and a part-time nursery nurse. The children in Key Stage 1 (KS1) are taught in two single age classes and the older pupils in Key Stage 2 (KS2) are taught in four mixed age classes. The average class size is 25.8. In total, there are 7.27 full-time equivalent teachers, including the headteacher and two part-time teachers. A part-time classroom assistant supports their work. In addition the school employs a part-time teacher for Welsh as a second language and the Local Education Authority (LEA) provides a part-time teacher for a pupil with special educational needs (SEN).

The school serves the village of Leeswood, situated about three miles southeast of Mold, in Flintshire. Nearly all the children come from the village with a few from the surrounding rural area. There is a mixture of rented and owner occupied houses in the community. The school describes the locality as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Twenty per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is about average. No children have ethnic minority backgrounds and none come from homes where Welsh is the preferred language. English is the predominant language.

The school receives pupils from the full range of abilities. Baseline assessments show the majority of children achieve good standards at the time they begin full-time education. Subsequent assessments identify 26 per cent of pupils to have SEN. This is broadly average. One pupil has a statement of SEN.

The school sets targets for raising standards. The prospectus includes the school's statement of ethos and aims. The school development plan (SDP) identifies the following priorities for 2001/2:

- continue staff training in information technology;
- review/update provision in physical education, Welsh, science, design and technology, geography, art, religious education and music;
- monitor English and mental arithmetic;
- review arrangements for assessment, record keeping and homework;
- apply for Sports Marc Cymru and reapply for Basic Skills Quality Mark;
- undertake training in setting staff appraisal targets, develop staff responsibilities and review job descriptions;
- provide training in Welsh, design and technology and history;
- monitor "Investors in People" initiative and literacy training;
- provide appropriate training for support staff;
- provide funding for monitoring and implement recommendations;
- provide mentor training;
- develop strategies for curriculum post holders to teach alongside staff;
- review health and safety policy, improve storage, re-turf field, mark and clean yard;
- review budget allocations for subjects – purchase resources for design and technology, information technology and language;
- monitor curricular provision and the budget, and produce policies for performance management, handling complaints and admissions;
- monitor inspection action plan, review and update school development plan, produce action plan for Basic Skills Quality Mark and review "Investors in People" action plan.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

### The main findings of the report

Good relationships contribute positively to the good quality of life in this school. There are strong links with the local community and the school continues to build well on its strengths in pastoral provision. The school's mission statement, "Development through Care", is evident throughout its work.

- The provision for children under five is appropriate and successfully promotes the desirable outcomes in the six areas of learning. The children make good progress. This provision is an outstanding feature of the school.

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

- The standards achieved in the subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) in Key Stages 1 and 2 are:

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

- The standards of achievement in using the key skills of speaking and listening are good. Standards in using reading, writing, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) across the curriculum are satisfactory.
- The majority of pupils, including those with SEN, make satisfactory progress across both key stages. By the end of KS2, the performance of boys is generally better than that of girls in national tests. This is contrary to the national picture.
- The school's results in NC tests and assessments show a positive improvement over time. In the 2001 KS1 NC tests and assessments, on the basis of teacher assessment, 81 per cent of pupils

attained at least the nationally expected level 2 in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is in line with national figures and the average for similar schools<sup>1</sup>.

- In the 2001 KS2 NC tests, 59 per cent of pupils attained at least the nationally expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science. These results are below national figures and those for similar schools. The picture is similar over the last three years and in general the results are close to local averages.
- The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral development. This is an outstanding feature. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good.
- The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is well established in the school. Suitable opportunities are taken across the curriculum to promote pupils' awareness of Welsh culture and heritage but too little emphasis is given to raising their awareness of the richness and diversity of other cultures.
- The quality of pupils' behaviour, both in class and around the school, is good. The pupils have positive attitudes to learning and to each other. This is a very strong feature of the school.
- The overall level of attendance is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Levels of attendance are sometimes in excess of 95 per cent in both key stages during the last two terms.
- The impact of teaching is satisfactory over time. In observed lessons the majority of teaching was good or better. There are particular strengths in the teaching of the under-fives and in teaching creative and practical subjects, such as art and physical education, which have a positive impact on standards.
- The teachers have high expectations of behaviour and achievement, but factors such as shortcomings in lesson planning and organisation, together with the limited range of teaching styles in KS2, limit the impact of teaching. The teaching does not adequately promote independence and initiative in the older pupils' learning.
- The procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress, including baseline assessment for children under five, are good. The information from tests is used well to identify pupils with SEN and those of high ability.
- Although assessment information is made available to teachers they do not build sufficiently on the outcomes in their planning to help ensure individual progress is maintained.
- Planning for the whole-school curriculum is based on well-structured schemes of work. The curricular provision for the children under five is an outstanding feature. The curriculum in both key stages is broad but shortcomings in its implementation mean that provision is not always sufficiently balanced or always made relevant to the pupils' needs.
- There is a good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities and good opportunities for the pupils to take part in competitive sports. Curricular provision is further enhanced by the good range of educational visits, including residential opportunities, and a variety of visitors to the school. This has a positive impact on standards.
- The school successfully promotes social inclusion. This is a particular feature and is evident throughout the school. The pupils have equality of access to the curriculum but the opportunity for the more able pupils to excel is sometimes limited where the work is not challenging enough.
- The quality of support and guidance offered to pupils and the attention given to aspects of health, safety and welfare is good. This is a strength of the school.

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<sup>1</sup> Schools having between 17% and 24% of pupils entitled to free school meals.

- The provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory overall. The school has identified the need to strengthen its provision in this area. The work of a part-time teacher with small groups of pupils with SEN, and some more able pupils, is already having a positive impact.
- The overall quality of the school's partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions is good. This is strong feature.
- Despite the absence of a formalised policy the school has a few links with small businesses in the locality. Taken overall, the school's partnership with industry is satisfactory.
- The scope and effectiveness of the school's procedures for evaluating standards and planning for improvement are satisfactory. The results of tests are carefully evaluated but most teachers use the results insufficiently to help improve pupils' progress. The outcomes of assessments and whole-school evaluations are not linked rigorously enough to whole-school planning.
- Subject co-ordinators monitor pupils' work and lesson planning, but there are no formally agreed criteria for these initiatives. The co-ordinators are beginning to identify strengths and weaknesses in their subjects but plans for further action are at a very early stage.
- The SDP is a thorough document but there remains a lack of rigour in planning the way forward and ensuring initiatives are consistently implemented across the school.
- The headteacher, with the strong support of staff and governors, successfully promotes a teamwork ethos and sensitively ensures a clear direction for the work of the school. In particular, this has a very positive impact on the quality of pastoral care.
- Although the length of the school day is sufficient, the use and organisation of lesson time is often inefficient. The length of time spent in lessons frequently falls below the nationally recommended level of 23.5 hours in KS2. Some lessons are lacking in sufficient pace and verve. Most morning lessons are English and mathematics and this means that too little time is available for other subjects.
- There are well-established arrangements for financial management. There is a clear policy that defines procedures and the systems are effective. This was endorsed by the most recent auditors' report.
- The school is well staffed. The provision of accommodation and learning resources is good.
- Since the previous inspection the school has successfully raised standards in all areas of learning for children under five and in Welsh as a second language, design and technology and art in both key stages. Standards in music have also improved in KS1.
- The school has implemented a suitable action plan to address the key issues raised by the last inspection. Improvement in relation to the key issues is satisfactory. Several areas for further improvement are identified at the end of this report.

### **3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning**

The standards of achievement are satisfactory overall.

- In the 60 lessons or parts of lessons inspected, standards of achievement were judged to be very good in 5 per cent, good in 45 per cent, and satisfactory in 50 per cent.

