

REPORT

on the

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

**DINAS JUNIOR SCHOOL
BISHOP STREET
PENYGRAIG
TONYPANDY
CF40 1PQ**

School Number: 674/2099

Date of Inspection: 13 – 15 January 2003

By

Mr E Lloyd Williams
Registered Inspector W241/79113

Under Estyn contract number: T/168/02P

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. CONTEXT | |
| The school and its priorities | 1 |
| 2. MAIN FINDINGS | |
| The main findings of the report | 1 |
| 3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS | |
| 3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning | 3 |
| 3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum | 4 |
| 4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL | |
| 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 5 |
| 4.2 Behaviour and attitudes | 6 |
| 4.3 Attendance | 6 |
| 5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION | |
| 5.1 Teaching | 7 |
| 5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting | 7 |
| 5.3 Curriculum | 8 |
| 5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare | 9 |
| 5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) | 10 |
| 5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions | 10 |
| 5.7 Partnership with industry | 11 |
| 6. MANAGEMENT | |
| 6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement | 12 |
| 6.2 Leadership and efficiency | 13 |
| 6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources | 13 |

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| English | 14 |
| Mathematics | 15 |
| Science | 16 |
| Welsh second language | 17 |
| Design and technology | 17 |
| Information technology | 18 |
| History | 19 |
| Geography | 20 |
| Art | 20 |
| Music | 21 |
| Physical education | 22 |
| Religious education | 23 |

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

| | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|----|
| 8.1 | Progress since the last inspection | 23 |
| 8.2 | Key issues for action | 24 |

APPENDIX

| | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| A. | Basic information about the school | 25 |
| B. | School data and indicators | 25 |
| C. | Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations | 26 |
| D. | The evidence base of the inspection | 27 |
| E. | Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team | 27 |

1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Dinas Junior School occupies an elevated position overlooking the small town of Penygraig in the Rhondda. The school was opened in 1996 and is in generally good condition.

There were 135 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection. Almost all the pupils come from the villages of Penygraig or Dinas and most have attended Craig-yr-Eos Infants' School, which shares the same site. The catchment is described by the school as economically disadvantaged and the approximate nature of the pupil intake is also described as disadvantaged. Just over 33% of pupils are entitled to free school meals and 46 (34%) are identified as having special educational needs (SEN), including one pupil with a statement of SEN. None of the pupils is from an ethnic minority group and no pupil comes from a home where Welsh is the first language.

The school's aims and objectives are clearly stated. They include promoting a happy and positive environment where pupils feel valued as individuals, creating an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and in which pupils can reach their full potential, and giving pupils the opportunity to interact with others and enjoy developing caring relationships based on respect for different beliefs and traditions.

The School Development Plan (SDP) includes a review of the programme set for the previous year, as well as priority areas for the current year and outline plans for the long term. Among the current targets for improvement are: to develop pupils' acquisition of key skills across the curriculum, promote higher levels of effective teaching through identification and sharing of good practice, and establish an effective performance management structure through the process of self-evaluation. The school sets pupils quantitative targets aimed at raising their levels of attainment in the core subjects.

The school was last inspected in the spring term of 1998. The head has been in post since July 1997.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

The school has made clear progress in a number of areas since its last inspection in 1998.

- Pupils' standards of achievement were good or better in just under 65% of the sessions observed and satisfactory in the remainder.
- Standards of achievement in the subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) and in religious education are as follows:

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

- Standards in information technology which were judged to be unsatisfactory in 1998 are now satisfactory and standards in five non-core subjects are now good rather than satisfactory.
- In the school's NC assessment in 2002, results in English, mathematics and science exceeded the national averages and results overall compare well with those in similar schools in Wales. The results were a significant improvement on those in the previous two years. Over the last three years the performance of boys and girls have been broadly similar.
- In key skills across the curriculum standards in English are good in listening, speaking and reading and satisfactory in writing. Standards are satisfactory in numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT).
- The quality of teaching was good in 64% of the sessions observed, very good in five per cent and satisfactory in 31%. Lesson preparation is of good quality and whole-class presentations are clear and of suitable length. Pupils are set appropriate tasks generally. However, in a few cases, aspects of class management are not sufficiently rigorous, with the result that a small minority of pupils are not always on task, and the pace of some lessons is too slow.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A daily act of collective worship is provided and these services successfully stimulate pupils' spiritual and moral growth. Pupils work effectively together and support each other's learning. They learn to value and respect the traditions and beliefs of other cultures and religions; this reflects the school's detailed policy for racial equality and cultural diversity.
- The school promotes pupils' bilingualism in Welsh and English. A number of school signs and directions are in Welsh and some members of staff use Welsh incidentally during the day. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in their knowledge and use of Welsh as a medium of communication. Planning and provision of *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* are good.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good and attendance figures over the last three terms are satisfactory.

