

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

**GOETRE JUNIOR SCHOOL
Rowan Way
Gurnos Estate
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 9PB**

School Number: 675/2035

Date of Inspection: 19 – 21 May 2003

**REGISTERED INSPECTOR: GORONWY MORRIS
W160/78283**

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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 some shortcomings.
4. Unsatisfactory: some satisfactory work but shortcomings in important areas.
5. Poor: many shortcomings.

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Goetre Junior School, built in the 1960s, is located on an elevated site shared with the infant school on the edge of the Gurnos, a large, predominantly local authority, housing estate, in an economically and socially disadvantaged area to the north of Merthyr Tydfil town centre. Over recent years, there has been a significant drop in the number of children on roll as housing has been demolished and people have left the area. There are 242 pupils currently on roll who are taught in ten mainstream classes and three Special Educational Needs classes. The intake is described by the school as comprising many less-able and few able pupils, 46% being identified as having special educational needs (SEN). Sixty-five percent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Apart from one pupil from an ethnic minority background, all other pupils come from homes where the predominant language spoken is English. The current head has been in post since February 2003 following the promotion of the previous head. The school aims to develop a caring community where every child and adult feels respected and listened to. The school promotes a culture of continuous learning in all aspects of school life through teamwork, collaboration and shared responsibilities. The school has set challenging targets for raising pupil achievement. The school was last inspected in 1997.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Goetre Junior School is a school with many strengths. This is reflected in the caring and welcoming ethos of the school, the commitment of staff, the positive behaviour and attitudes of the pupils, the provision for pupils with special educational needs and the effective partnerships created with parents and the community. Significant progress has been made since the last inspection. The school has been successful in creating a high quality, orderly learning environment, where relationships are very good; all pupils feel valued and develop as polite and friendly individuals.

- Standards of achievement in the subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) and religious education are as follows:

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

- Since the last inspection there have been substantial improvements in the levels of achievement and attainment. Standards have improved significantly in science, Welsh second language, design technology, information technology, geography and art.
- Overall analysis of the NC assessments over the past five years indicates significant improvement with an increase in the percentage of pupils achieving level 4, the expected level, in English, mathematics and science.
- Test results for 2002 show that the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 was below the average for schools within a similar range of Free School Meals. The percentage of pupils attaining level 4 in the core subject indicator was 46% (Wales 68.1%). However, after adjustment for additional pupils with SEN, the school compares favourably with similar schools.
- Standards in the key skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and numeracy are satisfactory. The award of the Basic Primary Basic Skills Quality Mark attests to the school's commitment to the development of this aspect of their work. Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are good. The school recognises the need to further develop a key skill continuum and to further integrate key-skill development in non-core foundation subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The headteacher and staff create a secure, friendly, caring and supportive community for the pupils, where each individual is valued. This is strength of the school. Relationships between pupils and adults and between the pupils themselves are friendly and positive. Care and consideration for others is given a high priority in the school. Responsible attitudes and good behaviour are encouraged at all times.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are good overall and have a positive impact on their learning and the standards they achieve. The assertive discipline policy introduced at the start of the current academic year provides clear guidance and strategies used consistently by all adults. This is a major strength of the school.
- The level of pupil attendance and punctuality is satisfactory. Procedures for daily routines and dealing with lateness are firmly in place and are rigorously implemented. This is a major improvement since the last inspection.
- The quality of personal support and educational guidance given to pupils is good overall. The school provides a supportive environment where pupils feel safe and valued.
- The quality of partnerships with parents is good. Partnerships with schools, other institutions, the community and industry are very good. This is a notable strength of the school.
- The quality of the curriculum is good. Pupils study the NC subjects and religious education. The needs of all pupils including those with SEN are met and the school promotes equal opportunities and inclusion. Provision for the Cwricwlwm Cymraig is very good and pupils understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity is well promoted.

- The commitment of staff means that a very good range of extra-curricular activities is offered within the school. These contribute to the educational standards achieved and pupils' personal development.
- The quality of provision for pupils who have SEN is good. The school has effective procedures in place for identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with SEN. Pupil progress is carefully monitored and tracked. Pupils with SEN are provided with opportunities to succeed and as a result have positive attitudes and show interest in their work.
- Arrangements for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' learning are good overall. Comprehensive procedures are in place which identify opportunities for assessment and to track pupils' progress, however their impact on teaching and learning is variable.
- Teachers are hard working and conscientious. They display great commitment to their school and the pupils in their care. They know their pupils well and relationships are positive. They set high expectations in terms of pupil behaviour. The contribution of the Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) is highly valued and makes a significant contribution to the educational provision.
- The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen. It was very good in five per cent, good in a further 55% and satisfactory in 40% of the lessons observed. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection.
- In the best lessons, teaching is energetic and lessons are seen as fun, lessons progress with good pace and pupils are eager to learn. Teachers use a range of appropriate strategies and resources and pupils are actively involved in their learning. The work is appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils, stimulating questions probe pupils' understanding and challenging targets are set which extend their abilities. Opportunities are sought to develop cross-curricular links and to foster the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Where teaching is less successful, the pace of learning is slow, classroom activities are not linked closely enough to the learning objective and tasks are insufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. In these lessons, pupils' work is often limited in quantity and quality because of an over reliance on worksheets. Insufficient opportunities are made available for pupils to discuss their ideas and to offer extended explanations.
- Good procedures are in place for evaluating and improving the work of the school. Both staff and governors are aware of the strengths and areas for development, and a self-critical ethos is being developed. They are keen to improve their understanding and methods of working to contribute to raising pupils' standards of achievement.
- Overall leadership and management is satisfactory. There is a positive ethos in the school that encourages respect and full involvement for all pupils and adults.
- The newly appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the school's needs and provides confident, enthusiastic and sympathetic leadership. Recent changes in management and

staffing, coupled with long-term staff illness, have limited opportunities to develop the senior management structure. Current arrangements do not provide sufficient support for the new headteacher.