- The children in the nursery class make good progress. They achieve very good standards in language, literacy and communication, mathematical development and in the personal and social areas of learning. Standards are good in knowledge and understanding of the world, in physical development, and in creative areas of learning.
- In the reception class, the children maintain good progress. Standards are good in language, literacy and communication, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in the personal and social, creative and physical areas of learning.
- In KS1, pupils of differing abilities make satisfactory progress overall. The pupils in Y1 build well on their previous learning in a wide range of work. In Y2, satisfactory progress is maintained in most subjects.
- In KS2, the overall rate of progress is satisfactory but there is too much variation. Most pupils make suitable progress in acquiring English and mathematical skills and learning scientific knowledge but progress in information technology, geography, history and religious education slows where the range of work is sometimes narrow.
- Across the school, the progress of pupils with SEN who receive additional support, mainly in literacy, is generally satisfactory but progress is sometimes slower when the pupils work with the whole class.
- In both key stages, overall standards are good in Welsh as a second language, design and technology, art and physical education. Standards are satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, information technology, geography and religious education.
- In music, standards of achievement are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2. In history, standards are satisfactory in KS1 and good overall in KS2.
- By the end of KS2, the boys generally out perform the girls in the standards attained in national tests. This is contrary to the national picture.
- The school's results in NC tests and assessments show a positive improvement over time. In the 2001 KS1 NC tests and assessments, on the basis of teacher assessment, 81 per cent of pupils attained at least the nationally expected level 2 in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is in line with national figures and the average for similar schools<sup>2</sup>.
- In the 2001 KS2 NC tests, 59 per cent of pupils attained at least the nationally expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science. These results are below national figures and those for similar schools. The picture is similar over the last three years but in general the results are close to local averages.

### **3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum**

The standards of achievement in using the key skills of speaking and listening are good. Standards in reading, writing, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) are satisfactory.

#### **Good features**

- The children under-five make good progress in using their developing skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

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<sup>2</sup> Schools having between 17% and 24% of pupils entitled to free school meals.

- In both key stages, the pupils contribute to whole-class sessions with enthusiasm. They listen attentively to their teachers and to other pupils. For instance, in Y4 and Y5 the pupils use speaking and listening skills with enthusiasm in regular *Helpwr y Dydd* sessions.
- Most of the older pupils read with appropriate confidence and can explain how to locate information in books.
- In early KS1, the pupils learn the conventions of writing and many develop their skills well across the subjects. In KS2, the pupils are beginning to plan, draft and improve their writing for a range of purposes.
- The pupils steadily gain confidence in using mental skills to make calculations. Progress is good where pupils regularly explain their methods and discuss alternative strategies.
- The younger pupils in KS1 regularly use a range of ICT applications to support their learning. Across the school, the pupils use word processing with increasing competence and are beginning to develop the skills of drafting and redrafting.
- The older pupils in KS2 are beginning to use data base programs and download information from the internet.
- Pupils in both key stages are becoming confident in using the interactive white board and overhead projector with their teachers.

### **Shortcomings**

- The pupils do not make enough use of their reading and writing skills to extend their learning across the curriculum. In general, they make too little use of the library and CD-ROM.
- In some of the work, the pupils do not sufficiently develop their writing because the worksheets used limit their response.
- The pupils do not regularly practice using mental skills in all classes. As a consequence some lack confidence and accuracy. They seldom use their numeracy skills to solve problems and present information in other subjects.
- The pupils do not regularly use a sufficient range of ICT applications across the curriculum. This limits their keyboard skills and their overall competence in using ICT with an appropriate degree of independence.

## **4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral development. This is an outstanding feature. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good.

- The school is a caring and supportive community where pupils are valued as individuals. The staff successfully creates a safe and happy learning environment that thoroughly fulfils the school's mission statement to provide "Development through Care".
- The pupils participate fully in daily whole-school assemblies that incorporate an appropriate act of collective worship. Two local ministers, who are well known to the pupils, regularly contribute to

assemblies. The pupils sing hymns, join in prayers and recite morning and afternoon prayers in class.

- The pupils' spiritual development is suitably promoted through encouraging reflection about their own thoughts and values both in collective worship and in aspects of their studies such as religious education, geography and English.
- The pupils are considerate towards others less fortunate than themselves and contribute time, effort and money to various charities including, support for a young boy from India to receive treatment in Hungary, Red Nose Day, Children in Need and Hope House.
- They show good levels of respect for people and property and behave very responsibly in and around the school. They have a very good understanding of what is right and wrong and understand the importance of respecting all peoples, behaving humanely to animals and caring for the environment.
- All the pupils respond positively to praise for effort, achievement and behaviour.
- Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are very good, and they are good between the pupils themselves. The pupils make good progress in social and interpersonal skills. They enjoy and benefit from regular residential experiences in Glan Llyn, Tenby or Northumberland.
- When given suitable opportunities, the pupils use their initiative conscientiously and reliably around the school. There are monitors in each class; for example the children in reception perform their milk monitor duties to the rest of the school very seriously and successfully. The pupils in Y6 undertake a range of responsibilities throughout the school, such as helping to supervise younger pupils during rainy lunch and playtimes, looking after the library and ringing the bell.
- Although most pupils collaborate constructively in pairs and small groups during lessons, the older pupils do not sufficiently use their initiative or work with appropriate independence.
- Extra-curricular activities and numerous visits to places of interest enrich pupils' cultural development and broaden their curricular studies, especially in history. The school lies at the heart of, and is a lively member of, the local community.
- The *Cwricwlwm Cymraeg* is well established in the school. The pupils study the work of Welsh artists, recite traditional Welsh nursery rhymes and learn about local geography and history. They enthusiastically participate in the school's St David's Day celebrations and compete, often successfully, in the Treuddyn and Urdd *Eisteddfodau*.
- Pupils' awareness of life in other countries and previous cultures, such as the Romans and Celts, is satisfactorily raised through stories and studies in geography and history. In religious education, the traditions and lifestyles of Christians, Jews, Sikhs and Muslims are studied but the pupils gain only limited insights into the diversity of cultures within our society. There is a school policy on racism.
- The pupils have a sound appreciation of European artists such as Matisse and Van Gogh. They have a developing knowledge of European composers and recognise some of their works through listening to recordings during daily assemblies. The pupils' awareness of a broader range of art and music is insufficiently developed.

## **4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes**

The quality of pupils' behaviour, both in class and around the school, is good. The pupils have positive attitudes to learning and to each other. This is a very strong feature of the school.

- The majority of pupils are attentive and enthusiastic in learning. They are co-operative during lessons, listen well to their teachers, show interest in their work and persevere appropriately with the tasks they are set. They maintain good levels of self-discipline both in class and during breaktimes.
- Pupils co-operate sensibly and profitably when working in pairs or small groups and most listen with respect when other pupils present their work. There is an absence of friction and there is a happy atmosphere in the classrooms.
- The school has in place well thought out and comprehensive policies to ensure that discipline is maintained and to counteract any misbehaviour that may lead to bullying or any form of victimisation. The pupils are very aware of the high standards of behaviour expected of them. They benefit from clear rules and the positive role models provided by the adults in the school. Any misbehaviour is carefully managed.
- The pupils are friendly and courteous. They are respectful of adults, their peers and property in the school. There are warm relationships between teachers and pupils that contribute to the spirit of friendliness in a supportive learning environment. The pupils express a sense of fun and healthy competitiveness in work and play.
- The older pupils show self-confidence and enjoy conversation with adults. They conscientiously undertake appropriate responsibilities and contribute positively to the good quality of life in the school.
- Pupils' general behaviour and attitudes benefit from the positive emphasis placed on aspects of personal and social education in class discussions and through assemblies.
- The pupils feel secure, valued and able to turn to their teachers whenever they have concerns. They are confident that any incidents of misbehaviour will be dealt with promptly and fairly. There have been no exclusions during the last year.

### **4.3 Attendance**

The overall level of attendance is good.

- Attendance levels are consistently well above 90 per cent for pupils of statutory school age. This is an improvement since the last inspection and approaches the targets the school has set itself.
- In both key stages, levels of attendance are usually good, being in excess of 95 percent in most classes during the last two terms.
- The irregular attendance of a small number of pupils significantly reduced the overall level of attendance in summer 2001.
- There are few instances of unauthorised absences. The majority of authorised absences are due to illness.
- Pupils' punctuality at the start of the school day is generally good, with only a small minority of pupils arriving late.
- Registration is carried out correctly at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. The recording of absence complies with the requirements of the National Assembly for Wales.
- The school has clear arrangements in place to investigate any unexplained absence. The teachers know their pupils well and use this knowledge of their background appropriately when evaluating the reasons for absence.