- The quality of assessment is good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when assessment was judged to be unsatisfactory. The school's policy for assessment establishes clear guidelines for teachers and there are good, manageable systems which are designed to ensure that pupils' work is regularly assessed and recorded.
- The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. It is suitably broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Policies and schemes of work are at least satisfactory, and in a number of cases good, as are teachers' short and medium term plans. However, planning of key skills across the curriculum is not sufficiently developed. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including team games and a breakfast club, is provided and good use is made of educational visits to support pupils' learning.
- The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good and they make satisfactory progress in acquiring basic language skills. The school's policy for SEN is detailed and up-to-date. Individual education plans are clear and specific and are regularly reviewed.
- The quality of partnership with parents and other institutions is good; that with the community and other schools, and with industry is very good.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good with some very good features. The school's range of procedures ensures that standards are consistently monitored, evaluated and targeted for improvement. The SDP is an effective working document which helps the school to move forward.
- The school is well led and managed. The head administers the school effectively and efficiently and provides sound guidance. He regularly monitors teaching and learning and is dedicated to improving the quality of provision and raising standards. Core subject co-ordinators are also now involved in monitoring lessons but few of the foundation subject co-ordinators visit colleagues' classes as part of their monitoring duties. The governors provide the school with very good support and are well informed about its life and work.
- The school has responded positively and for the most part effectively to all the key issues identified in the 1998 report.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Standards of achievement were judged to be good in 61% of the sessions observed, very good in three per cent and satisfactory in 36%.

- In the core subjects, pupils' standards of achievement are good overall in English; they are good in listening, speaking and reading and satisfactory in writing. Standards in mathematics and science are good.

- In the non-core subjects, standards of achievement are good in design and technology, history, geography, art, music, physical education and religious education and satisfactory in Welsh second language and information technology.
- Girls and boys achieve at broadly the same level throughout the school. The ablest pupils and those of average ability achieve good standards generally in the core subjects and in most of the foundation subjects and religious education. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress in acquiring basic language skills.
- In the school's NC assessments in 2002, results in English, mathematics and science exceeded the national averages and results overall compare well with those in similar schools in Wales. The school's core subject indicator (which denotes the percentage of pupils attaining level 4 or above in English, mathematics and science in combination) was 74% in 2002, significantly higher than in previous years and 6% above the average for Wales. Over the last three years the performance of boys and girls have been broadly similar.

3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum

Pupils' standards of achievement in key skills across the curriculum are good in most aspects of language and satisfactory in numeracy and ICT.

- Pupils listen carefully in lessons and during whole-school occasions, such as assemblies. They carry out instructions willingly and respond quickly to requests. Most pupils listen politely to the views of others in group and class discussions.
- Pupils express their thoughts and ideas clearly and confidently in subjects across the curriculum. They are articulate and fluent in their speech and explain their work well, showing a growing confidence in speaking in a range of contexts. As they mature, they acquire a good range of general and subject-specific vocabulary which they use accurately in the correct context.
- Pupils' reading skills across the curriculum are good. They correctly follow written instructions and younger pupils make good progress in consolidating their phonic understanding. Pupils of average and above average ability read with a good range of expression and they have a good understanding of the material they read. Reading skills are used effectively in all subjects to access information and extend knowledge and understanding. Pupils acquire a range of library skills which help them access information and further their research activities.
- Pupils' writing skills are satisfactory. Most pupils have an appropriate understanding of the structure required for particular written tasks and of the style in which they need to approach them. There are some good examples of extended writing in several subjects, which show that pupils are aware of the need to draft and redraft their written work and which display a good development of individual style and expression. However, standards of presentation of written work vary widely and a significant amount of pupils' work is impaired by errors in spelling and punctuation.
- Numeracy skills are satisfactory. Pupils have a secure understanding of number and place value. As they move up the school, their estimating skills develop well and they can

identify patterns and predict outcomes. Problem solving skills develop well and pupils are prepared to explore a range of different strategies. However, pupils make too little use of their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum; opportunities to extend the use of number in order to tackle problems are missed.

- Pupils' standards in the use of ICT are satisfactory. Most pupils have an appropriate grasp of basic IT skills, such as word-processing and working with data bases. However, too little use is made of ICT during lessons and, as a result, there is limited enhancement of pupils' learning in subjects across the curriculum.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and they respond well to this provision.

- Pupils' spiritual development is good. In the daily acts of collective worship pupils reflect upon their responsibilities to others and respect the feelings of their peers. Collective worship is well organised and appropriately based on Christian traditions. Assemblies are frequently joyful occasions; pupils participate enthusiastically in hymn-singing and periods of prayer and quiet reflection are marked by a reverent atmosphere. In religious education lessons, questions about meaning and purpose are discussed and pupils know that teachers value their ideas.
- Pupils' moral development is good. They have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils show a good level of respect for each other and for adults; they care well for learning resources and for the school environment. Their discussions during personal and social education lessons show a good understanding of problems faced by others and of ways in which they can make a contribution to the general good. They are encouraged to become involved in the life of the local community and in charitable work, so that they are aware of the needs of people less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils develop well socially. They work effectively together in pairs and groups during lessons and are prepared to support each other's learning. Older pupils undertake responsibilities around the school and they perform their duties courteously and conscientiously. Relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves are good. The school values the achievements of every individual and these are celebrated during assemblies.
- *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is appropriately addressed in a number of curricular areas, such as literacy, history, geography, art and music. Pupils learn to appreciate the history and traditions of Wales through visits to museums such as St. Fagan's, Llancaiach Fawr and other sites of historical and environmental importance. They have a good understanding of the particular historical and cultural development of the Rhondda through the close and fruitful links which have been forged with the local community.

- Pupils learn to value and respect the traditions and beliefs of other cultures and religions through work in history, geography, religious education and music. This work reflects the school's detailed policy for racial equality and cultural diversity. Displays of work in classrooms and corridors are well designed to reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding and to celebrate the similarities and differences with pupils' own experiences of beliefs and values.