- The deputy headteacher is currently seconded to a multi-agency *People in the Community* project. This project provides an avenue of communication between school and the wider community, and a great deal of ‘multi agency’ expertise, which the school is able to draw on. While the project has had a very positive impact on the quality of life at the school and the seconded deputy headteacher plays an active role in the school, there are currently no arrangements in place to cover the role of deputy headteacher.
- Curriculum co-ordinators provide positive support for their colleagues and have a good overview of their responsibilities. They identify training needs and have led a series of subject-based initiatives, which have impacted on standards.
- Members of the governing body (GB) are representative of the Goetre school community. They are knowledgeable about the school and involved in a variety of ways in school life. Governors were involved in the construction of the School Development Plan (SDP), however, their role in self-evaluation and monitoring is as yet under-developed.
- Appropriate priorities for spending are established within the SDP. Indications are that carefully considered spending decisions have resulted in good levels of staffing, resources and accommodation. The school provides good value for money. The recent award of the Investors in People standard attests to the school’s commitment to this aspect of its work.
- Budget projections for 2003/04 were not available at the time of the inspection. The lack of up-to-date projections of future spending limits the school’s ability to plan appropriately for the future and in particular to deal with the impact of the falling role.
- Administrative procedures and daily routines are effective. The headteacher and staff are accessible and approachable and the secretary, caretaker, cleaners and mid-day staff all make a positive contribution to the running of the school and the pupils’ well being. The school is an orderly environment. Teaching time meets recommendations, however, timetabling arrangements particularly around lunchtime are complex and limit flexibility.
- Since the last inspection there have been many changes at Goetre Junior School. The structure of the staff has changed and new systems and procedures have been introduced. Good progress has been made in meeting the requirements of the Post Inspection Action Plan. Teachers have worked hard to bring about significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, which has resulted in substantial improvements in pupil achievement and attainment.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Standards are satisfactory or better in all subjects of the NC and religious education.

- Based on the lessons and work observed, standards of achievement were judged to be good or very good in 52% of the work and satisfactory in 48%. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection.
- Standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics are satisfactory. Good standards are achieved in science.
- In the non-core foundation subjects, standards are good in design and technology, information technology, art and music. Standards are satisfactory in Welsh as a second language, history, geography, physical education and religious education.
- Pupils with SEN make appropriate progress throughout the school.
- Overall analysis of the NC assessments over the past five years indicates significant improvement with an increase in the percentage of pupils achieving level 4, the expected level, in English, mathematics and science.
- Test results for 2002 show that the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 was below the average for schools within a similar range of Free School Meals. The percentage of pupils attaining level 4 in the core subject indicator was 46% (Wales 68.1%). However, after adjustment for additional pupils with SEN, the school compares favourably with similar schools.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

The standards in the key skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and numeracy are satisfactory. Standards in information and communication technology are good.

- Pupils listen attentively in most classes and respect other pupils' views. Most pupils understand a range of vocabulary.
- In all years, pupils ask and answer questions, but use a limited range of vocabulary and extended answers.
- Reading skills are improving and most appear to enjoy books. Some pupils read books as a source of information and more-able pupils access the internet for research purposes and value reading as a source of pleasure and information. Overall, pupils do not yet make sufficient use of their reading across all curriculum areas.
- Writing is used for a variety of purposes across the curriculum. More-able pupils write at length and in a variety of forms, however, many pupils make only satisfactory progress. Overall, the quantity and quality of written work within some non-core foundation subjects is insufficient.
- Numeracy skills are developing in some curriculum areas. In science, pupils record numerical data in tables and a range of graphical forms. In Y6, pupils use census records to research the Victorian period in history.
- ICT is used extensively to support pupils' activities in all year groups. In Y3 pupils access a CD-ROM to research William Booth; Y4 pupils use graphic programmes in both

art and design technology; Y5 pupils use Ecology in Science to measure temperature and Y6 pupils create personal profiles and include digital photographs. Pupils use audio equipment to record their poetry, stories and musical compositions.

- Pupils with SEN make progress in line with their age and ability.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has a friendly caring atmosphere and is a supportive community for all pupils.

- Care and consideration for others is given a high priority in the school. The school displays an inclusive policy and the right of equality is an integral part of the schools' approach.
- The school has a friendly atmosphere and is a supportive community for all pupils. Relationships between pupils and adults and between the pupils themselves are friendly and positive. Responsible attitudes and good behaviour are encouraged at all times.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. They understand the difference between right and wrong. They are encouraged to have respect for others, for themselves, for property and the environment.
- There are clear systems in place for rewards and sanctions with the emphasis on promoting good behaviour. These arrangements have had a profound impact upon the school as a whole, and measures are in place to reward all pupils who make a positive contribution to school life.
- Inter-school competitions, extra-curricular activities, school visits and residential experiences promote pupils' social awareness. Pupils co-operate well in class and play together successfully. The school's system of awards contributes positively to pupils' moral and social development.
- Well planned and meaningful arrangements for the daily act of Christian collective worship contribute well to the ethos of the school. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their own and others' values and beliefs. Pupils make a valuable contribution to these occasions.
- Pupils recognise and increasingly understand a diversity of beliefs, attitudes, and social and cultural beliefs. Prominence is given to the Welsh dimension within the curriculum and pupils are aware of the cultural heritage of Wales. Pupils' work in geography and religious education helps pupils foster an understanding of different cultures from around the world.
- Pupils' knowledge of their locality is good and is significantly extended by well planned educational visits. Discussions with regard to local issues enhance their understanding of and respect for the environment.
- Pupils respond positively to the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development. They are happy in school and are very welcoming and polite to visitors.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

The standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning are good overall. The assertive discipline policy introduced at the start of the current academic year provides clear guidance and the strategies detailed are used consistently by all adults. This is a major strength of the school.

- The school is a well ordered, welcoming and caring community where relationships are very good and all pupils are valued.
- All staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They know pupils and their parents well and have built mutually respectful and supportive relationships. Staff are consistent in their applications of routines and pupils know what is expected of them. All staff are good role models. The headteacher's knowledge of individual pupils gained since his fairly recent appointment is impressive and pupils respond to him very well.
- Pupils are happy in a school that provides a richness of experiences that sustain pupils' interest. Motivation and behaviour in the classroom are good for the majority of the pupils. They are involved and show enthusiasm for their work. They settle quickly and show perseverance and good levels of concentration. Pupils collaborate and support each other when working in groups and pairs.
- There are a number of pupils in most classes who present teachers with challenging behaviour. They have poor listening skills, become distracted and inattentive and often disrupt the flow of lessons. They are dealt with positively and are very well supported.
- Pupils know the routines and behave maturely and move sensibly in and around the school sometimes in confined areas. They show courtesy and consideration to each other to staff and to adults. They talk to visitors in a friendly and natural manner. Their behaviour outside school is praised and this is a good feature of the school.
- Schemes are in place to improve and maintain behaviour. Pupils know and understand the Golden, Safety and Sensible Rules that are prominently displayed around the school. They know the consequences of misbehaviour.
- Pupils respond well to initiatives designed to improve behaviour and raise self-esteem, such as Circle Time and the Pyramid Club, and to the reward system. They feel they are treated fairly and that their efforts are valued. All aspects of good behaviour, efforts and achievements in and outside school are celebrated during the weekly Gold-Star assemblies. Certificates and Gold Cards are displayed proudly in every classroom.
- Parents value the home-school contract and support the school's behaviour policy. Pupils appreciate the recently introduced praise postcards that help to strengthen the link between home and school.
- The recently introduced breakfast club is a valuable social time for pupils and adults that is having a beneficial effect on behaviour. It is very well attended and the number on the

register is growing. Pupils interact well with teachers and adults from the community and are developing good social skills.

