

REPORT
on the
INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF
THE SCHOOL INSPECTION ACT 1996

GAER INFANT SCHOOL
MELFORT ROAD
NEWPORT
NP20 3FP

School Number: 680/2014

Date of Inspection: 14 – 17 October 2002

By

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Under Estyn contract number: T/55/02P

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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.

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Gaer Infant School caters for pupils between three and seven years of age, and is situated in the town of Newport. There are 235 pupils on roll, including 82 part-time pupils in the nursery class. These children attend for either morning or afternoon sessions, although a very small number of children attend full-time. Most pupils come from the immediate vicinity of the school, which is an area described by the school as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.

Pupils are organised into eight mixed-ability classes, including the nursery class. There are seven pupils on stages 1 – 4 of the Code of Practice for special educational needs (SEN), and three pupils have a statement for SEN. Very few pupils have other than white ethnic backgrounds, and the predominant language spoken at home for these pupils is Punjabi and Japanese. There are a very small number of pupils ‘looked after’ by the local authority. One pupil receives support teaching in English as an additional language, and no pupil speaks Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard. Twenty per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals.

The school was last inspected in November 1997. There have been no changes to the school type or age range over the past five years, however, there has been a high turnover of teaching staff, and particularly over the last two years.

The school’s priorities, as identified in the school development plan (SDP), include:

- developing the work of the Early Years;
- extending the work of subject co-ordinators;
- focusing on the management structure of staff development;
- introducing performance management procedures.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Gaer Infant School is a good school, with many good and very good features and, as a result, pupils achieve very well.

- Children enter the nursery unit at the age of three with broadly average levels of achievement overall. However, a significant number of children demonstrate literacy and communication and personal and social skills that are below average. The educational provision for children under five is very good in the nursery (three- and four-year-olds)

and reception classes (four- and five-year-olds), and successfully promotes the desirable outcomes for children's learning.

- Standards of achievement for the Early Years are very good overall and standards are as follows:

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

- Standards achieved by pupils in Key Stage 1 (KS1) were very good in 22 per cent, good in 61 per cent and satisfactory in 17 per cent of lessons observed.
- In KS1, pupils' standards of achievement are good overall. Standards in National Curriculum (NC) subjects and religious education are as follows:

| | KS1 |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| English | Very good |
| Mathematics | Good |
| Science | Very good |
| Welsh as a second language | Satisfactory |
| Design and technology | Very good |
| Information technology | Very good |
| History | Very good |
| Geography | Very good |
| Art | Good |
| Music | Very good |
| Religious education | Very good |
| Physical education | Satisfactory |

- The standards achieved in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are very good. The use of numeracy skills and of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum are also very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and reflects the positive and caring ethos of the school. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is well promoted throughout the school. Pupils' response to this provision is very good. The school's good ethos is based on respect.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are very good. The headteacher, teaching and support staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond positively to their calm and consistent approach.
- Attendance rates are satisfactory and instances of unauthorised absence are minimal. The school places a high priority on attendance and punctuality and has been successful in

reducing rates of unauthorised absence over the past few years. The governing body is rightly concerned about the number of parents who take their children on holiday during term time. This has an adverse impact on the continuity of pupils' education and on overall rates of attendance for the school.

- The quality of teaching is good overall. The quality of teaching was very good in 25 per cent, good in 56 per cent and satisfactory in 19 per cent of lessons seen. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed. Newly qualified staff are generally well supported by effective mentoring arrangements. However, the planning, preparation, evaluation and assessment procedures are particularly demanding at this early stage of their careers. Classroom assistants and nursery nurses are fully involved in planning, preparing and supporting lessons and make a very valuable contribution to teaching and pupils' learning. The quality of teaching is not always effective when learning is interrupted because of other planned activities; for example, when pupils move to other parts of the school for reading, phonic, number and flashcard activities.
- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is very good and supports pupils' standards of achievement. The marking of pupils' work is often very good and promotes high standards by being positive and encouraging.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which is very well planned and contributes to the achievement of very good standards. In the Early Years, the quality, breadth and balance of the curriculum are very good, providing pupils with rich experiences and a secure foundation to their schooling. In KS1, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements and includes religious education. However, the rigidity of timetabling sometimes hinders learning.
- The quality of support and guidance and the attention paid to pupils' welfare throughout the school are very good. The school promotes positive attitudes and values, which encourage good learning standards in a highly caring environment.
- The quality of provision and support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good. To ensure timely and appropriate support, identification of pupils with SEN is made as early as possible.
- The school places particular importance on its partnership with parents, the local community, schools and institutions and enjoys very good partnerships in all these areas. A successful partnership with parents is developed at an early stage. The school's partnership with industry is very good and well established throughout the school, and the valuable links with industry, business and commerce enrich work in many curriculum areas.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement are very good and are a strength of the school. The headteacher, staff and governors have identified whole school priorities and targets in the school development plan (SDP). The school regularly monitors its progress towards achieving its targets.
- The quality of the leadership and management of the school is good overall. The headteacher has very strong commitment and effectively promotes high expectations and sense of purpose of the school. However, the headteacher needs to ensure that the

administrative workload for all staff is achievable in order not to hinder the establishment of a happy and supportive environment. The governing body is supportive of the school and is providing good expertise and guidance. However, some governors are insufficiently aware of the unrealistic expectations placed upon teaching and support staff. Communication needs to be more effective in order to recognise the concerns and pressures upon staff.

- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are very good. The school has worked very hard to provide an attractive and stimulating outside area. It has detailed plans to further enhance this provision to extend pupils' learning.
- The school has made very good progress in addressing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report.
- National Assembly for Wales guidelines are taken into account and all statutory requirements are met.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Pupils' standards of achievement are very good in the Early Years and KS1.

- Children enter the nursery class on a part-time basis for either morning or afternoon sessions. A very small number of children attend the nursery full time. Children start in the nursery showing a wide range of achievement, with broadly average levels of achievement overall. However, a significant number of children demonstrate literacy and communication skills and personal and social skills that are below average.
- By the time children leave the reception classes they have broadened and consolidated their early learning, and standards of achievement are very good in language, literacy and communication, personal and social development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and good in physical and creative development. The educational provision for children under five is very good in the nursery class (three- and four-year-olds) and reception classes (four- and five-year-olds), and successfully promotes the desirable outcomes for children's learning. Children in the Early Years are making very good progress.
- Standards achieved in KS1 are very good in English, science, information technology, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education. Standards achieved in KS1 are good in mathematics and art. Standards in KS1 in physical education and Welsh as a second language are satisfactory. Overall, standards achieved by pupils were very good in 22 per cent, good in 61 per cent and satisfactory in 17 per cent in lessons observed.
- Standards of achievement in English in KS1 are very good. Pupils listen attentively and many readily speak in a range of contexts, both in small groups and in whole-class situations. The school gives reading a high priority and most pupils achieve a very good

standard by the end of Y2. Pupils' research skills are developing very well. Pupils' written work is valued and attractively displayed in classrooms and around the school and this enhances pupils' understanding of writing for a purpose and for a wider audience.