4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.

- In lessons, pupils behave well and are enthusiastic about their work. They listen attentively, follow instructions and settle down to work quickly and quietly. This contributes significantly to their standards of achievement. However, a small minority of pupils in the lower classes lack concentration.
- The school sets appropriately high standards, and good behaviour is always praised and encouraged. Initiatives, such as the 'Proud to Present' scheme of rewards, are having a positive effect and pupils are keen to earn points.
- Pupils know the school rules and the consequences if they break them. Older pupils learn to undertake responsibility and show self-discipline by being members of the Behaviour Squad, members of which help maintain order particularly in the corridors.
- Pupils are well mannered and courteous. They help one another, visitors and members of staff.
- Any complaints of bullying are investigated and procedures are set out clearly in the school's anti-bullying policy. Pupils feel secure.
- Nearly 90% of the parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire state that the school achieves high standards of good behaviour.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance levels are satisfactory, averaging 91.3% over the last three terms.

- Registers are kept neatly and correctly and registration procedures comply fully with the requirements of NAW Circular 3/99.
- All unauthorised absences are properly recorded and enquiries made about them. The Education Welfare Officer visits the school several times a year and works closely with the staff to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who attend irregularly.
- At the end of each term, pupils with good attendance records receive a certificate.
- Punctuality is good and ensures a prompt start to the school day.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching was good in 64% of the sessions inspected, very good in five per cent and satisfactory in 31%.

- Teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach and of the requirements of the NC and religious education is good.
- Teachers prepare their lessons carefully and have clear objectives for each session.
- Presentations are orderly and lively and instructions and explanations are generally clear.
- Good use is made in most classes of a variety of teaching methods and pupils are given differentiated tasks which are well matched to their ability levels.
- Most teachers make purposeful use of their time when pupils are undertaking their activities.
- In a few cases, aspects of class management are not sufficiently rigorous, with the result that a small minority of pupils are not always on task, and the pace of some lessons is too slow.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

The quality of procedures for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' work and progress is good. Significant progress has been made in this area since the last inspection.

- Teachers' assessments of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science are accurate and consistent. Samples of pupils' work in these subjects are compiled in portfolios which are levelled and annotated according to NC criteria. The on-going development of portfolios of work in the foundation subjects of the NC is a positive step to ensure greater accuracy and consistency in teachers' assessments of work in these curricular areas.
- The school's policy for assessment establishes clear guidance for teachers. There are good, manageable and purposeful systems which are designed to ensure that there is regular assessment and recording of pupils' progress. However, in practice, there is some inconsistency in the way in which some teachers use assessment information to inform the planning of future work.
- Records are kept of the achievement and progress made by individual pupils, especially in the attainment targets of the core subjects of the NC. This enables teachers to track areas of difficulty and provides an efficient system to inform monitoring exercises.
- Samples of individual pupils' work are kept in their 'Proud to Present' files. These demonstrate the progress made in knowledge, understanding and skills throughout the year and also records pupils' personal development.

- Specific and meaningful individual targets are set each term to encourage pupils to raise their standards of achievement. Pupils are fully involved in the target setting process and develop useful skills of self-evaluation and self-awareness. Progress made towards the targets set is closely monitored.
- Good use is made of standardised tests in English and mathematics to augment information on pupils' progress, to predict outcomes and to set realistic targets for raising standards. The school's detailed analysis of NC test papers and of pupils' response to individual questions provides very good information about areas of difficulty which require further attention.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and thoroughly; thoughtful comments encourage pupils to maintain and improve their effort and provide them with an understanding of what they need to do next in order to raise their standards of achievement. The head teacher's monitoring of pupils' books effectively reinforces teachers' expectations.
- Pupils with SEN are regularly assessed and the findings are used to identify progressive learning steps. Teachers and support staff successfully intervene to support pupils and help them achieve their targets.
- There are regular consultation meetings with parents as well as more informal occasions when parents are invited to view their children's work. The annual written report gives parents a clear indication of achievement and progress across the curriculum. However, the current report format does not contain a dedicated section where pupils' learning targets are specified and shared with parents.

5.3 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements.
- It includes all the NC subjects and religious education and reasonable time is allocated to each one. However, the planning of key skills across the curriculum is not sufficiently developed.
- There are schemes of work for each subject and they have been up-dated to reflect the latest development; their quality is at least satisfactory and in a number of cases it is good.
- Teachers' short and medium term planning is also generally good and gives effective support to day-to-day learning.
- The school promotes pupils' bilingualism in Welsh and English. A number of school signs and directions are in Welsh and some members of staff use Welsh incidentally during the day. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in their knowledge and use of Welsh as a medium of communication.

- Planning and provision for *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* are good.
- The school has a detailed personal and social education policy and scheme of work. Pupils receive appropriate health education, including sex education and information about the dangers of drugs' misuse.
- There are well-considered equal opportunities and race equality policies, both of which are actively promoted within the daily life and ethos of the school and within the curriculum.
- Pupils with SEN take a full part in all aspects of the curriculum.
- The school has a homework policy and the tasks set cover a variety of activities. In a questionnaire completed by the parents prior to the inspection, 87% of those who responded indicated that they were content with the homework their children receive. The other parents voiced some concern about the nature or amount of homework given.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including team games, is provided and good use is made of educational visits to support pupils' learning.