## 5 QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### 5.1 Teaching

The impact of teaching is satisfactory over time. In observed lessons the quality of teaching ranged between very good and unsatisfactory. There are particular strengths in the teaching of the under-fives and in teaching creative and practical subjects, such as art and physical education, which have a positive impact on standards. The teachers have high expectations but factors such as lesson planning and organisation, together with the limited range of teaching styles in KS2, limit the impact of teaching.

- In the 60 lessons or parts of lessons inspected, the quality of teaching was judged to be very good in 5 per cent of lessons, good in 52 per cent, satisfactory in 40 per cent and unsatisfactory in 3 per cent.
- The teachers and the nursery nurse working with the under fives have high levels of expertise. They have a good knowledge of how young children learn; they plan effectively, provide a good range of learning activities and maintain effective routines.
- In the nursery, effective lesson planning and teamwork, rigorous organisation and high expectations ensure that the children sometimes excel in a range of activities linked to the class theme. Such lessons are purposeful and promote the children's interest very well.
- Taken overall, teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. The quality of teaching is variable across all subjects.
- Strengths include the direct teaching of subject knowledge, especially in the core subjects. Where good resources are used imaginatively, the quality of learning is good. For instance, in a science lesson the pupils in Y2 observe and sketch caterpillars, set up their vials and collaborate enthusiastically to research and record information from a variety of sources. Similarly, a lively pace is maintained when pupils in Y3 and Y4 practise mental calculations.
- Shortcomings in planning and organisation often limit the impact of teaching. For example, the quality of learning is reduced where lessons lack pace and rigour, as in a science lesson with pupils in Y5 and Y6, where there is too little emphasis on the pupils 'finding out'. The practice of spending a whole afternoon on one subject, or concentrating on just one aspect of a subject for several lessons, is not always fully effective.
- The planning of lessons is well supported by schemes of work. These provide for progression in learning and teachers' plans are clear about the content of the work but they rarely identify how this is to be accomplished or indicate strategies for assessment.
- The range of teaching and organisational strategies used is satisfactory. The main strengths are in clear explanations, sometimes enhanced by the use of the interactive white board. However, the preferred approach is often whole-class teaching and then to use over-structured worksheets, especially in KS2. This sets a narrow context for the work and leads to too few opportunities for the pupils to use their initiative and develop the skills of enquiry and investigation.
- The staff have high expectations for behaviour and achievement. Some of the teaching materials used provide suitably differentiated activities but the absence of identified assessment opportunities that are linked to key learning objectives in the teachers' lesson planning means that the work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' prior knowledge and understanding.

## **5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Arrangements for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory overall.

- The school's procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress, including baseline assessment for children under five are good. The staff systematically implement a suitable range of standardised tests in both key stages.
- The pupils with SEN are accurately identified. The school is developing suitable provision to meet the needs of these pupils.
- Useful records of pupils' progress are maintained and regularly updated. There is focused day-to-day monitoring of the achievements of the children under five and, in both key stages, profiles of pupils' work exemplify individual progress. Teachers also maintain a variety of reading records and the results of weekly tests.
- The quality of the annual reports to parents is good. Teachers know the children well and the reports concentrate on pupils' progress in the skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject. Parents are invited to discuss the reports at an open evening.
- Overall, the assessment of pupils' attainments is accurate. However, no formalised tests are used in science and there are no systematic arrangements for making assessments in foundation subjects. Furthermore, the staff has insufficient experience in moderating and collaboratively levelling pupils' work using NC criteria.
- The data gleaned from tests is used well to identify pupils with SEN and those of high ability. A small group of able pupils receives extra tuition. The results of tests are analysed well in relation to pupils' abilities but there is a lack of rigour in analysing and evaluating attainment in relation to gender. This aspect is underdeveloped.
- Assessment information is made available to teachers but they do not build sufficiently on the outcomes in their planning to help ensure individual progress is maintained.
- The pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to assess their own progress in both personal and academic areas, for example by setting their own targets for further improvement.
- The marking of pupils' written work is supportive but the comments are mostly brief and give insufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve on their achievements.

## **5.3 Curriculum**

Planning for the whole-school curriculum is based on a good range of well-structured schemes of work. The provision for the children under five is an outstanding feature. The curriculum in both key stages is broad but shortcomings in its implementation mean that provision is not always sufficiently balanced or made relevant to the pupils' needs.

- The curriculum for children under five successfully promotes the desirable learning outcomes through a series of suitable topics. This provision is very well planned and implemented.
- In KS1 and KS2, the curriculum is broad and meets statutory requirements.
- There are updated policies and schemes of work in all subjects. These provide a clear framework for the content of teaching across the school. The schemes of work provide a good basis to ensure progression and continuity in pupils' learning.

- The implementation of new schemes of work is having a positive impact in ensuring that pupils experience the full range of learning opportunities in subjects such as design and technology, where standards have improved markedly.
- However, there is an imbalance in the time and emphasis given to some aspects of several subjects. For instance, investigations in mathematics and science, opportunities for research in geography, history and religious education and composition in music. This, together with the frequent use of over-structured learning materials, such as work sheets, leads to a lack of depth in some of the work and only limited opportunities for pupils to become more independent in their learning.
- There is a suitable policy for the development of key skills but although planning identifies appropriate opportunities to develop the key skills there are no formalised arrangements to ensure consistency. This aspect is a developing area.
- The arrangements for pupils' personal and social education are satisfactory. The themes of daily assemblies often contribute to this aspect.
- There is a good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, such as creative dance, choir, drama, Welsh and a variety of sports. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sports. In music, several pupils receive regular tuition in playing the violin.
- Curricular provision is further enhanced by the good range of educational visits, including residential opportunities, and a variety of visitors to the school. This has a positive impact on standards.
- The school successfully promotes social inclusion. This is a particular feature and is evident throughout the school.
- The pupils have equality of access to the curriculum provided but the opportunity for the more able pupils to excel is sometimes limited where the work is not challenging enough.
- Taken overall, the school's curricular provision is satisfactory. The implementation of well-organised schemes of work together with the regular provision for homework is improving standards.
- There are no pupils for whom the NC is modified or disapplied.

#### **5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare**

The quality of support and guidance offered to pupils and the attention given to aspects of health, safety and welfare is good. This is a strength of the school.

- The school's policies, including those for health and safety, sex education and child protection, offer clear guidance and support to the staff.
- Fire drills are held regularly and risk assessments carefully noted. The accident notes are efficiently kept. A number of members of staff hold current First Aid qualifications and two teachers are awaiting further training.
- The staff designated to look after pupils' welfare are well supported by close liaison with the Local Education Authority (LEA) support services and other outside agencies, including the educational psychologist, SEN, social and medical services
- The procedures to ensure Child Protection are good. These are fully understood by the staff.
- Sex education is taught as part of the curriculum, in particular within science, rather than as a separate subject.

- The pupils feel secure and relaxed in the school environment and respond positively to teachers' high expectations of behaviour. The pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Aspects of personal and social education (PSE) are addressed through daily assemblies and incidentally across the curriculum. No audit of the curriculum has been made to ascertain full coverage of all aspects of PSE through the separate subjects.
- The headteacher and governing body have been informed of a few matters observed during the inspection that constitute a threat to the health and safety of the pupils. These include the lack of paving around the school gates. This is hazardous to pupils as they leave or enter the school, as pedestrians and traffic use the same entrance. Although the headteacher has made a number of representations to the LEA concerning this, the danger remains.

## **5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

The school's provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory overall.

