

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

GWERSYLLT JUNIOR SCHOOL

Gwersyllt

Wrexham

School Number: 665-2180

Date of Inspection: 18-20 November 2002

by

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Registered Inspector

Date: 8 January 2003

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Gwersyllt Junior School is situated in the village of Gwersyllt just outside the large town of Wrexham in North East Wales. The original school building was opened in 1908 and was extensively re-modelled in 1988/89. The campus is shared with Ysgol y Gaer Infant School, the Gwersyllt Special Educational Needs (SEN) Centre and the Reading Centre.

There are currently 189 pupils in the school aged between seven and 11 compared with 229 during the time of the last inspection in February 1997. Pupils are taught in classes representing separate year groups except for one mixed aged class for Y4/Y5. According to the school, approximately 50 per cent of the pupils are from backgrounds which are neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged; 25 per cent come from relatively prosperous areas and another 25 per cent from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Around 16 per cent are registered as being entitled to free school meals. The school describes the intake as representing the full range of ability. Approximately 20 per cent are identified as requiring SEN support; two are statemented. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language but they are all taught Welsh as a second language.

The principal aim of the school is to establish a happy and hard working atmosphere that is caring and stable:

- where pupils can develop as confident individuals aware of the needs of others as responsible members of society;
- and where the highest possible quality of education is provided which reflects the needs of individual pupils, and the opportunities for pupils to achieve their potential.

The School Development Plan (SDP) lists as its main priorities : information technology, staffing and class organisation, performance management and issues relating to SEN.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

- Gwersyllt Junior School is a good school with a number of strong features.
- Pupils' standards of achievement are at least satisfactory in all subjects and areas of learning; they are good in 64 per cent of sessions observed and satisfactory in the remainder (36 per cent). This represents a significant improvement on the previous inspection in which standards were judged to be good or very good in 25 per cent of classes, satisfactory in 60 per cent, and unsatisfactory in 15 per cent.

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

Subject	Key Stage 2 (KS2)
English	Good
Mathematics	Good
Science	Good
Welsh (second language)	Good
Design and technology	Satisfactory
Information technology	Satisfactory
History	Satisfactory
Geography	Good
Art	Good
Music	Satisfactory
Physical education	Good
Religious education	Good

- Standards in the key skills of listening, speaking and reading are good and in writing, they are satisfactory. Standards in numeracy are good and in information and communications technology (ICT), they are satisfactory.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good. Provision for moral development is very good. Collective worship, religious education and the wider curriculum have made a significant contribution to enhancing the spiritual dimension of pupils' education since the last inspection. Pupils develop good social skills in and out of lessons. Many and varied extra-curricular activities play an important part in the development of social and cultural awareness within the school. Pupils are provided with good opportunities of appreciating their own and other people's cultures.
- Standards of behaviour are good as are pupils' attitude to work. The school has established good strategies to develop pupils' self-discipline and personal values since the last inspection.
- Attendance is satisfactory and the school's registration procedures comply with the requirements of the National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. It is at least satisfactory in all lessons. In six per cent of the lessons observed, it was very good; in 59 per cent, teaching was good and in 35 per cent, it was satisfactory. This represents a marked improvement since the last inspection in which 25 per cent of the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory, 50 per cent satisfactory, and only 25 per cent good or very good.
- Good features are clear learning objectives outlined to the pupils at the beginning of well-structured lessons; good questioning skills; lessons proceeding at a good pace; the use of a good range of teaching techniques and teachers' good subject knowledge.
- Where teaching is less effective, insufficient attention is given to setting tasks which ensure that pupils are working at an appropriate level of challenge.
- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good overall. Pupils' work is marked regularly and in most classes teachers' written comments are constructive and helpful. Good use is made of the results of NC tests in the core subjects but assessment in foundation subjects is underdeveloped. The quality of the written reports to parents is good.

- The quality of the curriculum is very good and covers all statutory subjects. Policies and schemes of work in all subjects offer good guidance to teachers. There are appropriate arrangements for the development of key skills and for pupils' personal, social and health education. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is very good and there are effective procedures for child protection and for promoting the well-being and health and safety of pupils.
- Provision for SEN is good. The SEN Code of Practice is very efficiently and effectively implemented. Overall, the tasks set are matched to pupils' individual needs and the quality of assessment and recording is good.
- Partnership with parents and the community is very good and has a positive impact on pupils' overall development and standards of achievement. Links with other schools, institutions, industry and business are good.
- Overall, the quality of self evaluation and planning for improvement is very good. School-based reviews leading to Quality Development Statements have a positive effect on pupils' standards of achievement and the quality of educational provision.
- The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher is very good. She is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior teacher. The senior management team provide a clear sense of direction to the work of the school.
- The school has a monitoring policy. However, current procedures do not focus sufficiently on the evaluation of standards achieved by pupils in subjects across the school. Subject portfolios that provide evidence of pupils' achievement assessed against NC level descriptors have yet to be formulated.
- Governors are interested and committed to the school. They have a strategic role in the development of the school; members are linked to various curriculum areas and they visit the school on a regular basis which greatly assists them in the decision making process.
- The budget is well managed. The school provides value for money.
- The school makes good use of available learning resources, staffing and accommodation.
- The school has made very good progress towards addressing the key issues contained in the last inspection report.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

