

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

**HILLSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Upper Hill Street
Blaenafon
NP44 9NN**

School Number: 678/2109

Date of Inspection: 13th – 16th January 2003

PHILLIP EDWARDS

REGISTERED INSPECTOR: W227/15669

24th February 2003

UNDER ESTYN CONTRACT NUMBER: T/180/02P

BASIC INFORMATION

- (i) Name of School : Hillside Primary School
- (ii) Type : Community/Primary
- (iii) Status : Local Authority Maintained
- (iv) Age-Range : 4 – 11 years
- (v) Headteacher : Mrs J. M. Cook
- (vi) School Address : Upper Hill Street
Blaenavon
NP44 9NN
- (vii) Telephone Number : 01495 790295
- (viii) Name and address of Local Education Authority : Torfaen County Borough Council
Education Department, 4th Floor
County Hall
Cwmbran
NP44 2WN
- (ix) Welsh Office School Number : 678/2109
- (x) Registered Inspector : Mr Phillip Edwards
- (xi) Date of Inspection : 13th – 16th January 2003
- (xii) Number of Pupils on Roll : 174
- (xiii) Number of Teachers (including headteacher) : 7
- (xiv) Average Class Size : 29
- (xv) Total Available Revenue (2000/2001) : £457,130
- (xvi) Expenditure Per Pupil on Books, Materials and Equipment (2002/3) : £25,771

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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
Year	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

- Hillside Primary School is situated in the town of Blaenavon in Torfaen and is administered by Torfaen County Borough Council Education Department. It has a roll of 174 pupils aged four to 11 years; the majority come from Torfaen. In general terms the school describes less than three quarters of the area it serves as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged and over a quarter as economically disadvantaged. The annual intake covers the full ability range. Approximately 34 per cent of pupils are registered as being entitled to receive free school dinners. A hundred per cent of pupils come from homes where English is the main or only language. There are 35 pupils identified by the school as requiring special educational needs (SEN) support with one whose statement includes modification of the National Curriculum (NC).
- The school has identified the following targets in its school strategic development plan for 2002 - 2005:

Academic Year 1: To further raise standards in English; to further raise standards in Maths; to further raise standards in Science; to continue to develop standards in foundation subjects; To implement and refine ARR procedures in line with ACCAC guidelines, including in ICT, for both pupils and staff; to introduce and implement measures to stretch more able pupils; to introduce and implement Performance Management.

Academic Year 2: To continue with post action plan priorities; to continue to refine AR&R and monitor impact on teaching and learning to continue to raise standards in ICT and monitor impact on teaching and learning; to further develop the role of Subject Co-ordinator in core and foundation subjects with an emphasis on raising standards; Continue to improve and develop Performance Management procedures;

Academic Year 2: Priorities set according to 03/04 annual report and according to self assessment report.

- The school has an appropriate set of aims and a motto 'Learning and achieving together'.
- The school was last inspected in December 1997.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

This is an improving school where a number of important initiatives are in place to provide a sound basis for achieving the high aspirations it has for its pupils.

- Standards of achievement throughout the school are satisfactory or better in all lessons seen. They are good in around 55 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 45 per cent.
- The educational provision for the under fives taken overall is appropriate and successfully promotes the desirable outcomes for children's learning. Standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

Areas of Learning	
Language Literacy and Communication Skills	Satisfactory
Personal and Social Development	Good
Mathematical Development	Satisfactory
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Good
Physical Development	Satisfactory
Creative Development	Good

- In both key stages, pupils' standards of achievement in the different subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) and religious education are as follows:

Subject	KS1	KS2
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Good	Good
Welsh 2 nd Language	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Good
Information Technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
History	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Art	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Music	–	Good
Physical Education	Satisfactory	Good
Religious Education	–	Good

- National Curriculum teacher assessments for summer 2002 showed that at the end of KS1, the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in English was significantly below the national average in 2002. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 2 or above in reading, writing and speaking was significantly below the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in mathematics was below the national average, those in science significantly below. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in all the core subjects according to teacher assessment was significantly below the national average for 2001. The teacher assessment does not compare favourably with those of similar schools as the percentages fall in the lower quartile.
- In the NC test and task results for summer 2002 at the end of KS2, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in English or above was well below the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in mathematics was considerably below the national average and those in science significantly below. The percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in all the core subjects by test was considerably below the national average for 2002. The school's results overall do not compare well with those of other similar schools as the percentages fall below the lower quartile in English and mathematics, with science slightly above the lower quartile.
- In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils in both key stages achieve good standards in listening and information and communications technology and satisfactory standards in speaking, reading and numeracy. Standards are unsatisfactory overall in writing, particularly in KS1.

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- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. A good sense of community is apparent in the daily work and life of the school and pupils are happy and secure in a caring and supportive environment. The school effectively promotes racial equality and is committed to promoting the self-esteem of all pupils.
 - Pupils' behaviour in all areas of the school and their attitudes to learning are good. The school has good strategies for behaviour management. Pupils have good relationships with each other and with all members of staff. They are courteous and self-confident when talking to visiting adults.
 - Attendance levels are satisfactory. Pupils' punctuality at the start of the school day is satisfactory overall though a significant minority of pupils was seen to arrive late during the inspection. The school's registration procedures generally comply with the requirements of NAW Circular 3/99 though the completion of some registers lacks rigour.
 - The quality of teaching in the school is good overall. It is judged to be good or better in approximately 61 per cent of lessons seen, including around 4 per cent very good and 57 per cent good, and satisfactory in about 36 per cent. Teachers generally gain confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the subjects and children they teach through relevant training, appropriate preparation and planning of work. Teachers and pupils display mutual respect and have positive and productive relationships which have a good effect upon the ethos of the school and give pupils the confidence to improve their learning; teachers often have high expectations of pupils. Occasionally, lessons have overlong introductions and lack of forward planning means essential resources are not available due to their being used elsewhere in the school.
 - Since the last inspection the school has established new procedures and practices for assessment, recording and reporting pupils' achievements. These have only been in place for a few months and at present these are being used in a satisfactory manner to improve pupils' performance and promote higher standards. Daily on-going assessment as pupils' work is generally sound; teachers are adept at observing and providing appropriate feedback and show pupils how to extend their work. Most teachers are beginning to evaluate in their weekly planning how lessons went, but their comments do not always include sufficient information about pupils who need further help and those who achieved particularly well.
 - School assessment data, particularly in the core subjects, is analysed in detail and appropriate targets are set for school improvement. Statutory requirements for reporting to parents are met. Annual written reports are good and they provide sufficient relevant information to give parents a clear picture of pupils' academic, personal and social achievement.
 - The quality and organisation of the curriculum is good overall. Pupils study the full range of National Curriculum (NC) subjects and religious education: it is accessible to all pupils including those with special educational needs and for those for whom the full curriculum has been modified. Arrangements for promoting pupils' personal and social development are good and are beginning to contribute successfully to their confidence and self-esteem. The school operates a positive equal opportunities policy, is inclusive and provides all pupils with good opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life. The school has a new homework policy which is not always implemented regularly in some classes; there are appropriate home-school links for reading. A suitable sex

education policy is in place and pupils are made aware of the dangers of drug abuse. The roles of the curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring implementation of the planned curriculum is developing and they aim to review and improve subject schemes of work to ensure pupils make continuing progress from year to year.

- Good provision is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils. The school provides a safe, happy and secure environment.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and they make at least satisfactory and often good progress. This represents an improvement since the last inspection where pupils on the school's register of SEN made limited progress.
- The school has good relationships with parents and organisations in the local community. There is an active Parent Teachers' Association, (PTA) and parents and grandparents help occasionally in school. There are good relationships with the local church and other Christian organisations, the local education authority (LEA), educational welfare officer (EWO), link schools and the Town Council.
- The school's partnership with local companies is under-developed so that pupils have few opportunities to learn about the world of work around them.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good overall. The school has made good progress in establishing a culture of self-evaluation and improvement. Although standards achieved in last year's national tests are unsatisfactory, the self-evaluation report and the school strategic development plan (SSDP) provide clear direction for the school and the steps to be taken to enable progress to be made. The school self assessment report includes a good overview of the progress made by the school since the last inspection. The GB is well informed of the self-evaluation process. Good systems are in place to ensure that there is regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and the sharing of good practice. A wide range of data is analysed over time to set whole school, key stage and year group targets. Procedures are at present only satisfactory, as the targets set for KS2 NC assessment tests for 2002 were over ambitious and not met. The school strategic development plan (SSDP) includes a good overview of the progress made by the school since the last inspection. Weekly staff meetings to measure progress made towards targets promote the culture of self-evaluation and planning for improvement that characterises the school.
- Leadership and efficiency are good. The head, well supported by the governors, works diligently and provides inspiration and direction to the school community. She has been very effective in improving the potential of the school in many ways over the past few years and along with her recently appointed deputy is succeeding in engendering a positive, improving culture in the school. The school has appropriate aims and objectives agreed by head staff and governors. There is a clear commitment to equality of opportunity, inclusiveness and self-esteem. The governing body takes an active interest and is well informed by the head and staff about the work and life of the school. The leadership role of the governing body is developing and staff work well as a team to share responsibilities. A good team spirit pervades among staff where they share a common sense of purpose and values. A significant carry over this year is being held to enable the school to maintain maximum stability of staff during a projected shortfall in income due to falling rolls.
- The effectiveness of routine administration and organisation is smooth and efficient and enables the school to function as a happy, well-organised and harmonious community.