- Pupils are encouraged to help and care for each other. The Playground Friends group has a positive influence on behaviour. They organise games and support isolated children at lunch-times. They take their roles seriously and are developing confidence and self-esteem. During playtimes and lunch-times pupils observe the demarcation areas and use play equipment sensibly. Instances of boisterous behaviour are dealt with promptly and pupils are quick to apologise.
- Trained mid-day supervisors maintain positive discipline to ensure continuity of good behaviour during the lunch period. They help to draw up the lunch-time and playground policies and have a full role in the rewards and sanctions system. Supervision in the dining hall and in the playground is very good and this is a social time for the pupils. Strategies to deal with children of concern and others who have difficulty in conforming to acceptable standards at lunch-time are effective. No incidents of unacceptable behaviour were noted during the inspection and there have been no lunch-time exclusions in the current academic year.

4.3 Attendance

The levels of pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

- Procedures for daily routines and dealing with lateness are firmly in place and are rigorously implemented. This is a major improvement since the last inspection.
- At 90.38% the average rate of attendance over the last three terms is almost in line with schools in the LEA. The overall rate is adversely affected by a combination of illness, frequent short absences and family holidays in term time together with the lengthy absence of a very small number of pupils
- Determined efforts and specific targets are set. Pupils' absences are closely monitored and follow up procedures are in place. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) visits daily and works closely with the school to reduce the level of condoned absences and improve punctuality. The first day response facility and recent media publicity has resulted in a measure of success. There is evidence that attendance rates are around 94% some months. The school and EWO actively pursue the cases of poor attendance.
- Procedures for recording latecomers are rigorously applied. Pupils arriving after 8.50 sign the late book. The vast majority live within walking distance and are generally less than five minutes late. There is evidence that the number of persistent latecomers is being reduced. Pupils are embarrassed by their late arrival. They apologise and are welcomed warmly into class.
- Pupils arriving after 9.00am are generally brought to school by minibus or taxis. The school has no control over transport, but the EWO makes regular reports to the appropriate agencies.

- Firm plans are in place to introduce a Class of the Month initiative to improve attendance and punctuality. At present, full attendance is celebrated, but rewards depend heavily on finances available and are inconsistently applied.
- Registers are completed at the beginning of each session and individual lessons start on time. However, National Assembly for Wales (NAfW) requirements are not always fully met.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen. It was very good in five per cent, good in a further 55% and satisfactory in 40% of lessons. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection.

- Teachers are hard working and conscientious. They display great commitment to their school and the children in their care. This is demonstrated in the way they have created such a high-quality, orderly learning environment which has a significant impact on children' learning.
- They know their pupils well and set very high expectations in term of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. In the main, pupils respond accordingly. Teachers are calm and good relationships with pupils enable them to handle difficult situations effectively. Pupils are praised warmly and are made aware of how pleased the teacher is when they make progress.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is good. They have invested significant time and effort in developing themselves professionally. They work closely with their LSAs who play a pro-active role in supporting pupils' learning.
- Teachers' planning is comprehensive, but time consuming. The use of precise measurable learning objectives at the beginning of lessons is a feature in all classes. Tasks given to pupils are clearly explained and appropriate support is given to pupils with learning difficulties.

In the best lessons:

- teaching is energetic and learning is seen as fun, lessons progress with good pace and pupils are eager to begin their activities,
- teachers use a range of appropriate strategies and resources, pupils are actively involved in their learning,
- the work is appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils, stimulating questions probe their understanding and challenging targets are set which extend their abilities,

- opportunities are sought to develop cross-curricular links and to foster the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT,

Where teaching is less successful:

- the pace of learning is slow, teacher explanations are overlong with the result that a number of pupils lose interest and become easily distracted,
- classroom activities are not linked closely enough to the learning objective and there is an over-dependence on worksheets
- insufficient opportunities are made available for pupils to discuss their ideas and offer extended explanations

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Arrangements for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' learning are good overall.

- The schools' assessment policy establishes guidelines for all members of staff and outlines the various forms of assessment and when they occur. Whole-school policies for planning, assessment, reporting and a marking policy provide a comprehensive framework for this aspect of the school's work.
- Assessment maps in English, mathematics and science are used to identify opportunities for assessments and to track each pupil's attainment. These feed into pupil audit trails. Currently these are not being used to set targets for improvement.
- Portfolios containing exemplar material of pupils' work are retained by the school to support assessment. Some subject portfolios require more careful moderation and annotation to assist teachers when they are assessing standards achieved.
- The school's marking policy provides useful guidelines for teachers when marking pupils' work. In the best examples, pupils are given a clear indication of the strengths of their work and clear targets for improvement. In a minority of classes, pupils are beginning to evaluate their own work and have a clear perception of their progress. However, there are examples of pupils' work where marking is cursory and unsupported by meaningful comments, and the school would benefit from ensuring that the good practice is disseminated to all classes.
- The school complies with statutory arrangements for assessing and recording the needs of pupils on the SEN register.
- Reports to parents are of good quality. They provide information on standards achieved and give an indication of their child's progress. Parents are invited to the school to discuss their child's progress informally and on formal occasions.

5.3 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. Pupils study the NC subjects and religious education. The needs of all pupils including those with SEN are met and the school promotes equal opportunities and inclusion.

- Policy documents and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. These are of a good quality overall, however there is no consistency of format. There is an appropriate time allocation for all subject areas and teachers have identified the teaching of some non-core foundation subjects in half-termly blocks.
- Teachers' planning is detailed and of a good quality. Learning objectives, activities and assessments are clearly identified. The weekly evaluations are of a reflective and analytical nature and contribute appropriately to future planning.
- The school uses the setting of pupils in the core subjects to enhance teaching and learning opportunities. This process contributes effectively to raising standards within the school and is kept under constant review to ensure the best opportunities for all pupils.
- The school does not yet have a policy for key skills and they are not identified in schemes of work. This means that opportunities for developing key skills across the curriculum are lost.
- The school has good arrangements in place for teaching personal and social education and carefully planned circle time supports the effectiveness of this programme.
- Homework tasks are set in a range of subjects, however, the impact of homework is inconsistent.
- Provision for Cwricwlwm Cymreig is good and is identified in a number of curriculum areas.
- The commitment of the staff means that a very good range of extra-curricular activities is offered within the school. These include modern dance, rugby, football, netball, hockey and athletics. Other activities include a BAYS science club, pottery, drama and choir and computer clubs. Pupils are offered many opportunities to participate in community events, visit places of interest and link with industry. These all contribute to the educational standards achieved and pupils' personal development.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

The quality of personal support and educational guidance given to pupils is good overall.

- The school provides a supportive environment where pupils feel safe and valued. The headteacher, class teachers, support staff and adult helpers know and care for pupils very well and ensure that they are effectively supported. Pupils in turn are confident to approach them with any concerns and worries.