- Based on the lessons and work observed, standards of achievement are at least satisfactory in all subjects and areas of learning; they are good in 64 per cent of sessions observed and satisfactory in the remainder (36 per cent). This represents a significant improvement on the previous inspection in which standards were judged to be good or very good in 25 per cent of classes, satisfactory in 60 per cent, and unsatisfactory in 15 per cent.
- Standards in English are good overall. Pupils make good progress in listening speaking and reading; standards in writing are satisfactory. In mathematics and science, pupils make good progress and achieve good standards in each attainment target of the NC.

- Standards in Welsh second language are good overall. Standards in speaking and listening are good and, in reading, standards range from satisfactory to good; standards in writing are satisfactory.
- Standards in design technology and information technology are satisfactory.
- In geography, art, physical education and religious education, standards are good.
- Standards in history and music are satisfactory.
- In the most recent NC tests in English, mathematics and science in 2002, pupils achieved standards that were significantly above the national averages. There was no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls in these tests. This shows a marked improvement on the results reported in the last inspection.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

Overall, the school plans appropriately for the development of key skills. Standards in listening, speaking and reading are good, standards in writing are satisfactory. Standards in numeracy are good and the standards in ICT are satisfactory.

- Pupils generally develop good skills in listening and speaking; they discuss and share ideas openly in group and class discussions. The majority speak confidently using a wide and purposeful range of vocabulary. A few pupils do not listen nor concentrate sufficiently well to profit fully from their lessons.
- The pupils' reading skills are good across the key stage. They read for pleasure and enjoyment and display sincere enthusiasm when discussing the books they like. They gather information from a range of sources to enhance and support their knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.
- The quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum for a variety of purposes is variable; overall, standards are satisfactory. There are good examples of written work in science and religious education but in general, there is insufficient use of extended writing to record work across the curriculum.
- Overall, standards in numeracy are good. Pupils apply their knowledge well to calculate and measure in science, geography and design and technology.
- Across the key stage, the pupils are competent in their control and use of basic computer skills. They use programs suitable to their age to support their work mainly in language and mathematics. In general, however, the use of ICT to support various aspects of the curriculum is underdeveloped.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good while moral development is very good.

- The school has a clear set of aims for all its pupils. These aims are understood throughout the school and help to create the positive and supportive atmosphere that permeates all classes. Strong relationships with governors and parents are important elements in the partnership approach to the raising of standards of pupils' learning. The school has an inclusive policy and a caring and supportive ethos.

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- Well-planned and meaningful arrangements for collective worship contribute well to the ethos of the school. These are reverent occasions in which pupils respond appropriately. Pupils also contribute to these occasions by reading and sharing their experiences with others. The quality of the singing is satisfactory although some of the older pupils are reluctant to participate. Pupils have the opportunity to reflect on the weekly themes at other times during the week.
 - Pupils know the school rules and those of their own classes, which they help to formulate. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and show respect for each other, adults, each other's property and the environment of the school.
 - Charitable activities and pupils' understanding of their significance contribute to the development of their moral and social skills. Pupils raise funds for numerous local charities and make boxes for Operation Christmas Child.
 - Pupils collaborate well in their lessons and during lunchtime helping to build good social skills. Some pupils are given responsibilities as "Office Monitors" to help with office duties during the lunch period. Others act as monitors in class and demonstrate a high level of responsibility.
 - Pupils' work in geography and religious education help pupils to foster an understanding of different cultures from around the world. The school has successfully promoted racial harmony through work with the Football Association and has a comprehensive policy on this issue.
 - The provision for the development of Welsh culture is good. Pupils develop an awareness of the traditions and heritage of their own locality in and around Wrexham. They are involved with the Urdd competitions and a number of pupils are members of this movement.
 - Many and varied extra-curricular activities play an important part in the development of social and cultural awareness within the school.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

The overall quality of pupils' behaviour is good and the great majority have a positive attitude to their work.

- The vast majority of pupils behave well in class; they listen to instructions and respond appropriately. They are polite, courteous and helpful to visitors.
- A few pupils find it difficult to maintain concentration and self-discipline and in these cases, the school has developed appropriate arrangement for ensuring that good discipline is maintained.
- Pupils co-operate well in class and play together successfully. The school's anti-bullying policy is effective.
- The parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are happy with the standards of behaviour set by the school. These views are also endorsed by the non-teaching staff.
- Pupils show courtesy and friendship in talks with adults and are able to discuss their views maturely.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance is satisfactory.