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- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall. Teachers are suitably qualified and provide the school with a valuable range of expertise and experience. The roles of the co-ordinators and subject leaders are being satisfactorily developed to include overview of planning, pupils' work and the monitoring of teaching and learning.
 - The accommodation is good for the number of pupils on roll and the curriculum provided; it is well maintained and provides a safe and secure environment for all pupils. Opportunities for physical development of the under fives is limited by a lack of access to a safe outdoor play area but they are well supervised when playing during break times. The school has a suitable range of learning resources that are generally good in both quality and quantity. Resources are generally used effectively although insufficient use is made of the non-fiction library.
 - The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

- Standards of achievement throughout the school are satisfactory or better in all lessons seen. They are good in around 55 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 45 per cent.
- Standards of achievement in both key stages are satisfactory or above in all of the lessons seen. They are good in approximately 56 per cent and satisfactory in 44 per cent.
- The educational provision for the under-fives taken overall is appropriate and successfully promotes the desirable outcomes for children's learning. Reception children achieve good standards in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development; they are satisfactory in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development and physical development.
- In KS1 (KS1), standards are good in science. They are satisfactory in English, mathematics, Welsh as a second language, design and technology and information technology, history, geography, art and physical education. No judgement could be made for music and religious education due to timetable arrangements.
- In KS2 (KS2), standards are good in science, design and technology, music and physical education. They are satisfactory in English, mathematics, Welsh as a second language, information technology, history, geography, art and religious education.
- National Curriculum teacher assessments for summer 2002 showed that at the end of KS1, the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in English was significantly below the national average for 2001. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 2 or above in reading, writing and speaking was significantly below the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in mathematics was below the national average, those in science significantly below. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in all the core subjects according to teacher assessment was significantly below the national average for 2001. The teacher assessment does not compare favourably with those of similar schools as the percentages fall in the lower quartile.
- In the NC test and task results for summer 2002 at the end of KS2, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in English or above was well below the national average for

2001. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in mathematics was considerably below the national average and those in science significantly below. The percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in all the core subjects by test was considerably below the national average for 2002. The school's results overall do not compare well with those of other similar schools as the percentages fall below the lower quartile in English and mathematics, with science slightly above the lower quartile.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils in both key stages achieve good standards in listening and information and communications technology and satisfactory standards in speaking, reading and numeracy. Standards are unsatisfactory overall in writing.

- There are good opportunities for children aged under five years to develop and apply the skills of literacy, numeracy and use of information and communications technology within and across the six areas of learning.
- Due to successful teaching strategies, the vast majority generally listen well throughout the school in both key stages. During lessons across the curriculum, pupils are attentive listeners to teachers and each other and this contributes significantly to a growing and improving understanding of the content and concepts being learnt.
- In both key stages, pupils' speaking skills are developing appropriately; many are learning to adapt speech to an increasing range of circumstances and demands. A significant number of pupils do not speak audibly to an audience, or project their voices.
- Pupils in both key stages enjoy reading and looking through books, which contributes positively to a steadily improving competence in reading. Overall, they do not yet make sufficient use of reading to extend their learning across the curriculum. A significant number have difficulty in reading their worksheets and books, which hinders their overall progress. More able pupils in the key stage read with confidence and value reading as a source of information and pleasure.
- More able pupils write at length and communicate their ideas in a variety of forms, taking into account the needs of their audience. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 generally do not tackle an appropriate range of written work across the curriculum. Written work in some subjects, particularly history and geography, particularly in KS1 is often insufficient in quantity and quality. The deficiencies adversely affect pupils' progress in the subjects.
- Pupils in KS1 use number patterns and relationships progressively to make mental calculations. Overall, pupils in this key stage do not have sufficient depth and breadth in numeracy skills and their application. In KS2 most pupils use mental skills appropriately to solve mathematical problems and by the end of the key stage know their table facts well. However, a significant number lack independence in using the skills of numeracy to solve problems in, for example, science and geography.
- Pupils' skills in information and communications technology in both key stages are improving significantly and progress is being made. A significant feature is the consistent use of available computer hardware and software by pupils and teachers to support subjects effectively in the NC.
- Relative to their age and ability, pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards in oracy, reading and writing. In both key stages they make satisfactory progress in numeracy, while their ICT skills are improving steadily.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

- A good sense of community is apparent in the daily work and life of the school and pupils are happy and secure in a caring and supportive environment.
- All pupils attend daily assemblies where appropriate arrangements are made for them. Acts of collective worship are orderly and meaningful occasions with appropriate themes for pupils to acquire sound moral values. Pupils listen attentively and readily take part in prayers and hymn singing to recorded accompaniment. The school has good links with local churches and pupils show suitable respect for the beliefs of others.
- The school, throughout its work, promotes knowledge and insight into values and beliefs. Pupils understand and the majority accept the values and standards of behaviour expected by the school. They consistently help others less fortunate than themselves through direct support and raising money for a variety of charities.
- In their relationships with pupils and one another, adults provide effective role models and encourage pupils to be considerate and supportive of others in their work and play. Pupils generally show care and respect for each other, adults and property. Class monitors undertake their tasks reliably. Opportunities during lessons for responsibility and initiative, to enable pupils to explore themes collaboratively and extend themselves, are good.
- Appropriate emphasis is placed on the heritage and culture of Wales, particularly in curricular areas such as history, geography and art. Visits to places of interest enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding and are well linked to work undertaken in class. Visits to places of interest broaden their knowledge and understanding. Pupils do not experience the full diversity of other cultures in their work such as artefacts or pictures depicting aspects of a multicultural society.
- The school effectively enhances pupils' personal and social development through an appropriate variety of extra-curricular activities inside and outside school time.
- The school effectively promotes racial equality and is committed to promoting the self-esteem of all pupils.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Pupils' behaviour in all areas of the school and their attitudes to learning are good.

- The school has good strategies for behaviour management. Good records of disciplinary matters are kept and parents are properly informed if their child misbehaves.
- As part of the merit system staff reward pupils with points, stickers and certificates for hard work, good behaviour and attitudes, and helpfulness. Pupils' achievements are recognised at a weekly assembly. Both pupils and their parents value this system.
- Pupils have good relationships with each other and with all members of staff. They are courteous and self-confident when talking to visiting adults.

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- The recently formed school council provides a good opportunity for junior pupils from each year group to exercise responsibility. Pupils themselves run the fortnightly meetings with only the presence of a teacher. Year 6 pupils are also able to take on responsibilities such as passageway supervision and helping at wet break times.
 - Two boys have been temporarily excluded and one boy permanently excluded in the past twelve months. Proper procedures are followed on these occasions.
 - The school's behaviour policies provide sound procedures for handling any instances of bullying or racism.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance levels are satisfactory, having averaged 92.1 per cent during the previous year for the pupils of statutory school age. This figure is slightly higher than attendance levels at the last inspection. Attendance during the last term has improved significantly to 93.5 per cent.

- Over the past year, unauthorised absence levels have consistently been unsatisfactory, having averaged 3.2 per cent. This figure is significantly higher than the Wales average.
- The education officer (EWO) gives good support and visits the school weekly to discuss with staff ways of improving pupils' attendance levels. She encourages parents to inform the school of the reason for their child's absence, but so far has had limited success.
- Pupils' punctuality at the start of the school day is satisfactory overall though a significant minority of pupils was seen to arrive late during the inspection.
- The school encourages good attendance by giving a cup to the best attendee in each year group over the year.
- The school's registration procedures generally comply with the requirements of NAW Circular 3/99 though the completion of some registers lacks rigour.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching in the school is good overall. It is judged to be good or better in approximately 61 per cent of lessons seen, including around 4 per cent very good and 57 per cent good, and satisfactory in about 36 per cent. In the early years, the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall with some good teaching seen.

- Teachers generally gain confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the subjects and children they teach through relevant training, appropriate preparation and planning of work.
- Teachers and pupils display mutual respect and have positive and productive relationships, due in part, to effective and consistent implementation of the school's positive discipline strategy. This has a good effect upon the ethos of the school and gives pupils the confidence to improve their learning. Teachers often have high expectations of pupils.
- Reception children under five who are in the same class as Y1, receive an appropriate start to their education, particularly when they are taught apart from the other class. They

receive sensitive and caring support from the teacher. The support assistant and NVQ student make a positive contribution to the quality of learning.

- The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages and occasionally very good in KS2. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the requirements of the NC and religious education. Where teaching is at its best, learning objectives are suitably matched to pupils' age, ability and prior attainment and the planned activities are varied to sustain pupils' concentration. Pupils are praised for both effort and achievement and teachers' interventions both support and accelerate their learning.
- Where the teaching in lessons is satisfactory, some of the above features are present, but occasionally some important deficiencies, such as overlong introductory sessions and lack of forward planning to ensure essential resources are available and not being used elsewhere in the school.
- Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good as is the present separate morning provision for some of the pupils in the large Y2 class.
- Display is effective; it highlights useful information and celebrates pupils' work in many areas of the curriculum. Satisfactory use is made of homework to support pupils' learning, although some parents are not fully aware of the school's provision for homework.
- Short-term planning is generally sound with content, continuity and progression evident and includes sufficiently clear learning objectives and how the key skills are to be developed to enable pupils and teachers to focus on what should be learned. End of week evaluations of work planned are brief and are at an early stage of development.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Since the last inspection the school has established new procedures and practices for assessment, recording and reporting pupils' achievements. These have only been in place for a few months and at present these are being used in a satisfactory manner to improve pupils' performance and promote higher standards.

- The school's assessment policy provides clear guidance for staff and outlines the various forms of assessment, which help pupils make progress.
- An accurate profile is drawn up of children's attainments on entry to the reception class. The baseline information is used to monitor children's progress and provides an appropriate range of information which guides teachers planning. In the main good use is made of the information to ensure that work is properly matched to individual needs and abilities. Early identification of children with special educational needs ensures these children receive good support from the beginning.
- Daily on-going assessment as pupils work is generally sound; teachers are adept at observing and providing appropriate feedback and show pupils how to extend their work. Most teachers are beginning to evaluate how well their lessons went but their comments do not always include sufficient information about pupils who need further help and those who achieved particularly well.
- Group reading records are well maintained and contribute to pupils' development and enjoyment in reading. Home-school links reading diaries are also kept.
- A whole school marking policy provides suitable guidance for teachers and although pupils' work is always marked, the policy is not always implemented consistently

throughout the school. In the best practice pupils are given clear indications of their strengths and also how best to improve. In both key stages there are examples where marking is cursory and lacks helpful comments.

