

REPORT

on the

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

**HEULFRE JUNIOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL
GWAENYNOG ROAD
DENBIGH
DENBIGHSHIRE
LL16 3RU**

School Number: 663/2236

Date of Inspection: 15 - 17 October 2002

By

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Under Estyn contract number: T/35/02P

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Heulfre Junior School is situated in the small county town of Denbigh. The school caters for pupils from 7-11 years and they come mainly from the surrounding estate. There has been a slight decrease in pupil numbers since the last inspection in June 1997, from 110 to the current roll of 97 pupils. The pupils are organised into five classes; one class for each of the year groups 3-5 and two parallel classes for pupils in Y6.

The school considers its catchment area to be mainly disadvantaged. Pupils represent the full range of ability. Currently, about 49% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals which is above the national average for Wales. The area is anglicised in character and English is the language spoken at home by all pupils.

Thirty-one pupils (32%) are on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN). According to the stages of the new Code of Practice for SEN, six pupils are being monitored, 10 are on school action, 11 are on school action plus and four are the subject of a statement of SEN.

The school states that its main aims are:

- to give all children, regardless of gender, race, religion, circumstances and ability, a full, appropriate and worthwhile education in a safe, happy, healthy and positive environment;
- to work in partnership with home to promote trust, support, understanding and knowledge of the school through two way open door communication;
- to involve as many agencies as appropriate to secure the best provision for all the children so that help and support are readily available to meet their needs and that of their families.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

In Key Stage 2 (KS2), pupils' standards of achievement in the different National Curriculum (NC) subjects and religious education are as follows:

Subject	KS2
English	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory
Science	Good
Welsh second language	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Satisfactory
Information technology	Good
History	Satisfactory
Geography	Good
Art	Good

Music	Good
Physical education	Good
Religious education	Good

- Standards were at least satisfactory in all lessons seen and, in 63 per cent, they were good.
- Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in the development of key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). As a result of the very good strategies operating for developing pupils' love and enjoyment of reading, pupils make good progress in reading for information across the curriculum.
- In the (NC) test assessments, pupils scored slightly below the national average in the combined scores for English, mathematics and science. However, in relation to schools in similar social circumstances, the school achieves good standards.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is a very caring community in which all pupils are valued and respected. Pupils have a clear sense of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was never less than good and it was very good in 20 per cent of them. Teaching reflects the staff's high expectations, good subject knowledge and ability to plan and organise the work to ensure successful learning outcomes for pupils of all abilities.
- The overall quality of assessment, recording and reporting is satisfactory with some good features. The present system is in its first term of implementation and has not yet had time to influence fully the standards of achievement in the school.
- The school provides a curriculum that is good in its range, relevance and balance. Schemes of work have very recently been reviewed and updated. They are now of good quality. The provision for homework varies between classes. At best, as in the Y6 classes, it serves to reinforce classroom work appropriately and parents are kept fully informed through homework diaries. The homework is not as well planned and consistently set in other classes.
- The provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is good. The school is a caring and supportive community in which the supervision of pupils is good and their safety is ensured at all times. Relationships are good and pupils know that they are able to approach staff with any problems and are confident that they will get a sympathetic hearing.
- The overall provision for pupils with SEN is good. They receive good support in and out of class. They make good progress and achieve satisfactory standards in meeting the learning targets they are set.
- The school's links with parents, community and other institutions are satisfactory with some good aspects. The partnership with industry is unsatisfactory.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory. The current school development plan (SDP) covers a one-year period only. This is partly due to staff absences, including that of the head teacher over the past year. There is a self-assessment

document of good quality in place for pupils' welfare but no such document exists for curriculum aspects. Updated schemes of work and assessment procedures of good quality for all subjects have recently been devised but no strategies are in place for evaluating their effectiveness in relation to teaching and learning.