- Attendance rates are well above 90 per cent and the average attendance for the previous three terms was 93.5 per cent. There were no unauthorised absences.
- Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of notification and explanation of absences and the school has an effective system in place to investigate any absences that cause concern.
- The school has a good working relationship with the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Pupils arrive at the school punctually and staff ensure that the school day and lessons start on time.
- Registration procedures comply with requirements.

5 QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching is good. All the lessons observed were at least satisfactory or better. In six per cent of the lessons, teaching was very good; in 59 per cent, teaching was good and in 35 per cent, it was satisfactory. This represents a marked improvement since the last inspection in which 25 per cent of the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory, 50 per cent satisfactory, and only 25 per cent good or very good.

- Lessons are well-prepared and the learning objectives are outlined clearly to the pupils at the beginning of the lesson.
- In the majority of lessons, the pace is brisk, which maintains pupils' attention and alertness. Materials and resources are available so that tasks can begin promptly. Time is not wasted in transition between activities.
- Most lessons are appropriately structured with suitable introductions and plenary sessions which contribute well to the quality of pupils' learning.
- Questioning techniques are suitably developed and, in most lessons, pupils are aware of the high expectations teachers have for them to achieve.
- Overall, appropriate attention is given to the development of key skills in most lessons.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach are sound.
- In general, teachers use appropriate methods and a good range of teaching techniques. Evidence of good practice in co-operative group work, problem solving and independent learning was found in classes across the key stage.
- Whilst differentiation is used effectively in a number of lessons, in others, insufficient attention is given to setting tasks that ensure that pupils are working at an appropriate level of challenge.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good overall.

- Pupils' work is marked regularly, often in their presence. In most classes teachers' written comments are constructive and support learning but in some, marking, though conscientious, is superficial.
- Good use is made of the results of published tests and national assessments both to compare the school's performance with local and national averages and as a diagnostic tool to inform planning in the core subjects. All pupils are assessed on entry to the school and are given a series of standardised tests as they progress through the key stage. Currently, this information is mostly paper based and the school is looking at the use of information technology to reduce bureaucracy.
- Assessment in foundation subjects is underdeveloped and is an area the school has already identified for improvement. In a number of subjects, there is no systematic assessment or recording of the standards achieved by pupils in order to assist transition between classes and across the key stage. Portfolios of pupils work, assessed and levelled against NC level descriptions, have yet to be formulated.
- The assessment and recording procedures for pupils with SEN are good and fully meet the requirements of the Code of Practice.
- The quality of the comments on written reports to parents is good giving a clear indication of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. As well as the annual report, parents receive narrative assessments, which include the views of the child with space for parents to write comments. Open sessions occur each term when parents are invited to meet the teachers to discuss their children's progress either formally or informally.
- Pupils are involved in setting termly targets for themselves; lesson objectives are clearly displayed on the board so that pupils are involved in and understand what is expected of them. Such initiatives greatly assists them to take ownership of their learning process.

5.3 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is very good and covers all the statutory subjects. It is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs.

- Policies and subject schemes of work are in place for all subjects of the curriculum and offer good guidance to staff about the aims and objects of each subject.
- Time allocation is appropriate for all subjects and teaching time is in accordance with National Assembly for Wales recommendations.
- Pupils are taught in separate year groups except for one mixed-aged class for Y4/Y5, and appropriate planning ensures that continuity and progression is safeguarded within these arrangements.
- Within the planning, consideration is given to the development of key skills and there are appropriate arrangements for pupils' personal social and health education.
- Homework is given on a regular basis and reinforces the teaching and learning process. Parents are happy with these arrangements.

- Weekly curriculum planning is undertaken which focuses on raising standards by stating learning objectives and focusing on the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Effective and well-developed links are in place with the feeder infant school and the receiving secondary school. This is having a positive effect on continuity and progression in pupils' learning.
- Curriculum provision is effective in ensuring that all activities are socially inclusive and there is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.
- The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are available for all pupils. After school clubs are arranged in a large number of sporting activities as well as in drama, recorders, art, Urdd and family French. Pupils participate enthusiastically in these activities which are greatly appreciated by parents.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

The school makes very good provision for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils in its care.

- Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive and supportive. Pupils report that they feel secure and that their welfare is a priority in school. The supervision during break and lunch times is equally careful and alert to pupils' needs.
- The school's assessment, recording and reporting procedures ensure that pupils are aware of their academic progress and that they receive guidance on how to improve.
- A Health and Safety policy offers useful guidance to teachers.
- Procedures for Child Protection are fully understood by all concerned and correctly implemented by staff.
- Fire drills are held regularly. A number of teachers hold current First Aid qualifications.
- The school has a strong professional working relationship with other outside agencies.
- Personal and social education issues are well addressed throughout the curriculum and in collective worship.
- Minor aspects of safety were reported to the headteacher and governors during the inspection.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN

The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Special educational needs pupils participate fully in a broad and well-balanced curriculum, including religious education.