5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

The support, guidance and attention to pupils' welfare are good.

- Pupils work and play in a happy, secure and supportive environment where their personal and social development is of paramount importance. The quality of personal guidance provided for pupils is very good. Pupils are given good levels of educational guidance.
- The school's personal, social and health education policy and scheme of work are of good quality. Pupils have ample opportunities to discuss matters which concern them and the link with the police force in the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) programme enhances their understanding of current social issues and problems.
- A sex education policy has been introduced and implemented. Pupils receive appropriate instruction in line with this policy.
- An equal opportunities policy is in place. The school takes care to ensure that all pupils have access to the curriculum at a level appropriate to their age and abilities. The caring ethos of the school ensures that everyone connected with it is treated fairly and equally.
- Procedures for dealing with child protection are well established. A full and detailed policy has been fully implemented and is clearly understood by staff.
- An effective security system ensures that pupils and staff work in a safe and secure environment.
- Pupils are well supervised at break and lunch times.
- A fire drill is held twice a term. All the teachers have qualifications in first aid.

5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

The school makes good provision for pupils with SEN. They achieve satisfactory standards in line with their abilities and prior attainment.

- An effective and detailed whole-school policy has been implemented based on the revised Code of Practice. All members of staff are committed to its successful operation.
- There are 46 pupils on the SEN register, including one pupil with a statement of SEN. The majority of these pupils are at the School Action stage of the Code of Practice. The needs of the statemented pupil are being met through the full-time support provided at the school by the Unitary Authority. All pupils with SEN have access to a broad and relevant curriculum and they are well integrated into the life of the school.
- All pupils on the school's SEN register have an individual education plan (IEP). The contents of the IEPs are shared with pupils and their parents.
- The IEPs clearly indicate current levels of achievement, the specific areas requiring improvement and they set relevant and meaningful stepped targets to address the areas of difficulty. The targets describe small steps in learning that can be readily measured and which provide strong incentives for pupils to improve and gain greater self-esteem.
- The deputy head teacher fulfils the role of SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO) and ensures that appropriate withdrawal support, mainly in language, is given to SEN pupils by well qualified learning support assistants. The SENCO liaises closely with class teachers to ensure that teaching and learning strategies and resources are carefully matched to pupils' needs. Documentation relating to pupils with SEN is meticulously kept, IEPs are regularly reviewed and progress is monitored.
- Pupils with SEN work effectively alongside their peers in mainstream classes and they benefit from working in co-operation with other pupils. Pupils working in withdrawal groups for part of the time benefit from the support they receive to improve their reading and other language skills.
- The school has good links with external agencies which leads to positive advice and support when requested.

5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions

Partnership with parents and other institutions is good; with the community and other schools it is very good.

- The school works closely with parents. There are very good arrangements, both formal and informal, for parents to visit the school, talk to teachers and view their child's work.

- The school's prospectus contains all the statutory information and is colourful and easy to read. This is augmented by an attractive web site, which is at present under development. There is, however, limited information about the curriculum.
- The Friends Association is very active and raises funds which are appropriately used to buy resources, for example, ICT equipment.
- Parents help in the library and with design and technology and art lessons.
- The Governors' Annual Report to parents meets statutory requirements. Few parents attended the last meeting.
- Community liaison is very good. The school works very closely with the Valleys Kids Community project. At present they are investigating the production of a mural for the school hall linked to religious education and art classes.
- The school works closely with local churches and links are in place with a day centre and with a local old people's home.
- Members of the community are invited into school to talk to pupils. This contributes greatly to pupils' learning.
- A close relationship exists with the infants' school next door. Joint training is held ensuring that there are good curriculum links. Y2 pupils spend time in the junior school being taught by and getting to know Y3 teachers prior to transition.
- Relationships with the receiving comprehensive school are also very good. Y5 pupils visit for a 'taster' day and, in Y6, secondary school staff speak to parents and confer with teachers to ensure best placement in the secondary and a smooth transition. Ex-pupils also talk to Y6 pupils giving them a fuller picture of life in a large school.
- The school does not have a formal partnership with a teacher training establishment. There are links with the University of Glamorgan on developments in ICT.

5.7 Partnership with industry

The school's partnership with industry is very good.

- Pupils have very good opportunities to develop their understanding of the world of work. For example, a representative of a national oil company visits the school and pupils learn about how oil is discovered and the processes it follows to end up in pumps on the garage forecourt. They work in groups, led by an adult, to complete a task, with each group being dependent on another to complete the chain.

- The Rain Forest Road Show also visit and there are links with the National Botanical Gardens and a chemical company. These extend pupils' learning particularly about sustainable development and re-cycling.
- A very good relationship exists with the local Education and Business Partnership (EBP) which funds trips, for example, to a fast-food outlet in connection with the science curriculum, and to a power station. The school was elected EBP School of the Year in mid Glamorgan for two years in succession.
- Both the head teacher and his deputy have undertaken placements in industry to develop their understanding of industry and management skills in general. Other staff have benefited from software training provided by an IT company.
- Financial support is also forthcoming, for example, a local hotelier donated £500 to the school. Particularly noteworthy is the school's link with an international computer company to develop the school's web site.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good with some very good features.