- Effective arrangements are in place for pupils' personal guidance. Focused activities and initiatives such as Circle Time and the Pyramid Club contribute very positively to pupils' understanding of issues and promote self-esteem and confidence.
- The school considers issues of inclusion carefully and ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils with SEN are well integrated in all aspects of school life.
- Procedures for promoting the well-being, and health and safety of the pupils are satisfactory. The deputy headteacher is the named child protection officer. Both she and the headteacher have received appropriate training and share responsibilities. Records are currently under reorganisation, but as yet appropriate information has not been disseminated to the rest of the staff.
- There is a named first aid officer and the school operates a rolling programme for staff training. All staff and about half the mid-day supervisors and canteen assistants are currently fully trained.
- Evacuation procedures do not meet with statutory regulations. At the time of the inspection, there was no evidence of evacuation fire drills. Pupils have not experienced evacuation procedures in the past four months. Records of fire equipment safety checks were found to be out of date.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The quality of provision for pupils who have SEN is good. Four pupils in the SEN classes have Statements with a further 60 pupils at School Action Plus (including 45 in the three special classes) and 40 pupils on School Action. The school has three area special needs classes which cater for pupils with predominately moderate learning difficulties (some also have emotional and behavioural difficulties). These pupils successfully integrate into a range of lessons, particularly art, music, physical education and design and technology.

- Provision for pupils with SEN meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. There is good documentation in the areas of identification, assessment, planning and recording and these contribute to pupil progress.
- The school has a clear inclusive ethos. All pupils with SEN have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and are fully included in the life and work of the school.
- The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) is well organised, performs her duties effectively and provides good support to her colleagues. There is good liaison between her and the staff, outside agencies and parents, who are kept well informed of the pupils' progress.
- The school has effective procedures in place for identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with SEN. Good use is made of the SEN Register, Language Development Register and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to ensure that pupil progress is carefully monitored and tracked.
- Individual Education Plans are devised by the SENCO in liaison with the classteachers and are reviewed regularly. The IEPs are detailed and have clear precise targets. They offer positive reinforcement and support for learning.

- Relationships between pupils and between teachers and pupils are friendly and show mutual respect. Pupils with SEN contribute to the pleasant and orderly atmosphere of the school. The behaviour of the pupils with SEN is good.
- Pupils with SEN have positive attitudes and show interest in their work because they are provided with opportunities to succeed. They are keen to learn and be fully involved in whole-school activities and clearly enjoy their work.
- Teachers in the special classes plan their lessons well and manage pupils in a positive and supportive way. This has resulted in the pupils in these classes settling into school routines and becoming more confident learners.
- Support staff work well with pupils with SEN. They are clear regarding their duties and they provide appropriate support and encouragement, thereby contributing effectively to pupil progress.
- Teachers use a range of different strategies to promote and consolidate learning as well as using a range of strategies to assess progress (questioning, observation, and practical activities).
- Pupils with SEN are eager to contribute orally in class and are willing to offer answers or make suggestions with confidence.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

The quality of partnership with parents is good and with schools, other institutions and the community it is very good. This is a notable strength of the school.

- The quality of information provided for parents both formal and informal is good and is a major improvement since the last inspection. An information pack issued to parents of Y3 pupils includes all the important documents that parents need. A copy of the school's discipline policy and details of the rewards and sanctions system was issued to parents when the new arrangements were introduced. All parents have signed the home-school agreement. Half-termly newsletters and other communications keep parents well informed about school activities and events. However, there is a lack of information about the subjects being taught and strategies to enable parents to become effective partners in their children's education.
- The school brochure is of good quality, provides valuable information and is regularly updated. However, the governors' annual report to parents does not fully meet the NAFW Circular 15/01.
- A small number of parents provide good quality support in the classroom and with practical activities that is highly appreciated by the school and helps to raise the standards that pupils achieve. Social events such as concerts, celebrations and sports days are very well supported. Parents show a high level of commitment to their children's out of school activities.

- Although there is no formal parent-teacher association a small committee organises focused fundraising events. The money raised is used to enhance resources and improve the environment.
- The school has very good links with the community through its involvement in the People in the Communities Family Project. Currently the deputy headteacher and three support staff are engaged in the project and work closely with health, social and speech and language professionals. A significant number of adults support the school in addressing issues, for example Community Safety Wardens regularly patrol the school grounds to ensure safety. They work with pupils on practical activities that help to enhance the environment and raise standards, such as the science garden project. They help to foster a sense of community and raise pupils' social skills through their support of the breakfast club where they regularly eat and socialise with the pupils.
- Pupils' education is enriched through a variety of curriculum-linked visits and visitors to the school. For example, pupils' experiences include working with artists, musicians and theatre groups. Their work is displayed in the local museum and they are involved in the LEA musical event.
- Pupils go out into the community to entertain. The choir sings at a residential home and is involved in the annual Mayor's Christmas Church carol concert. Pupils' sense of achievement is raised through their performances in musical productions, for example Y5 in the opera *Katerina* at St David's Hall and year 6 in the LEA production of *The Pied Piper* at the leisure centre. All concerts and celebrations held at school are open to invited members of the community and are very well supported.
- Older pupils benefit from their involvement in residential study camps where they develop independence and teamwork. Their good behaviour on these occasions is a feature of the school.
- The school supports charities and raises funds for people less fortunate than themselves. The school has strong links with the parish and members of the clergy regularly take assemblies.
- There are close links with the feeder infant school and the receiving secondary school. Strong pastoral and curriculum links particularly the E-Learning project are well established. Firm plans are in place for the development of key skills with the infant school and Circle Time training for Y7 teachers to ensure continuity and progression.
- The school is in partnership with an initial teacher-training establishment and has close links with a neighbouring college of further education. It provides training and work experience for student teachers and sports diploma students. Pupils' skills are enhanced through working with artists in residence and from additional sports coaching.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

The quality of partnership with industry is very good.

- The school has a written industry policy. An enthusiastic industry link co ordinator is in place. Her professional development and that of two other teachers has been enhanced through European Awareness training and industrial placements.
- Pupils are involved in an annual whole-school Europe Day that covers all areas of the curriculum.
- Visits and visitors help to raise the pupils' awareness of the world of work both past and present. Pupils are involved in workshops and projects for example Y4 are involved in the *Newspapers in Education* initiative that helps to develop their problem solving and reading skills and improve their general knowledge. Y6 pupils' science and design and technology skills are enhanced through working on a science experience project and with master builders to design a house for the future. Pupils in Y5 and Y6 are involved in mini-enterprise projects that help to broaden their business acumen.
- The school has close links with the media. Pupils' activities are reported weekly in the local newspaper and pupils contribute to the *Y Gorau* magazine.
- A number of pupils throughout the school make dramatic improvement in their reading through the quality support provided by volunteers from the local Inland Revenue office.
- The school benefits from donations that are used to enhance resources such as the music system and to pay for extra curricular activities.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

Good procedures are in place for evaluating and improving the work of the school.