- Approximately 20 per cent of pupils are listed on the school's SEN register, two of whom have a statement of SEN.
- Pupils make steady to good progress when withdrawn for small group or individual tuition and by in-class support.
- Pupils on statement or on the School Action Plus register make good progress.

- Very good liaison between class teachers and the SEN support tutor ensures that pupils work on the same curriculum area without disruption. Teachers strive to match the work they set to individual pupils' needs.
- The SEN Code of Practice is very efficiently and effectively implemented. Individual education plans (IEP's) are focused, regularly reviewed and provide useful teaching and learning information to class teachers.
- The headteacher acts as SEN co-ordinator (SENCO); procedures are systematic and well implemented.
- The pupils' progress is enhanced by good working relationships between the headteacher and external agencies.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

The school's partnership with parents and the community is very good and makes a very good contribution to pupils' overall development and standards of achievement. There are good links with other schools and institutions.

- The school has striven to provide parents with a thorough knowledge on the education that pupils receive, through the Prospectus, regular newsletters, reports and parents' visits.
- Parents acknowledge and appreciate the open-door policy and feel welcome and able to discuss any concerns they might have with the headteacher and staff. This view was strongly endorsed in the responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire.
- The home-school agreement complies with statutory requirements. It places reasonable responsibilities on pupils, parents and the school.
- The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) raises valuable funds which are put to good use by the school; it also serves to strengthen the social links with the community.
- Parents assist in classroom activities and provide help with extra-curricular and sports activities.
- The links with the local community are also very good with the school making good use of available local amenities and facilities to enrich pupils' learning.
- Members of the community assist through listening to pupils reading and sharing their expertise and experiences with the pupils. A lay minister comes in regularly to take services.
- The school encourages pupils to join in social activities within the community and they contribute to local charitable efforts and also represent the school at civic events.
- There are strong links with the feeder infant school as well as with the receiving secondary school. Joint staff meetings, regular visits and developing curricular links ensure a smooth transition for pupils between the various sectors.
- The school regularly provides initial teacher training places as well as work experience for students from the local secondary school.
- Good use is made of all the relevant services provided by the unitary authority (UA) including the services of its officers and specialist advisers.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

The school has good links with industry.

- The school has produced a suitable policy statement for work-related education that provides good guidance for future development.
- Pupils visit industrial sites and local businesses which provide curricular enrichment.
- Links with a leading regional newspaper have provided valuable learning opportunities.
- The school uses the facilities of commercially run centres such as Erddig, Legacy and the Boat Museum in Ellesmere Port.
- Local organisations have provided valuable resources for the school. Local businesses regularly provide gifts for school and PTA activities.
- Two members of staff have had placements with companies and this has had a positive impact on curriculum development.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

The quality of self evaluation and planning for improvement is very good.

- The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the needs of the school and the way forward. The governing body is well-informed and fully involved in processes of evaluation and school improvement.
- The school produced a detailed action plan following the last inspection and very good progress has been made in the implementation of the key issues raised in the report.
- The school-based reviews leading to Quality Development Statements are honest and evaluative documents which have a positive effect on standards of pupils' achievement and the quality of educational provision.
- The SDP is a well constructed document which is regularly reviewed and updated. It contains all the appropriate steps in sufficient detail to enable the governing body to judge the effectiveness of its decisions.
- The school analyses NC test data, and results are compared with local and national averages; pupils are tracked through the school and individual targets are set in the core subjects.
- The school has effective arrangements for evaluating the training and development needs of all members of staff. Further developments are planned through the training programme for Performance Management.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

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

- The school has a very good ethos and a clear sense of purpose. It succeeds in establishing a hard working atmosphere that is caring and welcoming, where pupils develop as polite and confident individuals, and where all pupils are given good opportunities to achieve their full potential.
- The school benefits greatly from the discerning and effective leadership provided by the headteacher and this has been a significant factor in the school's notable improvement since the previous inspection. She is committed to further improvements and is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the senior teacher who carry out their responsibilities effectively and conscientiously.

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- Governors are interested and committed to the school. They meet regularly and contribute to the formulation of school policies. They have a strategic role in the development of the school and they are well-informed by the headteacher and the staff to assist members in the decision making process. Appropriate sub-committees are in place; members are linked to different curriculum areas and they visit the school and meet with their respective co-ordinators on a regular basis.
 - All members of the teaching staff have been allocated curriculum responsibilities. They develop and evaluate subject policies and schemes of work, undertake an audit of resources and visit classes. However, procedures for evaluating pupils' standards of achievement across the key stage are at an early stage; subject portfolios that provide evidence of pupils' achievement assessed against NC level descriptors have yet to be developed.
 - The SDP for the period 2002 to 2005 is a practical working document and contains appropriate details relating to the areas which have been identified as having a high, medium and low priority. Plans are regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure continued improvements in the quality of the educational provision.
 - Financial resources are well managed. The most recent auditor's report stated that the school had a very good standard of financial control. There are good procedures in place for ensuring that expenditure is appropriately linked to the SDP and to judge the effectiveness with which resources are used. The current surplus in the budget has been earmarked for the purchase of additional resources and equipment and to cushion the effect of falling rolls on current staffing levels.
 - A wide range of organisational and administrative policies is in place and school routines operate efficiently and effectively.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall.

