

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

**IRFON VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL
GARTH
LLANGAMMARCH WELLS
POWYS
LD4 4AT**

SCHOOL NUMBER: 666/2122

DATE OF INSPECTION: 2-3 OCTOBER 2001

BY

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DATE: 20 NOVEMBER 2001

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE REPORT IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER :

ACCAC	-	Awdurdod Cymwysterau Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru (The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales)
CD-ROM	-	Compact Disk Read Only Memory
CoP	-	Code of Practice
EBP	-	Education Business Partnership
GB-		Governing Body
ICT	-	Information and Communications Technology
IEP	-	Individual Education Plan
INSET	-	In-Service Education and Training
KS	-	Key Stage
LEA	-	Local Education Authority
NAfW	-	National Assembly for Wales
NC	-	National Curriculum
NTA	-	Non-Teaching Assistant
PSE	-	Personal and Social Education
PTA	-	Parent-Teacher Association
SDP	-	School Development Plan
SEN	-	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	-	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
Y	-	Year

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PART 2: THE INSPECTION SCHEDULE

1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Irfon Valley Primary school is situated in the village of Garth, about six miles west of Builth Wells. It was opened in 1980 as a result of the closure of four small village schools, including one in Garth; it accommodated pupils from a fifth local school a short time later. Consequently, it serves a large rural area of approximately 100 square miles, although a few attend from outside the catchment area through parental choice. The accommodation comprises one main building of semi-open plan design with four teaching areas, a hall, a kitchen, a staff room and an administrative office. Outside there are two playgrounds, a playing field and attractive landscaped gardens.

The school currently caters for 87 pupils between the ages of three and eleven, taught in four mixed age range classes; there is one child of nursery age. The number on roll has steadily declined over the last five years, due partially to changes in the catchment area and school transport arrangements. According to the school, all pupils come from homes that are neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged; only 3.5% are registered as being entitled to receive free school meals, which is well below the national and local averages. The intake covers the full range of ability. Around 16% are identified as requiring SEN support, which is below the national norm; one is statemented. Around 5% of pupils come from an ethnic minority background, but none speaks English as an additional language. Similarly, no pupils are natural Welsh speakers.

The school has appropriate aims. Recent priorities have focused on reviewing policy and practice in English and science and improving standards in ICT and mental mathematics, as well as in incidental Welsh and mapping skills in geography. The school was awarded the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark in June 2001.

The school was last inspected in January 1996. A new head was appointed with effect from September 1st 2001, following the retirement of the previous incumbent, who had been in post since the opening of the school.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

This is a school with several good features, but a number of whole school aspects require attention.

- From the lessons observed standards in the school are around 95% satisfactory or better, of which about 45% is good and 18% very good.
- Overall, children in the early years receive a solid foundation for their future learning. The educational provision for the under-fives, therefore, taken overall, is appropriate to

their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children’s Learning.

- Standards achieved by children in the early years in the six areas of learning are as follows:

Language, literacy and communication skills	Very good
Personal and social development	Good
Mathematical development	Very good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Good
Physical development	Very good
Creative development	Very good

- Standards in KS1 are around 89% satisfactory or better, of which about 56% is good and 11% very good. Standards in KS2 are 100% satisfactory or better, of which about 30% is good and 20% very good.

- Standards in the different subjects are as follows:

	KS1	KS2
English:	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Speaking	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Listening	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Reading	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Writing	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Good
Science	Good	Good
Welsh second language	Good	Good
Design and technology	Good	Good
Information technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
History	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Art	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Music	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Physical education	Very good in the one lesson observed	No lessons observed
Religious education	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

- In key skills across the curriculum, children in the early years achieve good standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and ICT. In KS1 and KS2 standards are generally satisfactory in speaking, reading, numeracy and ICT, but unsatisfactory in writing; in listening standards are satisfactory in KS2, but unsatisfactory in KS1. There is no whole school strategy in place for the development of key skills or the common requirements of the NC, although a draft plan has recently been drawn up.
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school meets statutory requirements for collective worship, although sessions vary in quality. The cwricwlwm Cymreig is satisfactorily developed, but there is generally a lack of attention to multicultural education.