- School assessment data, particularly in the core subjects, is analysed in detail and appropriate targets are set for school improvement. This includes the analysis of pupils' responses in statutory tests, which enable the school to identify areas of weakness in individual performance. The school has begun to establish a more concise tracking system that can be used more effectively as a basis for continuous development and improvement.
- Cohort tracking files, once firmly embedded, will provide good information and evidence about pupils' progress in English, mathematics, and science. Although pupils' sporting and personal achievements receive much acclaim from the school, they are not included at present. Older pupils in Y5 and Y6 are involved in the assessment process and are beginning to set personal short-term targets for themselves. They are becoming well informed about what they need to do next in order to improve.
- The school has recently established celebration portfolios of pupils work in all areas of the curriculum. Plans are in place to moderate these to guide teachers' judgement about the levels at which pupils are working in all areas of the curriculum.
- The school complies with the statutory arrangements for assessing and recording the requirements of pupils on the special needs register.
- Statutory requirements for reporting to parents are met. Appropriate consultation evenings are held for parents to discuss their children's achievement and progress. Parents are also given useful advice on how to help at home.
- Annual written reports are good and they provide sufficient relevant information to give parents a clear picture of pupils' academic, personal and social achievement.

5.3 Curriculum

The quality and organisation of the curriculum is good overall. Pupils study the full range of NC subjects and religious education: it is accessible to all pupils including those with special educational needs and to those for whom the full curriculum has been modified.

- The school has policies and schemes of work for each national curriculum subject and religious education, which follows the locally agreed syllabus. There is a separate policy for the Cwricwlwm Cymreig, which reflects the language, culture and heritage of the locality and Wales. Teachers follow the guidelines well and their short-term planning indicates how these are included within each subject.
- The curriculum provided for children under five is appropriate and promotes the desirable outcomes in the six areas of learning. Children are provided with a varied range of experiences that lay a good foundation for their education.
- The school has a clear rationale for the time allocated to individual subjects and generally ensures breadth and balance in the curriculum. Good emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy and the development of ICT skills. Teachers have a clear overview of how the curriculum is organised, for example the foundation subjects of geography and history; also art and design technology are rotated and taught in half-termly blocks.
- The school has a good policy for the development of key skills across the curriculum. Appropriate standards are achieved in speaking and reading, and good standards are seen

in pupils' listening and ICT skills but the use of writing across the curriculum is still not sufficiently well developed yet.

- Teachers' long and short-term plans relate well to NC requirements and help to secure good continuity and progression in most subjects. Weekly planning is very detailed for English, mathematics and science; it is clear for most other subjects and includes a list of suitable resources.
- Arrangements for promoting pupils' personal and social development are good and are beginning to contribute successfully to their confidence and self-esteem. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school operates a positive equal opportunities policy, is inclusive and provides all pupils with good opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The school has a new homework policy which is not always implemented regularly in some classes; there are appropriate home-school links for reading. A suitable sex education policy is in place and pupils are made aware of the dangers of drug abuse.
- The roles of the curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring implementation of the planned curriculum is developing and they aim to review and improve subject schemes of work to ensure pupils make continuing progress from year to year.
- The governing body's support for and involvement in reviewing the curriculum is well developed as are links with the community.
- Visitors to the school including local church leaders enrich the curriculum. This together with local education visits and a residential stay make a good contribution to pupils' learning. In particular the recent artist in residence has enhanced pupils' creative development and the ambience and décor of the school.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

Good provision is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils.

- The school provides a safe, happy and secure environment.
- Pupils have good relationships with all members of staff, and work and play amicably with each other.
- The school has a satisfactory child protection policy. Staff show appropriate knowledge of the procedures to be followed.
- Good policies are in place to promote pupils' health and welfare.
- Appropriate attention is paid to personal, social and health education and measures to promote equal opportunities and racial harmony.
- The school nurse visits fortnightly to monitor the health and welfare of pupils.
- As part of a monitor system, older pupils are given appropriate opportunities to exercise minor responsibilities such as helping with door and passageway supervision and assisting at assemblies. The recently formed school council provides extra scope for junior pupils to take on responsibilities.
- Due attention is given to academic guidance, with use of the recently introduced cohort tracking files to monitor progress.

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- Pupils are aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire. However, drills are not regularly held despite the school's stated policy. Emergency doors operate satisfactorily and fire extinguishers are within the specified test period.
 - There are two qualified first-aiders and other members of staff have recently undertaken first aid training at the school.
 - The faulty operation of some external doors during the inspection was brought to the attention of the headteacher who arranged for the faults to be corrected.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and they make at least satisfactory and often good progress. This represents an improvement since the last inspection where pupils on the school's register of SEN made limited progress.

- The school has a good policy which is consistently applied by all teachers to ensure consistent and effective practice. Procedures conform to the national Code of Practice.
- Approximately 20 per cent of pupils in the school receive support through school action and action plus stages including five pupils who have formal statements. The progress of all pupils is reviewed regularly in appropriate ways.
- The new special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) works extremely hard and in a methodical way to discharge her duties. She has established her role in a very positive way and co-ordinates a good team of learning support staff, including the two special needs nursery nurses, all of whom are enthusiastic and well trained in successful ways in which to help pupils improve.
- Throughout the school relationships between pupils and staff are very positive; pupils receive regular praise which motivates them to do well and contributes to their high levels of self-esteem. Good liaison takes place between the co-ordinator, class teachers and support staff to ensure that both individual and group targets are pursued effectively. Where necessary pupils have individual behaviour plans that monitor and support them in developing more self-discipline and positive attitudes to school.
- All pupils on the CoP have well written individual educational plans that set clear targets for achievement. These are of good quality and help ensure that teaching strategies are matched to pupils' individual learning needs. Pupils with statements of SEN have full access to the national curriculum and they receive very good quality support and progress well. Good provision is also made when pupils follow the statutory curriculum; work is interesting and accessible and supports individual needs well. Plans are reviewed regularly each term and the school makes strenuous efforts to involve parents in this.
- Extra help takes the form of withdrawal sessions and in-class support. Withdrawal arrangements are good and concentrate on literacy and numeracy and phonic work. Teachers' weekly planning clearly identifies ways in which the work has been adapted to meet pupils' current learning needs and all SEN pupils are well integrated and fully involved in all aspects of school life, including those who do not follow the full national curriculum.
- The school has well-established links with external support services from the local education authority and these contribute fully to the quality of pupils' learning. Regular visits are received from the designated governor, who takes a keen interest in the work and the quality of provision made by the school.

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- Funding for pupils with SEN is used effectively and additional funding is provided from the main school budget to ensure all identified pupils receive good help and guidance. Parents are kept well informed of procedures and are invited to reviews of their children's progress; they are pleased with the school's provision and the good progress being made.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

The school has good relationships with parents and organisations in the local community.

- Although only about 6 per cent of the parents of pupils completed the pre-inspection questionnaire, a large majority of their responses expressed support for the school. These views were confirmed by further brief discussions with parents during the inspection.
- Most of the information provided to parents through useful handbooks, regular newsletters, reports and meetings is of good quality. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents contain nearly all the information statutorily required. About one quarter of the parents have positively responded to the home/school agreement.
- An active PTA organises events which raise significant funds to help the school. Recent donations have included the purchase of extra science equipment. No parents but two grandparents regularly help in class by listening to pupils' reading and assisting with design and technology and art. About twelve parents, with their children, attend the pre-school 'Early Bird' session in the infant section.
- There are good relationships with the nearby Church in Wales church, whose vicar leads a termly assembly and talks to pupils in support of the curriculum. Representatives of several other Christian groups regularly visit the school to lead assemblies.
- There are good links with the LEA, EWO, social and medical services. Although there is no current link with the community police, pupils attend the Crucial Crew courses, organised by the police to raise pupils' awareness of crime and their own self-responsibility.
- There is a good partnership with the next-door nursery school and the nearby comprehensive school, which Y6 pupils attend for taster days. Teachers exchange visits and good quality curricular information to ensure that the subsequent transfer of pupils to the secondary school is as smooth as possible. Some of their students come to Hillside as part of their work experience or to take part in the 'Wings to Fly' drama presentation forming part of the police drugs awareness programme. There are no links with local colleges.
- There are strong links with the Town Council who annually sponsor an award for the best all-round performance by a Y6 pupil. Also, at the time of the annual Carnival, about fifty local residents, including some parents, attend daily community workshops over a two-week period at the school.
- Pupils entertain residents at two local homes at Christmas time and take gifts to them at harvest festival.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

The school's partnership with local companies is under-developed so that pupils have few opportunities to learn about the world of work around them.

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- There is a brief policy statement for partnership with industry.
 - Twenty local shops and businesses support the school through the donation of money and/or materials. Sports kit has recently been provided by the local rugby and soccer clubs.
 - Few visits have been made by pupils to local shops and companies as a source of enrichment for pupils' learning experiences; no staff have attended business-related courses recently.
 - Over the last three years, several staff from a nearby biological supplies company have visited the school regularly to help pupils with their reading. However, few other business people have come to the school to talk to pupils about their jobs.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

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

- The school has made good progress in establishing a culture of self-evaluation and improvement. Although standards achieved in last year's national tests are unsatisfactory, the self-evaluation report and the school strategic development plan (SSDP) provide clear direction for the school and the steps to be taken to enable progress to be made.
- The school self-assessment report includes a good overview of the progress made by the school since the last inspection.
- The GB is well informed of the self-evaluation process and each one takes an informed interest in a particular NC subject. Termly reports to the governing body on the progress being made toward the targets set in the school development plan give them a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work closely with the headteacher to monitor progress and appropriate spending decisions are made to secure school improvement.
- Good systems are in place to ensure that there is regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and the sharing of good practice.
- A wide range of data is analysed over time to set whole school, key stage and year group targets. Procedures are at present only satisfactory, as the targets set for KS2 NC assessment tests for 2002 were over ambitious and not met.
- The school makes good use of information from baseline, NC tests and standardised tests to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Teachers have a satisfactory level of understanding of expected levels in the core and foundation subjects of the NC. Useful presentation portfolios of work are kept to record progress. However, these are not annotated and levelled in order to give guidance and support to assist co-ordinators to identify areas of strength and weakness within their subject responsibilities and in assessment activities.
- The school strategic development plan (SSDP) includes a good overview of the progress made by the school since the last inspection. Weekly staff meetings to measure progress made towards targets promote the culture of self-evaluation and planning for improvement that characterises the school.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

Leadership and efficiency are good.