- The level of staffing is good and teachers are appropriately qualified for the age ranges they teach. The staff benefit from a range of in-service training (INSET) courses they have attended and the school has recently been awarded the Investors in People standard for the second time. The school has adopted performance management procedures.
- Good use is made of support staff including mid-day supervisors. This contributes significantly to the smooth running of the school.
- The accommodation is spacious for the number of pupils on roll and effective use is made of all available space. It is clutter free and kept in a clean and tidy state by the caretaker and cleaning staff. The kitchen staff have also recently won an award for hygiene standards. There is a good standard of display throughout the school.
- The school has adequate resources to deliver the NC. Subject leaders bid for resources at the start of the year for their subjects. The senior management team allocate funding having due regard to the SDP and curriculum needs. Governors play a role in monitoring any large expenditure. The headteacher has been successful in bringing additional funds into the school through grants and her work as a performance management advisor.
- The school makes the provision of a breakfast and after school club for a number of pupils on a regular basis. This provision has its own space and adequate resources for the number of pupils currently attending.

- The school provides a secure environment and doors are locked once pupils are inside. Entrance can then only be made on request via the front door and office staff.
- There is sufficient playground space for pupils and a large playing field on the campus.
- The school makes very effective use of valuable local amenities for sport and for curriculum development. These include visits to local sports centres and sites such as Legacy and the Alyn Waters Park. It also uses visiting artists and musicians and members of the community, including parents, to enhance the provision for pupils in the school.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

English

Standards of achievement in English are, overall, good. In speaking, listening and reading they are good; standards in writing are satisfactory. This represents a distinct improvement on the previous report on English.

Good features

- Pupils speak confidently and are keen to expand on their ideas. They can use both informal and informal language in appropriate circumstances.
- They ask and answer questions relevantly when they have guest speakers. They take part in role-play with relish and lack of inhibition.
- They listen well to their teacher and to each other indicating respect for other people's points of view. They respond promptly and accurately to instructions and directions.
- Pupils are reading at levels appropriate to their age and ability and many make good progress. Some pupils are responding well to the improved reading provision given through shared, paired and group reading.
- Younger pupils are developing good use of phonics and apply these and various cues sensibly to help their reading.
- Pupils analyse characters well and many can justify their ideas intelligently by reference to the text. They can predict the conclusions of stories imaginatively basing their ideas on their previous knowledge. Older pupils in the key stage are beginning to skim, or scan print. They read quickly off-screen.
- By the end of KS2 pupils experience a good repertoire of reading materials and display sincere enthusiasm when discussing the books they like. Most read with good understanding and expression. Many read their own work accurately. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction, the roles of author and illustrator, and have satisfactory reference skills.
- Pupils write in a satisfactory range of styles, mainly biographies, autobiographies, play-scripts, descriptions or narratives and some poetry.
- On the whole pupils are developing useful drafting skills.

Shortcomings

- Although many pupils are beginning to respond positively to the spelling and handwriting systems in place there are a number of pupils who persist in weak spelling and punctuation.
- The more able writers too often restrict the length and originality of their writing by being content with work which is not of their best.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement are generally good.

Good features

- Pupils across the key stage use a range of strategies to solve mathematical problems. They are able to describe how processes work and suggest alternative operations to reach the correct conclusions.
- Pupils' work is presented in an orderly and appropriate manner. Pupils in Y6 demonstrate good use of the ruler to measure and draw accurately when calculating the area of rectangles and simple, compound shapes.
- Pupils in Y5 successfully convert time from the twelve-hour clock to the twenty-four hour clock. Most pupils can add and subtract digital time and they use a range of resources to help with this process.
- In Y3 and Y4, pupils understand place value and are able to increase and decrease numbers by units, tens and hundreds. They understand that fractions are part of the whole and use correct vocabulary such as numerator and denominator to describe the fraction.
- A range of charts and graphs are used to present data collected by pupils. Good work is done by Y6 pupils as part of a transition project with the local high school using their recently acquired facilities in information technology.
- During mental activities, pupils respond quickly and accurately using number cards and generators to display their answers. Pupils also use a good range of number squares and place value cards effectively.

Shortcomings

- More able pupils make insufficient use of their mathematical skills in a range of practical tasks and investigations.