- Twenty-six per cent of pupils are included on the SEN register. One pupil has a statement of need. All pupils with SEN have full access to the curriculum available.
- A part-time teacher regularly withdraws small groups of pupils with SEN to provide focused teaching in language. The headteacher tutors a small group of more able pupils to enrich and extend their learning. This provision is having a positive impact.
- The LEA provides another part-time teacher who teaches a pupil for language and mathematics twice a week.
- The pupils make slow but steady progress in their work during withdrawal sessions. They work well in small groups rather than individually. Their progress in work with the whole class is generally too slow. Progress improves when they receive helpful support from a part-time classroom assistant.
- The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) and the learning support teacher are developing more systematic procedures and arrangements to improve the effectiveness of SEN provision in the school.
- The school is developing a suitable range of learning resources but insufficient use is made of computer software to enable pupils to learn at a pace appropriate to their individual needs.
- The parents of pupils with SEN are kept informed of progress and they are invited to contribute to the regular review of individual education plans (IEPs). A team of professionals regularly monitors the progress of pupils.
- The IEPs written for individual pupils identify suitable learning targets. They are appropriately detailed and are specific to the pupil. However, scrutiny of the pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that class teachers make insufficient use of the guidance provided by IEPs to plan appropriate work and ensure the best possible progress is maintained.
- Although the staff has received in-service training on aspects of SEN, they lack sufficient knowledge of a wide range of SEN that they may encounter in their work.

## **5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions**

The overall quality of the school's partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions is good. This is a strong feature.

- The quality of information provided for parents is generally good. Class teachers ensure that parents receive details on the topics being taught each term and they suggest ways that parents can assist their children at home.
- Frequent newsletters provide information about administrative arrangements and the pupils help to produce a school magazine that effectively informs the community about school events and pupils' achievements.
- The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents provide much useful information. These documents contain most of the required items but insufficient detail is provided about provision for pupils with SEN, admissions to the school, and parental choice in relation to religious education and the daily act of collective worship.
- Consultations with parents both before and during the inspection show that the overwhelming majority express both satisfaction with, and support for, the work of the school. In particular, several parents say the school is caring and that their children are happy.
- The parents of children entering the nursery and reception classes are given informative booklets. The school welcomes parents and operates an "open door" policy. Parents meet their children at the school doors each afternoon and members of staff are readily available for any required discussion. Parents also benefit from two open evenings each year to discuss their children's progress and they appreciate the detailed annual written reports provided.
- An appropriate home-school agreement is in place.
- The school welcomes the contribution of parents to school life. A small number of parents give in-class support with reading and by contributing skilled assistance in other areas, such as cookery. Several parents help with extra-curricular activities and during educational visits.
- There is a very active 'Friends of the School' society, which contributes substantially by raising funds to enhance the quality of education, offered to the pupils.
- The school plays an important part in the life of its community and benefits from links with local organisations such as the British Legion. There are close links with religious institutions in the village and two local ministers regularly contribute to school assemblies.
- The school choir takes part in various community events and the school holds an annual concert for local pensioners. The pupils benefit from joining in local efforts to raise money for both local and national charitable causes.
- There are effective arrangements to ensure good liaison between the local 'cluster' of schools. The heads of these schools meet twice a term and there are some opportunities for other staff to share expertise. The pupils from this school regularly meet and compete with pupils from other local schools in both sporting and cultural events.
- The arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the next stage of their education are well established. Pupils in Y6 undertake projects that link with work done in Y7. The head of Y7 and the SEN co-ordinator at Castell Alun School visit this school prior to the pupils' transfer and pupils in Y6 visit the comprehensive school for an 'induction day'.
- The school makes full use of all the relevant services provided by the LEA. Police and Fire Officers, the school nurse and representatives of the British Legion and the RSPCA visit the school to give talks to the pupils.
- The school maintains an effective partnership with two teacher training institutions and regularly receives student teachers. In addition, trainee nursery nurses spend time in the school. These

arrangements, together with students undertaking work experience, have a positive impact on pupils' standards.

## **5.7 Partnership with Industry**

Despite the absence of a formalised policy the school has a few links with small businesses in the locality. Taken overall, the school's partnership with industry is satisfactory.

- The school has no written policy or agreed strategy to promote links with industry. However, two teachers have benefited from work experience courses with a large employer.
- The school benefited, until very recently, from links with a large construction toy company.
- While there are no established links with industry at the present time, the headteacher has visited various companies with the aim of forming partnerships and the governing body is seeking to strengthen this aspect by building on local contacts.
- Local businesses regularly contribute prizes to help the school's fund-raising efforts and the school takes advantage of the voucher schemes promoted by major retailers.
- The pupils enhance their learning through visits to the village shop, post office, and a local farm and gain insights into our industrial heritage through making educational visits.

# **6. MANAGEMENT**

## **6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement**

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

- The scope and effectiveness of the school's procedures for evaluating standards are satisfactory. The results of tests are carefully evaluated but most teachers insufficiently use the results to help improve pupils' progress. The outcomes of assessments and whole-school evaluations are not linked rigorously enough to whole-school planning.
- The headteacher makes effective use of the results of NC tests and a range of tests in basic skills to track pupils' progress. For instance, a group of more able pupils has been identified; they are regularly taught together to accelerate their learning.
- The use of this information to set whole-school priorities is under-developed. Subject co-ordinators also monitor pupils' work and lesson planning but there are no formally agreed criteria for such initiatives.
- Subject co-ordinators are beginning to identify strengths and weaknesses in their subjects but plans for further action are at a very early stage.
- The SDP is a thorough document. It identifies a very wide range of points for improvement but lacks sufficiently precise goals and criteria for success. The SDP is reviewed annually through discussion among staff and governors but the evaluation of outcomes is not always linked closely enough to the original goals.
- The school sets appropriate targets for attainment at the end of KS2. The main focus of the SDP is on improving aspects of provision, such as resources and staff training. Few of the success criteria focus sufficiently on the impact on standards.

- The school is successful in meeting many of its goals to improve provision. Arrangements to monitor and evaluate practice across the school benefit from a planned programme to monitor teaching and learning. However, the criteria for observations are not sufficiently focused.
- The headteacher and staff are aware of the broad outcomes of monitoring and recognise the opportunity to prioritise and focus improvements more precisely. There remains a lack of rigour in planning the way forward and ensuring initiatives are consistently implemented across the school.

## **6.2 Leadership and Efficiency**

Leadership and efficiency are satisfactory overall.

- The headteacher, with the enthusiastic support of staff and governors, successfully promotes a teamwork ethos and sensitively ensures a clear direction for the work of the school. In particular, this has a very positive impact on the quality of pastoral provision in the school.
- The school sets out its well-considered aims and values in the prospectus. The school's mission statement, 'Development through Care', is clearly reflected in all aspects of its work. The school values and celebrates the pupils' personal achievements. There is a strong commitment to inclusion.
- The governing body is strongly supportive of the school. The governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and the first hand knowledge of several governors who regularly visit the school.
- There are appropriate arrangements for the required committees of governors. In the main the governing body meets its statutory obligations but there are some omissions from the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents.
- The role of subject co-ordinators is developing well. The staff regularly discusses the needs of the school but arrangements to link initiatives, focus efforts across the school and ensure consistent practice are largely informal and lack sufficient rigour.
- The length of the school day is sufficient but the use and organisation of lesson time is often inefficient. This reduces the amount of lesson time to below the nationally recommended level of 23.5 hours in KS2. The timing of assembly means that lessons rarely begin before 9.35am. Most morning lessons are English and mathematics and this means that too little time is available for other subjects.
- Further factors that sometimes reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching are spending a block of lessons on one aspect of a subject and spending a whole afternoon on one subject. This too often results in a slow pace of learning.
- In general, the support assistants are appropriately deployed. Where they fully understand the purpose of the lesson and are involved in the planning, they make a very positive contribution. However, on occasions in both key stages, the available support is not always fully utilised. This reduces efficiency and limits pupils' progress.
- The school adopts a prudent approach to budget planning. The pattern of expenditure matches the school's needs but there is little evidence of detailed forward planning. The school maintains a relatively high reserve, amounting to 13 per cent of available funds this year. This is to ensure sufficient funding is available to maintain staffing levels when pupil numbers fluctuate. A significant proportion of this reserve is wisely placed on 'deposit'.
- There are well-established arrangements for financial management. There is a clear policy that defines procedures and the systems are effective. This was endorsed by the most recent auditors' report.