- The leadership of the school by the head teacher and governors is generally satisfactory. A clear direction is given in relation to pupils' welfare. Staff feel, however, that they do not receive enough clear direction in relation to curriculum matters. The school has undergone a period of considerable instability during the past year with several staff changes and the absence of the head teacher through illness for the whole of the last term. This long period of upheaval has resulted in a dip in staff morale.
- Teachers work well together as a team and they have shared their considerable expertise effectively to produce curriculum documentation of good quality. At present, curriculum leaders do not have opportunities to monitor the work in their subjects in order to ensure a consistency of practice in the teaching and learning across classes and subjects.
- The governing body is very supportive of the school and members are knowledgeable about general school matters. The budget is managed effectively and financial resources are linked appropriately to priorities.
- The day-to-day administration of the school is good.
- Staffing, resources and accommodation are good. There is generous provision of staff, although the present non-teaching role of the head teacher is a short-term arrangement. The quality and range of resources are good and they are used effectively to support the work and to enhance pupils' learning experiences. There is ample space in the school's accommodation and this is used effectively. Displays are of very good quality and serve well to extend pupils' learning as well as to celebrate their work.
- The school has dealt satisfactorily with most of the key issues raised in the previous report. There has been, however, a slight dip in standards across most subjects since then. However, if the school now moves into a period of greater staff stability, with the newly devised curriculum documentation and assessment procedures being fully implemented and curriculum leaders taking on a prominent monitoring role, standards of achievement should rise significantly across all subjects.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Standards were at least satisfactory in all lessons seen and of these 63 per cent were good.

- Across the key stage, standards are satisfactory in English, mathematics, Welsh second language, design and technology and history.
- Standards are good in science, information technology, geography, art, music, physical education and religious education.

- Pupils with SEN achieve satisfactory standards and make good progress towards the learning targets set.
- The school's 2002 NC assessment results, taken by pupils at the end of KS2 show that, in comparison with the national results for 2001, pupils achieve standards slightly below the national average in relation to an average score for the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In relation to schools of a similar social background, the school achieves good standards. There is no significance difference in the performance of boys and girls.

3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum

Standards in key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum are satisfactory.

- Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to taped and televised programmes. The majority display good understanding of what they have heard. The responses of a significant minority, however, demonstrate that they do not have a satisfactory recall of the information imparted.
- The use made of oral skills is satisfactory. Pupils answer questions eagerly and sometimes give thoughtful comments. Their ability to offer extended contributions to discussions is generally limited.
- Overall, the majority of pupils demonstrate good skills in reading for information across the curriculum.
- The majority develop satisfactory skills in their ability to record facts and to write in different forms and for a variety of purposes.
- Pupils make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills across the curriculum. They collect data, use tally sheets and block graphs and draw conclusions based on their findings. Many lack more advanced skills in being able to select and analyse information effectively when handling data in various subjects.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils use the internet and CD-ROMs to collect information in a variety of subjects. The majority make satisfactory use of ICT to support their work in mathematics, science and aspects of history and geography.
- There is no whole school policy for the development of key skills across subjects. Teachers' individual plans, however, include appropriate strategies for their development.

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 is a very caring community in which all pupils are valued and respected. Pupils relate well to each other and to adults. They have a clear sense of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- Acts of worship are part of the daily routine and within these time is allowed for quiet reflection and contemplation. Such experiences serve well to enhance pupils' spiritual development.
- Pupils show respect towards people and property. They have a good understanding of their responsibility towards the environment.
- When given opportunities to develop independence in their learning, pupils respond well. They collaborate effectively during group or paired activities.
- Pupils' cultural development is well promoted in relation to the Welsh dimension. Visits to places of interest in the locality and further afield, including annual exchange visits with a school in South Wales and participation in Urdd activities, effectively enhance their awareness of Welsh culture and traditions. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures, religions and beliefs are developed effectively.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, country dancing, information technology, music and art and craft, is provided. Such activities serve well to extend and enrich the social and cultural development of pupils.

4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

The overall standard of pupils' behaviour is good and they show very positive attitudes to their work.

- Pupils show respect to one another and to their teachers and other support staff at the school.
- They move around the school in an orderly manner and older pupils show particularly good and mature behaviour when working independently in practical areas outside the classroom.
- Classroom and school rules to promote good behaviour are clearly understood by pupils. The awarding of points for effort and good behaviour is proving effective.
- The Home/School agreement enables the school to work closely with parents in order to maintain good levels of discipline and behaviour. The vast majority of pupils respond well to the school's expectations although it has been necessary to exclude four pupils for short spells during the last school year.
- Pupils listen attentively in class and show interest in their work. Most concentrate well on their tasks. Pupils with a shorter concentration span are supported well by their teachers and the classroom support assistants.
- Where parents had felt some concern about bullying in the past, it was generally agreed in the pre-inspection meeting with them, that the school had dealt effectively with the

problem in line with the school's anti bullying policy. No incidences of bullying were observed or reported during the inspection.

4.3 Attendance

The level of pupils' attendance is satisfactory and is consistently above 90%.