- Standards of achievement in mathematics in KS1 are good. Year 2 pupils use their knowledge of number bonds and doubles as strategies to help calculate sums mentally. Developing mental strategies is a good feature. They use the correct mathematical terminology when estimating and measuring with standard and non-standard units of length, weight and capacity.
- Standards of achievement in science in KS1 are very good. Pupils are developing good observational skills when looking for differences and similarities in materials and food. They make sensible predictions before testing their properties and record their findings carefully. They are beginning to understand the need for fair testing and their ability to plan and carry out systematic enquiries is developing well.
- Standards of achievement in Welsh as a second language in KS1 are satisfactory. Pupils have a positive attitude to learning the language in all classes. However, the use of incidental Welsh is inconsistent across the school, and there is a lack of progression in pupils' learning.
- Standards of achievement in information technology in KS1 are very good. Year 1 pupils enter text and other data into the computer and, with help, often save and print their work. Year 2 pupils use a word-processing package with increasing confidence to compose a story. They use a computer program effectively to present data as a pictogram and a table.
- Standards of achievement in physical education are satisfactory. There are some weaknesses in pupils' ability to pass and receive a ball, and pupils' evaluation skills are weak.
- The quality of provision and support for pupils with SEN are very good and they make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Identification of pupils with SEN is made as early as possible. Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) have clear, realistic targets and are well matched to pupils' needs.
- There was no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys or those from different ethnic backgrounds observed during the inspection. All pupils have equal access to the full curriculum.
- National comparative data for National Curriculum (NC) assessments at the end of KS1 are not yet available for 2002. However, the school's teachers' assessments in 2002 for pupils at the end of KS1 are above the national average when compared to national comparative data in 2001 in reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics and science. The trend in pupils' results over the past few years is one of improvement.
- When comparing the school's NC teacher assessment results for 2002 to NC average results for Wales in 2001, there is a higher than average proportion of pupils at the school achieving the higher level 3 in reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics and science.

3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum

Standards achieved in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are very good. The use of numeracy skills and of ICT skills across the curriculum is also very good.

- Most pupils concentrate and listen very well in lessons and during daily acts of collective worship. They carry out instructions accurately and listen intently to stories.
- They express their thoughts clearly and confidently when evaluating their own or other pupils' finished performance or product. They respond well to questioning by teachers or by visitors.
- Pupils value reading as a source of information and pleasure. Their reading skills are used effectively across the curriculum especially to access information and to follow instructions. They appreciate that reading serves many purposes.
- Writing skills are very well applied across the curriculum and are generally of a high standard. They write for different purposes and for different audiences and the work is always well presented.
- Very good use is made of mathematical skills and knowledge to support learning in other subjects. In science, design and technology and geography, pupils employ standard measures and illustrate their work with graphs and tables.
- Pupils regularly use their ICT skills to reinforce their numeracy and literacy work, especially their word processing skills. They use the equipment and software confidently; for example, to create patterns and drawings using an art program.
- There are no observable differences in the performance of boys and girls, other ethnic groups, or those for whom English is an additional language in acquiring and using these skills in other subjects.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and reflects the positive and caring ethos of the school. Pupils' response to this provision is very good.

- The daily acts of collective worship are of a very good standard and make a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The high level of attentiveness and the quality of their singing contribute significantly to the spiritual aspect of their development. The school fosters in pupils a sense of wonder at their world and their existence through lessons about humanity and the environment in different subject areas.

- The relationship between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves, is friendly and positive. The school's positive ethos is based on respect. They appreciate the need for rules and the importance of keeping to them. Pupils are encouraged to become involved in charitable work and, in addition to raising funds for charities, they learn about the needs of people less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils are very polite and they move about the building in a very orderly and well-disciplined manner. Educational visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities make a very good contribution to pupils' social development.
- Celebrating pupils' good work and achievements is a regular feature and pupils respond enthusiastically.
- Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good and there are regular opportunities to study the values and traditions of other cultures and religions through geography, religious education, art and music. The use of visits, visitors and appropriate artefacts impacts positively on pupils' understanding and knowledge.
- The school promotes Welsh culture and traditions very well through studies in history, geography, art and music and through their celebration of St David's Day. These are celebrated by all pupils, including those from different ethnic heritages.

4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are very good.

- The headteacher, teaching and support staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond positively to their calm and consistent approach.
- From their earliest days in the nursery, children quickly learn what is expected of them with regard to behaviour. Nursery staff are skilled at promoting understanding and acceptance of school rules and routines. Learning takes place in a happy and supportive environment.
- The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is very good and this contributes significantly to pupils' self esteem, confidence and positive behaviour. Pupils' relationships with teachers and support staff are mutually respectful and friendly. Pupils are courteous, polite and relate well to each other, to staff and to visitors. Pupils respect the cultural diversity of others.
- Pupils' very good behaviour is evident not only in lessons, but also in school assemblies, in the playground and at meal times. Lunch time is a pleasant, social occasion where pupils display good manners and enjoy good relationships with lunchtime supervisors. The very good play facilities that are available to all pupils during the lunch hour and the very good support offered by lunchtime supervisors make a major contribution to the very good order that exists during the lunch breaks.

- The school has an effective policy and set of procedures to promote good behaviour, which are implemented fairly and consistently by staff. The school's 'golden rules' are simple, relevant and clearly understood by pupils.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work and play. They listen carefully to their teachers, co-operate willingly with adults and their fellow pupils, settle quickly to tasks and sustain concentration. They are interested in their work, are keen to do their best and take pride in their achievements which they readily share with others.
- Good behaviour and effort are celebrated in the classroom and in school assemblies. Initiatives such as 'Star of the Week' and 'Friend of the Week' are greatly enjoyed by pupils.
- Teaching and support staff actively promote the values of kindness, tolerance and fairness. The headteacher and staff take the issues of bullying, racism and sexism seriously and effective procedures are in place should any incident be brought to their attention. No such instances were observed during the inspection.
- The consistently high standards of pupils' behaviour and their very good attitudes to learning contribute to the efficient functioning of the school, to pupils' personal development and to the high standards they achieve.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance rates are satisfactory and instances of unauthorised absence are minimal.