- The governing body regularly monitors the school's finances. There are no formal arrangements to evaluate the impact of spending but appropriate steps are taken to ensure best value in making purchases. Routine administration and organisation is good.

### **6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources**

The school is well staffed. The provision of accommodation and learning resources is good.

- There is a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum and of the pupils they teach. The teachers are appropriately deployed but some opportunities to share expertise are overlooked.
- Strengths in teachers' expertise include knowledge of the early years curriculum and good expertise in sport and Welsh. Despite recent training, some staff still lack confidence in teaching information technology.
- There are suitable arrangements for professional reviews and preparations are in hand for performance management. The governors set clear and appropriate targets for the head and deputy headteacher.
- In general, the courses attended by staff reflect the needs of the school. The information gained is regularly disseminated through staff meetings but there are no effective arrangements to ensure new approaches are widely implemented.
- Two support staff make a positive contribution to teaching and learning. The midday staff supervise pupils well at lunchtime. The school is well supported by an efficient secretary.
- The provision of accommodation is good. The school benefits from a central hall, ample playground and playing field space, well-equipped nursery and reception class facilities and sufficient teaching and work areas. However, the available classrooms and work areas are not always used to the full. This is most evident in Y1 where the classroom is too small for the necessary range of activities.
- Taken overall, the accommodation has a positive influence on the standards achieved and the quality of learning resources is good. Recent audits together with selective expenditure ensure sufficient learning resources of good quality are available.
- The school is in a sound state of repair. The original 'open plan' design has been improved to good effect in recent years. The caretaker and cleaning staff work hard to maintain a clean and safe environment.

## **7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

#### **Provision for the under-fives**

The provision for children under five is appropriate and successfully promotes the desirable outcomes in the six areas of learning. This provision is an outstanding feature of the school.

- The standards of achievement in the nursery class are very good in language, mathematical and social development; they are good in creative and physical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world.
- The standards of achievement in the reception class are good in all six areas of learning. The children are well prepared to begin work in the subjects of the National Curriculum.

#### **Good Features**

#### **Children in the nursery class**

##### **Language, literacy and communication skills**

- The children make very good progress in developing their early language skills. They listen attentively, speak to adults very confidently and respond easily to each other during their work and play activities.
- Many of the children confidently use more complex and extended phrases during their role-play in the 'Rainbow Café', 'Santa's grotto' and 'A&E wards'. These experiences successfully accelerate the acquisition of a very varied vocabulary. The children are familiar with a range of Welsh words.
- The children make good use of the writing table; they are progressing well in their emergent writing and many successfully write their names unaided.

##### **Personal and Social Development**

- The children have good relationships with adults and other children. They respond positively to the role models provided by adults and make very good progress in developing social skills.
- They are aware of the need for hygiene in the 'café' and in looking after themselves.

##### **Mathematical development**

- All the children count to and recognise their numbers up to at least five. They confidently match numbers to dice patterns and accurately order numbers one to five.
- They add one to numbers one to five, chant number rhymes accurately, sort and match resources such as shapes using simple criteria and judge whether an object is 'heavier or lighter', 'bigger or smaller', or 'longer or shorter' than another item.
- They accurately name a number of two-dimensional shapes, draw round them and cut out the pattern from a variety of materials.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the world**

- The children confidently name the foods on offer in their 'café' and successfully play at ordering, having and serving a meal. Many of the children play in role for extended periods.
- In their work about babies, the children learn about themselves and how things change over time. They investigate the differences between dry and wet sand and know which toys are to be pulled or pushed.
- The children confidently use the computer to click on icons and assemble sea pictures. They celebrate many different festivals during the year including Harvest and Chinese New Year.

### **Physical Development**

- The children have good control of pull and push movements and show appropriate awareness of safety and space when using their big toys. The majority demonstrate good hand-eye co-ordination.

### **Creative Development**

- The children make models, paint with increasing competence and use small tools well. They express themselves imaginatively in different media.
- They sing a wide repertoire of English and Welsh songs.

### **Children in the reception class**

#### **Language, literacy and communication skills**

- The children are articulate in class and converse easily with adults and to each other through role-play and when working in small groups. The learning activities are very well linked within a class topic and the children continuously broaden and reinforce their language skills.
- They are fully involved when listening to the teacher read, they readily recall familiar stories, re-tell the narrative in detail and enthusiastically ask questions about the text. The children listen to and repeat Welsh words and phrases with clear pronunciation.
- The children make good progress in learning the sounds and forms of letters. They are very familiar with books and most read simple words and familiar sentences confidently. The majority make good progress in learning to read.
- The majority form their letters and numbers accurately and makes good progress in writing.

#### **Personal and Social Development**

- The children work well together and demonstrate a collaborative approach to their tasks. Most take turns and share well when playing in the house, investigating and playing table games. They react well to the good relationships they witness between the adults who teach them.
- The children take responsibility for their own hygiene and dress themselves independently.

#### **Mathematical development**

- The children accurately add objects and numbers up to 20 and some to higher numbers. The majority know one more than a number and successfully identify the missing number from a sequence.

- They sort objects into sets and use terms such as ‘fewer’, ‘more’ and ‘less’ correctly. The majority recognise mathematical objects by their shapes and readily identify and make repeating patterns.
- The children learn to sequence, sort and match well through using a variety of number games and they have a sound knowledge of both two and three dimensional shapes.
- The majority follow a number line well, sequence the days of the week and tell the time by the hour on an analogue clock face.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the world**

- The children observe and identify a number of different examples of sea life and place them in sets according to two criteria.
- They know that water freezes to become ice and that it melts again with heat. They describe their reactions to this change of state using terminology such as solid and liquid well. They learn how humans, animals and creatures grow and develop over time.
- The children are developing familiarity with computers; they use the mouse competently to create their own towns when using a simulation program. They click on and drag objects into sets and confidently choose the correct tool. When operating a controllable robot, they switch the device on and take it in turns to clear and input directions for the machine with increasing success.
- They use the listening stations to good effect in their learning.

### **Physical Development**

- The children manipulate materials well in making puppets and picture frames. They participate keenly in outside play activities and physical education lessons. The majority make satisfactory progress in larger movements, including jumping, hopping, walking and running.

### **Creative Development**

- The children make music using a variety of un-tuned percussion instruments to creatively develop their knowledge and understanding of their ‘under sea’ topic work. They engage in a variety of role-play with enthusiasm and sing both English and Welsh songs with gusto.
- The children experiment with a range of media; they have a particularly good knowledge and understanding of the techniques of famous artists, such as Van Gogh and Hockney, and demonstrate a good sense of colour and form when they emulate their pictures.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings in the provision for the children under five.

### **English**

The standards of achievement in English are satisfactory in both key stages.

### **Good Features**

- In KS1, the pupils speak with confidence. They report their news articulately and confidently ask and answer questions in a lively and unselfconscious manner. They are eager to take part in role-play and small group work. Some of the more able pupils in Y2 speak volubly and draw on a wide range of vocabulary.

- The pupils listen attentively, indicating keen interest in what they hear. They remember events and details of a story clearly and in the correct sequence. They follow instructions accurately and are beginning to heed other pupils' contributions.
- The majority of pupils read at levels appropriate to their age. All pupils respond positively to the emphasis laid on phonic development. Most have a satisfactory understanding of what they read.
- Pupils predict the outcome of stories read to them using clues from the text and their imagination. They respond eagerly to a suitable range of poems and stories and readily discuss characters and the plot.
- Many pupils are developing a mature recognition of writing for different reasons.
- In KS2, pupils converse with each other and adults confidently. They formulate relevant questions and some discuss their topic work in detail when collaborating in small groups.
- The pupils show appropriate interest in stories and have a good recall of the sequence of events. Many sensibly anticipate how a story might end and are confident when expressing preferences about characters. They make appropriate attempts to justify their choice or point of view.
- Overall, the pupils make satisfactory progress in reading. The more able read fluently and with good expression and understanding. Most use appropriate strategies, in particular phonics, to help them with their reading.
- The pupils write in many different styles including poetry, diaries, recipes, invitations, narrative and descriptive pieces and they often use writing frames to improve the structure of their work. They also use planning sheets to identify setting, characterisation and plot and many are beginning to punctuate speech accurately.
- When writing an issue for debate, the pupils marshal their thoughts well; some express these thoughts convincingly in the form of a letter and, when writing dialogues they produce realistic and fluent work.