- Overall, most pupils behave well, but there are a few whose behaviour is unsatisfactory, which has a negative effect on the quality of learning and relationships within the school.
- Attendance and punctuality are good.
- Based on the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching in the school overall is around 95% satisfactory or better, of which about 41% is good and 27% very good.
- Teaching in the early years is consistently good or very good and in other classes there are examples of good or very good practice, particularly in KS2.
- Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly, the large majority of which are well managed and appropriately structured. Clear instructions and explanations are usually given and questioning techniques are generally well developed.
- Teachers use a range of methods and in the majority of lessons work is differentiated by task and/or outcome, but there is scope to extend this across the curriculum and to increase the amount of independent study to allow pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting overall is satisfactory. Regular assessment takes place and appropriate records are kept, but data is not always used effectively to target improvements in teaching and learning.
- Work is marked regularly and reports to parents are issued annually, but comments in books and on reports, although mainly positive, do not generally provide guidance for improvement. Reports to parents of Y1 pupils and the NC assessment data issued for Y2 and Y6 do not fully meet statutory requirements.
- The lack of any completed schemes of work, coupled with the way the curriculum has been planned and how pupils' work is organised and kept, does not ensure full coverage of the statutory curriculum or continuity and progression in pupils' learning. There are also inconsistencies in teachers' medium and short term planning.
- Curriculum time for KS2 pupils does meet NAfW recommendations.
- Good provision is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils and overall the arrangements for pupils with SEN are satisfactory; appropriate attention is paid to the CoP.
- Partnership with parents and the community is good; with other schools, institutions and industry it is satisfactory.
- School self-evaluation and planning for improvement are at an early stage of development. There is no current SDP and the role of the subject co-ordinator is relatively underdeveloped, particularly in relation to the systematic monitoring of standards, teaching and learning throughout the school.

- The school is entering a new era in relation to its management and leadership; at the time of the inspection the new head had only been in post for three weeks, but she had quickly assessed the strengths and areas for development in the school. She has a clear vision of the way forward. She has inherited a large number of responsibilities in addition to her management duties, and at present she is teaching full-time; this is inappropriate.
- Daily routines operate efficiently and the GB is supportive and keen to take the school forward. The budget is appropriately managed, but there is no projection for future spending. The school gives satisfactory value for money.
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall.
- Although progress has been achieved to some extent in each of the key issues from the last inspection, the school has not made major changes over the last five years to the way it is managed and organised, with the result that various aspects of the shortcomings highlighted in the last report remain as key issues for development in the current inspection.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

From the lessons observed standards in the school are around 95% satisfactory or better, of which about 45% is good and 18% very good.

- Standards in the early years are consistently good or very good in each of the six areas of learning. Overall, children make very good progress and receive a solid foundation for their future learning.
- Standards in KS1 are around 89% satisfactory or better, of which about 56% is good and 11% very good. Standards in KS2 are 100% satisfactory or better, of which about 30% is good and 20% very good.
- Standards in English are satisfactory overall. Most pupils make steady progress through the school in speaking, reading and writing, but there are shortcomings in the range and quality of writing in both key stages and in listening in KS1.
- Standards in mathematics are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2; a number of older more able pupils have well developed mental agility skills.
- Standards in science are good in both key stages with some very good features in KS2; pupils develop a range of understanding and skills through investigative work.
- Standards in Welsh second language and design and technology are good in both key stages.
- Standards in information technology are satisfactory in both key stages overall, but there is recent evidence of some good and very good work throughout the school.

- Standards in history, art and music are satisfactory in both key stages.
- Standards in physical education were very good in the one early years/Y1 lesson observed.
- Standards in religious education are unsatisfactory in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2.
- Standards in geography are unsatisfactory in both key stages.
- Although cohorts are small, NC test results for 2000 and 2001 in KS1 indicate that pupils overall perform around the national and local averages and at least as well as schools of a similar type. They attain better in mathematics than in English and science; few achieve level three in reading and none reaches this level in writing or science for either year.
- In KS2 in 2000 pupils generally performed better than the national average, although there were considerable discrepancies between the teacher assessment and test results, with far more pupils achieving level five in the English and mathematics tests. In 2001, when there was a large proportion of boys, results declined in all three subjects to around the national average, and below the norm for schools of a similar type. Marked discrepancies between the teacher assessment and test results were again evident with pupils performing much better overall in the tests.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

In key skills children in the early years achieve good standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and ICT. In KS1 and KS2 standards are generally satisfactory in speaking, reading, numeracy and ICT, but unsatisfactory in writing; in listening standards are satisfactory in KS2, but unsatisfactory in KS1.