- The school places a high priority on attendance and punctuality and has been successful in reducing rates of unauthorised absence over the past few years. Many pupils have very good records of attendance.
- Pupils are punctual and keen to attend school. Registration sessions and lessons start promptly.
- The headteacher monitors attendance and punctuality rigorously. Effective procedures are in place to encourage good attendance and punctuality, to ensure pupils' absence is adequately explained and to follow up situations where necessary.
- The governing body is rightly concerned about the number of parents who take their children on holiday during term time. This has an adverse impact on the continuity of pupils' education and on overall rates of attendance for the school.
- Regular and effective liaison takes place with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- Registration is conducted efficiently and in accordance with statutory requirements.
- The school has set a whole school target of 93 per cent attendance rate and is aiming to eliminate all unauthorised absence. Parents are reminded frequently of the need for regular and punctual attendance of their children.

- The school complies fully with the requirements of the National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99, ‘Pupil Support and Social Inclusion’.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching is good overall.

- The quality of teaching was very good in 25 per cent, good in 56 per cent and satisfactory in 19 per cent of lessons seen. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed.
- The quality of teaching is good overall in the Early Years where all staff work effectively together as a team; they are self critical and regularly evaluate the success and quality of their work. This has a good impact upon learning and standards achieved. The quality of teaching is consistently very good in the Nursery.
- Overall, teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects and areas of learning they teach. Particular expertise is readily shared and subject knowledge is updated through appropriate training.
- Newly qualified staff are generally well supported by effective mentoring arrangements. However, the planning, preparation, evaluation and assessment procedures are particularly demanding at this early stage of their careers.
- Classroom assistants and nursery nurses are fully involved in planning, preparing and supporting lessons and make a very valuable contribution to teaching and pupils’ learning.
- Lesson planning is very good. The objectives for learning are closely linked to the schemes of work and what pupils need to learn next.
- A strong feature of lesson organisation, particularly in English and mathematics, is the planning of appropriate work for groups of pupils of different abilities. Pupils with SEN and more able pupils are well catered for.
- In most lessons, the tasks fully extend the learning of the most able by providing an appropriate extension activity.
- All staff have very high expectations of pupils’ behaviour and achievement. They use a good range of teaching strategies. Whole class teaching is generally effective with clear expectations, good use of questions and frequent references to previous learning.
- Teaching is often very effective because of ability grouping arrangements for English and mathematics. Work is very well matched to the prior attainment of pupils and detailed lesson planning ensures that learning is effective and provides appropriate support for gifted and talented pupils.

- In the nursery and reception classes, careful day to day assessments are carried out, and these ensure that children make good progress in the six areas of learning. Good and often very good intervention, especially in the nursery, moves children's learning forward at an appropriate pace.
- Where teaching is satisfactory, lesson introductions are sometimes too long and unclear, with a resultant slowing of pace. The quality of teaching is not always effective when learning is interrupted, because of other planned activities; for example, when pupils move to other parts of the school for timetabled reading, phonic, number and flashcard activities.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is very good and effectively supports pupils' standards of achievement.

- The school has a comprehensive whole-school policy on the organisation and use of assessment to improve the quality of teaching and learning. It is implemented accurately and consistently throughout the school. The quality of teacher assessment is very good for all pupils, including those with SEN, gifted and talented pupils and those from different ethnic backgrounds and pupils are provided with tasks and targets appropriate to their ability.
- Results of assessment tasks are carefully recorded and analysed for weaknesses and trends. This is reflected in the planning and implementation of the curriculum to raise standards of pupils' work.
- There are effective assessment arrangements for children starting school. These provide an appropriate system for assessing the achievements of children and provide useful information for future planning.
- The marking of pupils' work is often very good and promotes high standards by being positive and encouraging. Feedback to pupils is effective and supportive, indicating what is needed to improve.
- Individual pupil's progress is regularly tracked and monitored against targets previously set by the school and the LEA.
- Portfolios of annotated and sometimes levelled examples of pupils' work have been created to develop teachers' assessment skills. There were no differences identified in the performance of girls and boys or those pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- Annual reports to parents are very good. They contain well-considered comments and assessments and identify targets for future learning. Parents are invited to discuss the content of the reports and to reinforce the targets set.

5.3 Curriculum

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which is very well planned and contributes to the achievement of good and very good standards.

- In the Early Years, the quality, breadth and balance of the curriculum are very good, providing pupils with rich experiences and a secure foundation to their schooling.
- In KS1, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements and includes religious education, which meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. In all subjects there are thorough policies and very well planned schemes of work that reflect the needs of the school.
- There are very effective procedures in place to ensure that all curriculum policies and schemes of work are regularly evaluated, reviewed and updated. This is a positive feature of the school.
- The curriculum fully reflects the aims of the school. There is a good balance of time given to all subjects and the planning of cross-curricular themes across the school is a well-developed feature. However, the rigidity of timetabling sometimes hinders learning.
- Long, medium and short term planning across the school is very good. Objectives for learning are clearly identified. Teachers identify opportunities to develop key skills in their lesson planning.
- There is appropriate use of Welsh in displays, both in classrooms and around the school. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig features strongly in history, geography, music and art.
- There is an appropriate homework policy, which is consistently applied across the school and contributes positively to pupils' achievement.
- The arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education are very good and are very effective.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Well planned educational visits, together with visitors to the school, contribute to the curriculum and enhance pupils' experiences.
- The school's provision is socially inclusive. There is equality of opportunity for all pupils. There is effective inclusion of all pupils, including those with SEN, very able pupils, those from different ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language.

5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

The quality of support and guidance and the attention paid to pupils' welfare throughout the school are very good.

- The school promotes positive attitudes and values, which encourage good learning standards in a highly caring environment.
- Pupils are well supervised at all times, with teachers and support staff taking all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.
- Security arrangements are effective and sensitive and do not preclude parents from accompanying children to classrooms and cloakrooms at the start of the school day.
- All support staff, including supervisors and volunteers, provide very good care and support for pupils and add to the overall sense of community. Arrangements for dealing with accidents and emergencies are well established and effective.
- There are clear policies and guidelines in relation to child protection, health education and health and safety issues, which are sensitive to pupil's needs, and they are fully implemented. The school's policy for equal opportunities is implemented effectively and the high priority given to the social inclusion of all pupils is exemplary.
- Relationships in the school are very good and pupils are extremely happy and confident. Teachers and adults know their pupils very well, both academically and socially, and they keep detailed records of their progress in both these aspects.