- The school complies with the local authority statutory requirements for the recording of class and whole-school attendance. Collated data is regularly monitored to assess individual and group trends of absence.
- Registration is completed quickly and effectively at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Effective procedures are in place for dealing with unauthorised absences and the methods adopted ensure as little disruption as possible to pupils' education.
- Punctuality at the start of the school day is generally satisfactory, although a small number were observed arriving after the start of lessons. Details of those arriving late are recorded and reviewed daily by the headteacher. Pupils arrive punctually for lessons during the school day.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was never less than good and was very good in 20 per cent of them.

- There are clear objectives to all lessons and, in the best practice, these are shared with pupils.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and stimulating by using a good range of techniques, appropriate resources and ensuring that lessons move at a brisk pace.
- Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Even when some teachers are not fluent Welsh speakers, they ensure that their knowledge of the scheme of work and their personal revision of appropriate vocabulary and language patterns enable them to provide pupils with suitable learning experiences.
- The work is appropriately differentiated according to pupils' ages and abilities.
- Good use is made of classroom assistants to support the work of small groups and individuals.

Where the teaching is judged to be very good all the above elements are present and, in addition:

- Expectations of pupils are very high and this results in an even greater level of productivity by pupils;
- Introductions are clear and informative; follow-up activities contain suitable challenges to meet the needs of all abilities; and the plenary part of the lesson enables pupils to share their work and to evaluate ways of improving their own and others' performance.
- Teachers have a very good understanding of recent initiatives in literacy teaching.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

The overall quality of assessment, recording and reporting is satisfactory with some good features.

- The school's current policy documentation and its assessment and recording procedures are in their first term of application.
- The overall linking of assessment to teachers' planning is well planned and effective.
- Assessment information is retained and used by the teachers to inform mid term planning and to identify any special educational needs (SEN) of individual pupils. This is effectively undertaken in all classes.
- Day to day assessment of pupils' progress is good and teachers' response to emerging difficulties is prompt and effective. The regular support provided by classroom assistants is a valuable resource enabling good quality group and individual help to be organised as the need arises. More able pupils are also identified and planned class tasks include extended work to challenge them.
- Subject portfolios of assessed and levelled examples of pupils' work are beginning to be developed by subject co-ordinators. The benefit of these is not yet evident across the school.
- The quality of the comments on written reports to parents are satisfactory and generally identify the progress made in all subjects over the school year. However, areas for development are not clearly identified and recorded. There is also a lack of consistency in noting attendance figures in the written reports.
- The school is successful in identifying short-term targets for individual pupils, groups or whole class situations, based on specific testing in the early part of the school year. Such targets are shared with pupils and parents. Pupils are also encouraged to set their own personal targets.
- The results of the KS2 national assessments are carefully analysed and specific areas of weakness are identified. Problem solving in mathematics has been one area identified and satisfactory strategies have been devised to raise standards of achievement with regard to this.

5.3 Curriculum

The school provides a curriculum that is good in its range, relevance and balance.

- The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides broad, balanced and relevant experiences in all subjects. Religious education is taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus.
- The attention paid to key skills and the opportunities provided for pupils to apply them across subjects are satisfactory.
- Schemes of work have very recently been reviewed and have been updated to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000. They are of good quality. Teachers have adopted a common format for medium and short term planning and this is having a positive impact.
- The provision for homework varies between classes. At best, as in the Y6 classes, it serves to reinforce classroom work appropriately. Homework diaries involve parents in the process and are appreciated by them. The homework is not as well planned and consistently set in other classes.
- There is a Home/School behavioural agreement that has been signed by the majority of parents.
- The school is socially inclusive and there is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, including those with SEN.
- The attention paid to personal and social education is good. Aspects of this area of pupils' development are included in science and religious education lessons as well as incidentally throughout the life and work of the school.
- The planning for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is good. Effective use is made of opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge of Wales and its culture through displays, teachers' planning, pupils' work, Urdd activities and visits to places of interest.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities has a very positive impact on pupils' learning across the curriculum.

5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

The overall provision throughout the school is good.

- The school is a caring and supportive community. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and relationships between them and pupils are good. Pupils address the staff confidently and politely. They are able to approach them with any problems and know that they will get a sympathetic hearing.
- The supervision of pupils is good and their safety is ensured at all times. There are regular fire drills and any accidents occurring at the school are appropriately dealt with and recorded. Some staff have current first aid qualifications and it is planned that the remaining members are to attend an update course in the week following the inspection.

- Health and safety education is integrated well into the general curriculum. Aspects of sex education and drug use and misuse are dealt with sensitively within the science curriculum and incidentally as the need arises.
- The school has appropriate procedures for dealing with child protection issues and has established close links with social services and other relevant bodies outside the school.

5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. The school meets the requirements of the new Code of Practice for SEN. All pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve satisfactory standards in relation to the learning targets set.