- Many pupils throughout the school speak clearly and audibly. Opportunities are provided for them to express their thoughts but, on the whole, the use of oral skills is often limited. Too little emphasis is placed on role play and drama in some subjects.
- Listening skills are underdeveloped in KS1. Pupils often do not listen attentively to their teacher and to each other, both in whole class sessions and in group activities.
- Standards in reading across the curriculum are satisfactory, but there are few opportunities for pupils to use books to find out information for themselves. Little use is made of the library to expand pupils' research and study skills, due especially to its location and a lack of resources.
- Good concentration is evident during silent reading periods, but pupils do not read sufficiently in groups or pairs in order to improve fluency and comprehension.
- Writing lacks sufficient breadth. Too little encouragement is given to pupils to engage in extended writing across the curriculum. Work is often marred by carelessness and untidy presentation and at times it is unfinished.

- Pupils in KS2 do not make sufficient use of dictionaries and thesauri to improve their spelling skills and to ensure that words are correctly written.
- In both key stages most pupils make satisfactory use of their mathematical skills across the curriculum, for example in science and geography.
- Efforts are being made to ensure that ICT forms an integral part of the curriculum to enhance and extend learning in all areas.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

- The school meets statutory requirements for collective worship, but sessions vary in their quality, according to their purpose, format and timing during the school day. In the best practice, pupils lead in and out quietly, listen well and participate effectively, for example through role play and drama, playing recorders and reading prayers; an appropriately reverent ambience is created through the use of music and time for reflection. On all occasions pupils sing enthusiastically and tunefully. There is a Welsh assembly each week and visits are made to the Church for services at least twice a year.
- Pupils' spirituality is further enhanced through aspects of the curriculum, the school environment and daily routines, such as saying a prayer at the end of the day, but there is no planned approach.
- Most pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and the need to accept responsibility for their own actions and to exercise fairness. They are aware of the need to treat other people, living things and their environment with care and respect. They learn about those less fortunate than themselves and regularly support charities. Older pupils are being introduced to circle time to enable them to share their views and feelings, as well as to explore moral issues and to resolve conflicts.
- The majority of pupils work and play together well, but a few lack the skills to think of others rather than themselves. Most take on responsibilities willingly and confidently and take turns fairly, performing their duties effectively. Older pupils often help younger ones and are keen to show initiative, although opportunities for this are somewhat limited.
- The cwricwlwm Cymreig is satisfactorily developed through some subjects, for example history and geography, as well as through the use of the Welsh language and special events, such as the annual Eisteddfod, but there is no co-ordinated approach in place.
- Although pupils are taught about other cultures and faiths, for example in religious education and collective worship, there is generally a lack of attention to multicultural education, with the result that pupils' awareness of important social and racial issues, not within their immediate experience, and their understanding of the richness and diversity of other cultures are underdeveloped.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Overall, most pupils behave well, but there are a few whose behaviour is unsatisfactory, which has a negative effect on the quality of learning and relationships in the school.

- The school promotes mutual co-operation, respect, harmony and friendship, and carefully records incidents of misbehaviour.
- The youngest children are well behaved and secure in familiar routines. They remain on task and show an interest in their work; they are well motivated and keen to complete their activities.
- In KS1 pupils at times find difficulty sharing resources and, when they are not well motivated, they lose interest and become disruptive.
- Similarly, a few older pupils display immaturity; they seek attention and disturb others. They find it difficult to sustain concentration or work independently.
- Although the school seeks to involve the home in finding resolutions to behaviour difficulties, a small number of parents is continually concerned about discipline and attitudes, including bullying. Rewards and sanctions are not outlined for parents in the prospectus and the behaviour and bullying policy is inappropriately combined with the SEN policy.
- The school's strategies for dealing with misbehaviour are not always effective; they do not impact appropriately on pupils who have challenging and demanding patterns of behaviour.
- At lunch time older pupils play very boisterously and can be aggressive; they do not listen to, or show appropriate respect for, the lunch time supervisors. The sanctions applied, which include sending pupils in to the school building, are not regarded as punishment by the pupils themselves.
- The head recognises that new procedures, coupled with such strategies as circle time and staff development, are needed to promote better behaviour and to raise awareness that such actions as bullying are unkind.
- There have been no exclusions in recent years.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance is good overall.