5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

The quality of provision and support for pupils with SEN is very good. The new SEN Code of Practice has been introduced and is followed correctly. Pupils with SEN achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make good progress.

- To ensure timely and appropriate support, identification of pupils with SEN is made as early as possible. Procedures for identifying and monitoring pupils with SEN are meticulous and are adhered to closely.
- Pupils are very well supported by classroom assistants and an NNEB-qualified assistant who also supports a statemented child effectively both in-class and individually.
- Regular interaction through discussions between classroom teachers, support staff and the SEN Co-ordinator ensures that pupils are closely monitored and make good progress.
- Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) have clear, realistic targets and are well matched to pupils' needs. These IEPs are regularly reviewed and amended appropriately.
- Appropriate tasks are set in the classroom and are matched well to pupils' abilities.
- There is substantial evidence of a continuing dialogue between school, parents, LEA and relevant professional agencies.

5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions

The school places particular importance on its partnership with parents, the local community, schools and other institutions and enjoys very good partnerships in all these areas.

- Many parents are very supportive of the school and value the ready access they have to the headteacher and staff through the school's 'open door' policy. A useful home/school agreement has been drawn up which has readily been accepted by parents.
- A successful partnership with parents is developed at an early stage. Nursery staff work diligently to provide parents with information and opportunities to become involved in their children's education.
- The quality of information provided for parents, especially with regard to the curriculum, is very good. Parents are kept well informed by a comprehensive prospectus, an informative annual report of the governing body and by weekly newsletters. Parents have the opportunity each term to meet formally with teachers to discuss their children's work and progress, and these meetings are well attended.
- A number of parents and friends give freely of their time helping out in the classroom and accompanying children on educational visits. Their support is greatly valued by staff and they make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Parental involvement in the family literacy project has been very successful and benefited both pupils and parents.
- The school's active Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA) makes an outstanding contribution to the life and work of the school. Parents organise many social and fund raising events which enhance links with the local community and provide the school with a valuable source of additional income. Funds raised are used purposefully to enhance learning resources and to improve the school environment for all pupils.
- The school enjoys close pastoral and administrative links with the junior school to which pupils transfer. Regular liaison meetings, an exchange of information and ideas and teacher exchanges help to promote continuity of education between KS1 and KS2. Curriculum links are developing well, especially in English, mathematics and science and the introduction of 'bridging units' that span Y2 and Y3 has been very successful.
- Positive partnerships have been established with several institutes of further and higher education, and the school provides good training facilities for student teachers and students undertaking nursery nurse and general nursing qualifications. Staff also welcome students from local secondary schools who regularly undertake work experience placements at the school.
- The school's partnership with the community is very successful and is a strength of the school. Close links with churches, chapels, charities, institutions and businesses are particularly beneficial and give pupils a good insight into the life and work of their own community. The school supports a number of community initiatives, and the headteacher is an active member of the Gaer Community Network which seeks to involve all local participants in the development of a vibrant and thriving community.

- Very good use is made of the local community as a learning resource. Educational visits and the expertise of members of the local community enhance pupils' learning in many curriculum areas.
- Overall, the very productive links that the school enjoys with parents and community, schools and other institutions have a positive impact on pupils' motivation, standards of achievement and personal development.

5.7 Partnership with industry

The school's partnership with industry is very good.

- Partnership with industry is well established throughout the school and the valuable links with industry, business and commerce enrich work in many curriculum areas.
- The school has a very effective policy for industry links and clear procedures are in place to raise the economic and industrial understanding of pupils and to give them insight into the world of work. Industry links are effectively planned into pupils' learning and are an integral part of the curriculum. Pupils benefit from many rich and stimulating experiences.
- Through their visits to a number of industrial, retail and commercial sites within their locality and further afield, including supermarkets, local shops, a garden centre, woodlands and parks, pupils are gaining first-hand knowledge of different working environments and an understanding of the variety of work undertaken in the area.
- Staff actively encourage personnel from a wide variety of professions and occupations to speak to pupils about their work. The contribution of personnel from the emergency services and transport, together with health professionals, has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Younger pupils, especially, speak with enthusiasm about visitors who contributed to their 'people who help us' topic.
- Pupils have been involved in a number of re-cycling schemes and are keenly aware of environmental issues that impact upon their school and local community. They have undertaken traffic surveys and are knowledgeable about litter pollution. Pupils have been involved in the design and development of the school's conservation area, and the school is part of the eco-schools project. The school has won recognition for its commitment to the local environment through its many successes in the Newport in Bloom initiative and parents, pupils, staff and governors are justly proud of their involvement in the project.
- The school enjoys a very good working partnership with the Environmental Department of Newport County Borough Council. Parents, staff and pupils work closely with personnel from the department to improve and enhance the school grounds and immediate environment. This partnership has been an outstanding success and pupils benefit greatly from the improved facilities.
- A productive partnership has been established with the local college and pupils attend 'taster days' where they have the opportunity to experience carpentry, brickwork, plastering and painting.

- Few teachers, other than the headteacher, have undertaken relevant industrial placements, but the school is actively considering placements which will enhance staff development and enrich curriculum provision for pupils.
- The headteacher and staff are committed to the continuing development of a dynamic partnership with industry. The links already established, many of which are outstanding, contribute significantly to pupils' motivation, learning and standards of achievement.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement are very good and are a strength of the school.

- A self-critical culture has been established among staff and governors who have shared values about learning, behaviour and equal opportunities. Staff, governors and parents contribute to the process of self-evaluation. They are aware of its findings and are fully committed to taking action for the improvement of the overall performance and success of the school.
- Teachers are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and are keen to improve their skills and methods of working for the benefit of pupils. They regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their own lessons and plan the way forward. They work hard and are committed to improving teaching and learning.
- Co-ordinators scrutinise pupils' books and teachers' planning documents and gather exemplars of best practice in subject portfolios.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have identified whole school priorities and targets in the SDP. These are supported by well-resourced strategies within a realistic time scale and the use of specific criteria. The school regularly monitors its progress towards achieving its targets.
- Analysis of the self-evaluation process has a direct impact on procedures for raising the standards of school life.
- The headteacher's leadership and clear vision ensure a strong drive to improve standards.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The quality of the leadership and management of the school is good overall.

- There are clearly stated aims, values and policies, which are reflected appropriately in the life and work of the school. The way in which these aims are incorporated into all aspects of the school is very good.