- The governing body and the school management have prioritised staffing levels in their budget planning in order to support pupils with SEN. Support is provided in withdrawal and class based situations. Each class has regular access to a member of the learning support staff.
- Individual education plans (IEPs) are of good quality. They contain achievable targets and parents are kept fully informed and involved in procedures and progress. Pupils make good progress in line with the targets set in the IEPs.
- Close and regular links with the parents concerned form a supporting partnership for the pupils and homework is an important aspect in this shared learning process.
- Learning support assistants provide good in-class support for pupils who have statements of SEN and review procedures are properly conducted involving teachers, parents and other agencies.

5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions

Overall, a satisfactory partnership has been established with parents, the community, and other schools and institutions, with good features in some areas.

- The school has forged effective links with parents, with the prime objective of supporting pupils' personal and academic development.
- Regular newsletters keep parents fully informed on forthcoming events and on progress relating to issues in the development plan.
- Considerable support is received through a combined Parents, Teachers and Friends Association, whose core of dedicated workers organise regular fund-raising activities to provide extra resources for pupils. Benefits include assistance with travel costs to the Urdd Eisteddfod and the purchase of costumes for stage performances.
- Effective community links are established through visits by pupils to the local hospital and to entertain residents in a home for elderly citizens. At Christmas time, local residents are invited to a school carol concert in the church.

- Pupils are encouraged to participate in community projects and to develop personal awareness of environmental issues. Traffic, shopping and building surveys have assisted pupils in gaining first hand experience of the local community.
- Liaison arrangements with the infants and secondary schools are generally good. An established system is constantly being reviewed to ensure that the transfer is smoothly completed.
- Good partnership arrangements have been made with teacher-training establishments including Aberystwyth University. Students undertake regular placements at the school. The school also takes work experience students from the local secondary school.

5.7 Partnership with industry

Partnership with industry is unsatisfactory.

- There is no policy document for the development of links with industry.
- A link with a large retailer has enabled pupils to gain some knowledge of the workplace. Research carried out into methods of costing materials at the workplace has been linked to pupils' work in mathematics.
- The school has visited Denbigh Quarry, where pupils have learnt about marketing and production. Through such links, pupils' industrial and economic awareness has been increased.
- There have been no industrial placements for teachers but the school is in the process of introducing guidelines for the development of such provision.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

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

- There is a self-assessment document for pupils' welfare but not for curriculum matters.
- The school and governing body take due regard of the results of NC assessments. Staff undertake an analysis of the results and specific areas of general weakness are identified. Problem solving in mathematics is a recent identified weakness. Strategies for improving the teaching and learning are discussed and targets for whole school improvement are incorporated into teachers' mid and short term planning.
- The governing body is kept informed of developments in NC subjects through the annual curriculum targets prepared by subject co-ordinators that form part of the SDP. The school budget is closely linked to priorities identified in the SDP and money is allocated to improve resources according to needs specified in the annual targets. Staffing levels are

also prioritised in order to ensure favourable class sizes and regular classroom support for pupils with SEN.

- The current SDP covers a one year period only. This is partly due to staff changes and absences, including that of the head teacher, during the last year. Updated schemes of work and assessment procedures for all subjects have recently been put in place. These are of good quality but, at present, no strategies have been devised for evaluating their effectiveness in relation to teaching and learning.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The leadership of the school by the head teacher and governors is generally satisfactory.

- The head teacher and governors provide a clear direction in relation to pupils' welfare. At present, however, staff feel that they are not provided with a clear direction on curriculum matters.
- The school has been through a period of considerable instability during the past year with several staff changes. The absence of the head teacher through illness for the duration of the last term necessitated an Acting Head Teacher being brought in from a neighbouring school. The head teacher has now returned to work but does not have a teaching commitment for this term. The long period of upheaval for the staff has resulted in low morale in some instances.
- Most curriculum responsibilities are newly delegated and teachers have undertaken the revision of schemes of work and assessment procedures in their own time and during the summer break.
- Curriculum leaders do not have opportunities to monitor the work across the school in their subjects.
- Teachers work together well as a team and they have shared their considerable expertise effectively to ensure that the school's documentation is updated and that it provides suitable guidance to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning.
- The governing body is very supportive of the school and members are knowledgeable about general school matters. Each governor visits on a rota basis and completes an aide memoire of general observations made. They report back on their observations to the full committee at the next meeting. These observations are very general in content and relate more to displays and behaviour than to curriculum matters. Two governors provide regular support for teachers and this is valued and appreciated by staff.
- The budget is managed effectively and expenditure is linked appropriately to priorities listed in the SDP. Financial resources are efficiently managed.
- The day-to-day administration of the school is good.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing, resources and accommodation are good.