- The head, well supported by the governors, works diligently and provides inspiration and direction to the school community. She has been very effective in improving the potential of the school in many ways over the past few years and along with her recently appointed deputy is succeeding in engendering a positive, improving culture in the school.
- The school has appropriate aims and objectives agreed by head, staff and governors. There is a clear commitment to equality of opportunity, inclusiveness and self-esteem.
- The governing body takes an active interest and is well informed by the head and staff about the work and life of the school. It meets regularly to discuss the curriculum and progress. Appropriate minutes are kept of meetings of governors and staff. The leadership role of the governing body is developing and staff work well as a team to share responsibilities.
- Curriculum leaders have worked hard to rewrite or update appropriate policies and schemes of work including establishing new planning arrangements for the curriculum. A good team spirit pervades among staff where they share a common sense of purpose and values.
- The head and governors have been very effective in managing and procuring all available resources to enable the school to manage with a falling roll situation. The SDP is closely linked to budget setting. Close attention is given to managing the school finances prudently.
- A significant carry over this year is being held to enable the school to maintain maximum stability of staff during a projected shortfall in income due to falling rolls.
- The effectiveness of routine administration and organisation is smooth and efficient and enables the school to function as a happy, well-organised and harmonious community.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall.

- Teachers are suitably qualified and provide the school with a valuable range of expertise and experience. Job descriptions are in place for all members of staff and the number of staff is adequate for the pupils on roll. The large numbers in the mixed reception and Y1 class and also the Y2 class are compensated for by a small literacy and numeracy class formed during the morning sessions from these two classes; this class provides good support for pupils who benefit from teaching and learning in small groups.
- The training needs of teachers are identified through reviews with the headteacher and wherever possible staff attend training to support their professional development. Recent training in positive behaviour management and PSE is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to their work, to each other and their self-esteem. Teachers generally have sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and most are confident in delivering them including the use of an interactive white board, which is particularly well used in Y6.

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- The school does not have an induction and mentoring policy but new staff members assert that they are made very welcome and receive good support and guidance from all other staff. They staff work together as a close-knit and cohesive team; morale is good. The staff handbook and detailed planning in place provides good guidance for temporary or supply teachers to the school. At present the school does not have links with a teacher-training institution.
 - Nursery nurses and learning-support staff are well deployed and work closely with teachers to ensure that all pupils receive good support and guidance including those with SEN.
 - The roles of the co-ordinators and subject leaders are being satisfactorily developed to include overview of planning, pupils' work and the monitoring of teaching and learning. This is planned on a rota basis, with the headteacher covering classes as necessary.
 - The accommodation is good for the number of pupils on roll and the curriculum provided; it is well maintained and provides a safe and secure environment for all pupils. The space available for teaching is good; it is light and airy and usually well exploited and enables staff to use a range of teaching styles including small group work. Opportunities for physical development of the under fives is limited by a lack of access to a safe outdoor play area but they are well supervised when playing during break times. The school plans to establish a large well-appointed computer suite in the near future to support pupils' IT development and allow them access to the wider world through the Internet.
 - A large hall provides suitable accommodation for concerts, assemblies, physical education and extracurricular activities. Parents are regularly welcomed into school for class assemblies, such as the enjoyable re-enactment of a Welsh fairy tale during the time of the inspection. Good use is made of the outdoor play facilities for sporting activities although there is no large grassed area available.
 - Pupils have respect for the building; there is no vandalism or graffiti, and they are delighted with the very high quality displays they have produced with the help of an artist in residence. These provide a stimulating environment for pupils' learning and have a positive impact on the standards being achieved.
 - Standards of caretaking and cleaning are high and the school is warm and welcoming. Mid-day supervisors ensure there are effective procedures for lunchtime and contribute to the schools reward system. Day-to-day administration is efficient. School meals are very good and are much appreciated by the children.
 - The school has a suitable range of learning resources that are generally good in both quality and quantity except for instances where two or more classes require similar equipment at the same time. Resources are generally used effectively although insufficient use is made of the non-fiction library. Management and storage of resources is good.
 - Suitable use is made of resources outside the school, a residential stay is offered to older pupils and all pupils have good opportunities to visit places of interest. The school welcomes a range of visitors, including local church leaders and a variety of artists in residence support and enhance the curriculum. Particular mention must be made of the recent artist in residence, Leonie Rintler, whose dramatic and eye-catching work with the children has enriched their experiences in numerous ways.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

Reception

The quality of the educational provision for the under-fives taken overall is appropriate to their needs and children are making good overall progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

The teacher and support staff work closely together to ensure that children receive a broad range of experiences in a secure, caring environment. A baseline profile is drawn up of children's prior attainments on entry to the school and regular observations are subsequently made of progress.

Language, Literacy and Communication skills are satisfactory

Good features

- Appropriate steps are taken to develop the speaking skills of children, many of whom display significant difficulties when they first enter the school.
- Children listen attentively and enjoy stories such as, 'What Can You See?' based on familiar nursery rhymes and they describe everyday experiences and respond readily to questions. They follow words in large texts with interest and their sight vocabulary is developing at an appropriate rate. Their knowledge of letter sounds is good. The children enjoy books; holding them correctly and turning the pages with care and pleasure and have made a positive start to reading. Mark-making and colouring activities encourage writing and the proper use of implements; children regard themselves as writers and are aware of the purposes of writing and by the age of five when writing use symbols, pictures and some familiar letters and words to communicate meaning. They display an increasing control over letter formation. Children confidently use Welsh in response to greetings and simple questions and commands. They make good progress.

Personal and social development is good

Good features

- Children make good progress in their personal and social development and respond well to the range of activities planned for them. The majority work well individually and collaboratively; many understand the need to take turns, especially when sharing resources. Almost all children are sensitive to the needs of others and behave in appropriate ways, displaying suitable care, concern and respect. They have good relationships with the teachers and each other; staff are good at guiding any children who find sharing a problem so that they soon fit in to the daily routines and practices of the classroom. Good attention is paid to their spiritual, moral and social development and they attend assemblies on a daily basis; they have good knowledge of familiar bible stories such as 'Noah's Ark'. They demonstrate a growing understanding of the need for order and agree suitable rules and guidelines for the classroom. They tidy away well after work and play. All children are eager to explore new learning situations and most are developing good levels of confidence.

Mathematical development is satisfactory

Good features

- Children can count confidently to ten and beyond and suitable opportunities are provided for children to use everyday mathematical language in a range of contexts, such as counting the numbers staying for dinners and in the class shop. They compare, sort, match and sequence objects in an appropriate way and identify correctly two-dimensional shapes. They copy and repeat patterns and have an increasing knowledge of mathematical relationships. Children sort objects into sets and compare the size of a range of objects well. Through their sand and water play activities they are beginning to acquire the language of size and position. They achieve satisfactory standards overall.

Knowledge and understanding of the world are good

Good features

- A variety of suitable activities help children to develop knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Good use, for example, is made of photographs to encourage discussion about daily activities and to indicate changes from the time they were babies. In their work on homes in the past children describe with growing understanding the differences between life now and one hundred years ago especially with regard to appliances which use electricity. They observe the weather and celebrate birthdays. They are encouraged to talk about their environment and events that interest them, where they live and people who help them. Many are developing an understanding of the need to care for living things through their experiences of the class hamster and watching plants grow from seeds.
- Early experience is being gained in using computers and operating the mouse. Most children enjoy time at the computer and are able to click on objects and drag and drop them in programs such as dressing the teddy bear. They also use art programs to produce a range of colourful pictures linked to their topics.

Physical Development is satisfactory

Good features

- Most children are able to dress and undress themselves for physical education and help each other with costumes in the class role-play area. In physical education lessons children move quite lightly on their feet and have good spatial awareness. They follow instructions accurately and are beginning to move with marching movements in time to the music. They have occasional use of wheeled vehicles, which they use sensibly; they are developing suitable control and co-ordination in their movements. They handle pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and scissors correctly and most carefully cut out objects with increasing dexterity. They make satisfactory progress.

Creative development is good

Good features

- Good progress is being made in the development of creative skills. Collage, printing and painting take place on a regular basis. Their skills in cutting, positioning and pasting are developing well and they make choices from a variety of materials. They draw and paint pictures of themselves and familiar objects with suitable control. When performing songs and poems they are enthusiastic and respond well showing good enjoyment of their music making. They are sometimes less successful when responding to musical elements in the

scheme which requires them to hit untuned percussion instruments in time to someone's footsteps.

Shortcomings

- There is the potential to increase the number of planned sessions when the class is divided into two separate groups to further improve opportunities for discussion and involvement by reception children.
- Children's ability to engage in role-play and imaginative drama is underdeveloped.
- Many play activities are not structured sufficiently well to encourage children to solve problems and further enhance their thinking and communication skills.
- During the inspection, sessions devoted to the development of gross motor skills and use of robust play equipment such as trikes are relatively short. Activities are generally linked to playtimes.

English

Standards of achievement in English are satisfactory overall in KS1, although pupils' progress in writing is slow and is unsatisfactory at present. Standards of attainment are satisfactory in KS2 with some good features at the end of the key stage.

Good features

- Pupils are developing attentive listening skills; they are interested and maintain concentration whilst stories poems and information texts are being shared. Teachers use effective behaviour management strategies that enable good teaching to occur and this helps pupils to learn more effectively. Pupils' responses to questions are appropriate and reflect the interest shown in the work.
- Throughout the school, as a direct result of the importance placed on the development of reading skills across the curriculum, most pupils are becoming quite fluent readers. They make at least satisfactory and often good progress.
- In KS1, pupils pay good attention to what other people say and most answer sensibly when communicating their own ideas and experiences.
- They have a good knowledge of a range of different types of texts found in both fiction and factual books and they know how books work. They are beginning to understand why authors use specific punctuation such as bold, large type and exclamation marks and this in turn helps them with their reading.
- Pupils read good quality texts with good understanding; stories such as 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' are shared to strengthen pupils' reading strategies and improve their predictive skills. They use their knowledge of sounds and the events in the story to tackle any unfamiliar words. Where familiar texts are shared they join in with good fluency and expression using different voices to match the personality of the characters.
- The majority of pupils make sound progress in reading on the whole, including pupils with special educational needs, where relevant and interesting stories are reinforced with good information technology programs; these capture pupils' interest and they show a great deal of delight in using them.