- The headteacher has successfully identified the key areas for development and is making a very good contribution to the very good standards that the school achieves. The headteacher's skills are well complemented by those of the deputy headteacher and, together with a newly appointed assistant headteacher, they form an effective senior management team.
- The headteacher has very strong commitment and effectively promotes high expectations and sense of purpose of the school. However, the headteacher needs to ensure that the administrative workload for staff is purposeful and contributes to effective teaching and learning, and does not hinder the establishment of a happy and supportive environment.
- The quality of long- and medium-term planning is very good. The quality of teaching and learning has improved through thorough evaluation of standards and regular monitoring.
- The governing body is supportive of the school and is providing good expertise and guidance. There are regular meetings, and an appropriate range of committees reports effectively to the full governing body. However, governors are insufficiently aware of the unrealistic expectations placed upon teaching and support staff, such as the rigidity of timetabling and the administrative workload.
- Governors have delegated a range of responsibilities to working parties that effectively support the work of the school. Financial planning is very good, and there are appropriate links with the priorities established in the SDP.
- The school budget and resources are very well managed and governors receive appropriate financial information about the budget from the headteacher to enable them to evaluate regularly the effects of spending decisions and to ensure best value for money.
- Co-ordination of each subject of the curriculum is good. Despite considerable movement in staffing during the last two years, a committed and successful team of teachers work very successfully for the benefit of all pupils. Curriculum co-ordinators provide good support for their colleagues and share a commitment to raising standards. However, newly qualified staff already have responsibility for a number of subject areas, and although they receive some support from the senior management team, this is often an unrealistic burden for them.
- The deployment of teaching and support staff is very good. The teaching staff are very well supported by the efficient and effective use of support staff, who have a positive effect on the life of the school and standards achieved by pupils.
- Day-to-day administration is very good; it is well managed by the headteacher and office manager, and effectively supports the endeavours of teachers.
- There are very well-established procedures and clear responsibilities. However, communication needs to be more effective in order to recognise the concerns and pressures upon staff.
- National Assembly for Wales guidelines are taken into account and all statutory requirements are met.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are very good.

- The school is well staffed and all are appropriately qualified to teach the National Curriculum and religious education.
- Classroom support staff are effectively deployed and provide very good levels of support.
- Lunchtime supervisors make a very good contribution to the quality of pupils' lunchtime activities.
- Very good arrangements are in place to enable staff to discuss their performance and identify professional development needs during an annual programme of interviews. Teaching and all support staff are included in the professional development programme.
- Staff attend courses when relevant and effective arrangements are made for the dissemination of information to colleagues.
- The school is cleaned to a high standard and the grounds are clear of litter. The buildings are in a good state of repair and provide a secure environment for pupils.
- There is a well-stocked school library that is also used for the interactive whiteboard and includes a small computer suite. The library contains a range of books from different cultural backgrounds.
- The two reception classes are small for the number of pupils and activities available. Staff work hard to ensure that all space is used well. However, access to the outside area for one of the reception classes is hindered, because children have to pass through the other reception class.
- The learning environment is enhanced and supported by well-planned, rich and colourful displays. The school has worked very hard to enhance the quality of the outside learning environment. There are well advanced plans to further develop the school grounds to extend pupils' learning.
- The playground and outside areas are enhanced with pots planted and maintained by pupils. Nursery and reception children have regular access to an attractive secure area in which they use a good range of equipment and apparatus.
- The quantity and quality of learning resources are very good and meet the needs of curriculum areas. They are easily accessible, with a good balance between centrally held resources and those available in classrooms.
- Computers are used very well and effectively support learning in all curriculum areas. Staff are beginning to make good use of the interactive whiteboard to support pupils' learning.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

Children enter the nursery class on a part-time basis for either morning or afternoon sessions. A very small number of children attend the nursery full time. Children start in the nursery showing a wide range of achievement, with broadly average levels of achievement overall. However, a significant number of children demonstrate literacy and communication skills and personal and social skills that are below average. By the time children leave the reception classes they have broadened and consolidated their early learning, and standards of achievement are very good in language, literacy and communication, personal and social development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and good in physical and creative development. The educational provision for children under five is very good in the nursery class (three- and four-year-olds) and reception classes (four- and five-year-olds), and successfully promotes the desirable outcomes for children's learning. Children in the Early Years are making very good progress.

Good features

- Personal and social development is very good. Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve above what is expected for their age, and they make good progress through varied and well-structured opportunities to work, play and co-operate with others. They are responsive, interested in what they are doing, and concentrate and persevere well in their learning. They listen well and are happy to contribute their own ideas during discussions as was seen during food tasting activities in the nursery, when they took turns and shared fairly. Children observed in the nursery 'Hospital' role play area were beginning to show a good understanding of the needs of others and how best to care for them. During group and whole class activities, children sit quietly, most know that it is important to listen and show consideration for the feelings of others. Children in the reception classes successfully build upon these experiences. Children select from a range of activities with confidence and show shared commitment and responsibility; for example, towards tidying up quickly at the end of a session. They are excited and interested in their learning and respond well to the range of experiences given to them; for example, when preparing for their harvest celebrations, looking at and tasting fruit. The caring attitudes of adults and effective teaching make a positive contribution to the development of children's personal and social skills. Children are successfully developing a good awareness of their own needs, views and feelings, and are learning to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Nursery and reception staff are careful to ensure that good opportunities are provided for children to develop independence in their learning and this is successful.
- Although a significant number of children display below expected levels in their speech and language skills when entering the nursery, they make very good progress in language, literacy and communication skills during their time in nursery and reception classes. They listen well to their teachers, are becoming confident in their use of vocabulary and range of expression, and most achieve what is expected for their age. Nursery and

reception children are beginning to share books with adults, and some children talk confidently about the stories and pictures, as was seen when sharing books together. There is good provision for role-play, particularly in the nursery, and children participate well. During the inspection, the 'The Kitchen' and 'The Hospital' in the nursery provided good opportunities for children to communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas to adults and to each other.