- Both staff and governors are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development, and a self-critical ethos is being developed. They are keen to improve their understanding and methods of working to contribute to raising pupils' standards of achievement.
- The schools' self-assessment report provides a clear picture of measures taken to improve the quality of educational provision and standards achieved. A number of good steps have been taken to enhance teachers' skills in recognizing good practice in learning and teaching.
- The present SDP is a useful, clearly written document setting out a large number of targets for improvement together with training and cost implications.
- The school has achieved the Basic Skills and Investors in People awards.
- Teachers regularly participate in school-based in-service training and are given opportunities to attend external courses.

- There are procedures for subject co-ordinators to monitor standards in English, mathematics and science. These are used to inform the SDP, headteacher and governors. There is currently a lack of consistency in the format of reports.
- Good use is made of NC assessments to judge the overall performance of pupils.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory.

- The newly appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the school's needs and provides confident, enthusiastic and sympathetic leadership.
- There is a positive ethos in the school that encourages respect and full involvement for all pupils and adults. The school succeeds in establishing a hard-working atmosphere that is caring and welcoming and where pupils develop as polite and friendly individuals.
- Job descriptions are in place for all staff. These were agreed with the previous headteacher as part of a whole-school review. Recent changes in management and staffing, coupled with long-term staff illness have limited opportunities to strengthen the senior management structure. Current arrangements do not provide sufficient support for the new headteacher.
- The deputy headteacher is currently seconded to a multi-agency *People in the Community* project. This project an avenue of communication between school and the wider community, and a great deal of 'multi agency' expertise, which the school is able to draw on. While the project has had a positive impact on the quality of life at the school and the seconded deputy headteacher plays an active role in the school, there are currently no arrangements in place to cover the role of deputy headteacher.
- A Performance Management Framework has been introduced and performance objectives agreed between the GB and headteacher. Performance objectives for the current year have yet to be agreed with other staff.
- Curriculum co-ordinators provide positive support for their colleagues and have a good overview of their responsibilities. They identify training needs and have led a series of subject-based initiatives, which have impacted on standards. In the best examples, they take a clear lead in monitoring throughout the school ensuring coverage of the schemes of work, preparation of a portfolio of pupils' work and the establishment of appropriate assessment procedures.
- Members of the GB are representative of the Goetre school community. They are knowledgeable about the school and involved in a variety of ways in school life. Governors were involved in the construction of the SDP, however, their role in self-evaluation and monitoring is as yet under-developed.
- Appropriate priorities for spending are established within the SDP. Indications are that carefully considered spending decisions have resulted in good levels of staffing, resources and accommodation. The school provides good value for money.

- Budget projections for 2003/04 were not available at the time of the inspection. The lack of up-to-date projections of future spending limits the school's ability to plan appropriately for the future and in particular to deal with the impact of the falling role.
- The last auditor's report was in September 2000. The school has yet to fully comply with the recommendations contained in the report.
- Administrative procedures and daily routines are effective. The headteacher and staff are accessible and approachable and the secretary, caretaker, cleaners and mid-day staff all make a positive contribution to the running of the school and the pupils' well being.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

The quality of staffing, accommodation and resources for learning is good and contributes significantly to the standards achieved by the pupils across the curriculum.

- The school is well staffed and the teachers are appropriately qualified to meet the needs of the pupils in their care. The contribution of support staff has a significant impact on children's learning
- Teachers attend a range of courses, which they feed back to staff through staff meetings. Recent initiatives have enabled teachers to work collaboratively with colleagues from the main feeder comprehensive school and partner primary schools. These arrangements have had a positive effect on the quality of educational provision, particularly in English and ICT.
- The recent award of the Investors in People standard attests to the school's commitment to this aspect of its work.
- Teaching time meets recommendations, however, current timetabling arrangements, especially around lunch-time are complex and limit curriculum flexibility.
- The accommodation is well maintained and a rolling programme of improvements is in place to significantly enhance the provision. The school provides a high-quality, safe and secure environment for pupils. Very high quality displays enhance the learning environment throughout the school. This provides a stimulating environment for children's learning and has a positive impact on the standards achieved.
- The nature of the building, which includes a number of sets of stairs, limits access for the disabled.
- Adequate resources have been provided for the delivery of the curriculum. The lack of a central library facility limits opportunities to promote pupils' independent research skills. Opportunities for physical development is limited by the access to outdoor play facilities.
- The school currently benefits from significant ICT support provided by the LEA. Serious concern was expressed by staff regarding the adequacy of provision should this support be withdrawn.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

English

Standards of achievement in English are satisfactory.

Good features

- The majority of pupils listen carefully during lessons and respond willingly to teacher questions.
- Standards in speaking are satisfactory. When given the opportunities, many pupils will participate confidently in speaking activities. They are keen to share their work with visitors.
- The school's strategy for teaching reading is successful in helping pupils make good progress during the key stage. Pupils use suitable strategies to tackle new words and generally read with understanding.
- Pupils with learning difficulties are given good support to teach them strategies to develop as readers. The language support teacher has a significant impact in this aspect of the school's work.
- The more-able pupils read fluently and with expression. They can predict outcomes of stories sensibly on the basis of previous knowledge and their imagination. They express and give reasons for their choice of favourite author.
- Across the key stage, pupils study appropriately challenging texts. In Y4, pupils investigate the structure of advertisements and discuss some of the differences they have found. This work is developed in Y5 where pupils identify features in text (from a local newspaper) when comparing writing to inform and persuade. Pupils in Y6 list the genres they have studied and identify a number of authorial devices.
- Standards in writing are satisfactory. Pupils write in response to a number of tasks and for a range of purposes. Generally, standards in spelling are satisfactory. Many older pupils use dictionaries and thesauri effectively.
- By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils' writing conveys meaning clearly. More-able pupils write purposefully and competently using appropriate vocabulary and punctuation. At best, the writing is good. Pupils' writing fully engages the reader and sustains interest. Their ideas are organized into paragraphs and the handwriting and general presentation is good.
- Across the key stage, ICT is well used to prepare, process and present information and to communicate ideas.