Science

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils have a good knowledge of science across the NC programmes of study and a good understanding of experimental and investigative processes.
- Pupils in Y3 have a good understanding of life processes and living things. They understand the importance of a healthy diet for humans and they conduct an investigation to discover what drinks may be harmful to human teeth.
- Year 4 pupils are able to describe some of the basic differences between the properties of different materials and explain how these differences are used to classify substances as solids, liquids and gasses.
- In Y6, pupils' understanding of physical processes is developing well. They conduct an investigation to discover the effect of light on different surfaces. They are able to explain the relationship between the ray of light striking a mirror and the one reflected from it.
- Pupils use appropriate equipment for accurate observation and measurement, appreciate the need for a fair test and present their findings clearly.

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- Pupils across the key stage are developing good levels of independence in recording their work in the subject. They make every effort to interpret their findings and explain the outcomes of observations.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Welsh second language

Standards of achievement are, overall, good. In speaking and listening, standards are good, reading standards range from satisfactory to good and standards in writing are satisfactory.

Good features

- Teachers and pupils make good and regular use of incidental Welsh during the day which contributes well to pupils' understanding of the language and enables them to respond orally with increased confidence.
- Pupils' pronunciation is generally good. They are able to recall a range of vocabulary and sentence patterns relative to their age and ability. They listen well to one another and are eager to converse in pairs.
- They respond to basic questions about themselves, the weather, their likes and dislikes and are increasingly using the correct form of positive and negative replies.
- Younger pupils derive pleasure from reading together from the class reading book. Older pupils use their reading to further develop their oral and writing skills.
- Pupils develop writing in a variety of contexts. Younger pupils write words, phrases and short sentences to express simple information. Older pupils produce short dialogues and compose personal letters. Standards are satisfactory.

Shortcomings

- Pupils generally lack confidence in making extended observations in conversations.
- The reading and writing skills of a significant minority of pupils are currently underdeveloped.

Design and technology

Only one lesson in design and technology was observed, but evidence in the school indicates that standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils use the opportunity to use a range of materials and techniques across the key stage. In Y3 and Y4, pupils design and make bookmarks, picture frames, models of Tudor beds and Victorian samplers and achieve satisfactory standards.
- Pupils in Y5 and Y6 use information technology to control a fair ground ride made from construction kits. They design and make musical instruments and use circuitry to make simple torches. Overall, the quality of the finished products is satisfactory.
- Pupils in Y3 are able to evaluate bookmarks they had made, both for their appearance and fitness for purpose. They are able to comment on size and strength and suggest ways of improving their designs.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' designs and drawings lack sufficient detail to inform the making process.
- Pupils' design and evaluation skills are underdeveloped because of the limited opportunities they are given to look back at previous work.

Information technology

Overall, standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- The school is currently developing an ICT suite which, if correctly used, will enhance pupils' skills by providing them with far greater access to hardware and appropriate software.
- The majority of pupils are able to save their work to a file and retrieve it successfully. They can also access information from the Internet and by using a limited number of CD-ROMs. Some pupils can copy and paste work from one programme to another.
- Pupils in some classes can use e-mail to communicate either from home or to a link school in Powys. They understand the need for security and have completed an agreement with the school on Internet safety.
- Most pupils in Y5 and Y6 are able to programme a turtle in logo control to draw simple shapes. Some are able to talk about data logging and how spreadsheets can be used to collect data and create graphs.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not have access to the full range of media to present their work in information technology. Their use of recording, photographic equipment and slide presentations is underdeveloped.
- Pupils do not use ICT sufficiently in the classroom to support their learning and minor problems with the equipment impacts adversely on their confidence.
- Although used by teachers, pupils' skills in the use of the interactive whiteboard are underdeveloped.

History

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils study allocated historical periods through the topic of houses and households. They develop a good understanding of the ways of life of people in different eras.
- Younger pupils understand various aspects of the life of the Celts and Romans in Britain and make good use of the Legacy experience and Chester to bring the historical facts to life.
- Older pupils study the Tudors and their connection to Wales, with particular reference to the local connections with Thomas Myddleton at Chirk Castle. They write Elizabethan recipes, draw up time lines of the Tudors, work on a job description of Henry VIII and contrast the lives of the rich and poor. Pupils make an inventory of a typical Elizabethan bedroom and compare it with their own.

- They investigate the role of children in the Victorian age and write a report on their experience of how servants lived and worked in Erddig Hall. They contrast the lives of a country and city child at that time.
- Pupils acquire good first hand knowledge of the plight of British citizens in World War Two through visitors and other sources of information.

Shortcomings

- Although pupils experience history in a lively way and are interested in what they learn, their ability to investigate historical topics independently is underdeveloped.
- More able pupils often record their work in too brief a form.

Geography

Standards of achievement are good. This represents a distinct improvement on the report on geography in the last inspection.