- Mathematical development is very good. Children make good progress in colour, shape and number recognition. Nursery and reception children know a good range of number and singing games, and appropriate computer programs successfully reinforce activities and their learning. Numeracy skills are developing well. Children are beginning to create and identify patterns, and most compare, sort and count objects to five and beyond; for example, they know that one less than 10 is nine. Nursery children successfully count the number of objects that they see in a group; for example, when counting the number of items of fruit in a bowl. Children in the reception classes count up to 10 and some to 20. Most children know the answer when adding and taking away one. Children in the nursery and reception classes recognise the spoken names of numbers and the written figures, and associate one with the other. Children in the nursery recognise the shapes circle, square and triangle and talk about similar shapes that they see around them. Some reception children talk confidently about three-dimensional shapes such as cube, pyramid and cone.
- Children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and are developing a good understanding of the world around them. Some children talk about where they live, their families and their immediate environment, and some recall their experiences through a range and variety of role-play activities. Well-considered use of the outdoor area, particularly in the nursery class, is successfully supporting children's progress in this area of learning; for example, in growing plants, washing and drying clothes. In one very good lesson, children in the nursery took part in making soup. They knew that names of some of the vegetables and knew that they have to be washed and cut up before cooking. Skilful questioning by the teacher also ensured good opportunities for successful language development. In the nursery and reception classes, children make good use of opportunities for a range of scientific experiences, including experimenting with sand and water. Children use the skills of cutting, joining and building with a wide range of materials. Nursery and reception children use a good collection of construction materials well. Children in the nursery and reception classes use computers and other forms of information technology well. They are beginning to learn about electronic equipment and interact successfully with a computer program using the mouse. Nursery and reception children use information technology effectively to support their literacy and numeracy skills. They regularly use a cassette listening centre and headphones to enjoy a story. Reception children know that electrical devices communicate information. Children in the nursery visited the local church for their harvest service and showed interest in their new surroundings. They welcome visitors into their class and some chat with confidence.
- Children in the nursery and reception classes make very good progress in their physical development. They are developing a good awareness of their bodies and their co-ordination is good. Reception children use space well and show a good awareness of the effect of exercise upon their bodies. Nursery children use their own play area well to extend their physical development. They enjoy physical activities, make good progress

and show confidence in the use of space. They handle tools, objects, construction equipment and materials safely and with increasing control. Nursery children use large wheeled toys and apparatus with confidence.

- Children make very good progress in their creative development. Children in the nursery and reception classes enter an exciting and creatively rich environment in which imagination and expressiveness are valued. Children successfully explore colour, texture, shape and form. They recognise and enjoy singing a variety of rhymes and songs, often taking part with hand actions. Children sing a variety of autumn songs with enthusiasm and enjoyment in preparation for their harvest celebration. Reception children use paint effectively when painting a fruit bowl and handle play dough well when making 'kebabs'.
- Children experience Welsh at an early age and this is a valuable preparation for their future learning. They learn about their locality, customs, names, stories, legends and people from Wales.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

English

Standards of achievement in KS1 are very good.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils listen attentively and many readily speak in a range of contexts, both in small groups and in whole-class situations. Their responses are enthusiastic and appropriate, demonstrating the very good quality of their listening.
- Pupils achieve very good standards in their speaking skills. Most pupils ask and answer questions sensibly and are developing appropriate vocabulary as they contribute to class discussions in different subjects.
- The school gives reading a high priority and most pupils achieve a very good standard by the end of Y2. Pupils enjoy looking at books and make very good progress in the mechanics of reading. They learn new words appropriately and use phonics very well.
- Pupils' research skills are developing very well; for example, when using information books to find more about Egypt in religious education.
- Pupils appreciate the function of different kinds of punctuation and modify their expression accordingly when reading aloud. Pupils sequence stories and most discuss the main elements of a book, demonstrating a good understanding of what they have read.
- Pupils' writing demonstrates a range of forms; for example, from early independent writing about personal experiences in Y1 to letter writing, writing labels and recipes and re-telling stories in Y2. They use their writing skills well in subjects across the

curriculum; for example, when writing a report about ‘The Manna and the Quails’ in religious education.

- Simple words are usually spelt correctly and many pupils choose words for variety and interest. Punctuation to mark sentences is developing well. Older pupils show confidence when using a dictionary.
- Writing is often collated into attractive class books, which are to be found on display so that pupils may re-read their work and recall experiences. Pupils’ written work is valued and attractively displayed in classrooms and around the school and this enhances pupils’ understanding of writing for a purpose and for a wider audience.
- Pupils demonstrate well-formed and well-spaced handwriting. They take pride in their written work and it is consistently well presented.
- By the end of the key stage, most pupils organise their writing effectively to produce stories with a clear beginning, middle and end.
- Information and communication technology skills are used well to enhance pupils’ language development.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement in KS1 are good.

Good features

- Pupils sort, match and sequence numbers correctly and are beginning to recognise patterns, including odds, evens and doubles. They are confident with simple addition and subtraction and are developing good recall of number bonds.
- They count forwards and backwards in twos, fives and 10s, starting at different points.
- Year 2 pupils use their knowledge of number bonds and doubles as strategies to help calculate sums mentally. Developing mental strategies is a good feature.
- Pupils recognise the value of coins and make small purchases and calculate the change needed.
- They identify and name a range of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. They sort them correctly using various criteria.
- They use the correct mathematical terminology when estimating and measuring with standard and non-standard units of length, weight and capacity.

- Pupils give simple rotational directions, recognise lines of symmetry and create graphs using data gathered, for instance, about themselves or from the local environment.
- Information and communication technology is used appropriately in the subject.

Shortcomings

- Some pupils in Year 1 have slow mental recall of number bonds.

Science

Standards of achievement in KS1 are very good.

Good features

- Pupils are developing good observational skills when looking for differences and similarities in materials and food. They make sensible predictions before testing their properties and record their findings carefully.
- They use simple classifications and know the differences between living and non-living things.
- They are beginning to understand the need for fair testing, and their ability to plan and carry out systematic enquiries is developing well.
- Pupils apply their understanding of key scientific concepts in both familiar and unfamiliar situations and offer sensible explanations.
- They are developing a strong understanding of simple forces through well-planned activities followed by searching questions by the teacher.
- They are aware of the importance of a healthy diet and the effect of exercise on the body. They recognise and label correctly the major parts of the human body and of a flowering plant.
- Pupils make good use of correct terminology when describing seed germination.
- Information and communication technology is used appropriately in the subject.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Welsh second language

Standards of achievement in KS1 are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning Welsh in all classes.
- Younger KS1 pupils are acquiring a satisfactory oral vocabulary; for example, when responding to basic commands and instructions and in recalling short sentence patterns. Pupils' pronunciation is generally good.
- Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to create short dialogues with a partner about how they feel, using set phrases. They name parts of the body, know a range of colours and count confidently.
- They answer simple questions about themselves, such as where they live and if they have a brother or sister.
- They read aloud with the teacher from the Big Books and show a reasonable understanding of the story line.
- They regularly sing a Welsh hymn and repeat a Welsh prayer during acts of collective worship.

Shortcomings

- The use of incidental Welsh is inconsistent across the school.
- There is a lack of progression in pupils' learning.

Design and technology

Standards of achievement are very good in KS1.