- There is generous provision of staff, although the present non-teaching role of the head teacher is a short-term arrangement. Staff are well qualified and deployed appropriately.
- All teachers have attended appropriate in-service training, particularly in the subject areas where they have coordinator responsibility. They are aware of their professional needs and some progress has been made in conducting professional development interviews with a view to highlighting particular strengths and weaknesses.
- The quality and range of resources for learning are good and they are used effectively to support the work and enhance pupils' learning experiences. Resources are easily accessible to staff and pupils. Very good use is made of the central computer area by individuals, groups and whole classes.
- The accommodation provides ample space for the number of pupils on roll. The available space is used well and an attractive and stimulating learning environment has been created. Displays are of very good quality and serve effectively to extend pupils' learning as well as to celebrate their work. The building is kept very clean and is well maintained.
- There are attractive school grounds with adequate hard play and grassed areas.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

English

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in listening, speaking and writing, with a small minority of pupils achieving good standards. Standards are generally good in reading.

- Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and are eager to answer questions.
- The more able speak at length and use a satisfactory range of vocabulary. Many answer thoughtfully and with reasonable effectiveness when communicating their thoughts and ideas.
- Pupils' reading skills are developing well. Of particular note is their positive involvement and evident enjoyment during the whole school weekly reading session. The Y6 pupils who take turns to read to pupils in the adjacent infant school listen attentively to the younger pupils and correct their miscues sensitively.
- The majority of pupils by the time they reach Y6 read well with good levels of understanding. Their information gathering skills are also developing well.
- Pupils write for a good range of purposes and they make satisfactory progress across the key stage in their ability to write letters, descriptions, reports, book reviews, dialogues,

poems and stories. Some stories written by Y4 pupils and some examples of play writing by Y5 pupils display a progressive mastery of writing.

- Based on the book, 'Treasure island', Y6 pupils have re-written a synopsis of the story in the style of a classical text. The work is of good quality. Examples of pupils changing the narrative voice to that of Long John Silver are also of good quality.
- Information technology is used effectively to record some of the pupils' written work. The presentation of written work displayed around the school is of a good standard.

Shortcomings

- Although pupils appear to be listening attentively, some display an unsatisfactory understanding and recall of what they have heard.
- Pupils in Y3 and some others across the school are very reticent in responding to teachers' questions and do not offer extended answers.
- When confronted with box spaces in work-sheets, many pupils do not extend their writing further than the confines of the allocated space. This restricts examples of extended writing from them.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement in mathematics are satisfactory overall.

Good features

- Pupils in Y3 count, read, write and order numbers up to 100 and they have a good understanding of place value up to two places. They add and subtract two digit numbers and are able to double numbers mentally to 20. They understand the use of money and recognise the value of coins and perform simple subtraction to find differences in money values.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move up the school in their understanding and knowledge of numbers. They use standard units of measurement with increasing accuracy and confidence when weighing and measuring length.
- Pupils in Y4 understand the properties of 2 and 3 dimensional shapes and calculate areas and perimeters of regular shapes competently. They progress from counting squares to using calculations based on measurements.
- Pupils in Y5 understand co-ordinates and put this to good use in their map reading in geography.
- Pupils extend their understanding and use of number to include fractions and decimals and, by the end of the key stage, they have a satisfactory grasp of equivalent values.

- Pupils in Y6 gather relevant data on a range of subjects and create a variety of graphs and diagrams to record their findings. They draw meaningful conclusions from the data gathered. More able pupils independently find the range and mode of given data.
- A significant number of Y6 pupils are progressing well in their ability to apply their mathematical knowledge to problem solving situations.

Shortcomings

- Across the key stage, pupils are slow to perform calculations.
- Some display an insecure grasp of their multiplication tables.
- Many do not understand clearly the relationship between multiplication and division.

Science

Standards of achievement in science are good across the key stage.