- The average attendance is around 95% and in the early years and KS2 it is about 97% and 98% respectively, which is very good. The lower KS1 attendance figures in the spring term 2001 were affected by pupils suffering from a contagious illness.
- Unauthorised absence is relatively low and satisfactory targets are in place to improve attendance. The education welfare service provides effective support, as required.

- Although the GB's annual report to parents details the percentages of attendance, these are not recorded in the prospectus.
- Registration is completed efficiently at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and authorised and unauthorised absences are generally identified and recorded correctly.
- The majority of pupils arrive in school promptly and punctuality is maintained throughout the school day.
- The school complies with NAFW Circular 3/99.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

Based on the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching in the school overall is around 95% satisfactory or better, of which about 41% is good and 27% very good.

- Teaching in the early years is consistently good or very good and in other classes there are examples of good or very good practice, particularly in KS2.
- Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly and learning resources are usually ready for pupils to use; visual aids and classroom displays are employed effectively to enhance learning.
- The large majority of lessons are well managed and classroom routines are well established, so that learning time is maximised. Most pupils work conscientiously and remain on task.
- Transitions between activities operate smoothly, although occasionally pupils have to wait for materials to be issued or when they have completed a task. Extension and contingency activities are prepared for those who finish early.
- Lessons begin promptly and are appropriately structured with suitable introductions and conclusions, when work is shared and learning reinforced, although there is scope to vary this approach more. Time is generally well managed, but on occasions pupils sit listening for too long, especially at the beginning of lessons, with the result that they lose concentration and the time available for them to complete their tasks is limited.
- Clear instructions and explanations are usually given and subject specific terminology is well used. Questioning techniques are generally well developed to promote understanding and discussion, but older pupils at times are somewhat reticent to respond. On a few occasions learning objectives and procedures are not clearly thought through, with the result that pupils are not sure how to proceed.
- In the majority of lessons teachers differentiate work by task and/or outcome between and within year groups, particularly in mathematics, but there is scope to extend this across the curriculum to ensure all pupils work on tasks that are matched appropriately to their learning needs.

- Pupils are appropriately encouraged and praised, and generally individuals and groups are effectively monitored and supported; in most lessons work is marked as pupils proceed to provide immediate feedback.
- Where teaching is very good, expectations are high, a range of relevant learning activities are available and the pace is brisk and lively to maintain pupils' interest and alertness. Questions are differentiated and pupils are challenged to achieve. A good overview of the class is maintained with close attention being given to individual pupils' needs.
- Teachers use a range of methods, such as whole class teaching, individual tasks and work in pairs and groups, but there is scope to increase the amount of problem solving, co-operative group work and independent study to allow pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning and to discover more for themselves. However, in Y5/Y6 the large number of pupils in a confined space limits the opportunities for this type of work.
- Teachers generally have a good background knowledge of the statutory curriculum and are given good support by fellow co-ordinators and through INSET in the areas where they are less confident.
- In most lessons extra support is provided by classroom assistants, nursery nurses, students and parents, which is beneficial to pupils' learning, but they are not always deployed most profitably.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

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

- Whilst there are examples of effective procedures, these are not used consistently across the classes. The school recognises the need to develop more manageable and purposeful systems for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress.
- The standard of assessment and record keeping for the under-fives is good. Learning objectives are identified and effectively inform teaching plans.
- Consideration is given to the results of NC tests, but the school in the past has not engaged in any detailed analysis to ensure improvements in those areas requiring further attention or development.
- Regular assessment takes place throughout the school in English and mathematics. However, this is not always used effectively to target improvements in teaching and learning. In the foundation subjects and religious education there are no systematic procedures for assessment.
- Throughout the school there are examples of assessment, based on clear targets, that are used appropriately to inform curriculum planning. However, there is no consistent practice in all classes or across the whole curriculum. Assessment procedures are not sufficiently focused on what pupils can do and achieve.