Only one lesson in geography was observed, which was in Y3, but evidence in the school indicates that standards are good.

Good features

- Pupils have a good knowledge of their local area. They have a good understanding of how it links with other localities and what processes are contributing to its development.
- Pupils' skills of geographical enquiry are developing well. Year 3 pupils collect evidence about the jobs done by people who visit the school and begin to use the information to understand some of the similarities and differences between places.
- Through the key stage, pupils have a good knowledge of contrasting areas. Year 4 pupils can refer to some the similarities and differences between Gwersyllt and Conway, and Y5 pupils compare and contrast some of the geographical patterns in Snowdonia with those in their local area. Pupils in Y6 have a good understanding of similarities and differences in the lives of people in St Lucia and that of their own area.
- Older pupils understand the individual's responsibility for the environment. They visit a local park and prepare a pamphlet giving information on the park's amenities and attractions.

Shortcomings

- In general, pupils make insufficient use of ICT and secondary sources to obtain information and ideas about places.

Art

Standards of achievement are good across the key stage.

Good features

- Pupils use a range of materials and equipment during their art sessions. They have a good range of vocabulary that they use when describing their work.
- Pupils use ICT appropriately to support and enhance their work in art lessons. Pupils use software to create symmetrical patterns while studying the work of William Morris and Laura Ashley, for example.

- Pupils study artists and illustrators and can make observations about the styles used. They successfully emulate the work of artists such as L S Lowry and understand the significance of such work.
- Pupils' work is displayed effectively around the school and, in particular, in a gallery which shows a range of styles and progression across the key stage. Art is given a high profile and the school has been successful in promoting its work through participation in a number of local and national competitions.
- Pupils have the opportunity to work with a number of other artists, both in residence in the school and at the local college and produce large-scale abstract art of good quality.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills in making three-dimensional shapes are underdeveloped.

Music

Standards of achievement are satisfactory and represent an improvement since the last report. Over 30 pupils sing in the school choir and contributed to the CD of 'Wrexham Schools'. Many take advantage of the instrumental tuition offered, including recorders in Y5.

Good features

- Younger pupils are aware of the need for good posture in singing. They listen carefully to, and can identify, simple changes in pitch.
- Pupils have a good sense of rhythm, can maintain a steady beat and listen well to copy different rhythm patterns.
- They have a good understanding and are comfortable in using, correct musical terminology.
- They can distinguish between sounds of varying duration.
- Older pupils make a good attempt to maintain four part, round singing.

Shortcomings

- Although pupils respond positively to the much improved scheme of work they do not make more than satisfactory progression in the four years in the school.
- The quality of singing is, overall, barely satisfactory. Many pupils sing out of tune and strain to reach higher notes.

Physical Education

Standards of achievement are good.

Pupils follow a wide and varied programme reflecting all the requirements of the NC. Good use is made of off-site facilities for swimming, tennis, gymnastics and outdoor and adventure activities.

Good features

- Pupils are enthusiastic; they understand the significance of 'warm-up and 'cool-down' exercises. Pupils listen carefully, undertake their activities in an orderly and disciplined manner and pay particular attention to safety.

- In dance, Y3 pupils explore movements using the actions of travelling, jumping, stretching, turning and stillness. They develop their responses to a poem well by using different shapes, levels and directions.
- In gymnastics, Y4 pupils explore different ways of travelling and perform complex sequences of movement involving rolling, jumping and balancing. They repeat movement sequences which emphasise changes of shape, speed, level and direction, both on the floor and when using apparatus.
- Pupils in Y6 develop good skills of sending, receiving, striking and travelling with a ball. In football, they begin to understand the common skills and principles of attack and defence.
- Year 6 pupils show a good sense of rhythm and tempo when performing a traditional Welsh dance. They repeat patterns accurately and the vast majority move and step correctly to the tempo of the music.
- Good use is made of appraisal in all aspects of physical education, both by teachers, who give constructive feedback to pupils, and by pupils themselves, who consider ways in which they might improve their performance.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided in physical education. Pupils who attend these achieve good standards which enables the school to compete successfully in various competitions at local and county level.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Religious Education

The school follows the local agreed syllabus for religious education. Overall, standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils' ability to listen well in lessons and assemblies enhances their understanding of the needs and feelings of others. They can relate their own experiences to Bible stories and express views on historical as well as current events and happenings.
- Their awareness of other people's faiths and beliefs helps pupils to foster caring attitudes and good moral values. As well as Christianity, pupils mainly study Judaism, however they also discuss other religions through such activities as "Circle Time" and "What's in the News?" in geography.
- Pupils in Y6 study the significance and symbolism of the red and white poppy. They are can express their own feelings sensitively and some pupils take part in the local Remembrance Sunday service.
- Pupils' work is enhanced through links with the local community and church.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

In the last report, seven key issues for action were identified, and the school has made very good progress in addressing four of the issues and good progress in the others.