Good features

- Pupils in Y3 understand that sound is produced through vibration and that some materials are good conductors whilst others muffle the sound. They understand that light travels in straight lines and older pupils have satisfactory knowledge of electricity and circuits.
- In their study of health in humans and other animals, Y4 pupils understand that medicines can be helpful in controlling or curing ill health but that misuse of medicinal drugs can be harmful. They draw on their own experiences and that of the people around them as they discuss the health and safety factors surrounding the use of medicinal drugs. They understand that it is harmful to misuse alcohol and the harm caused to the human body through smoking.
- Pupils in Y5 have good recall of the term's studies on living things and they use correct terminology to describe their investigations orally and to discuss their findings. They use keys for the identification of living things according to set criteria. They understand the difference between herbivores and carnivores and realise the basic need for plants in order for all living things to survive and flourish.
- Pupils in Y6 discuss and find out the growth and reproduction needs of plants and carry out investigations to verify these needs. They can devise a fair test to prove their theory. They discuss how best to carry out an experiment within the resources available at the school.
- After examining the properties of materials, they can classify them according to specified criteria such as waterproof or windproof and whether they are man made or natural. They apply this knowledge well to their work in design and technology.

Shortcomings

- As a result of an over-reliance on work-sheet activities, pupils across classes are not confident in developing their own investigations and in recording their work independently.

Welsh second language

Given that no pupil speaks Welsh at home, the progress made by pupils across the school is good and they achieve satisfactory standards.

- Pupils display good attitudes to Welsh and they respond eagerly and with evident enjoyment at all times.
- They listen attentively and develop and use new vocabulary and language patterns with growing confidence.
- They respond well to instructions and by Y6 they can answer questions about themselves, their families and their hobbies effectively.
- Their pronunciation and intonation are good.
- Reading skills are developing well. Pupils read Welsh books alongside English books during the whole school reading session. They display good understanding of simple texts.
- Most pupils respond in writing satisfactorily to questions they have practised orally.

Shortcomings

- Pupils are unable to sustain a simple conversation in the language.
- A small number of pupils in each class do not have a satisfactory recall of work previously covered.

Design and technology

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils in Y3 can discuss the various ways of assembling and joining different materials and components such as gluing, stitching and mixing. They give good reasons for their choices.
- They collect and evaluate frames and observe the method of support on the different frames. They design and make their own frames using card and pipe cleaners and use simple finishing techniques.

- Pupils in Y4 are developing good working practices for designing a project as in their study of houses in Tudor times. They visit an example of a house from the period, take photographs, draw sketches of relevant features and study pictures in reference books. They evaluate their own work and are able to explain why the chosen material, a lego set, was unsuitable to the task.
- During a bread-making activity, Y5 pupils make good use of a series of photographs to record and sequence the process they undertake. They understand the changes that take place as the ingredients are mixed, kneaded, are left to stand and when heated.
- Pupils in Y6 design a shelter for a hamster. They study a range of shelters, including a gazebo and a wigwam and decide on the features needed to house a hamster. They disassemble and investigate the various features and experiment with paper. They understand how to reinforce a structure using rolled up paper and some pupils understand that right-angled structures are strengthened by the use of triangular shapes at the corners.

Shortcomings

- Pupils are not proficient at using simple mechanisms to produce different types of movement.
- They are not confident in evaluating their work in order to improve their finished products.

Information technology

Standards of achievement in information technology are good across the key stage.

Good features

- Pupils are familiar with a range of ICT hardware and software and are confident and increasingly competent in their use of a computer. They show good progression in computer skills as they reach the end of the key stage.
- They select and classify suitable information, such as recording weather temperature, to produce graphs to record weather changes and patterns.
- Pupils make purposeful use of the search facilities and CD-ROM to gather information on a range of subjects across the curriculum. They collate their findings and are developing well in their ability to select the relevant elements for a particular purpose.
- They use ICT to present a wide variety of findings in the form of graphs and select, retrieve and present aspects of their work in picture and sound showing good awareness of audience.
- Pupils use appropriate software programs linked to their numeracy and literacy lessons to practice and consolidate their learning confidently. They are developing well in their ability to use the interactive whiteboard independently.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

History

Standards of achievement in history are satisfactory with good aspects.

- Pupils in Y3 have used a range of evidence, including books, pictures and information from the Internet and CD-ROMs to support their study of Denbigh Castle. They display satisfactory understanding of the purpose of a castle and of changes that have taken place in the building of castles over time.
- In their study of the lifestyles of the rich and poor in Tudor times, most Y4 pupils make sensible comparisons between conditions in lifestyles then and now. They identify their favourite monarch and the least liked from the period.
- In Y5, pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of ‘sources’ as ways to seek information on historical topics. A few pupils display satisfactory understanding of the conditions in towns in the reign of Queen Victoria.
- Older pupils in Y6 can use and understand the concept of a timeline. The more able can work out the time gap between the Romans and the Victorians.
- They are developing good historical enquiry skills as they investigate what materials different artefacts are made of and their use in different times in history. A few pupils experience considerable success in deducing from what period the artefacts are from.