- Individual record folders exist for each pupil; these contain a range of work and assessment details for the core subjects, as well as general comments on topic work in the foundation subjects.
- Since the last inspection annual portfolios of pupils' work have been assembled in various subjects and records of pupils' NC coverage have been kept, although there are no exemplars of levelled and annotated work. A useful framework has been drawn up in Welsh to support teachers' understanding of NC levels.
- The use of personal targets is at an early stage of development; pupils are rarely involved in setting their own targets for improvement.
- Work is marked regularly and comments are generally positive, but there is a lack of consistency across the school and comments do not always provide help to guide future work.
- The school holds two parental consultation meetings a year. Annual reports are issued to parents, but they do not consistently identify targets for improvement and clear learning steps. In Y1 there are no comments on any of the foundation subjects, except Welsh: this does not meet statutory requirements. Additionally, early years reports do not cover all the six areas of learning.

5.3 Curriculum

Due to the lack of long term planning and the way that learning has been structured until recently, there is insufficient breadth and balance in the curriculum overall and teaching time in KS2 does not meet NAFW recommendations.

- The provision for the under-fives is based on the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and is well planned.
- In KS1 and KS2 the curriculum is appropriately organised; pupils normally study English and mathematics in the morning, with science and the foundation subjects being taught in a long afternoon session, which contains no break.
- The school operates a four-year topic plan, with a class studying three topics each year. This work encompasses most of the science NC and all of the foundation subjects, as well as religious education. The school acknowledges that this present system often creates imbalance and staff are actively engaged in a review of curricular provision and delivery.
- There is no whole school strategy for the development of key skills and the NC common requirements, but a draft plan is currently available for staff discussion.
- There are drafts of recently updated policies in many areas, although these vary in quality. There are no completed whole school schemes of work to ensure coverage of all areas of the curriculum.
- Medium and short term plans are detailed, but vary in format and do not consistently and rigorously identify clear learning targets to meet the needs of all pupils.

- The school is introducing aspects of PSE into the curriculum and is aware of the ACCAC guidelines.
- The curriculum provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory.
- There are satisfactory arrangements for homework and parents are generally happy with the system; the work focuses largely on English and mathematics.
- Teachers organise educational visits to many places of interest. These extend pupils' knowledge and expertise and are a positive feature of the life and work of the school.
- The school provides a range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport and music; these are clearly focused and enrich pupils' learning experiences.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

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

- Pupils are educated in a warm, caring environment, in which staff promote positive values to encourage pupils' learning.
- There is a school policy on health and safety, but there is a lack of detail on procedures. Many policies are in the process of review, especially those on sex education and equal opportunities. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and the life and work of the school.
- The school follows the Powys LEA child protection policy and procedures and the head is the designated person responsible for this area.
- Safety and security procedures are reviewed regularly and the school is addressing the small number of issues identified.
- The administration of medicines for pupils is carefully supervised and monitored. Specific procedures exist, based on the understanding that there is parental consent.
- Good relationships have been established with support services and an effective partnership is being developed with the school nurse to promote better understanding of health and personal development.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN

Overall, the organisation of the school's SEN provision is satisfactory.

- Appropriate attention is paid to the CoP. There is a revised whole school policy for SEN, which is at an early stage of development.
- Although the SENCO is relatively new in the post, responsibilities are appropriately discharged and suitable steps are being considered to effect improvements.

- The SEN support teacher works closely and enthusiastically with class teachers to provide guidance across the school.
- All pupils with SEN have full access to the NC.
- The teaching of pupils with SEN in withdrawal sessions is good. Resources are well used to motivate pupils and tasks are varied and interesting. Pupils are eager to learn and to complete tasks.
- IEPs have been drawn up in all classes. They identify specific targets and meet the requirements of the CoP.
- Consultation procedures and information exchange meetings for SEN staff and mainstream teachers occur. The school recognises the need to establish a manageable strategy which accurately monitors and assesses pupils' progress on a more regular basis.
- The school has a number of support staff who work with individuals or groups of pupils in their mainstream classes. However, they are not always deployed well enough to ensure that pupils make sufficient gains in their learning and at times a lack of purposeful lesson planning reduces their efficiency.
- ICT is often used well to support and extend the learning of pupils with SEN.
- Parents are fully involved in any decisions that are made at regular review meetings.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

Partnership with parents and the community is good and with other schools and institutions it is satisfactory.