- A very good team spirit and a shared vision on ways of taking the school forward are underpinned by good procedures to facilitate the achievement of the school's aims and objectives.
- The school's range of procedures ensures that standards are consistently monitored, evaluated and targeted for improvement. All members of staff and governors are consulted about the identification of targets and the progress that has been made in meeting them.
- The SDP is a detailed and effective working document which helps the school to move forward. Close analysis of all available data and recording of progress made are central to its efforts to bring about improvement and clear priorities are set in response to this exercise. Careful consideration is given to finance, resources and time-scales.
- The school has a clear and consistent system for setting improvement targets. The head teacher, subject co-ordinators and class teachers regularly assess pupils' achievements in the core subjects and they use a range of information from assessment and standardised tests to predict expected levels of achievement. They devise appropriate strategies to enable pupils to make progress. A strong upward trend in performance in recent years indicates that these procedures are effective. Targets are set for individual pupils and for year groups, and pupils' self-evaluation of their performance is playing an increasing part in this process of improvement.

- A self-critical culture is growing amongst staff and several areas have already been identified as requiring greater focus; these include the quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum and the greater use of ICT in the classroom.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The school is well led and managed.

- The school's aims provide clear directions to its life and work. They include a firm commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- The head administers the school effectively and efficiently and provides sound guidance. He regularly monitors teaching and learning and is dedicated to improving the quality of provision and raising standards. He is ably supported by the deputy head.
- Subject co-ordinators fulfil their duties competently in terms of preparing and updating schemes of work, attending and reporting on courses and organising learning resources. They scrutinise samples of pupils' work and a portfolio of work has been put together in about half a dozen subjects. Core subject co-ordinators are also now involved in monitoring lessons but few of the foundation subject co-ordinators visit colleagues' classes as part of their monitoring duties.
- The governing body provides the school with very good support and members are well informed about its life and work. Individual governors have links with specific subjects and some have examined schemes of work and observed lessons in those subjects. The governing body is experimenting this year by appointing a different member to the chairmanship of each committee.
- The school budget is efficiently managed by the head with the support of the governing body. Decisions on expenditure are linked to areas identified in the SDP. Some funds were made available over the last two years to provide the school with better ICT provision, and money is set aside to provide additional support for SEN pupils.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

The school makes good use of its staff, accommodation and learning resources to help pupils raise their standards of achievement.

- The levels of staffing are adequate to meet pupils' needs. Teachers are well qualified and undertake appropriate professional development in order to meet the demands of the curriculum. Learning support staff are effectively deployed to help pupils in the classroom and in withdrawal groups.
- There are no newly-qualified teachers employed at present. All teachers have comprehensive and detailed job descriptions; they are all aware of their specific duties and responsibilities and they undertake these competently.
- The school's Professional Development policy offers a wide range of school-based development opportunities and the internal sharing of good practice. A culture of self-

evaluation has helped teachers to re-examine their professional approach to teaching and they play a full part in discussing and evaluating whole-school initiatives and development planning.

- The school is well served by the school secretary, mid-day supervisors, kitchen staff, caretaker and cleaners.
- The new school building is in good condition and is well organised to promote good opportunities for learning. Pupils respect the buildings and are proud of their school.
- The good use of attractive displays of pupils' work in classrooms and elsewhere supports learning and contributes to the ethos and high levels of expectation within the school. Displays celebrate pupils' achievements and are often effectively used as teaching aids.
- The school has a good range of learning resources which are conveniently located within classrooms and resource areas. These are easily accessible to staff and pupils and are well used to enhance learning. The two library areas are well stocked and comfortably furnished to encourage pupils to browse.
- The school has an adequate range of new ICT hardware and software. Pupils access the Internet to obtain information and to extend their research and information-seeking skills.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

English

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils have good speaking and listening skills; they express their views and ideas aptly and enthusiastically. As they move up the school, their vocabulary skills show good progress; they enhance their oral and written work with an imaginative choice of adjectives to add colour to their work.
- Pupils listen carefully to each other and to their teachers. As a result, they develop logical and persuasive arguments to justify their points of view. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary accurately across the curriculum.
- Standards of reading are good across the school. Most pupils acquire good reading habits; they read accurately and with appropriate expression. They are developing good strategies for analysing character and plot. Comprehension skills are well developed. By Y6, many pupils are proficient readers who have developed decided tastes for different genres of writing and for different authors.

- Pupils have good prediction skills and use texts to infer and deduce. They use an appropriate range of non-fiction books to locate information and to extend their knowledge and understanding of topics across the curriculum.
- Pupils' standards in writing are satisfactory. Pupils write in different styles to suit different purposes and for a range of audiences. Younger pupils construct sentences correctly and can structure a story plan. A significant number of average and above average ability pupils make good use of speech marks, commas and capital letters. Most pupils write with a legible, joined script.
- In the upper classes, pupils develop greater confidence to produce pieces of extended writing, such as stories and descriptive accounts. Some of this work is of high quality and there are interesting character sketches and examples of persuasive and discursive writing. Good use is made of literary devices such as similes and metaphors, and imaginative selection of adjectives adds colour to writing.
- Most pupils make good progress in planning, drafting and re-drafting their written work. Many use IT word-processing programs to help them develop their editing skills and to enhance the presentation of their work.