### **Shortcomings**

- The pupils do not regularly review the books they read and the more able pupils infrequently use higher order reading skills, such as skimming, scanning and inference.
- Some pupils are making only slow progress in handwriting skills and the presentation of work is sometimes untidy.
- Not all pupils have a clear concept of a sentence and how to punctuate it correctly. Some tend to write brief one word answers at the expense of more detailed sentences.
- The creative writing produced by many pupils is often of insufficient length and unimaginative.

### **Mathematics**

The standards of achievement in mathematics are satisfactory in both key stages.

### **Good features**

- In KS1, the pupils develop a suitable mathematical vocabulary and their grasp of number bonds to 10 is appropriate for their age.

- They have a sound understanding of addition and subtraction, within 100, confidently use a variety of terms, such as ‘add’, ‘plus’, ‘take away’ and ‘subtract’ and use the appropriate mathematical symbols when recording sums.
- Most pupils in KS1 tell the time accurately in hours and recognise half-past and quarter-past on the clock face.
- Pupils know the value of the coins and confidently add amounts of money up to £1 and some larger amounts. They record amounts correctly and show a clear understanding of place value.
- The more able pupils in Y2 measure length accurately using centimetres and have a developing knowledge of symmetry and the properties of shapes. They record and identify the two-dimensional shapes well.
- In KS2, the pupils develop suitable competence in completing more complex calculations using the four operations in number. They break down larger numbers into sets in order to carry out these operations and can check their calculations.
- The younger pupils in KS2 have a developing knowledge of direction; they record fractions, investigate volume and use appropriate units to record weight and liquid measure.
- In the middle of the key stage, most pupils confidently explain their strategies for calculating answers to mathematical problems. Their response in mental work is often quick and accurate.
- By the end of the key stage, the pupils have a good knowledge of different methods of calculation and a few use mental strategies well. The majority confidently round, sequence and partition numbers and are beginning to understand the relationship between fractions and percentages.
- The pupils have a sound understanding of regular two and three dimensional shapes and are familiar with the vocabulary used to denote their properties, such as naming the different types of angle.
- They are beginning to collect and present information in a pie chart, for example and other types of graphs.

### **Shortcomings**

- Some of the older pupils in KS1 are insufficiently aware of number patterns and relationships.
- By the end of Y2, the pupils carry out only a limited range of practical investigations involving measuring, for example.
- Many of the younger pupils in KS2 do not readily explain their methods of calculation and they are sometimes slow to recognise alternative strategies.
- Across KS2, pupils do not sufficiently use and explore mathematics through practical investigations nor do they build effectively on their skills in making calculations to collect and present information in tabular and graphical forms.
- In both key stages, pupils do not make consistent use of ICT to enhance their work in mathematics. The presentation of work lacks care in some classes. This has an adverse effect on progress; especially where place value is involved.

### **Science**

The standards of achievement in science are satisfactory in both key stages.

## **Good Features**

- The pupils in Y1 observe the conditions for the germination of seeds and group animals appropriately. They name light and sound sources and successfully identify push and pull forces through investigating toys.
- In Y2, the pupils group materials appropriately by their properties, such as ‘squashy’ or ‘bendy’. They identify materials in the environment and discover that some materials are attracted to a magnet and others are not. They know a battery is a power source and make a simple circuit including a switch and a bulb.
- The pupils successfully increase their knowledge of life cycles by observing caterpillar larvae and use books and a CD-ROM well to research the topic.
- The younger pupils in KS2 identify the properties of materials and use terms including ‘transparent’, ‘opaque’ and ‘translucent’ correctly. They name the parts of a simple electrical circuit and distinguish between thermal insulators and conductors. Their knowledge of the conditions for germination is satisfactory.
- In the middle of the key stage, pupils know gravity and magnetism are forces and successfully investigate the effect of air resistance on a parachute. They confidently name the main bone structures of the skeleton and the major organs of the human body. Their knowledge of electrical circuits is satisfactory and they know that some substances are soluble.
- By the end of the key stage pupils have a sound knowledge of plant and animals life cycles and food chains. They name the parts of a plant, describe the conditions for germination and distinguish between vertebrates and invertebrates.
- They predict methods and outcomes when separating mixtures and use scientific terms such as ‘condensation’, ‘dissolve’ and ‘saturation’ correctly. They identify natural and man-made materials, observe changes of state and distinguish between reversible and irreversible changes.

## **Shortcomings**

- Pupils do not sufficiently develop their scientific knowledge and skills through a suitable programme of investigations as they move through the school.
- In KS2, the pupils have limited understanding of the conditions for a fair test. The older pupils do not pose enough questions and seldom test their own hypotheses.
- Across the school the pupils lack skills in organising, recording and presenting their findings in an appropriate variety of ways. The use of over-structured worksheets frequently limits their response.

## **Welsh second language**

The standards of achievement in Welsh as a second language are good in both key stages.

## **Good Features**

- In KS1, the pupils acquire a good spoken vocabulary. They speak clearly and confidently in role-play, and ask and answer questions with good pronunciation and intonation. They use simple language patterns well in a number of different situations and obviously enjoy the experience.

- They understand basic instructions and obey them promptly. They answer questions correctly and often with complete sentences. The vocabulary they learn supports and reinforces work done across the curriculum.
- The pupils perform their *Helpwr y Dydd* duties satisfactorily. They describe the weather, recite the days of the week, know a range of colours and count up to 20.
- In KS2, the majority of pupils make good progress in developing spoken and written forms of the language. They respond well to good quality teaching and the frequent use of good quality incidental Welsh throughout the school.
- Most pupils make good progress in reading both familiar and unfamiliar words and sentences.
- Progress in writing is satisfactory, for example the story booklets written by the pupils in Y6 for use by the younger pupils.

### **Shortcomings**

- In both key stages, the more able pupils rarely attempt work that is adequately challenging.

### **Design and technology**

Although only one lesson in design and technology was observed during the inspection, the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

### **Good Features**

- In KS1, the pupils investigate a variety of products and design their own version. They make, for example, a small school bag, a clock, a calendar; a gift made from dough and a model den using a construction kit.
- They select suitable materials and consider ways of improving their product, for instance, the pupils in Y2 incorporate a magnet in the design of their fishing game to improve the efficiency.
- The younger pupils in KS2 create an ambitious design for a model playground as a whole class project. Working in seven small groups the pupils research the topic of playground furniture in detail. Each group chooses a particular item and successfully makes a model of their design using construction kits.
- The pupils employ their improving drawing, cutting, shaping and sticking skills with mouldable materials to produce well finished final products, such as a model lighthouse that incorporates an electric circuit.
- The older pupils carefully construct Tudor style houses using wooden structures. Their work is informed by researching an internet site and the first hand experience of visiting Plas Mawr in Conway. The pupils measure carefully when planning their three dimensional model; they choose their own equipment and demonstrate good planning, predicting and recording skills.
- In their work on volcanoes and controllable cars, most of the pupils in Y6 display sound investigative, designing and making skills and they follow their useful annotated diagrams well. They successfully input instructions to control their model.

## **Shortcomings**

- Some pupils do not pay close enough attention to the presentation of their work and the quality of their finished products.

## **Information technology**

The standards of achievement in information technology are satisfactory in both key stages.

### **Good Features**

- The pupils in Y1 successfully use pictures and graphics when describing the weather in Welsh. They use a data base to present the information that they collect in different graphical forms and use the functions of a graphics package well to alter their pictures. The pupils regularly use a range of ICT programs to support their work in other subjects.
- Pupils in Y2 gain basic experience of using a word processing package. They find information on a CD-ROM, use a simulation programme to design a town and confidently put together symmetrical designs using a graphics program.
- The younger pupils in KS2 satisfactorily develop their word processing skills by writing letters for example. They download a local map from the internet and are beginning to use the CD-ROM appropriately for research.
- The older pupils have some experience of using data-bases, downloading pages from the internet and presenting information in graphical form. For instance, they use light and sound sensors to produce graphs showing different noises in the class. They further develop their skills in using word processing and a few can combine text and graphics.
- Some of the pupils in Y6 confidently use a desktop publishing programme to edit and present a school magazine.