- The quality and presentation of the prospectus, information for starting school and the GB's annual report to parents are good overall; however, they do not fully meet statutory requirements.
- Parents are generally pleased with the quality and quantity of information they receive about the life and work of the school.
- There is a very well attended mother and toddler group, which is held in the school once a week and which has very good links with the early years class; resources are shared and pre-school visits are made to the class. The early years teacher also visits the group regularly.
- Parents are invited to Harvest Festival, Eisteddfod, sports day and assemblies, although only a small number currently help in the school on a day to day basis.
- Although there is no PTA or Friends Association, the school arranges a number of varied fundraising events, which are well supported by parents.

- There is a home-school agreement in place, although it is formal in character and not suitable for the age and understanding of younger pupils.
- Parents feel welcome to come to school to discuss problems and concerns at any time.
- The community is well used as a learning resource with regular visits to the church, village hall, postal sorting office and fire station.
- People within the community are visited at Christmas and Harvest time and are welcomed into school for concerts. Those with particular expertise also come to talk to pupils about their experiences and to demonstrate their skills.
- The wider community is also well used through visits to local museums, buildings of historical interest, farms and a lake and a country park, all of which help to enrich the curriculum and pupils' learning.
- Pupils from the feeder high school undertake work experience within the school.
- INSET training for staff has included joint initiatives with Y7 of the local high school.
- The school joins with other local primary schools for competitive sports events and headteacher cluster meetings.
- At the time of the inspection, a student from a local college was attached to the school; this had a positive effect by providing extra support in the classroom.
- There are currently no partnership links with any teacher training institutions.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

Overall, there is a satisfactory partnership with industry.

- There is no specific school policy on industry links, but partnerships are promoted through the curriculum.
- The school has links with the local saw mill, quarry and farms within the area.
- The school has received funding in the past from the EBP and a large bank.
- The school choir participated successfully in a national competition for a song for the Millennium organised by a large clothes retailer. Pupils subsequently made a high quality recording of their work.
- The school pond has benefited from links with a local quarry and the Prince's Trust.
- No staff development in relation to industrial links has taken place in recent years.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

School self-evaluation and planning for improvement are at an early stage of development; a culture of critical self-review is being sensitively and actively promoted by the new head.

- There is no current SDP or rigorous process of school self-review, which identifies the school's strengths and shortcomings, although procedures are now being developed.
- Previous goals and targets, while valid in themselves, have not been determined by school self-evaluation and are narrow in focus. There is no long or medium term whole school planning in evidence.
- The systematic monitoring of standards, teaching and learning throughout the school is currently underdeveloped. Subject co-ordinators have monitored pupils' work in most subjects, but they have not evaluated standards, teaching and learning through class visits.
- In general, progress within and between key stages lacks systematic review and co-ordination.
- The school's self-evaluation report addresses the key issues from the last inspection, but it does not provide any other analysis.
- Due to a lack of a long term strategy in whole school development planning, staff development has not been closely linked to school improvement

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

The school is entering a new era in relation to its management and leadership.

- At the time of the inspection the new head had only been in post for three weeks. She has quickly assessed the strengths and areas for development in the school and has a clear vision of the way forward.
- The school has a sense of purpose and a community ethos, which has been successfully cultivated over a number of years. Staff work well together as a team and provide good mutual support for each other; staff meetings are held regularly.
- The acting deputy has served in this capacity for a number of years and the two other permanent teachers share a responsibility point for six months of the year each; these arrangements are now under review.
- Subject leaders are in place for all curriculum areas, although the head has inherited a large number of responsibilities in addition to her management duties, and at present she is teaching full-time; this is inappropriate.
- Daily routines operate effectively, although the school lacks a number of relevant policies and documents to codify established practices.