Shortcomings

- Across classes, pupils’ ability to give reasons for their findings is not well developed.
- Some pupils in all classes have unsatisfactory recall of previous work covered.

Geography

Standards of achievement by the end of the key stage are good.

- Satisfactory use of maps is made in Y3. Pupils have drawn a plan of the school grounds to include the position of their classroom in an outside hut. They have drawn a map of their journey to school and, after studying a local map, have coloured in the use of land around the school.
- Pupils in Y4 develop a good knowledge of a contrasting area in Wales. They have studied aerial photographs of the local area and can identify the school and other prominent places. They have undertaken a successful traffic survey, using a tally system to record the traffic.

- Year 5 and 6 pupils have carried out detailed studies of St Lucia and Gweta in Botswana respectively. Pupils in Y5 display satisfactory knowledge of some of the main features of St Lucia and can identify in very simple terms some of the similarities and differences with their own locality.
- Year 6 pupils display good knowledge and understanding of conditions prevailing in an under developed country. They can discuss the advantages and disadvantages of having tourists in Botswana. They have devised a good quality publicity leaflet to encourage tourists to come to the country. They are able to discuss the geographical features of the country and compare them knowledgeably with their own environment.

Shortcomings

- Pupils in some classes do not display efficient skills of geographical enquiry.

Art

No lessons were observed in art but evidence from a close scrutiny of teachers' planning, examples of work undertaken and discussions with pupils indicate that overall standards of achievement are good.

- Pupils in Y4 produce striking pictures depicting moving figures based on the work of Hugh Hughes of Llanidloes. Pupils' attempts to draw heads and hands from close observation are of a good standard. Their observational sketches of training shoes are also of a good standard.
- In Y5, pupils create a number of tonal shades from primary colours. They have experimented with colour mixing and put colour acetate over various objects and noted the effect. Some very effective tonal variations have been produced.
- Sketches of the human form by Y6 pupils demonstrate good observational skills and good progress in the skills of using a variety of media to ensure appropriate effects in line, shade and tone.

Shortcomings

- The sketching skills of Y3 pupils are immature and do not display a satisfactory grasp of line, tone and texture as they attempt to draw their pets.

Music

Standards of achievement are good.

- Pupils have a good repertoire of Welsh and English songs and generally sing tunefully.
- Pupils in Y3 recognise and sing a range of sea shanties. They handle a range of percussion instruments effectively and most can maintain a steady beat.

- Good progress is made across the school in appraising and composing simple pieces of music with a variety of percussion instruments. Recordings of pupils' compositions demonstrate that most of them have developed a good understanding of musical elements such as dynamics and tempo.
- Pupils throughout the school learn to play the recorder. Most play simple melodies well and a tape of the performance of Y6 pupils show that they achieve good standards of performance by the end of the key stage.
- There are a good number of opportunities for pupils to take part in concerts and in Urdd national competitions.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Physical education

Standards of achievement in physical education are good.

Good features

- Pupils understand the effect of exercise on their bodies. They know the importance of dressing appropriately and of the significance of the warm-up session before taking part in physical exercise.
- Pupils practise and display good skills in running, chasing and dodging to avoid others. They develop good throwing and catching skills, and work together very well in pairs and small groups in competitive short games.
- In gymnastics, they plan and practise a sequence of movements using the floor and a selection of apparatus. Their final performance shows good concentration and application and they are successful in creating a flowing movement involving moving in a variety of ways, balancing, climbing and jumping to create an attractive sequence.
- Through dance activities, pupils develop good movement sequences that are imaginative and skilful.
- Pupils make suitable suggestions for improvement as they evaluate their own and others' performances.
- Orienteering skills are developed effectively through preparation beforehand and activities undertaken during attendance at a residential course in an outdoor pursuit centre.

- All pupils have opportunities to learn to swim, and certificates awarded demonstrate that most experience considerable success at this activity.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Religious education

Standards of achievement are good across the key stage.