Good features

- Pupils apply appropriate skills and knowledge to designing and making. Good quality products are made from original designs using a range of materials, including reclaimed materials, clay, card and construction kits.
- They use the computer appropriately to generate designs and record their designs pictorially, with annotation if necessary.
- Pupils use simple mechanisms confidently. These include wheels and axles, and they measure, mark out, cut and shape a range of materials.

- Pupils assemble and join materials in a variety of ways, including fixing joints to allow movement. They decorate the product they make, and use suitable finishing techniques.
- Pupils discuss their work clearly and express likes and dislikes. Products are evaluated and modifications made if necessary.
- A good understanding of health and safety measures is shown by pupils when using equipment, tools and materials.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Information technology

Standards of achievement in KS1 are very good.

Good features

- KS1 pupils have a very good understanding of the function and use of computers and other forms of information technology. They know about household appliances that need to be controlled.
- Year 1 pupils enter text and other data into the computer and, with help, often save and print their work. They enter data about the colour of hair and eyes, and produce block graphs. They produce Venn diagrams when considering sweet and fatty foods.
- Pupils in Y1 successfully use a programmable toy in mathematics to reinforce their work on direction.
- Pupils in Y2 carry out a simple search of a database to find information. They create pictures and change the size of the 'brush' and select colours from a 'palette' of colour.
- Pupils in Y2 insert and resize photographs into text. They make amendments and consider audience appropriately in their presentation.
- They use a word processing package well to write reports in science, religious education and stories in English. Pupils effectively combine text and graphics in their work.
- Y2 pupils use a word-processing package with increasing confidence to compose a story. They use a computer program effectively to present data as a pictogram and a table.
- Pupils successfully use simulations and adventure programs in helping to develop their decision-making skills.
- There is good use of subject specific software and the Internet to reinforce skills across the curriculum.

- Pupils are beginning to use an interactive whiteboard well to enhance their learning in a range of subjects across the curriculum.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

History

Standards of achievement are very good in KS1.

Good features

- Year 1 pupils have a good understanding of chronology. They research the lifestyles of their grandparents and talk about the past in a meaningful way. They learn about the history of their own area by studying the life of interesting and significant people. Pupils prepare questions to help them interview interesting people.
- Y1 pupils understand the use of a time line in their study of the development of aircraft and ships.
- Y1 pupils undertake a study of the Newport Docks disaster as part of their local history study. They look at newspaper reports of the event and write clear accounts from the viewpoint of an eyewitness.
- Pupils compare the artefacts used by people in the past to those used now. They visited St Fagan's Museum of Welsh life to help them in their understanding. Pupils know that artefacts have changed in design and operation, but their use has not; for example, kettles and irons.
- Pupils in Y2 know about the development of flight from early times to the present day.
- Pupils know that instruments for writing have changed over the years. They successfully sequence tools in chronological order, comparing and giving reasons for change.
- Pupils know that the Gaer estate was one of the first estates built in Newport after the Second World War. They interview parents about their times at school and interview pupils from the adjacent junior school to help them in their understanding of how places and communities change over time.
- Pupils in Y2 show a good understanding of the development of transport over the years from a range of historical sources, including books, photographs and video.
- When discussing stories about characters from Welsh history, such as Saint David, pupils begin to make comparisons between the lives of people in history and their own lives.

- Pupils display a growing awareness of similarities and differences between the past and the present. Local visits and talking to visitors to the school successfully enhance pupils' understanding of the subject.
- By looking at artefacts, pictures and posters, pupils gain a good insight into the way people used to live. Pupils successfully identify representations of the past found in books, pictures and artefacts.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of why events happened and why people behaved in certain ways.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Geography

Standards of achievement are very good in KS1.

Good features

- Y1 pupils make simple weather observations and understand the seasonal variations.
- Y1 pupils recognise their route to school on a map and identify the key features of their locality.
- Pupils look at a contrasting locality, Sirhowy Country Park and consider the features of a woodland.
- Pupils begin to recognise some significant characteristics of other parts of the world; for example, The Great Wall in China and animals from India.
- Y2 pupils use basic co-ordinates to locate and place objects on a grid and this also successfully develops their mathematical skills. Pupils draw a map of an imaginary theme park, including a key to the various rides and stalls.
- Y2 pupils understand the nature of farming in Africa. They know about the types of homes that people live in. Pupils begin to understand the nature of African savannah; they create simple maps.
- Pupils and their parents undertake a school grounds survey; identify trees and other significant features within their locality.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the character of the area and the relationship between people and the environment, enhanced by a programme of local visits.
- Pupils discuss jobs and have an appropriate knowledge of environmental change. Some pupils identify Newport, Wales and other parts of the United Kingdom on a map.

- Information and communication technology is used appropriately in the subject.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Art

Standards of achievement in KS1 are good.

Good features

- Pupils effectively use a variety of materials, including pencil, crayon, charcoal, chalk and oil pastels, to create striking effects in their drawings and paintings.
- They use and mix paints successfully to create different shades of colour. They are successful in creating the appropriate flesh tones for their portraits and in creating a calm or rough seascape with different colours and tone.
- Pupils have their own sketchbooks to draw from memory or from observation. They also study the work of famous artists and try to copy their individual technique, with good results. Their observational skills are developing well.
- In their work on line and tone, pupils explore and experiment effectively to form repeating patterns, displaying good hand control.
- Pupils' collage work is effective and attractive, showing good choices of material to represent different textures.
- The weekly art club is very popular and helps to further develop pupils' artistic skills and appreciation.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' three-dimensional skills are underdeveloped.

Music

Standards of achievement are very good in KS1.

Good features

- Pupils sing competently with clear diction and show some control of dynamics. They are aware of the need to control breathing and the importance of good posture.

- Pupils sing a variety of songs in both Welsh and English and use music successfully to enhance their learning in other subjects. Music is an intrinsic part of assemblies, worship and celebration in the school. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and feeling.
- Instruments, including tuned and untuned percussion, are held and played correctly and pupils accompany singing. Older pupils learn to play the recorder well.
- Pupils show a good awareness of rhythm and use graphic scores to compose patterns and sequences of sound.
- Y2 pupils improvise and arrange music as accompaniments to songs and to illustrate poetry. These are performed well.
- Pupils listen and appraise music from a range of cultures and of differing styles, including Chinese, African as well as West End musicals. They appraise their own and others' compositions.
- Visiting musicians and workshops such as 'Pineapple Gong', successfully enhance pupils' understanding of the richness and variety of musical style as well as awareness of music from Wales and other cultures.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Physical education

Standards of achievement in KS1 are satisfactory.