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- Pupils use the different reading schemes well and have regular opportunities to share books especially in guided reading sessions. Home-school links reading is well supported by parents and further develops their children's reading skills. All pupils have equal opportunities to learn and achieve success.
 - Pupils' emergent writing develops at an appropriate rate in the early stages of KS1 from writing about personal experiences to recording ideas about stories. When given the opportunity, a minority of older pupils in the key stage produce writing with sufficient detail to engage the reader. They show some evidence of punctuation and their handwriting is becoming well formed.
 - In KS2 the majority of pupils continue to make appropriate progress in their speaking skills, with more able pupils becoming fluent and articulate. They are able to give extremely thoughtful answers; in discussions they communicate their own ideas and experiences well. Listening skills are especially good where lessons are interesting and pupils are challenged to engage fully in the work.
 - Pupils' reading skills continue to develop and they read with increasing fluency and understanding; they enjoy reading a range of texts for both information and pleasure as they progress through the key stage. In discussions most pupils express preferences about favourite authors and stories and by the age of eleven some prefer their own imaginative creation of characters rather than those portrayed in film versions of favourite books such as the 'Harry Potter Stories' by Joanne Rowling. By the end of the key stage they can skim or scan texts to find specific words or events. Appropriate standards are achieved.
 - At KS2, pupils successfully undertake a suitable range of writing tasks. Younger pupils have good knowledge of fables and myths and understand the implied meanings behind the words. They have satisfactory control over the story form and use dictionaries to help with spelling.
 - When a high quality text such as 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes is shared with the class, pupils' written responses are good and they make relevant comparisons between the past and present cultures. Similarly pupils' responses to 'Macbeth' by William Shakespeare show good involvement and understanding.
 - Older pupils' knowledge and use of the formal style of language seen in driving licences, for example, is developing well, they use organisational devices such as sub-headings, paragraphs and bullet points to make clear statements as well as give relevant information.
 - Pupils are encouraged to plan their narrative writing well and redrafting of work shows an improvement in style and content, with pupils building on suggestions made by their teachers. Pupils are also given regular opportunities to compose straight on to the screen and show appropriate word-processing skills. More able pupils are able to sustain and develop their ideas in interesting ways.
 - Pupils work hard to improve their spelling and handwriting during starting activities sessions and their presentation of work is generally of a good standard and reflects their positive attitudes.

Shortcomings

- Many pupils in KS1 are slow to develop their independent writing skills and at present their work does not contain sufficient detail.

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- Although key skills are identified in short-term planning, writing across the curriculum is not well established.
 - Pupils in both key stages are not always required to give extended answers to help develop their speaking skills. A significant proportion of pupils do not readily volunteer answers in class discussions when sharing texts and information.
 - The library area is not used by pupils to full effect and its potential for independent research is under-developed.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement in mathematics are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Younger pupils in KS1 can count to twenty forwards and backwards confidently. They stay well on task and make steady progress when they carry out a number of appropriate differentiated number activities, including matching number cards, finger counting and counting in twos, independently or with adult support. They have a good grasp of ordinals, odd and even numbers up to 10 and can give a number less than one up to 20.
- They begin to understand the concept of measuring length by using non-standards units such as paper clips to measure the length of a calculator. They can distinguish between taller and shorter appropriately.
- Pupils can name common two-dimensional shapes such as a triangle, square and circle and recognise patterns and simple reflective symmetry.
- Their concept of length is strengthened when they estimate and record on a table the length of various objects, such as rubbers, small books and pencils using non-standard measures, then measure to check their predictions.
- When given a number card between one and 20, the majority of older pupils in KS1 can stand in order themselves in a line quickly according to their number. They have a good idea of place value. More able pupils can give the place value of a three-figure number with hundreds, tens and units accurately. A significant number can total small amounts of money and give change.
- Younger pupils in KS2 develop and refine different strategies for adding two figure numbers appropriately. They are able to make sensible choices to enable them to spend money at fair attractions within a budget and still have some money left for a snack.
- Older pupils in KS2 learn appropriate mathematical language such as small, big, long, short and tall. They know their number bonds to twenty and can add and take away two figure numbers in their work books.
- They sequence and count numbers up to 50 appropriately. They can measure in centimetres. They count up to 50 pence and work out how many coins make 20 pence.
- Pupils are able to measure lengths of objects such as pencils up to at least sixteen centimetres with increasing confidence.
- They investigate the properties of three-dimensional shapes to see how many faces they have; for example they know a cube has six faces and a sphere one face.

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- As pupils progress through KS2, they learn to make decisions and solve problems effectively when they take part enthusiastically in a ‘What am I?’ factor game. They can identify missing factors well. They investigate if a number always has an odd number of factors; they discuss sensibly what the problem involves and suggest reasonable ideas on how to solve it. They look for the logical method to solve the problem and record their results adequately on a table. They overcome difficulties that arise reasonably well, organise their work effectively and check their results carefully. The majority of pupils complete the task well.
 - Pupils consolidate their knowledge of addition and subtraction appropriately. They know the value of thousands, hundreds, units, tenths and hundredths and have a sound understanding of percentages; they can convert to decimal and vulgar fractions. They begin to understand negative numbers through comparing hot and cold climates temperatures.
 - They recognise approximate proportions of a whole and use simple fractions to describe these, including mixed fractions and decimal fractions.
 - Pupils draw bar graphs to depict frequency of number of dice throws and number of birthdays.
 - They learn appropriately about regular and irregular pentagons, triangles, including right-angle triangles and have a good understanding of simple perimeters and can calculate them.
 - Pupils gain a sound understanding of angles when they investigate the addition of the internal angles of a polygon totalling three hundred and sixty degrees.
 - They measure length in centimetres and millimetres fairly accurately and convert one to one another, and become familiar with comparing 12 and 24 hour clock times using television timetables.
 - At the end of the key stage, able pupils have a good mental agility with numbers and know their table facts well. The majority of pupils use their good understanding of place value to multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals by ten, hundred and a thousand. Most pupils grasp the idea of multiplying by 5, fifty or five hundred by first multiplying by ten, hundred or a thousand then halving.
 - Pupils in KS2 can subtract two figure numbers from four figure numbers using the decomposition method of subtraction well. They understand equivalent fractions and can change improper fractions to mixed numbers accurately and can cancel fractions to their lowest terms
 - They understand probability as a chance of something happening again when they investigate the frequency of numbers when rolling dice. .
 - Pupils’ mathematical language is increasing appropriately.

Shortcomings

- Pupils in KS1 seldom develop their reasoning in using and applying mathematics or solve numerical problems using a calculator to help them do so.
- Shape, space and measuring work is often simple and they do not yet know geometrical features such as vertices. Measuring length in centimetres is insecure for many pupils and they do little work on pentagons and hexagons.

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- Pupils' knowledge of time is limited and many are unable to measure weight accurately using scales.
 - Pupils in KS2 have insufficient facility with understanding and using properties of position and movement.
 - Pupils do limited work in handling data frequency tables, collecting discrete data and interpreting frequency.
 - Graphical work of pupils is limited to simple line and block graphs for KS2, with little use of graphs using ICT.

Science

Standards of achievement in science are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils early in KS1 have a good recall of a variety of light sources such as the sun, torch, fireworks and candles. They describe how light reflects off objects into our eyes so we can see them. They compare this appropriately with seeing road reflectors shining under car lights. They work collaboratively in groups to carry out an investigation into which material can be used most effectively for seeing in the dark by making a dark box lined with matt black paper where light enters through a small hole. After making reasonable predictions they place various materials into the box, look through the hole, and record their findings.
- Younger pupils have a sound knowledge of what humans need to stay alive, such as air, water and food. They consider the importance of exercise in maintaining good health.
- Older pupils in the key stage investigate appropriately how sound travels through a string telephone using a variety of materials such as string, wool, and plastic covered wire connecting two receivers/transmitters. They have a good idea of what constitutes a fair test and make sound predictions. They work well together with great excitement and through class discussion of their findings, find string to be the best conductor overall.
- Later in KS1, they conduct a survey of favourite fruits methodically, finding that most pupils prefer sweet food. They realise the importance of eating healthy food and looking after our teeth.
- At the beginning of KS2 pupils have a good knowledge of materials and their different states. They consider well the most suitable materials for different purposes, such as the best soft materials for making clothes. Pupils separate mixtures of materials appropriately, using a sieve, and investigate soluble and non-soluble materials. They can measure temperature accurately and know that some materials can change back to their original state when they cool following heating while others do not.
- Pupils at the beginning of KS2 have a sound understanding of light travelling in straight lines when they investigate how shadows are formed and are larger when the light source is nearer the object which is casting the shadow. They write up their findings appropriately.
- Older pupils carry out the same experiment with more emphasis on correct recording of the investigation and the effects of change.
- Later in KS2, pupils show good independent and collaborative skills when they plan conduct and record an investigation into the strength of carrier bags. They appreciate the practical implications of a real-life situation where supermarket chains might need to carry out such an experiment. They consider appropriate procedures for carrying out the test such as recording

the weight of goods required to break the bags, taking into consideration health and safety issues when the bags break. They record their investigation well and produce appropriate graphs to illustrate their findings.

- Pupils' knowledge of life processes and living things is good in KS2. Pupils know that the heart pumps blood bearing oxygen to all parts of the body and investigate how our pulse increases during exercise.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of the solar system and conduct an investigation to gain a better understanding of how an orbit takes longer to circle the centre the further away it is.
- By the end of KS2 pupils have a good understanding of how sound travels in waves when they test different materials as sound insulators. They are able to plan the investigation well, select appropriate equipment suitable to the task and consider how best to represent the data collected, often using ICT effectively.
- Older pupils have an appropriate understanding of how our muscles work and realise light reflects at the same angle it strikes a mirror.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, although a significant number of pupils' progress is impeded by a lack of facility with writing skills.

Welsh as a Second Language

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

Good features

- The majority of pupils listen attentively to teachers, respond enthusiastically to questions and work well with each other. They can sing a range of Welsh songs confidently from memory and with clear diction.
- In KS1, pupils understand familiar words and phrases and make steady progress when they respond simply to teachers' questions about where they live. They can recognise and name a range of colours in Welsh; they count to ten confidently.
- There is a reasonable understanding of basic incidental Welsh by pupils and they are able to respond appropriately.
- As pupils progress steadily through the key stage, they write short sentences to consolidate their oral work.
- At the end of the KS1 pupils speak with intelligible pronunciation and intonation and make satisfactory attempts to copy simple sentences about their favourite clothes.
- Younger pupils in KS2 demonstrate appropriate proficiency in recalling previous work and make satisfactory progress.
- They learn to ask questions about what others are doing in the school well and read a big book 'Ci Clefar' with good pronunciation. Many can extend a simple sentence using the conjunctive 'and'.