Shortcomings

- The presentation of written work by lower ability and by some average ability pupils is untidy; standards of spelling, punctuation and paragraphing are variable.
- A significant minority of pupils do not form their letters clearly or write with a fluid, joined script.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils use a variety of addition and subtraction strategies in sessions of mental arithmetic.
- Younger pupils understand how tally charts work and what the benefits are of using them.
- Pupils use the four operations well and apply them correctly when solving problems. They can explain the method they use in their number work clearly.
- They use mathematical language accurately and have a good understanding of why signs and symbols are used in mathematics and what they mean.
- Pupils are making good progress in their knowledge and understanding of decimals and fractions.
- They collate information and represent it by means of tables, graphs and diagrams.

- Pupils' recognition of 2D and 3D shapes is good and the ablest are confident when describing the various features of shapes.
- The oldest pupils measure and calculate the perimeter and area of simple shapes accurately.
- Pupils make sensible use of computers, including the interactive white board, to promote their understanding of aspects of mathematics.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Science

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils understand the difference between living things, things that were once alive and non-living things and can describe the main features of such objects.
- Pupils can explain terms that describe what living things do, such as move, grow, reproduce, respire, excrete and take in nutrients.
- They carry out experiments confidently, record information accurately and report back on their findings.
- They are aware of all the aspects that influence fair testing when planning their experiments.
- Previous work is recalled efficiently and applied in different conditions.
- Pupils display a sound knowledge of electricity; they can describe its advantages and are aware of its dangers. They understand that electrical devices work when there is a complete circuit and a power source.
- Their understanding of light develops well. They can describe the sources of light and how shadows are formed.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the influence of the force of gravity and of the effects of forces and friction on movement.
- Some classes make good use of ICT for recording data.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Welsh second language

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils listen attentively and respond in an appropriate manner. They can ask and answer simple questions within a known sentence pattern, based on everyday topics. They pronounce words accurately and have a sound ability to recognise written words.
- In Y3, most pupils answer questions in complete sentences and recognise common nouns and verbs. They recall the correct Welsh words for a range of foods and clothes and write simple sentences to convey their likes and dislikes.
- Pupils use vocabulary appropriately to describe food, the weather and their health. They gradually gain confidence in using the language.
- In Y5 and Y6, pupils can construct a simple dialogue and their work shows a generally secure grasp of correct grammatical construction. Several pupils attempt to use the correct mutations in their dialogues. They record their learning appropriately.
- Pupils enjoy singing Welsh hymns and songs during assemblies and music lessons. They sing lustily and pronounce the words well.
- Displays of labels and phrases around the school help pupils develop their reading skills and secure their recall of vocabulary.

Shortcomings

- A limited amount of Welsh is spoken by pupils in the course of the school day. Speaking and listening skills and the acquisition of a wider range of vocabulary and expression are underdeveloped.
- Pupils are over-dependant on a basic range of sentence patterns when conducting a simple conversation in Welsh.
- Pupils make limited use of ICT to extend their knowledge and understanding of the language.

Design and technology

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils develop their skills well in measuring, marking out, cutting and joining a suitable range of materials.

- Pupils recognise the properties of different materials and their suitability for different products.
- They develop well in their ability to use tools safely.
- They develop their designing, making and evaluating skills appropriately, often in conjunction with work in other curriculum areas, particularly science, art and history.
- Pupils make model carousels, cars with moving parts, pneumatic toys and hand-held games suitable for children younger than themselves. The quality of almost all the finished products is at least satisfactory and in many cases good.
- Older pupils make good use of technical vocabulary. They know the function of a gear and cogwheel and the ablest can distinguish between different types of gears and wheels.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Information technology

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils know the functions of the keyboard and spacebar. They can identify icons representing various functions and programs.
- Pupils show a growing independence in using specific programs to support work in language and mathematics.
- Many pupils have well developed word processing skills; they use different fonts and sizes to enhance the presentation of their work and they vary the layout of their work effectively.
- Pupils use a paint program well.
- Pupils create and analyse different types of graph and the ablest can load, save and recall data confidently.
- Satisfactory use is made of CD ROMs to locate additional information on a range of subjects.
- Pupils' ability to use the Internet and e-mail is developing satisfactorily.
- The use of the recently installed computer suite and the interactive board is having a positive effect on standards.

Shortcomings

- Some pupils are slow on the keyboard and lack confidence in giving instructions to the computer.
- The ability of pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum is limited.

History

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils have secure chronological awareness. They understand the concept of the passage of time and can identify the differences between past and present when examining artefacts and other sources of evidence. In Y3, pupils hold interesting discussions on the differences between Tudor schools and their own experience of school life.
- Pupils develop a good ability to examine sources of evidence and to extract accurate information from them. They use pictorial sources well, looking carefully, for instance, at Tudor games and identifying a wide range of differences in the toys and interests of children in the past. They use subject-specific vocabulary well and have good recall skills.
- Pupils are aware that different points of view can be validly held on a range of historical events and problems, and they understand that historical interpretations can be biased.
- Pupils become increasingly aware of the importance of using evidence to substantiate opinions. Investigative and enquiry skills are well developed through the use of a range of imaginative and stimulating source material.
- Pupils locate and record relevant information from a range of reference materials. They ask sensible questions, developing their skills of historical enquiry and establishing a good sense of empathy with the past.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding are enhanced by the visits which they make to museums and sites of historical importance. They make good use of the locality to further their knowledge and understanding of the economic and social development of the Rhondda Valleys. They make good progress in investigating the reasons for the changes that have occurred over time.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Geography