Good features

- Pupils are familiar with their local church and understand the religious significance of various artefacts associated with Christianity. They are familiar with the main Christian festivals and have taken part in a pretend wedding ceremony at the local church.
- They discuss at length the meaning of vows taken within a church setting and how this is different from a civil wedding service. They understand why the church building is in the shape of a cross, how stained glass pictures represent stories from the Bible and the purpose of a font and of a chalice in religious ceremonies.
- Younger pupils can compare the use of various artefacts from the Jewish faith with those of the Christian faith. They show good understanding of the significance of symbols such as a dove, a halo, fish, a cross and lighted candles and can link some of these to specific parts of the Bible.
- Across the key stage, pupils study religious beliefs other than Christianity and they talk knowingly of similarities and differences between the outward symbols and life styles of followers of faiths such as Hinduism and Judaism.
- As an introduction to the teachings of Hinduism, pupils discuss the many things that parents teach their children. They understand the belief about an invisible god whose presence is all around.
- Pupils reflect in depth on various journeys and their purpose and think of changes in themselves from babyhood to schoolchild. They discuss friendships and relationships with other people and how stories from the Bible help them to know right from wrong.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The school has satisfactorily addressed most of the issues raised in the previous inspection report published in the Summer Term 1997. These were to:

1. maintain the good standards achieved in the great majority of subjects;

There has been a slight dip in standards of achievement since the last inspection. Standards at this inspection have been judged to be good in science, information technology, geography, art, music, physical education and religious education. They are satisfactory in English, mathematics, Welsh second language, design and technology and history.

2. improve standards of spelling and handwriting;

Most pupils achieve satisfactory standards in these aspects.

3. address shortcomings in aspects of the work in science, music and religious education;

The school has addressed most of the shortcomings.

4. sustain the high expectations of pupils' behaviour and quality of learning;

Behaviour and the quality of learning continue to be good.

5. continue the good progress made in devising and implementing whole school schemes of work;

Schemes of work have very recently been revised and updated and are of good quality. They are in the process of being implemented in classes but their full impact on ensuring continuity and progression across subjects has not yet been established.

6. improve the use made of assessment information to raise standards;

Newly devised assessment procedures have recently been introduced. They are of good quality but have not yet had time to influence progress and standards of achievement.

7. secure the improvements that have been planned to address the deficiencies in the accommodation.

The premises and accommodation are presently well maintained and in a good state of repair.

8.2 Key issues for action

The school needs to:

- ensure that the leadership provides a clear direction for all curriculum and other matters;
- devise more rigorous procedures of self-evaluation across all aspects of the life and work of the school;
- address the shortcomings in the subjects where standards are generally satisfactory;
- extend the role of curriculum leaders to include the monitoring of the teaching and learning across classes.

Acknowledgement

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

APPENDIX

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Heulfre Community School
School type	Junior
Age -range of pupils	7-11
Address of school	Gwaenynog Road Denbigh Denbighshire
Post-Code	LL16 3RU
Telephone Number	01745 812391

Headteacher	Mr C S Roberts
Date of appointment	1 September 1995
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Dr D A Jones
Registered Inspector	Ms L Thomas
Dates of inspection	15-17 October 2002

B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>					
Year group	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	18	25	20	34	97

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	5	2	6

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	N/A
Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	N/A
Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	19.4
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	91
Term 2			92	92
Term 3			91	91

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	49
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	4

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: 45					
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School						4.4	26.7	48.9	20	
		National				1	1	6	19	48	25	
	Test/Task	School						4.4	17.8	44.4	28.9	
		National		2				5	14	47	30	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School						8.9	22.2	57.8	11.1	
		National					1	4	20	47	28	
	Test/Task	School						11.1	28.9	55.6	-	
		National		2				4	18	42	32	
Science	Teacher assessment	School						4.4	26.7	60	8.9	
		National	1					3	15	52	29	
	Test/Task	School						6.7	20	66.7	4.4	
		National		2				2	13	51	31	

* School's 2002 results compared with national averages for 2001

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:	64.4	In the school:	51.1
In Wales:	65	In Wales:	65

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

D. Evidence base of the inspection

- Three inspectors spent a total of 6 days in the school.
- Twenty-two lessons were observed.
- A sample of pupils across all classes was heard reading.
- A selection of their written and practical work across subjects was inspected.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and pupils during the inspection on a vast range of subjects and aspects relating to the school's work.
- The school's planning documents and various files and records were inspected.
- Attendance registers were scrutinised.
- Inspectors attended acts of collective worship during the inspection.
- Four parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and 25 questionnaires were completed.
- Discussions were held with governors in pre and post inspection meetings.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ms L Thomas Registered Inspector	English, Welsh second language, history, geography, art, music	Context; Main findings; Standards of achievement in subjects and areas of learning; Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Teaching; Curriculum; Leadership and efficiency; Staffing, accommodation and resources; Progress since the last inspection; Key issues.
Mrs M E Hughes Team Inspector	Mathematics, science, design and technology, information technology, physical education, religious education	Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum; Behaviour and attitudes; Assessment, recording and reporting; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Provision for pupils with special educational needs; Quality of self evaluation and planning for improvement; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr S Roberts Lay Inspector		Attendance; Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions; Partnership with industry.