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- They are able to recall and understand a range of familiar vocabulary and sentence patterns. They have a reasonable knowledge of local Welsh place names which they pronounce well.
 - Older pupils in KS2 have a good grasp of basic vocabulary including a range of colours and numbers and a significant number can count up to a hundred in Welsh. They are able to respond appropriately to simple commands and greetings when playing a Bingo game and answer questions about their favourite hobbies using the cards as a stimulus.
 - A significant number of the oldest pupils make valiant efforts to answer simple questions on where they have been using the past tense.
 - They act out the part of television announcers from a script. Their reading, pronunciation and expression are delivered well and with apparent understanding.

Shortcomings

- The consistent use by pupils of incidental Welsh as a natural feature of everyday school life, throughout the school is variable. With some exceptions, pupils make insufficient use of Welsh on a day-to-day basis inside and outside classrooms.
- Pupils, particularly in KS1 and early KS2, do not read and write sentences of sufficiently increasing complexity as they progress through the key stage. Progression is often slow.
- As older pupils progress through the school, there is a significant variation in their ability to read, understand and write across a range of tasks and contexts.
- By the end of KS2, pupils do not make extended observations in conversation and discussion, for example, when sharing experiences or conveying information exploring ideas and offering points of view.

Design and Technology

Standards of achievement in design technology are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2. Due to timetabling schedules no lessons were seen in design technology. Pupils confirm the above standards in discussions about their products; this is supported by evidence in the celebration portfolios.

Good features

- Throughout the school, the new scheme of work provides a suitable range of opportunities and sufficient guidance for pupils to experience a range of activities; these help pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the purposes and importance of design technology to modern living.
- Pupils undertake an appropriate range of making activities, through food technology, construction; collage and modelling with reclaimed materials. They have a developing knowledge of basic materials and use simple equipment for cutting, shaping and joining. They generally produce a range of artefacts connected with their current topics.
- In KS1, pupils work with a range of construction materials and interlocking equipment to develop their manipulative and creative skills. They combine strips of paper to make colourful place mats and design a crown, which they make and decorate attractively. Other making projects include Christmas cards and reindeer puppets.
- They work successfully to make other simple products such as sandwiches and show some understanding about choices that suit individual tastes. They are aware of the combination of

different foods that would make 'silly' sandwiches, which links to their collage work in art. Where a jointed Santa has been produced pupils show a developing understanding of mechanisms which allow movement.

- They create simple sketches of their intended outcomes, identify the materials they will use and sometimes sequence the stages of making. Class teachers confirm that pupils usually evaluate their work orally in order to consider what they have made and how they might improve it.
- In KS2, younger pupils have investigated a range of Celtic jewellery in their history topic. They have drawn detailed sketches of simple knot work and made their designs in raised relief work in string. Other jewellery such as brooches and necklaces 'torques' are made from clay and embellished and finished in extremely realistic and decorative/effective ways. Finished products indicate that all pupils have taken a great deal of care with their work and realised their designs to a good standard. Their work is displayed in an attractive manner and they are pleased with what they have achieved.
- Older pupils begin to work to a design brief, such as recent work on Christmas products and educational games for younger children. They draw sketches to show simple mock-ups of their designs and are aware of some materials and joining methods that would enable them to realise their designs successfully.
- Pupils structure the task carefully, acknowledge the importance of teamwork and ensure all members of their group are fully involved. They have good awareness of safety considerations when using simple tools and equipment.
- At the end of the key stage, work on designing and making 'games' for a younger age group enables pupils to build successfully on their knowledge and make products which they can test out. They are aware of the need to produce simple instructions and parts that young children can relate to and handle easily. They show good awareness of the requirements of the task and relate well to recording their findings and use a grid format to record observations and personal responses. These enable them to identify important aspects of the products to be made.
- They solve problems successfully such as making both attractive and interesting baseboards and playing pieces. Further evaluations are planned which should reflect the responses made by the younger children, when playing the game. This information should help pupils to reflect on their designs and suggests sensible ways in which they might further improve or develop their work.
- In discussions pupils also show some understanding of the importance of practical or decorative 'design' features on clothing for example, that influence a consumer's choice and in discussions make satisfactory links between their own work and possessions and the real world.

Shortcomings

- In KS1, pupils make choices from a very narrow range of materials, which sometimes limits the production of their creative and imaginative ideas.
- There are no simple written evaluations by pupils that include judgements about the suitability of their models, likes and dislikes, level of enjoyment using smiling or sad faces for example and this element in the design and make cycle is not sufficiently well developed.

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- Throughout the school pupils' designs skills are underdeveloped, their drawings lack detail and they are not always labelled sufficiently well to indicate the types of materials that they would choose.

Information Technology

Standards of achievement in information technology are satisfactory in both key stages and improving steadily.

Good features

- Pupils use a variety of information technology hardware confidently to enhance their learning, such as listening centres, video recorders and a digital camera. Some are becoming conversant with operating a new interactive whiteboard.
- Pupils develop their information technology skills steadily in a variety of contexts with increasing confidence and competence as they progress through the key stages. Older pupils in KS2 benefit from a weekly visit to the local comprehensive school where they steadily improve their information technology skills.
- Pupils in both key stages are clearly aware that control is integral to everyday devices, such as listening centres.
- Pupils in KS1 can use a word processor to produce sentences that communicate meaning well.
- Pupils in KS1 combine images with text to achieve more interesting and informative presentations. By the end of KS2 word-processing skills are firmly established and pupils become adept at redrafting written composition on screen.
- KS2 pupils give a sequence of accurate instructions to make their screen cursor move in different directions. They show that they can apply and extend this knowledge effectively.
- Pupils become more confident in their ability to use models or simulations to investigate and solve problems.
- Many in KS2 can search a CD-ROM purposefully to access information across the curriculum.
- Pupils in both key stages use word-processing appropriately to draft and redraft work. They use different font styles and colours to make good presentations and many are able to use a spell check, find and replace and cut and paste facilities to help match their work to an audience.
- They can access CD ROMS to download images for topic work with increasing skill.
- Computers are being used consistently throughout the school to develop and use pupils' information and communications technology skills across the curriculum.

Shortcomings

- Pupils are limited in their ability in Logo work to repeat functions to produce a desired outcome.

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- Pupils seldom use database programs to store and present data in a variety of contexts; or choose appropriate styles of graphical representation to present information, and make valid interpretations from them.
 - Pupils work on modelling is limited, and they use an insufficient range of simulation programs, although this is now being addressed.
 - A significant number of pupils are unable to use the Internet to gather information related to their work in, for example, history, geography and science.

History

Standards of achievement in history are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 make observations on how people live now compared with Victorian times. They can describe the clothes people wore and the homes they lived in and realise that progress is usually made over time.
- They look at how transport changes over time, for example in Victorian times it was cheaper to transport goods by sea than by road as more could be carried and it was often quicker.
- They study how people used to heat their homes before gas fires, electricity and central heating and appreciate that we are much warmer today than our Victorian ancestors who had coal fires. They handle real coal and build a coal fire from recyclable materials and gain a good idea of the work evolved. Appropriate attention is given by pupils to the safety aspects of fire. They give appropriate attention to whether a coal fire would be as effective as modern heating systems.
- At the beginning of KS2 pupils have a good understand of how home life is different today from the past. They compare differences well when they make simple observations about historical artefacts of the Victorian era, such as a washboard, clothes, a carpet beater and a toasting fork.
- Pupils study life in Celtic Britain when the Romans invaded Britain. They have a good knowledge of Queen Boudicca and colour in a picture of her in her battle dress.
- Pupils have a good idea of the armour Roman soldiers wore when one of them dresses up as a soldier. They appreciate the protection the armour gave and the purposes of the weapons the soldier used. They have a good idea why the Romans invaded Britain and what they saw here.
- They know about how Rome was created and from whence it takes its name. They write a sequential cartoon story depicting clearly the story of Julius Caesar.
- Pupils study and visit Abergavenny Castle appropriately after which they describe their visit adequately, illustrated with a drawing.
- Older pupils in KS2 write interesting and lively reports on James Watt and his work with steam in a question and answer form.
- They have a good idea of life before the Industrial Revolution and compare their own house with that of one in that time. They recognise a significant number of differences.

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- They research into the census figures of major cities and towns to find which city had the largest population in 1901. They compare facts of a big city with those of Blaenavon and find why people moved to Blaenavon.
 - They imagine what life was like for a miner and imagine they own Big Pit, a local colliery, and create effective advertisements to attract miners to work in the pit.
 - Pupils organise and communicate evidence satisfactorily when they study how Stuart houses were made and from what they were made. They compare different types, such as a manor house and a long house of the period using plans of each story. They discuss who would have lived in each type of house and the names and functions of the rooms.
 - Older pupils study pictures of the former iron works and mines in Blaenavon when they study how industries developed in the industrial revolution. They discuss what is going on in the pictures and make reasonable observations about the jobs involved. They make good progress in their understanding of the various jobs associated with the ironworks and the coalmine.
 - By the end of KS2, pupils are clearly aware of how ships have changed over time. They have a good knowledge of what life must have been like on a Roman ship by writing an empathetic journal of an imaginative journey in a one. They write effectively about their feelings on board a Roman ship and describe vividly the smell on board and what they may have eaten.
 - Pupils at the end of the key stage have a good recall of relevant information about war and cargo ships. They know the purpose of ships and how they traded wine, oil, wool and wheat. They are able to relate a primary source such as the Endeavour which Captain Cook used in his explorations. They describe at length the characteristics of his ship following a visit to the Endeavour. They note how ships change over time as they become bigger, stronger and travel further because of improved sails. Their knowledge of event is secure and their idea of cause and consequence developing well.
 - Pupils generally make useful links between history and art.

Shortcomings

- More able pupils in both key stages do not develop their skills of enquiry and interpretation sufficiently.
- Pupils in KS1 complete little work in their books to show their understanding of history.
- Work does not increase sufficiently in quantity and depth as pupils' progress through KS2 and there is no apparent continuity in the order in which they acquire knowledge.
- A significant number find it difficult to recognise the Victorian houses from the plans of the rooms.