## **Shortcomings**

- In most classes across the school, pupils do not progressively develop their skills and achieve sufficient competence in operating computer programs.
- Most pupils have limited keyboard skills. Few of the older pupils have sufficient knowledge of editing techniques such as ‘cut and paste’ and ‘spell check’.
- In KS2, the pupils seldom use spreadsheets, simulation programs, explore monitoring or use applications such as “Logo”.

## **History**

The standards of achievement in history are satisfactory in KS1 and good overall in KS2. The latter judgement reflects the pupils’ good recall of historical knowledge gained from a variety of educational visits.

### **Good features**

- The pupils in Y1 know that methods of sending messages and lighting the home have changed over time. They distinguish between ‘old’ and ‘new’ by sorting pictures. They have a developing knowledge of important events in the past such as The Great Fire of London and know that William Morgan translated the Bible into Welsh.

- The pupils in Y2 develop a clear sense of chronology by comparing a kitchen of the past and the artefacts of wash day with modern homes. For instance, they know that food was kept in a larder before the invention of the fridge.
- The younger pupils in KS2 develop appropriate insights into aspects of town and country life in Celtic and Roman times. They study later periods and know that rationing had a significant impact on life in World War 2.
- In the middle of KS2, pupils develop an appropriate knowledge of Tudor Times. They name the monarchs and learn about key events, including the Reformation, the Spanish Armada and the sinking of the Mary Rose.
- Continuing the seafaring theme, they enthusiastically investigate and dramatise the story of the sinking of the Titanic. In other work, the pupils find out about life in Victorian factory towns and the coal industry in Wales.
- The older pupils use the 1891 census to identify changes in Leeswood. They compare Victorian and present day schools and enthusiastically investigate a range of household artefacts. They know that inventions such as the Wright brothers' plane, the steam engine and early motor cars paved the way for transport today.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils across the school do not progressively develop a sufficiently wide range of skills in history. The older pupils seldom research topics in sufficient depth.
- The pupils show limited independence when working on areas of enquiry. The older pupils find organising their work difficult and the presentation is often untidy.

### **Geography**

The standards of achievement in geography are satisfactory in both key stages.

### **Good features**

- In Y1, the pupils identify features in the school environment and draw pictorial maps. They observe changes in the weather and know that the climate is different at the South Pole and in desert regions.
- Pupils in Y2 successfully identify Wales on a map of the United Kingdom and they compare the features of a village with a town. They use appropriate vocabulary to describe different types of houses and, when using maps to identify the features of an island, they interpret symbols appropriately.
- The younger pupils in KS2 further develop their skills in map reading and drawing. They use co-ordinates and keys appropriately. They find out about food and farming in this country and know that some areas are designated as National Parks.
- The older pupils have a sound knowledge of rivers, including features found along a river's course. They accurately plot the names of the main rivers of Wales on a map and are beginning to understand the reasons for some associated place names. They are beginning to understand that there are reasons for a settlement being where it is.
- By the end of the key stage, the pupils use a range of map reading skills appropriately. For example, they identify rivers and cities around the world, compare local maps of different scales

and use road maps to plan a journey. They have a sound knowledge of physical features, such as volcanoes and the structure of the earth.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils across the school do not progressively develop a sufficiently wide range of geographical knowledge and skills.
- The pupils seldom research the topics they study in sufficient depth and only rarely make comparisons and consider topics such as land use and environmental change.

### **Art**

The overall standards of achievement in art are good in both key stages.

#### **Good Features**

- In KS1, the pupils develop their control of fine brushes through painting their self- portraits. They enthusiastically explore mixing and shading colours through ‘blow’ and ‘bubble’ painting.
- Having visited a Boat Museum the pupils investigate shape and pattern by looking at different lace designs and they successfully emulate the pictures of roses and castles in the artwork of canal boat people.
- The pupils study the work of Monet and use chalk and pastels effectively to reproduce the effect of a river. They develop a wide range of skills and techniques through using a variety of materials and work well in three-dimensions to show expressions on faces and to represent the movement of waves.
- Many pupils demonstrate good observation and interpretation skills when studying Matisse’s work entitled ‘Snail’. They discuss their ideas eagerly and make good progress in matching shapes, patterns and colours. They also extend their skills in weaving and making collages and use a variety of materials and textures to good effect.
- In KS2, the pupils demonstrate improving observational and evaluative skills in their work based on the style of Mark Rothko.
- They understand the basic elements of the techniques used by Matisse to create the work ‘Icarus.’ They use these techniques well to make an interesting visual account of the story, dividing it into seven episodes, and producing it in booklet form for use by younger pupils.
- The pupils’ observational drawing, based on examples of Kyffin Williams’ work, is often of a good standard and demonstrates thoughtfulness and perseverance.
- The older pupils develop their skills in observational drawing and painting particularly well. For example, many of the pupils produce good work, and some very good work, in response to still life cameos in the style of Cézanne.

### **Shortcomings**

- The pupils do not develop their artistic skills in sufficient depth, through a variety of contexts, as they move through the school.

### **Music**

The standards of achievement in music are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2.

## **Good features**

- Pupils in KS1 can repeat simple rhythm patterns accurately and maintain a steady beat. They listen carefully to recorded music and identify basic elements, such as the dynamics of a piece.
- They sing enthusiastically in tune and perform without inhibition in front of an audience. Most pupils persevere with rehearsing their work in order to improve it, as in their movement to the music of the 'Camel song.'
- The pupils play a variety of un-tuned instruments, including empty containers and some filled with different amounts of water, to perform their own compositions that effectively create a sound picture of rain falling into a stream and flowing into the sea.
- Pupils in KS2 can sing in three-part rounds and they generally keep in tune. When working on their own compositions, they collaborate closely whilst working in small groups.
- They have good recognition of an appropriate repertoire of music and composers, played in school assemblies. The majority appraise pieces of music sensibly and use a good musical vocabulary.
- The older pupils satisfactorily identify changes in pitch, tempo, mood and name the instruments playing when listening to a range of music. They successfully note changes in musical patterns.
- They participate enthusiastically and respond positively when working with a visiting singing tutor. Some pupils maintain an individual part well whilst singing in canon.
- A good number of boys and girls improve their singing through regularly attending the school choir. They sing well and thoroughly enjoy performing to members of the public.
- A small number of pupils make steady progress in learning to play the violin and they also attend a harp workshop.

## **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings in KS1.
- In KS2, a significant minority of older pupils does not control their breathing well enough while singing; they strain on higher notes or tend to shout.
- The pupils do not sufficiently develop the skills of composition; they rarely attempt work that presents a genuine challenge.

## **Physical Education**

The standards of achievement in physical education are good in both key stages. During the inspection it was only possible to observe athletics and games activities. Other evidence indicates that pupils undertake a full programme of work in gymnastics, dance, movement, games and swimming.

## **Good Feature**

- In KS1, the pupils make steady progress in developing hand-eye co-ordination in throwing, catching, and batting and movement skills.
- They show a good awareness of space and most pupils respond promptly to directions. They develop good pace, control and confidence in their work.
- In KS2, the pupils appraise their own and others' performance constructively. They know the effect of exercise on their bodies and understand the reasons for warming up before and cooling down sensibly after exercise.

- Most pupils willingly persevere to improve the quality of their performance.

### **Shortcomings**

- Some of the older pupils are heedless of the teacher’s direction and make minimal effort to perform well.

## **Religious Education**

The standards of achievement in religious education are satisfactory in both key stages.