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils have good mapping skills and a secure knowledge and understanding of the local environment. In Y3, pupils can identify features which might improve their playground and are aware of the limitations of the site because of the steep slope. They have a good understanding of directions.
- In Y4, pupils have good understanding of the environmental problems caused by pollution. They list a variety of sources of pollution and have a secure knowledge of how the environment is harmed by these. They use subject vocabulary well and can link problems, such as litter, to their own school environment. They have a good awareness of the factors causing noise pollution.
- Pupils draw and read diagrammatic maps, plans and aerial photographs to show different features of land use in Porthcawl. They identify reasons why there are differences in land use in the Rhondda Valleys and are aware of the significance of the contour lines on their maps. They use keys and compasses accurately and interpret the data they have to arrive at sensible conclusions.
- By Y6, pupils have honed their observational skills and can interpret interesting information from photographs of a Kenyan village. They take all the important factors into account in their explanations. For instance, they know that mud houses are a good defence against the heat of the sun. They have a good ability to analyse the main similarities and differences between the life of a village woman in Kenya and the lives of their own mothers in Wales.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Art

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- In Y3, pupils use a wide range of materials and media to produce attractive and well crafted designs and drawings. In their work on cats they capture the texture of the animal's fur and they use pastels, chalk, charcoal and coloured pencils to good effect, developing their ideas for blending and smudging to create a realistic effect.

- Pupils use pencils imaginatively to create townscapes which are based on the work of Lowry. Still-life sketches of fruit show careful observation of the object in front of them and they achieve the appropriate amount of light and shade. They develop this theme further in their 3D work in clay and produce carefully crafted and detailed objects, showing due regard for line, shape and texture.
- Y4 pupils produce some well observed pencil drawings of typical architectural features of houses in the Rhondda Valleys. They pay particular attention to the brick work and architraves around doors and windows. Pupils' work with colours, shades and tones enables them to produce some good streetscapes to represent sunny and dull days.
- Pupils experiment by adding sand and flour to their paints and producing attractive pictures, based on the work of van Gogh. They show skill in weaving, producing mountain landscapes by using a variety of materials.
- In Y5, pupils produce good quality observational drawings of Welsh furniture and artefacts which they have seen in museums, and in Y6 there are good examples of pencil sketches of a Welsh miner and his pit pony and of castle designs.
- Pupils show skill in producing well crafted miniature busts in clay; these demonstrate good control of shaping tools and an accurate sense of scale.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Music

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils know a wide repertoire of songs and hymns, including Welsh hymns, which they sing confidently and with obvious enjoyment. They have opportunities to listen to and appreciate a range of music during singing practice and can identify the range of dynamics and tempo within it. They are becoming aware of the mood evoked by the music and respond accordingly.
- The quality of singing throughout the school is good; good attention is paid to breathing and phrasing so that performances are polished. A performance in two-part harmony of 'I love you, Lord Jesus' demonstrated good levels of tone, pitch, rhythm and texture.
- Pupils in Y3 and Y4 have good knowledge of the pentatonic scale and can define an ostinato. Some pupils successfully accompany the class on chime bars and glockenspiels, beating time accurately and keeping to the G note to produce a drone effect.

- A number of pupils receive instruction on brass and stringed instruments from peripatetic teachers. They make good progress in learning the correct techniques and playing to music notation.
- When performing, pupils co-operate well and show good awareness and understanding of the needs of other performers. They evaluate their own and others' accomplishments in a sensible and supportive manner and appreciate the efforts of their peers.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Physical education

Standards of achievement are good. Judgement was based on two observed lessons and evidence presented on video tape.

Good features

- Pupils dress appropriately for lessons and understand the importance of warm-up activities at the beginning of a session and of relaxing at the end.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of exercise in keeping healthy.
- They have a good awareness of space and take care to make best use of it. They undertake a variety of travelling activities both individually and in combination. They run, turn, hop and stop competently and they make good progress in ball handling skills.
- Pupils show good control over their bodies. They make a range of body shapes and postures, including symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes, using various parts of the body appropriately.
- Pupils perform confidently on a range of apparatus. They evaluate one another's efforts and apply themselves to refining their own performances.
- They put away the apparatus quickly, quietly and safely.
- Both sexes have opportunities to take part in various team games and the school engages in a number of sporting activities at local, area and county levels. All pupils are provided with swimming lessons during the course of the year.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Religious education

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils have a sound knowledge of the main Christian festivals and are familiar with a number of stories from the Old and New Testament.
- Pupils' skills in using appropriate religious language develops well. They examine feelings that arise from stories and personal experiences and discuss their relevance at different levels.
- Pupils know that there are several different religions in this country and that believers have different ways of worshipping and expressing their faith. They also understand that some features are common to them all.
- Younger pupils have an increasing knowledge about chapel artefacts and church furniture. They can name many of them, explain their function and denote any symbolic meaning they may have.
- Pupils understand the importance to all religions of their peculiar sacred scriptures. They can distinguish between the holy books used by Christians, Jews and Muslims.
- Older pupils know about the significance to Jews of their main festivals and can explain how most of them originated and why.
- Pupils understand increasingly that an individual's faith can shape his/her behaviour and life style.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The key issues identified in the previous inspection which was held in the Spring term of 1998 were as follows:

There was a need to:

- improve standards of achievement in information technology and to address shortcomings in other subjects;
- ensure that curriculum leaders were more actively involved in monitoring and evaluating standards;

- produce and implement an assessment and recording policy;
- give more independence to pupils in extending their learning skills;
- develop a sex education policy to meet statutory requirements;
- ensure attendance registers fully complied with relevant Welsh Office circulars.