Shortcomings

- Many pupils' progress in speaking and listening is hindered by a limited vocabulary and range of expressions. Pupils seldom give extended answers or pose questions to prompt a reasoned response. Role-play and drama generally is underused in helping pupils to develop a richer vocabulary.
- Pupils are given too few opportunities to develop fluency and understanding by reading together and discussing and comparing books in a group situation. The lack of a central resource library restricts opportunities for pupils to retrieve and collate information from a range of sources to display higher-order reading skills
- The written work of a number of pupils is marred by weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils' skills in drafting and redrafting their work to improve the style, content and structure of their writing is inconsistently developed across the key stage.
- Standards of presentation vary considerably. Although a minority of pupils demonstrate good presentational skills, writing in a neat joined-up style, handwriting skills are inconsistently developed across the school.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement in mathematics are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils in all year groups make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their understanding of mathematical skills, knowledge, concepts and acquisition of mathematical vocabulary.
- Most pupils are developing a secure understanding of place value and more-able pupils at the end of the key stage identify 6 digit figures.
- Pupils in Y3 and Y4 add and subtract successfully and more-able pupils use a range of mental strategies and explain their calculations. Older pupils are developing strategies to use multiplication and division in their calculations. More-able pupils use fractions, decimals and percentages.
- Younger pupils measure in centimetres and metres. By Y6, pupils use a range of measuring equipment and make sensible estimates in mass and volume.
- Most pupils select appropriate equipment to carry out mathematical investigations and use ICT to enhance their learning, including using the interactive whiteboard.
- Most pupils describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes and more-able pupils talk confidently about three-dimensional shapes and investigations of area, perimeter and angles.

- All pupils collect data and present this in the form of graphs, diagrams and tables. Pupils in Y3 and Y4 use block graphs and discuss their findings. By the end of the key stage, pupils create line graphs and more-able pupils interpret the data. Computer generated graphs feature in the work of all year groups.

Shortcomings

- Some pupils are slow in recalling number facts and only use a limited range of mental strategies.
- Most pupils need to further develop their understanding and use of mathematical vocabulary.

Science

Standards of achievement in science are good.

Good features

- Pupils have a good recall of previous learning and share their understanding. They respond to questions confidently and understand scientific terms relevant to their age and stage of development.
- Teachers across the key stage ensure the use of specific scientific vocabulary in their teaching and pupils' explanations of work.
- A Science Garden has been established within the area of the school supported by the Community safety wardens. All children are encouraged to use the garden to observe plants and minibeasts and they understand the need to care for the environment and living things.
- Children benefit from the after-school 'Bays' Science Club to extend their interest in investigational work and have achieved a Bronze Award as a celebration of their success.
- Through focused observation of ants and worms children in Y3 show a good knowledge of minibeasts and are able to create fact files.
- Pupils are developing an understanding of the need for a fair test and how to conduct this. They make reasoned predictions of outcomes. This was demonstrated by the Y5 investigation of materials.
- Pupils in Y5 identify and classify leaves. They apply their knowledge to investigate and understand the function of leaves.
- Work is differentiated to meet the needs of individual pupils. Pupils respond well to teachers questioning. They enjoy working in pairs or in groups and in discussion, pupils relate to previous skills acquired.
- Investigations are clearly set out in science books and learning objectives are clearly written at the start of the investigative process by pupils. Pupils are encouraged to

research projects through books and ICT and present their findings in their science books.

- A comprehensive programme of visits and visitors to the school are of considerable benefit to raising standards in science. Y3 and Y4 took part in XL Wales Roadshow, Y5 had a forces workshop with Gary the Clown and Y3, Y5 and Y6 have visited Techniquet, exploring a variety of topics.
- NC Test results for 2002 indicate that 76.9% of pupils attained level 4, the expected level, with over half achieving level 5. This is a notable success for the school.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, although pupils would benefit in extending the use of ICT to store, retrieve and present scientific information.

Welsh Second Language

Standards of achievement in Welsh as a second language are satisfactory.

Good features

- The school has created a positive Welsh ethos. Welsh is given a prominent place in displays around the school. Clearly defined Welsh areas have been defined in all classes and resources are accessible.
- Participation in St David's day celebrations, extra-curricular activities offered by the Urdd and a residential visit to Llangrannog have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning the language. Incidental Welsh is used in a variety of situations during the school day.
- In Y3, most pupils count in Welsh and recognise the names of colours. They are introduced to the vocabulary for different occupations and match words to pictures. They participate enthusiastically, demonstrate good pronunciation and show a good attitude towards learning the language.
- Pupils in Y4 respond to a range of basic questions about themselves and describe their likes and dislikes. Pupils read appropriate text from the board and from their workbooks.
- In Y5, pupils tell the time in Welsh using the quarter and half-hour. Most interpret a TV listing page, answering questions relating to programme times.
- In Y6, pupils are enthusiastic and listen well. Many are eager to answer and practice their Welsh. They recall words relating to food and ask and answer simple questions in short dialogues with a partner. They make good use of their developing ICT skills to create a book for younger children using sentence patterns they have learned
- Across the key stage, a range of written tasks helps pupils to become familiar with sentence structures, reinforces vocabulary and provides opportunities for personal writing. Younger pupils write words, phrases and short sentences to express simple

information. Older pupils write following set patterns.

Shortcomings

- Generally, pupils' range of language is narrow and a significant number have an insecure grasp of the vocabulary and sentence patterns they use. Many pupils lack confidence in speaking and are very reliant on the prompting of their teachers.
- Pupils' progress in Welsh is not consistently supported by the use of incidental Welsh in all classes. The lack of a structured programme limits opportunities for pupils to progressively develop oral skills.
- Pupils' reading and writing is within a limited range. Insufficient use is made of Welsh texts to improve their reading. Pupils' independent writing skills are under-developed.

Design and technology

Standards of achievement in design and technology are good.

Good features

- Pupils discuss ideas and suggestions before designing models. They select and use a wide range of tools, materials and techniques to design and carry out their projects.
- Pupils' objectives are clearly highlighted at each stage of the design process. Work in sketchbooks shows that all aspects of the design technology process are developed systematically and progressively in all classes across the key stage.
- Specific skills are taught to support pupils' designs. In Y3, pupils investigated and tested simple levers and linkages to make 'pop up' books.
- Pupils communicate well and use technical vocabulary when constructing models. All pupils receive a range of interesting experiences which helps to stimulate interest in the subject. Pupils in Y3 have used construction kits to create models using pulleys. Pupils in Y4 have designed and made sandals and shoes. In Y5, pupils constructed and tested bridges through problem solving. Y6 pupils designed a learning aid for younger children.
- Pupils' knowledge gained in other areas such as mathematics, English and art is applied when designing and making their products.
- Pupils communicate their design ideas in a variety of ways, using ICT where appropriate. They produce good quality sketches and accurate drawings. When designing products they evaluate their ideas effectively.
- Pupils experiment with textiles and clay and with the support of a visiting artist have made mosaics and batik hangings of high quality, which are effectively displayed around the school.

- Pupils use a programmable toy and simulation programmes to support their design skills. Y6 pupils have linked with the comprehensive school to investigate and explore control modelling.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills in control technology are limited.

Information Technology

Standards of achievement in information and communication technology are good.