1. Improve levels of attainment in spelling and punctuation.

Before the last inspection, improvements in pupils' standards of literacy were identified in the SDP. Various initiatives have been undertaken since 1997 to improve attainment in spelling and punctuation. A new spelling policy is in place and monitoring procedures have been formulated to assess progress. Evidence gathered in this inspection and results of recent NC tests indicate a distinct improvement in levels of attainment.

2. Raise overall standards in geography, music and written Welsh.

Standards have improved in all three subjects. Standards are now judged to be good in geography and satisfactory in music and written Welsh.

3. Establish and consistently apply strategies to develop pupils' self-discipline and personal values.

Strategies to ensure consistency of approach by all members of staff in matters relating self-discipline and the promotion of positive attitudes and values are firmly embedded and are implemented effectively.

4. Take action to ensure that quality of teaching is consistently high throughout the school.

In the current inspection, the quality of teaching was judged to be very good in six per cent of the lessons observed; in 59 per cent, teaching was good and in 35 per cent, it was satisfactory. This represents a marked improvement since the last inspection in which 25 per cent of the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory and only 25 per cent good or very good.

5. Enhance the spiritual dimension of pupils' education within assemblies, religious education lessons and the broader aspects of the curriculum.

Pupils' spiritual development is now judged to be good. Collective worship, religious education and the wider curriculum have made a significant contribution in enhancing the spiritual dimension of pupils' education since the last inspection.

6. Provide better resources to support learning in information technology, history, geography, religious education and Welsh.

Since the last inspection, the allocation of funding to support curriculum development has ensured that adequate resources are available to deliver the requirements of the NC. A spare classroom is currently being developed into an information technology suite.

7. Ensure that the total teaching time per week meets National Assembly for Wales recommendations.

The school now meets the recommendations of 23.5 hours teaching per week.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

To build on the good practice that exists, the school needs to:

- raise pupils' standards of achievement in areas of learning where shortcomings are noted, and particularly where standards were judged to be generally satisfactory;
- establish appropriate procedures for assessing pupils' progress and achievement in foundation subjects;
- develop subject portfolios which include evidence of pupils' achievement assessed against NC level descriptors.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Gwersyllt Junior School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	7-11
Address of school	Dodd's Lane Gwersyllt Wrexham
Post-Code	LL11 4NT
Telephone Number	01978 756655

Headteacher	Mrs B Gittings
Date of appointment	April 1995
Chair of Governors	Mr E C George
Registered Inspector	Mr D Gwynfor Evans
Dates of inspection	November 18 - 20, 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	0	0	0	0	41	47	48	53	189

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	3	8.57

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	22:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	27
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.2:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Term 1			91.92	91.92
Term 2			95.01	95.01
Term 3			93.02	93.02

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

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2002

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2002								Number of pupils in Y6: 55					
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	45	51	0
		National	0	0	2	n/a	1	1	6	19	48	25	0
	Test/Task	School	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	2	44	49	0
		National	0	2	2	0	n	n	5	14	47	30	n
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		National	1	0	3	n/a	0	1	4	24	49	21	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		National	1	2	0	2	0	0	3	22	48	23	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	53	38	0
		National	0	0	2	n/a	0	1	4	20	47	28	0
	Test/Task	School	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	13	46	36	0
		National	0	2	1	1	n	n	4	18	42	32	n
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	45	51	0
		National	1	0	2	n/a	0	0	3	15	52	29	0
	Test/Task	School	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	4	44	47	0
		National	0	2	0	0	n	n	2	13	51	31	n

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	90.9	In the school:	78.2
In Wales:	68	In Wales:	68

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

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

- The inspection team comprised of four inspectors, including the lay inspector who visited the school for a total of 10 inspector days at the school.
- 51 teaching sessions were observed.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff and headteacher.
- Pupils were heard reading and samples of their work were inspected in all classes.
- Extra- curricular activities were observed.
- Acts of collective worship were attended and playtimes, lunch times, registration periods and other school routines were observed.
- The full range of documentation available in the school was studied.

- Pre-inspection meetings were held with staff, parents and governors.
- Nine parents attended the pre-inspection meeting; 42 parents' responses to a questionnaire were analysed.
- Staff and governors were given feedback after the inspection.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Mr D G Evans	RgI	Context; Main findings; Standards achieved by pupils; Teaching; Curriculum; Quality of self evaluation and self improvement; Leadership and efficiency; School improvement.	Welsh science geography physical education
Mr G Morris	Lay	Behaviour and attitudes; Attendance; Partnership with parents and community, schools and other establishments; Partnership with industry.	
Mrs M Meredith-Jones	Team	Support guidance and pupils welfare; Provision for pupils with SEN.	English history music
Mr J Griffiths	Team	Pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Assessment, recording and reporting; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.	mathematics design and technology information technology art religious education

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