### **Good Features**

- In KS1, the pupils consider feelings and what it means to be helpful. They celebrate harvest festival and write thoughtful ‘thank-you’ prayers. They build well on their own experience to further their understanding of celebrations such as baptism.
- They have a sound knowledge of Old and New Testament stories. The younger pupils are beginning to understand that Muslims pray in a different way to Christians. The older pupils know the Bible is a special book to Christians and enthusiastically enact the story of writing the Bible in Welsh.
- The younger pupils in KS2 further their knowledge of religious customs and celebrations. They know that Pesach is a Jewish festival and identify kosher foods. They know the story of the first Christmas, have a developing knowledge of key events in Jesus’ life, such as his baptism and Palm Sunday, and begin to understand the importance of pilgrimage to followers of Islam.
- In the middle of the key stage pupils identify the features of worship and special services such as baptism and Holy Communion. They know that special clothes are worn for special occasions, such as a Jewish boy’s Barmitzvah, and know the Gurdwara is a focus for prayer in a Sikh temple.
- The older pupils suitably further their understanding of religious teachings. They name the holy books of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. They learn about Old Testament leaders, such as David and Abraham, and consider the impact of the teachings of Jesus and Muhammad.

### **Shortcomings**

- The pupils do not sufficiently develop their knowledge of different faith groups.
- In general, the pupils make insufficient use of artefacts and a variety of media to fully develop their understanding of religious traditions and family customs.

## **8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection**

In the six years since the previous inspection, the school has maintained and built upon its many strengths, particularly in pastoral aspects where its mission statement, “Development through Care”, is clearly evident and has a positive influence on the pupils’ achievements.

- The school has successfully raised standards in all areas of learning for children under five and in Welsh as a second language, design and technology and art in both key stages. Standards in music

have also improved in KS1. Furthermore, the standards attained in end of key stage NC tests and assessments show an overall trend of improvement since the last inspection.

- The school has implemented a suitable action plan to address the key issues for action identified by the previous inspection. Improvement in relation to the key issues is satisfactory.

The key issues were:

**(1) devise and implement strategies to raise overall standards of achievement and fully develop the potential of all pupils including:**

**(a) achievement-orientated targets within SDP**

**(b) developing the status of and provision for science and design and technology**

**(c) raising expectations in terms of quality and presentation of pupils' work across the curriculum;**

- Although the standards attained in English, mathematics and science have kept pace with the national trend and the school sets appropriate targets, it places too little emphasis on setting quantitative achievement orientated targets in the SDP. The school has successfully improved provision in science and design and technology but the presentation of pupils' work remains widely variable.

**(2) continue to develop the role of curriculum co-ordinator, paying particular attention to the monitoring of overall curriculum provision and delivery;**

- This remains a focus for development in the SDP. Most subject co-ordinators have a clear overview of work in their subjects and continue to develop strategies to monitor achievement and promote further improvement.

**(3) monitor the time devoted to individual subjects of the curriculum, ensuring that a balanced and appropriate coverage of the NC is provided for all pupils;**

- The school places a strong emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in the allocation of lesson time but it has not been sufficiently rigorous in ensuring both a balanced allocation of lesson time across all subjects and appropriate coverage of the content of the subjects.

**(4) take steps to ensure that provision of in-service training more effectively meets the needs of the whole school as well as those of individual teachers;**

- The staff attends a variety of in-service training courses and the SDP clearly identifies areas where further training is required to meet both personal and whole-school needs.

**(5) raise the general level of staff expertise with regard to provision for pupils with special educational needs.**

- The school employs a part-time teacher to support pupils with SEN but continues to identify this aspect as a key priority for staff training in its SDP.

## **8.2 Key Issues for Action**

In order to further raise standards and continue to improve the quality of education, the school and the governing body, with the support of appropriate agencies, should:

- further improve achievement in subjects where standards are judged satisfactory and address the shortcomings identified in aspects of the school's work;

- use assessments effectively within planning;
- use and allocate lesson time effectively and efficiently and ensure a balanced emphasis both within and across subjects;
- increase the range of teaching styles in KS2;
- link arrangements for monitoring and evaluation to key priorities in the school development plan.

## APPENDIX

### A Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Ysgol Derwenfa
School type	Community
Age -range of pupils	3 – 11 years
Address of school	Queen Street Leeswood Mold Flintshire
Post-Code	CH7 4RQ
Telephone Number	01352 770477

Head teacher	Mr D Hughes Jones
Date of appointment	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1988
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Councillor C Jones
Registered Inspector	Mr M T Ridout
Dates of inspection	10 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2002

### B School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	13.5	14	22	28	18	27	20	26	168.5

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	6	3	7.27

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	21.3 : 1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	13.5 : 1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/a
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25.8
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.12 : 1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>				
	Reception	KS1	KS2	KS1/2
Summer 2001	95.89	92.21	92.61	92.37
Autumn 2001	95.14	95.33	95.93	95.63
Spring 2002	95.79	94.95	95.21	95.08

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

### NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS END OF KS1: 2001

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2001			Number of pupils in Y2 : 16						
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	A	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	13	63	25	0
		National	0	0	4	13	62	21	0
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	12	50	38	0
		National	0	0	4	13	54	29	0
	Task/Test	School	0	0	0	12	50	38	0
		National	1	0	3	13	53	30	0
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	12	88	0	0
		National	0	0	5	13	70	12	0
	Task/Test	School	0	0	0	12	62	26	0
		National	0	1	5	10	75	9	0
EN: Speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	12	62	26	0
		National	0	0	3	11	63	23	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	69	31	0
		National	0	0	2	9	60	29	0
	Task/Test	School	0	0	0	0	69	31	0
		National	0	1	2	6	56	36	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	19	56	25	0
		National	0	0	2	10	67	21	0

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

- D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements  
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence  
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

**NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS  
END OF KS2: 2001**

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results: 2001			Number of pupils in Y6: 27									
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	-	0	0	15	22	56	7
		National	0	0	0	-	1	1	6	19	48	25
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	11	44	30
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	5	14	47	30
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	-	0	0	15	26	52	7
		National	0	0	0	-	0	1	4	20	47	28
	Test/Task	School	11	3	0	0	0	0	11	11	52	15
		National	0	2	1	1	-	0	4	18	42	32
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	-	0	0	15	22	56	7
		National	1	0	0	-	0	0	3	15	52	29
	Test/Task	School	0	0	2	0	0	0	11	15	52	22
		National	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	13	51	31

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	59%	In the school:	59%
In Wales:	68%	In Wales:	68%

- D Pupils who are exempted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
- A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
- F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
- B Pupils not entered for the tests because they are working outside the set levels of the tests.
- W Pupils who are working towards level 1

**D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection**

- The inspection team consisted of three inspectors who worked for 10 inspector days gathering first-hand evidence. In total, 60 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Inspectors observed classes and evaluated the children's work.
- Inspectors visited registration sessions and school assemblies and observed break times. All teachers were observed teaching several times. Discussions were held with members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, representatives of the governing body, parents and others both during the inspection and initial inspection visits.
- All the available work and records of a representative sample of at least three pupils from each class, plus the work of a sample of pupils with SEN was scrutinised. A representative number of pupils were heard to read both formally and informally.
- A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection.
- The registered inspector held a meeting attended by 13 parents before the inspection and considered 56 parents' responses to a questionnaire.
- Little direct teaching of information technology was seen during the inspection. A limited range of work in physical education was observed.

- The inspection took place over four days.

### **E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team**

<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Aspect Responsibilities</b>	<b>Subject Responsibilities</b>
Mr M T Ridout	RgI	The school and its priorities; educational standards; standards in key skills; teaching; curriculum; quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement; leadership and efficiency; progress since the last inspection.	Mathematics; science; information technology; history; geography; religious education.
Mrs M Meredith - Jones	Team	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; assessment, recording and reporting; support, guidance and pupils' welfare; provision for pupils with SEN; provision for the under-fives.	English; Welsh as a second language; design and technology; art; music; physical education.
Mr. G. Morris	Lay	Behaviour and attitudes; attendance; partnership with parents, the community, schools and other institutions; partnership with industry; staffing, accommodation and learning resources.	

***The inspectors wish to thank the governing body, staff, parents and pupils of Ysgol Derwenfa for their co-operation, assistance and courtesy before and during the inspection.***

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