Good features

- Pupils in all year groups are developing good computer skills. They enter and store information; use computers to problem solve, enhance their own learning and have a growing understanding of the application of computers in the wider context.
- All pupils have access to computers in the classroom and in addition pupils in Y5 and Y6 have daily access to a large number of laptop computers as part of a LEA e-learning initiative. All pupils use this hardware confidently and apply their IT skills across the curriculum.
- Word-processing skills are developing in all year groups. Y3 pupils use font, size and colour to enhance their work. They know how to save and print. Older pupils edit their work and combine graphics with text.
- Pupils in Y6 create multi-media presentations, including digital photographs and use these to enhance their own work in a variety of curriculum areas.
- Younger pupils use paint programs to create greeting cards and repeating patterns.
- In Y3 and Y4 pupils enter and save data and produce block graphs and pie charts. Y5 and Y6 pupils use spreadsheets to manipulate data.
- Pupils in all year groups use the internet for research purposes and more-able pupils use search engines to locate, copy and paste relevant information.
- All pupils, to enhance their learning, use the interactive whiteboard.

Shortcomings

- The school needs to secure the provision of hardware, if pupils are to sustain the very significant progress made since the last inspection. The potential loss of the laptop computers, which form part of the LEA e-learning project will have a significant impact on standards of achievement within the school.

History

No lessons were observed in history during the period of the inspection, but scrutiny of pupils' books, planning documents, displays and discussions with pupils enabled judgements to be made. These indicate that overall standards of achievement in history are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing a sense of chronology, historical knowledge and understanding of life in early Wales and Britain, the Romans and life in Tudor times.
- Appropriate use is made of the local area as an historical resource and pupils have visited Rhyd y Car and other local sites, which has enabled them to empathise with people of past times and to deepen their understanding of the period they are studying.
- Pupils use an appropriate range of historical sources, including information technology, artefacts and census details.
- There is appropriate reference to the Curriculum Cymreig and the periods studied have a significant Welsh element within them.
- Pupils have begun to develop historical enquiry skills and compare the advantages and disadvantages of using ICT with original transcripts of census returns.

Shortcomings

- Teaching of key skills in history is under-developed.
- The use of ICT to communicate findings, create and analyse databases and use historical simulation is limited.
- The school's own limited supply of artefacts restricts the possibilities of extended research of historical topics by the pupils.

Geography

Standards of achievement in geography are satisfactory.

Good features

- In Y3, pupils use maps and aerial photographs to identify the physical and human features of their locality. They have undertaken a local trail around their immediate locality and identify the key features and buildings that give the area its character.
- Pupils in Y4 have been taught to use geographical enquiry and skills to study two contrasting localities, Merthyr Tydfil and a less economically developed country, St. Lucia. This has given the pupils the opportunity to make comparisons between the two localities and to consider the effects of tourism on the two places.

- Pupils in Y5 and Y6 study the theme of environmental change and have an awareness of how the development of Trecatti Tip has altered the environment and land use.
- In visits to places such as Porthcawl, pupils have further developed their understanding of the differences between their own environment and that of those who live and work in a seaside resort.

Shortcomings

- Pupils skills in handling, classifying and interpreting data is underdeveloped.
- Pupils record their work in a fairly superficial fashion.

Art

Standards of achievement in art are very good and pupils' work is celebrated in the many attractive displays around the school.

Good features

- Pupils make good progress in developing their observational skills through sketching activities. They use a variety of techniques and media.
- Pupils experiment with a range of drawing media on a variety of scales and evaluate their own and others work very well, discussing techniques and styles.
- Pupils produce good examples of drawing and painting landscapes and images which represent Wales. They choose colours appropriately and the paintings show the use of a number of techniques, effectively used to create textured effects. The use of food art in Welsh and their study of the work of Welsh artists displayed around the school is impressive.
- Pupils have used a range of techniques to produce designs on canvas. Pupils in Y4 and Y5 studied the artist David Hockney and produced high quality interpretations on his theme of water.
- Pupils have benefited from the skills of an 'artist in residence' to produce batik wall hangings 'symbols of peace' that are of a high standard, many examples of which are on display throughout the school.
- Pupils have used ICT to develop art by scanning pictures on the computer to create three-dimensional scenes.
- Pupils have good opportunities to study art of other cultures. Their *Interpretation of India* in the style of Mari Lloyd Jones is effective and imaginative.
- Pupils know that sculptures are made from a variety of materials and their work with clay reinforces their observations. Pupils in Y3 produced sculptures of minibeasts that show a good sense of proportion.

- Pupils are familiar with the work of famous artists and have produced effective work from observation of various aspects of their paintings. They make good efforts to capture the essence, mood and techniques of these styles in their own paintings.
- Pupils have good extra-curricular opportunities to extend their interests by taking part in art and clay clubs.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Music

Standards of achievement in music are good.

Good features

- Pupils in all year groups have good vocal skills. They sing a wide range of songs both in English and Welsh, demonstrating clear diction, singing in tune and performing with expression, enthusiasm and sensitivity.
- All pupils sing in whole-school musical productions and concerts on an annual basis.
- Pupils in Y3 make their own untuned instruments and create group beats. They identify families of tuned and untuned instruments.
- Pupils in Y4 and Y5 experiment with graphic notation using comic strips as a stimulus. They record their ideas on a score, perform and record their work using ICT.
- Pupils in Y6 record their own compositions using computers. They rehearse, perform and evaluate their own work. Pupils work collaboratively to improve the quality of compositions.
- Pupils in all year groups use a range of musical vocabulary when they are creating, performing or appraising music.
- Pupils know about the work of Welsh composers, such as Grace Williams and appraise and research their compositions using the Internet.
- Some pupils undertake instrumental tuition in violin and recorders. Pupils in Y5 and Y6 also benefit from a peripatetic singing teacher during the year and have performed with the *School Live Arts Wales Project* in Cardiff and undertaken workshops with Welsh National Opera.
- An extra-curricular choir attracts pupils throughout the school and they perform annually at a wide variety of venues within the community.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Physical education

Standards of achievement in physical education are satisfactory. No formal games, athletics or outdoor activities were observed during the inspection. Lessons took place in the school hall. Photographic evidence and teachers' plans confirm that, over the year, a range of activities takes place, which meet NC requirements.

Good features

- Pupils understand the importance of warming up properly before undertaking exercise. They also understand what is meant by heart and pulse rates and know the short-term effects of exercise on their bodies.
- Pupils balance effectively and devise their own balances. They understand the meaning of balance and posture and work imaginatively in pairs and groups to create balanced shapes.
- Pupils set out apparatus efficiently and safely and use it appropriately.
- A rota for swimming lessons is in place and the majority of pupils gain distance awards.
- Pupils co-ordinate a range of movements in dance effectively and perform a range of traditional Welsh folk dances with enthusiasm.
- Pupils have access to a range of clubs that include football, rugby and netball and they compete successfully in fixtures with other local schools.

Shortcomings

- Not all pupils are appropriately dressed for physical education with the result that they do not participate in lessons.
- Pupils do not consistently evaluate their own and others performance.