Good features

- In gymnastics, pupils make good use of space and show a growing awareness of how they can use different parts of their bodies to produce a range of movements and shapes.
- They create a sequence of movements demonstrating good imagination, balance, poise and control. Older pupils successfully transfer their chosen sequence onto benches, stools and climbing frame.
- Pupils work hard and make a determined effort to improve their performance. They are well disciplined and behave sensibly, especially when moving large apparatus. They listen and follow instructions well, showing an awareness of safety issues.
- They understand the reason for warming up and cooling down, before and after exercise, and are aware of the effects of vigorous exercise on their bodies.
- Older pupils show good control of movement when learning the steps of a Jewish dance and an ability to move to the beat of the music whilst following instructions.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' ability to pass and receive a ball is under developed.
- Pupils' evaluation of their own skills and those of others are weak.

Religious education

Standards of achievement in KS1 are very good.

Good features

- Pupils know a variety of Bible stories and they recall the main events and characters.
- They have an increasing understanding of Christian festivals with specific reference to worship and celebration. Visits to local churches, and visitors from them, help pupils' understanding of religious symbolism.
- In studying aspects of other religious traditions, including their festivals and ceremonies, pupils are developing a good understanding of, and respect for, different cultures. They are aware that different religions have their own special book, ceremonies, festivals and stories.
- Older pupils make up their own prayers for special occasions.
- Opportunities for role-play in a Baptism or Wedding give pupils a good understanding of such ceremonies in the Christian church.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The previous inspection report identified key issues for action covering the need to address shortcomings in physical education and religious education, develop curricular links with the junior school and to improve toilet and bathroom provision.

Progress in addressing the three key issues for action identified in the previous inspection report has been very good overall. The school has provided considerable improvements in religious education and some improvement in physical education. There are now well established curriculum links with the Junior School. The concerns about the quality of toilet and bathroom provision have now been fully addressed.

8.2 Key issues for action

To improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors need to:

- 1) raise standards in those subjects and aspects where shortcomings are identified;
- 2) raise the morale of staff by:
 - reviewing the workload of all staff to ensure that it is realistic;*
 - improving the flexibility of the school's decision-making procedures to more readily accommodate change and the contribution of all staff.

*This has already been identified as an area for examination by the school.

Acknowledgement

The registered inspector and team wish to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy before and during the inspection.

APPENDIX

A. Basic information about the school

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Name of School | Gaer Infant School |
| School type | Community |
| Age -range of pupils | 3-7 |
| Address of school | Melfort Road Newport |
| Post-Code | NP20 3FP |
| Telephone Number | 01633 265620 |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Headteacher | Mrs M Biddle |
| Date of appointment | 04 January 1994 |
| Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority | Councillor L Al Nuaimi |
| Registered Inspector | Mr B Mahoney |
| Dates of inspection | 14 th – 17 th October 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 | 40.5 | 46 | 59 | 48 | | | | | 193.5 |

| <i>Total number of teachers</i> | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
| | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time equivalent (fte) |
| Number of teachers | 8 | 0 | 8 |

| <i>Staffing information</i> | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes) | 25:1 |
| Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes | 13:1 |
| Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in special classes | n/a |
| Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes | 25 |
| Teacher (fte) : class ratio | 1:1 |

| <i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i> | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|
| | R | KS1 | KS2 | Whole School |
| Term 1 | 83.90 | 92.46 | | 88.18 |
| Term 2 | 93.86 | 89.38 | | 91.62 |
| Term 3 | 92.45 | 92.31 | | 92.38 |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals | 20.49 |
| Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection | 0 |

C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2002

| National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2002 | | | Number of pupils in Y2: 47 | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------------|---|----|----|----|---|
| Percentage of pupils at each level | | | | | | | | |
| | | | D | W | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| ENGLISH: | Teacher Assessment | School | 0 | 0 | 7 | 61 | 33 | 0 |
| | | *National | 0 | 4 | 13 | 62 | 21 | 0 |
| EN: Reading | Teacher Assessment | School | 0 | 0 | 4 | 51 | 45 | 0 |
| | | *National | 0 | 4 | 13 | 54 | 29 | 0 |
| EN: Writing | Teacher Assessment | School | 0 | 0 | 6 | 64 | 30 | 0 |
| | | *National | 0 | 5 | 13 | 70 | 12 | 0 |
| EN: Speaking and listening | Teacher Assessment | School | 0 | 0 | 4 | 63 | 33 | 0 |
| | | *National | 0 | 3 | 11 | 63 | 23 | 0 |
| MATHEMATICS | Teacher Assessment | School | 0 | 2 | 2 | 60 | 36 | 0 |
| | | *National | 0 | 2 | 9 | 60 | 29 | 0 |
| SCIENCE | Teacher Assessment | School | 0 | 2 | 2 | 62 | 34 | 0 |
| | | *National | 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: | 94 | *In Wales: | 81 |

D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

*National comparative data is not yet available. The national comparative data included in the table relates to 2001.

D. Evidence base of the inspection

The team of three inspectors scrutinised the work in all classes and, between them, spent a total of eight days in the school.

Thirty-two lessons or parts of lessons were observed during the inspection, and each teacher was observed teaching on several occasions during the course of the inspection.

Inspectors scrutinised a complete sample of the work of about 10 per cent of pupils, heard a similar percentage read and spoke to many more about their work.

Discussions were held with members of the teaching staff, members of the support staff, parents and governors.

During the inspection, pupils were observed as they arrived and departed from school, during break and lunch times.

Inspectors attended assemblies and acts of collective worship.

Aspects of the life and work of the school were discussed in a pre-inspection meeting with governors.

The previous report, action plan, school policies, the school development plan, registers, pupils' records and teachers' planning were examined, as were a sample of minutes of the meetings of the governing body and reports to parents.

Before the inspection, four parents attended a meeting with the registered inspector to express their views on the work of the school, and 32 responses were received from parents to a questionnaire on the same subject.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

| Team member | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mr B Mahoney Registered Inspector | Provision for the under-fives English Design and technology Information technology History Geography Music | Context Main findings Standards achieved in key areas of learning Teaching Curriculum Leadership and efficiency Staffing, accommodation and learning resources Progress since the last inspection Key issues for action |
| Mrs J M H Warr Lay Inspector | | Behaviour and attitudes Attendance Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions Partnership with industry |
| Mr M D Jones Team Inspector | Mathematics Science Welsh second language Art Physical education Religious education | Standards in key skills across the curriculum Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Assessment, recording and reporting Support guidance and pupils' welfare Provision for pupils with special educational needs Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement. |