Geography

Standards of attainment in geography are satisfactory overall in both key stages.

Good features

- In all classes good opportunities are created to enable pupils to learn about their own locality. Suitable links have been made with other subjects such as history and art.

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- In KS1, pupils have a developing understanding of plans and simple pictorial maps and recognise maps that identify different areas of their school and grounds; they are beginning to use a key successfully. They are aware of the route they take from home to school and relate well to symbols that identify specific features for trees, streets and houses.
 - Pupils have an appropriate knowledge of their local environment and are developing a secure grasp of simple geographical vocabulary. They are aware of attractive and unattractive features and express definite views about ways they would like to improve certain areas. For example, they would like to improve their school grounds by the addition of attractive markings to enhance their playtimes.
 - They study weather patterns over a period of time in order to observe and describe changes, and they create their own weather symbols to represent different kinds of weather. Through their topic work and stories pupils draw relevant differences between their own world and those of children in other countries.
 - In KS2, pupils have good understanding of the location of Blaenavon and how and why it developed in its specific place. They relate well to photographic evidence of the area and to the features recognised on field trips. Through visits to places such as the local church and chapel, pupils have a suitable understanding of the purposes of different buildings and the specific objects found within them.
 - Pupils have some understanding of land use and changes that have occurred; for instance, they are aware of some of the reasons for the demise of the coal mines and increase in factories. They understand the need to make comparative judgements about different places and present relevant arguments about the advantages and disadvantages of living in their town. They are particularly proud of Blaenavon's World Heritage status but wish it had more shops. They have suitable knowledge about the character and identity of Wales.
 - They are beginning to ask and answer questions about the nature of places and how places relate to each other. They are starting to compare their locality with a town in Bangalore and are becoming aware of the merits and disadvantages of both. Their understanding of the relationship between people and the environment is just developing.
 - From fieldwork visits they recall pertinent information about the landscape including building development and the location of valleys and rivers. Pupils record climate, rainfall and temperature information from cities around the world in simple in graphical form.
 - Discussions with pupils reveal their interest in environmental issues; they are concerned about litter, damage to property and unsightly graffiti. Their observational skills are sound such that they are aware of signs in the environment and the messages they give. They are extremely concerned about 'What goes on in our World' and regularly use television programmes such as 'Newsround' to update their knowledge. Education for global citizenship is in early stages of development.

Shortcomings

- There is limited evidence in their recording of work to identify what has been studied and work often lacks detail and sufficient development. The key skill of writing is underdeveloped.
- Older pupils have not made relevant comparisons with another contrasting locality outside the British Isles. There has been relatively little work featuring a country in the third world, as a contrasting environment, to enable pupils to appreciate the influences of climate, social and economic issues on its development and ultimately on the lifestyle of its people.

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- At present pupils do not extract and record sufficient evidence from a variety of available sources. There has been insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' independent research and enquiry skills.

Art

Standards of achievement in art are satisfactory overall in both key stages. Pupils achieve very good results when working with an artist in residence on a large scale; work produced is both eye-catching and dramatic and enhances the school environment.

Good features

- The art curriculum is well planned to provide pupils with opportunities to undertake a suitable range of experiences in drawing, painting, textiles, clay and other 3D work. Evidence in the celebration portfolios shows satisfactory standards are being achieved in drawing and painting.
- Pupils' work in the hall and corridors, as a direct response to an artist in residence, is very good; it is displayed as a cohesive whole and captures the atmosphere of different and famous 'Wonders of the World'. For example, in capturing the essence of Egypt through the Sphinx and Pyramids, children were involved in developing a range of techniques related to colour mixing, tonal composition to match desert landscapes and co-operating in groups to produce magical work on a large scale.
- Similar standards of work were achieved when pupils captured elements of Red Square in Moscow, Easter Island sculptures and the Parthenon in Greece. Plaster work in re-capturing the 'Last Supper' was particularly impressive and resembles al fresco work of the 'Old Masters' in a pleasing way. Pupils and staff are to be congratulated on their achievements; these attractive and colourful displays contribute effectively to pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The strong cross-curricular links with history, geography and religious education enhance the quality of the curriculum well.
- In KS1, pupils produce colourful self-portraits and some observational drawing of familiar things such as teddy bears. These images are also captured using the 'Paint Magic' computer programme where pupils demonstrate good control and use of relevant colours.
- They are becoming observant when describing the range of colours used by a particular artist such as Breughel and are able to identify and isolate some of the shapes used by him in landscape paintings reflecting different types of weather. They manage a frame successfully with their teacher to isolate particular areas they like and some use the ideas successfully in their own work. Pupils understand the use of 'cold' colours such as blue and grey and the effect they can achieve in winter scenes.
- They are developing a suitable vocabulary for talking about colour in pictures and making progress in indicating how their own work makes them feel. Most pupils show suitable control of pastel and are able to smudge and blend to extend the range of colours and produce a muted effect.
- All pupils in KS2 have explored the art forms of a range of other cultures to enable them to appreciate and understand further the skills of particular craftspeople.
- Younger pupils are developing appropriate skills in interpreting the work of famous artists. They work in a range of media such as watercolour, poster paint and pastel to try to capture the effects in paintings by Monet and Turner, for example.

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- Work linked to the Celtic period of history is good. Pupils have gathered information about the type of designs used during this specific period and used their knowledge to inform their own work in a range of different ways.
 - Initial sketches are used to develop work in different media. For example, pupils have designed simple Celtic knots and then realised them in string. They produce detailed pattern work reflecting that found on jewellery and designed their own artefacts such as a brooch and necklace. These are further developed in clay to a good standard, and embellished with gold and other relevant raised design features; they combine visual and tactile elements well. There are strong links with design technology.
 - Younger pupils have also worked closely with the built environment as reflected in their drawings of their houses and their streets; these show some of the characteristics of Welsh valley side dwellings.
 - Older pupils in KS2 investigate Tudor portraits and have some understanding of how art reflects the culture and of the time being studied and that original pictures are valuable sources of evidence.
 - Where pupils have designed backdrops for pyramids they show some evidence of perspective in terms of size as articles get closer.
 - Pupils make satisfactory progress in art; they build on suggestions and become involved with their tasks so that behaviour is good. They show responsible attitudes to the safe use of tools and work successfully as individuals, in pairs and small groups, co-operating and sharing tools and equipment and ideas well.

Shortcomings

- Work in art does not begin by exploring ways of mark making. Pupils seldom develop basic skills in colour mixing and observational drawing; for example, they do not experiment and produce shades of one colour to support their work in interpreting the work of famous artists.
- Investigations based on collections from the natural world and made environments are not used sufficiently well to develop pupils' observational skills. There is insufficient work by pupils in their sketchbooks to show their developing skills in using the visual language of art, craft and design, especially the use of tone, texture and form.
- Towards the end of KS2 pupils still place facial features equidistant across an oval outline without realising the importance of shading and shadow from the direction of light to help bring character and some dimension to their self-portraits.
- Painting in direct response to familiar landscapes allows pupils to experiment with techniques such as scumbling, daubing, scratching and swirling paint, but lacks sequential development to enable pupils to improve their control and skills.

Music

Standards of achievement in music are good in KS2. Insufficient evidence was available to make a secure judgement for KS1. Singing is good in both key stages overall.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages sing well in assemblies; they project their voices through good breathing and can sing clearly a significant number of songs in two-part counter harmony in English and Welsh.

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- Younger pupils in KS1 sing in tune and clap in time to the beat of a variety of songs with great pleasure and enjoyment shown.
 - They understand the importance of a steady beat in most songs which they demonstrate adequately when they play them with a taped tune.
 - Younger pupils in KS2 revise the pentatonic scale well. Certain pupils differentiate clearly between a scale and a pentatonic scale and learn which notes make up the pentatonic scale in the key of C. They listen avidly to Samson and Delilah by Saint Saens based on the pentatonic scale and recognise the Middle Eastern style in the tune. They successfully recognise a variety of instruments in the orchestra and discuss sensibly their suitability of purpose. Pupils work in groups to compose a pentatonic tune of their own which they perform afterwards on a glockenspiel. They collaborate well together through choosing a composer, arranger/performer and lyricist. Their performances are measured, pleasing and well thought out.
 - Older pupils have a good appreciation of the melody of a Tudor song 'Greensleaves' through moving with a tape and accompanying it with appropriate untuned percussion instruments and arm movements. They refine their listening to the recorded music and chose appropriate instruments to accompany and reflect the mood of the melody. Their performance is played and recorded and pupils make constructive evaluations of the instruments used and make appropriate suggestions for improvement. The final performance with the music is good and the flowing movements of pupils' hands and the addition of instruments effective.
 - Older pupils in KS2 read and recite a war poem and illustrate the noise of battle by a variety of different musical instruments. They respond appropriately and make valid choices. Pupils make appropriate musical illustrations to show where they intend to play various instruments for best effect, for example a tambourine for rapid rifle fire, a drum for cannon and a scraper for machine gun fire. They record their efforts and evaluate reasonably well.
 - A significant number of pupils learn violin, brass and recorder to an appropriate standard to have an important influence on overall standards.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, although a significant number of pupils sing within a limited range of notes and use little graphical representation. Pupils' use of tuned instruments is limited in both key stages.

Physical Education

It was not possible to inspect the full range of physical education activities, particularly in KS1. However, from the planning and lessons seen in dance and games it is judged that standards of achievement in physical education are at least satisfactory in KS1 and generally good in KS2.

Good features

- Younger pupils in the key stage explore space appropriately and become suitably aware of levels up or down when they imitate the 'Grand Old Duke of York'. They move lightly on their feet and co-operate well when working in groups.
- They demonstrate good control of their bodies, stretch and move gracefully when they reflect ice patterns to music. They create imaginative sculpture shapes which they hold well in a frozen shape; they 'melt' effectively to a lying position where they lay perfectly still.