Religious education

Standards of achievement in religious education are satisfactory.

Good features

- The school follows the local agreed syllabus for religious education.
- Visits to school by local clergy and visits by pupils to local churches enhance the pupils' understanding of the significance of places of worship and of the uses and meanings of Christian artefacts such as the font, pulpit, lectern and cross.

- Personal, moral and social education during Collective worship and Circle Time contribute effectively to pupils' awareness of Christian values and beliefs. They explore feelings through story and discussion.
- Pupils in Y3 have a good knowledge of the major Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter and describe the events surrounding them. They understand the significance of baptism and recount some stories from the Bible. They reflect on rules they are familiar with and design posters to encourage other pupils to follow the 'Golden Rules'.
- In Y4, pupils are aware that people can have different beliefs and faiths that should be respected. They are introduced to the Islamic and Jewish faiths and some of the artefacts and festivals associated with them.
- Pupils in Y5 extend their understanding of different religions to include Islam. They distinguish the key characteristics of the different faiths they have studied.
- In Y6, pupils discuss right and wrong and express their feelings on moral issues such as racial prejudice and stereotypes. They write sensitively about the lives of significant figures such as Ann Frank and Martin Luther King.

Shortcomings

- Pupils have only a limited knowledge of well known Bible stories.
- The ways in which the national language, culture and heritage provides a context for religious belief in Wales are under-developed.
- Although pupils undertake a range of written work, too heavy reliance is placed on photocopied sheets at the expense of independent writing.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

Following an inspection in the autumn term of 1997, the previous inspection report identified eight key issues for action covering the need to:

1. give urgent attention to safety issues raised during the inspection;
2. raise standards in science, Welsh, design technology, information technology and geography, and within other subjects that are identified as having shortcomings;
3. develop procedures for systematic monitoring, assessment and evaluation of all subjects;
4. improve the quality of teaching;
5. complete policies and schemes of work and amend procedures for short-term planning to ensure that teachers target the needs of all pupils within their class

6. implement strategies for the effective organisation and management of SEN;
7. introduce precise and quantifiable target setting in the SDP;
8. devise strategies aimed at improving
 - (a) daily routines of the school day, particularly attendance and punctuality;
 - (b) communication with parents;
 - (c) links with external agencies.

Since the last inspection, there have been many changes at the school. The structure of the staff has changed and new systems and procedures have been introduced. Good progress has been made in meeting the requirements of the post inspection action plan.

1. The issues raised during the previous inspection have been addressed and appropriate arrangements for health and safety are now in place. There was no evidence, however, of recent fire equipment safety checks or of evacuation drills.
2. There have been substantial improvements in the levels of achievement and attainment. Standards have improved significantly in science, Welsh as a second language, design technology, information technology and geography.
3. Arrangements are now in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Core subjects are monitored twice a year, while foundation subjects are monitored on a two year rolling programme.
4. There has been a significant improvement in the proportion of good teaching with no incidents of unsatisfactory teaching observed during this inspection.
5. A comprehensive format for planning and assessment has been adopted which provides for a greater focus on learning objectives. However, the format now needs to be reviewed to redress the balance between planning and preparation
6. Effective arrangements have been developed for SEN. The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good.
7. Challenging quantifiable targets for each core subject, based on evidence of prior attainment, are now included within the SDP
8. Arrangements for improving attendance and punctuality are now in place. Communication with parents has been improved and effective links have been established with external agencies.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order to build on the significant improvements made since the last inspection, the school needs to:

1. continue to raise standards in those aspects and subjects identified as satisfactory overall;
2. devise and implement a policy and procedures that make clear how the key skills of literacy and numeracy will be progressively developed with particular reference to speaking and listening and writing;
3. simplify the planning and assessment process to improve consistency, manageability, relevance and focus to enhance its impact on teaching and learning;
4. define and implement an effective senior management structure to secure the improvements identified by self-evaluation;
5. clarify the school's budget planning and financial systems;
6. fully comply with the requirements for recording and monitoring attendance.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Goetre
School type	Junior
Age-range of pupils	7-11 Years
Address of school	Rowan Way Gurnos Estate Merthyr Tydfil
Post-Code	CF47 9PB
Telephone Number	01685 722161

Headteacher	Mr. John Bibby
Date of appointment	February 2003
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mr. Raymond Adler
Registered Inspector	Mr. G. Morris
Dates of inspection	19-21 May 2003

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					57	64	57	64	242

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	13	4	15

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	17:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	0
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	7:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	21
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.2:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Term 1			89.8	89.8
Term 2			88.7	88.7
Term 3			91.8	91.8

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.	7
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C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2002

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2002							Number of pupils in Y6: 63					
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School					3.1	26.2	30.8	40		
		National	0	0	0	0	1	6	17	46	30	0
Mathematics	Test/Task	School		3.1	4.6			13.8	16.9	40	18.5	
		National	0	2	2	-	-	5	12	41	38	
	Teacher assessment	School					3.1	3.1	47.7	40	6.2	
		National	0	0	0	0	1	4	19	47	28	0
Test/Task	School		3.1				10.8	35.4	27.7	23.1		
	National	0	5	2	-	-	4	19	43	30		
Science	Teacher assessment	School						3.1	41.5	46.2	9.2	
		National	0	0	0	-	0	2	13	50	33	
	Test/Task	School		4.6				3.1	41.5	46.2	9.2	
		National	0	2	0	-	-	1	10	47	38	

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:	27	In the school:	46
In Wales:	69.6	In Wales:	68.1

- D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	65
Number of pupils excluded during the 12 months prior to inspection	7

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

The school was inspected by a team of five inspectors who were in school for a total of 14 inspector days.

Observation notes were made from 62 teaching sessions or activities. Discussions took place with governors, parents, teachers, support and ancillary staff, volunteer helpers and pupils from all teaching groups. Samples of work from each class, covering the whole curriculum, were looked at and noted.

In addition, the inspection team examined policies, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings, financial reports, school reviews and plans and the school development plan. Evidence from a pre-inspection meeting with the governing body was taken into account. Similarly there was a separate meeting attended by the parents of 14 pupils and views also expressed in the 38 questionnaires completed.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Team Members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr. Goronwy Morris Registered Inspector	English Welsh Religious Education	Context Main Findings Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Quality of Teaching Leadership and Efficiency Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources Progress since the Last Inspection Key Issues for Action
Caterina Lewis Lay Inspector	N/A	Behaviour and Attitudes Attendance Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and other Institutions Partnership with Industry
Susan Davies Team Inspector	Mathematics Information Technology Music	Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum Curriculum
Karen Prosser Team Inspector	Science Design and Technology Art	Assessment, Recording and Reporting Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement
Graham Edwards Team Inspector	History Geography Physical Education	Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs

The inspection team would like to thank all parents, governors, staff and pupils for their assistance and co-operation at all stages of the inspection.