The school has responded positively and for the most part effectively to all the key issues identified in the 1998 report. Standards of achievement in information technology are no longer unsatisfactory and standards in five of the foundation subjects are now good rather than satisfactory. The school has put together a detailed assessment policy and the quality of assessment, judged to be unsatisfactory in 1998, is now good. Pupils have more opportunities to work independently to develop their learning skills. The school has produced an appropriate sex education policy and attendance registers are now effectively monitored. Curriculum leaders are more actively involved in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, however, this needs to be further developed.

8.2 Key issues for action

There is a need:

- to raise pupils' standards of achievement in the subjects or aspects of subjects where shortcomings have been identified;
- to improve the quality of whole-school planning for the development of key skills; *
- in a few classes, to strengthen aspects of class management and quicken the pace of some lessons;
- to develop further the monitoring and evaluation systems that have already brought about improvements in standards of teaching and learning. *

* These appear in one form or another in the current SDP.

APPENDIX

A. Basic information about the school

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Name of School | Dinas Junior School |
| School type | LEA maintained/Community |
| Age -range of pupils | 7-11 |
| Address of school | Bishop Street Penygraig Tonypandy |
| Post-Code | CF40 1PQ |
| Telephone Number | 01443 433209 |

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Headteacher | Mr I Wilcox |
| Date of appointment | July 1997 |
| Chair of Governors | Mrs K Davies |
| Registered Inspector | Mr E Lloyd Williams |
| Dates of inspection | 13 th -15 th January 2003 |

B. School data and indicators

| <i>Number of pupils in each year group</i> | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Year group | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 | Y6 | Total |
| Number of pupils | 38 | 37 | 37 | 23 | 135 |

| <i>Total number of teachers</i> | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
| | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time equivalent (fte) |
| Number of teachers | 6 | 0 | 6 |

| <i>Staffing information</i> | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes) | 23:1 |
| Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes | 27 |
| Teacher (fte) : class ratio | 1.2:1 |

| <i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i> | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------|
| | KS2 | Whole School |
| Term 1 | 91% | 91% |
| Term 2 | 89% | 89% |
| Term 3 | 92% | 92% |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals | 33% |
| Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection | 0 |

C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2002

| National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2002 | | | | | | | | Number of pupils in Y6: 42 | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|---|---|---|-----|---|----------------------------|---|----|----|----|---|
| Percentage of pupils at each level | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | D | A | N | N | W | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| English | Teacher assessment | School | 0 | 0 | 0 | n/a | 0 | 0 | 9 | 14 | 41 | 36 | 0 |
| | | National | 0 | 0 | 1 | n/a | 1 | 1 | 6 | 19 | 48 | 25 | 0 |
| | Test/Task | School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | n | n | 9 | 12 | 48 | 31 | n |
| | | National | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | n | n | 5 | 14 | 47 | 30 | n |
| Mathematics | Teacher assessment | School | 0 | 0 | 0 | n/a | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 40 | 40 | 0 |
| | | National | 0 | 0 | 1 | n/a | 0 | 1 | 4 | 20 | 47 | 28 | 0 |
| | Test/Task | School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | n | n | 2 | 17 | 38 | 43 | n |
| | | National | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | n | n | 4 | 18 | 42 | 32 | n |
| Science | Teacher assessment | School | 0 | 0 | 0 | n/a | 0 | 0 | 2 | 16 | 41 | 41 | 0 |
| | | National | 1 | 0 | 1 | n/a | 0 | 0 | 3 | 15 | 52 | 29 | 0 |
| | Test/Task | School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | n | n | 0 | 12 | 55 | 33 | n |
| | | National | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | n | n | 2 | 13 | 51 | 31 | N |

| 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: | 76% | In the school: | 74% |
| In Wales: | 68% | In Wales: | 68% |

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under sections 364 and 365 of the Education Act 1996,
A Pupils who have failed to register a level due to absence
N Pupils who have failed to record a level for reasons other than absence.
B Pupils not entered for the tests because they are working outside the set levels of the test.
W Pupils who are working towards level 1 but who have not yet achieved the standards necessary for level 1.
n Tests do not cover these levels.
n/a Not applicable

D. Evidence base of the inspection

- Three inspectors, including the lay inspector, visited the school for a total of seven inspector days.
- Forty two lessons or parts of lessons were observed.
- A number of pupils, representing different ages and abilities, were heard reading. Many pupils were spoken to and asked about their attitudes to their work.
- Samples of pupils' written work and practical work in all of the subjects were examined.
- The inspectors held discussions with the head and teachers on a wide range of issues regarding the school's work. Consideration was given to the school's planning documents and various files and records.
- Six parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and 47 questionnaires were completed.
- The inspectors held a meeting with the governing body before and after the inspection.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

| Inspector | Type | Aspect Responsibilities | Subject Responsibilities |
|---------------------|------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mr E Lloyd Williams | RgI | 1; 2; 3.1; 4.3; 5.1; 5.3; 6.2; 8.1; 8.2. | Mathematics; science; design and technology; information technology; physical education; religious education. |
| Mrs A Newman | Team | 3.2; 4.1; 5.2; 5.4; 5.5; 6.1; 6.3. | Welsh second language; English; history; geography; music; art. |
| Mrs R Boardman | Lay | 4.2; 5.6; 5.7. | |

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