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- The majority of younger pupils in KS2 make good efforts to explore large movements with contrasting elements to the music of the 'Entertainer' by Scott Jocklin. A significant number adapt and refine the basic actions of travelling to the music including walking, creeping, jumping, spinning and crawling, with increasing control.
 - They work effectively with a partner to discuss movements to accompany the music and think of contrasting elements. Many use high and low arm actions well and twist to the rhythm effectively. A very good feature in this activity is the way all pupils regardless of physical difficulties are encouraged by all to have full access to the physical education curriculum and achieve relatively good progress within their capabilities. They are aware of safety issues and the majority respond and listen well to instructions.
 - Older pupils in the key stage perform good stretching movements on command. They respond effectively, particularly when working in pairs, to the Swan Lake music showing appropriate sadness and despair. They control their movements well and gracefully.
 - By the end of the key stage, pupils are mature in their preparation for a games lesson when they collect and take out apparatus. They respond very well to instructions and ideas given and work hard to exercise their bodies appropriately. They appreciate the importance of warming up and cooling down activities. When carrying out a variety of group activities, they show discipline and control, collaborate and demonstrate good skills, for example in sending and receiving small apparatus such as quoits. They are keen to do their best against the clock or stopwatch and improvement is apparent.
 - Pupils in KS2 learn to swim at the local leisure centre pool and achieve the required standards in distance swimming and safety awards.

Shortcomings

- Pupils in KS1 have a limited appreciation of warming up and cooling down for physical activities. They are often noisy and shout out to gain attention, which negates against improving their performance.

Religious Education

Good standards are achieved in religious education in KS2. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about standards achieved in KS1.

Good features

- Pupils follow a well-planned programme of work predominantly based on Christian beliefs and values. They have a clear understanding of moral values such as caring and kindness and know the difference between right and wrong. They contribute to class and school rules and are aware that all communities depend on rules for good order.
- Christian celebrations and festivals are shared with the local community, both in school and local churches.
- In KS1, pupils recall their own 'special place' and a few link them to feelings of being safe and secure. They are encouraged to write their own thanksgiving prayers.
- In KS2, good knowledge is shown of familiar Bible stories such as Moses, David and Goliath, important parables and miracles such as the healing of the lame man.

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- Younger pupils relate well to the story of Jonah and reveal that 'you can run away but you can't hide from God'. Suitable understanding is being developed of the concept of prayer, with pupils sometimes composing simple prayers of their own.
 - They have good knowledge of the places of worship previously visited and with support draw out appropriate similarities and differences; they make suitable gains in knowledge and understanding of artefacts and furniture and the role of the vicar as a leader.
 - Older pupils understand the significance of religious symbols and the meaning of ceremonies such as baptisms and weddings. They relate well to the different colours of robes worn by the vicar to symbolise different events in the church year. They obtain information from a range of sources including pictures books and videos.
 - Appropriate attention is paid to other faiths and customs. Pupils are currently learning about beliefs and practices in Judaism and realise that people throughout the world worship in different ways. They show good respect for the rituals used during a Shabbat meal, they are genuinely impressed when an authentic Kiddush cup is produced and reflect successfully on ways in which they might find observing a day of rest difficult.
 - Pupils are encouraged to relate their own past experiences to their developing knowledge about the Muslim faith; during well-focused group discussions pupils produce a range of pertinent questions to ask young Muslims about their religious observances and practices, such as 'Have you been to Mecca or Medina?' and 'Do you get married in a mosque?'
 - Teachers deal sensitively with misconceptions and enable pupils to make appropriate gains in knowledge and understanding about important aspects of religious beliefs and practices.
 - By the age of eleven pupils show good awareness of the ways in which faith might be communicated and the commitment needed to set a good example in the face of difficulties. They relate this to the ways in which Jesus showed his faith in God throughout his life, for example during His temptation in the desert.
 - In discussions older pupils recall the main celebrations in the Christian faith, such as Christmas and Easter and acknowledge the importance of other events; they are aware that other faiths also have special celebrations such as Divali.
 - Assemblies make an appropriate contribution to pupils' religious knowledge and understanding. Pupils listen intently and show by their responses that they appreciate the meaning and significance of stories.

Shortcomings

- In KS1, many pupils have poor retentive memories and are unable to recall information about previous work, including bible stories. They find it difficult to discuss simple ideas and give opinions about their current work.
- Insufficient emphasis is placed on the development of literacy skills and pupils do not often record personal responses to the information they have been given, so they are unable to look back and recall significant details of what they have been taught.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

There were five key issues for action identified in the previous report.

The school needs to:

- improve the progress made by pupils on its register of SEN;

This has been achieved successfully.

- take measures to manage the behaviour of the small number of pupils whose responses in class are severe enough to disturb their own work and others;

Considerable progress has been made due to a successful and consistent positive behaviour strategy.

- improve standards in information technology across the school and in design technology, history and music in KS2;

The school is well placed to improve standards in IT which are satisfactory at present are improving; ICT skills are good. Design and technology is now satisfactory in both key stages whereas it was good in KS1 and unsatisfactory in KS2. History in KS2 is satisfactory. Music has improved in KS2.

- overcome the uneven teaching and learning in KS2;

This has largely been achieved with the quality of teaching more consistent and occasionally very good.

- ensure that the work provided, especially written work, is appropriately adapted to meet the needs of pupils across the ability groups.

Significant steps have been made to address this issue, but progress remains slow at present.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school needs to:

- raise standards in subjects judged satisfactory and address shortcomings where identified;*
- improve writing as a key skill across the curriculum, particularly in KS1;
- continue to develop the good recent initiatives in planning;
- continue to implement and develop assessment and recording procedures to give a full picture of pupil achievement; *
- continue to develop the school management team and subject leaders' role in the formal monitoring of standards in teaching and learning.*

* Aspects of these key issues have been identified in the school's current SDP.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information about the School

Name of School	Hillside Primary School
School Type	Primary
Age-Range of Pupils	4 - 11
Address of School	Upper Hill Street Blaenavon Torfaen
Post Code	NP44 9NN
Telephone Number	01495 790295

Headteacher	Mrs J.M. Cook
Date of Appointment	January 1998
Chairman of Governors	Mrs B. Prince
Registered Inspector	Mr P.D.W. Edwards
Dates of Inspection	13 th – 16 th January 2003

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of Pupils in Each Year Group</i>								
Year Group	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of Pupils	12	21	34	22	33	21	31	174

<i>Total Number of Teachers</i>			
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time Equivalent (fte)
Number of Teachers	6	2	7

<i>Staffing Information</i>	
Pupil : Teacher (fte) Ratio	25
Average Class Size	29
Teacher (fte) : Class Ratio	1:1

<i>Percentage Attendance for Three Complete Terms Prior to the Inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School
Term 1	89.1	94.1	90.3	91.6
Term 2	91.5	91.2	90.8	91
Term 3	90.8	94	93.2	93.5

Number of Pupils Excluded during Twelve Months prior to Inspection	3
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C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS

END OF KS1: 2002 compared with national figures for 2001

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2002			Number of Pupils in Y2: 23					
Percentage of Pupils at Each Level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	4	9	26	48	13	0
		National	0	4	13	62	21	0
ENGLISH: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	4	9	26	39	22	0
		National	0	4	13	54	29	0
	Task/Test	School						
		National	1	3	13	53	30	
ENGLISH: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	4	17	1	52	9	0
		National	0	5	13	70	12	0
	Task/Test	School						
		National	0	5	10	75	9	
ENGLISH: Speaking and Listening	Teacher Assessment	School	4	4	22	57	13	0
		National	0	3	11	63	23	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	4	0	17	48	30	0
		National	0	2	9	60	29	0
	Task/Test	School						
		National	0	2	6	56	36	
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	4	4	30	43	17	0
		National	0	2	10	67	21	0

Percentage of Pupils Attaining at least Level 2 in Mathematics, Science and English (or Welsh as a First Language) according to Teacher Assessment			
In the School:	57%	In Wales:	81%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements
A Pupils who were absent from the tests/tasks
W Pupils who are working towards Level 1

The majority of seven-year-old pupils are expected to attain Level 2.

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2002							Number of Pupils in Y6 30						
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	17	33	42	8	0
		National	0	0	1		0	1	6	19	48	25	0
	Test/Task	School	0	17	8	0			25	17	25	8	
		National	0	2	2	0			4	14	47	31	
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	17	33	42	8	0
		National	0	0	1		0	1	4	19	47	28	0
	Test/Task	School	0	17	8	0			25	33	17	0	
		National	0	2	1	1			4	18	42	32	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	17	17	58	8	0
		National	0	0	1		0	0	3	15	52	29	0
	Test/Task	School	0	8	0	0			25	17	42	8	
		National	0	2	0	1			2	13	51	31	

Percentage of Pupils Attaining at least Level 4 in Mathematics, Science and English (or Welsh as a First Language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the School:	47%	In the School:	33%
In Wales:	68 %	In Wales:	68 %

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
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 who have not been 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

The majority of eleven-year-old pupils are expected to attain Level 4.

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors over a period of three days.

- Pre-inspection meetings were held with the acting head, staff and governing body.
- 15 parents attended a meeting with two members of the inspection team.
- 110 questionnaire responses were analysed and summarised.
- All documentation submitted by the school was analysed and discussed, including the school development plan, policy and curriculum documents and teachers' planning files.
- Pupils were observed as they arrived and departed from school and during the midday and other breaks.
- At various times during the day, inspectors took the opportunity to talk to pupils and to discuss their work.
- 56 lessons or part-lessons were observed.
- Pupils were heard reading and were examined in their knowledge and understanding of English, mathematics, science and other subjects.
- A wide range of pupils' written and other work was examined in each class.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' work with class teachers and examined assessment records.
- Discussions were also held with the acting head, curriculum co-ordinators and other staff.
- The work of pupils with special educational needs was examined, including those in the SEN units.
- Minutes of meetings and documents relating to the financial management of the school were discussed.
- Budget figures were examined and discussed with the acting head.
- Attendance and pupil records were inspected.
- Inspectors attended acts of collective worship.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Team Member	Subject Responsibilities	Aspect Responsibilities
Mr Phillip Edwards RgI	Mathematics Science Welsh 2 nd Language Information Technology History Music Physical Education	Context Main Findings of the Report Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the curriculum Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Quality of Teaching Quality of Self Evaluation and Planning for Improvement Leadership and Efficiency Progress Since Last Inspection Key Issues
Mrs Gillian Phillips Team	Provision for Children Under Five English Design and Technology Art Geography Religious Education	Curriculum Teaching Assessment, Recording and Reporting Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs Staffing, Accommodation and learning Resources Key Issues
Mr Stephen Page Lay		Behaviour and Attitudes Attendance Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions Partnership with Industry Key Issues

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