- The GB is supportive and keen to take the school forward; each member has a subject responsibility and most visit the school from time to time. Meetings are held regularly and sub-committees are being established.
- The budget is appropriately managed, but there is no projection for future spending, due to the lack of a long term SDP. At present there is a healthy budget surplus, but the GB is aware that this is being eroded as the number of pupils on roll declines. There is a good level of spending on resources for learning, which are well managed, but no subject priorities are currently identified. At present the school gives satisfactory value for money.
- The school has been audited financially twice in the last two years; the reports indicate that routine administration is generally well established, although recommendations in the first report were not fully implemented by the time of the second visit. These issues are now being addressed.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall.

- At present, the school is adequately staffed with four full-time teachers, including the head, and one part-time teacher for a total of 87 pupils.
- All teachers are suitably qualified and job descriptions have been drawn up for all members of staff.
- Classroom accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on roll, but due to the large number of pupils in Y5/Y6, space in their classroom is cramped and restricts learning activities.
- Good support is provided by the nursery nurse, NTAs, the school secretary, caretaker and kitchen staff. Standards of cleanliness are high in all areas of the school.
- The school hall is used for dining, teaching and other purposes; it is small and has inadequate space for physical education lessons, especially in upper KS2.
- Displays of pupils' work in corridors and classrooms enhance the learning environment and are generally of good or very good quality.
- Learning resources are adequate overall, but there are deficiencies in some areas, such as reference books in history, geography and religious education and construction kits in KS2.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

Standards are very good in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development, physical development and creative development and good in personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The educational provision for the under-fives, therefore, taken overall, is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Only one child was of nursery age during the inspection.

Good features

- Children listen very well and are eager to answer questions; they speak confidently and have a good vocabulary for their age. They follow a story carefully and understand that print has meaning. They handle books correctly and show interest in reading. They have a good understanding of sounds and how these relate to letters.
- At nursery age children learn to overwrite and underwrite and by the end of the reception year they can compose their own sentences without assistance; many write legibly and accurately and produce a good quantity of written work for their age.
- Children have a good recall of words in Welsh and make good efforts to pronounce them; they can remember and repeat, for example, the names of colours and numbers.
- Children work together well, show good concentration and complete activities successfully. They settle quickly, take turns sensibly and seek help when necessary. They show an understanding of others and exercise appropriate self-control. They take responsibility for their own hygiene and most can dress and undress themselves without assistance. They relate well to adults.
- Younger children can identify and count numbers to 10 and write the number one; by the end of reception they can count to 20 and add and subtract within 10. They can sort objects into colour sets, match sound to digit and place single numbers in the correct sequence. They have experiences of measuring, weighing and capacity and can identify basic two and three dimensional shapes.
- Children understand and use basic mathematical language, such as long and short and thick and thin, and they recognise symbols, such as add and equals. They know simple number rhymes and songs. They produce a good quality of mathematical work, which is well advanced for their age.
- Children undertake investigatory work and are able to complete a simple pro forma about what they do and find out. They are familiar with how seeds grow, the life cycle of a butterfly and different types of houses and clothes. They experience seeing chickens hatching in the school's incubator.

- Children talk about different places and can recall the past. They are familiar with the times of the day and changes in the seasons and the weather. They use the computer confidently, showing good control over the mouse and keyboard, as well as recognising various instructions on screen. For example, they can create a coloured picture through using a fill tool and paint spray and are able to change the size and colour of images and print off their results.
- Children take part enthusiastically in physical development lessons and follow instructions carefully. They move confidently, show appropriate control over their movements and use space well. They develop relevant skills in catching and throwing, using small equipment such as balls and bean bags; some can aim, throw and catch competently for their age. They are keen to demonstrate their skills and perform proudly in front of their peers.
- Children have regular experiences with large outdoor equipment in a secure area, developing skills of pushing, cycling, bouncing and sliding. They handle small tools, such as cutting implements, rolling pins and paint brushes, with good control and appropriate dexterity.
- Children experience a range of creative activities, using a variety of media and techniques, such as marbling. Their paintings of Van Gogh's Sunflowers, for example, show close attention to detail from observation, as well as some very good use of line and colour mixing to create different shades. They are introduced to the design and make process and plan out and evaluate their models effectively, producing some good results.
- Children enjoy role play and drama and enthusiastically join in with songs, including ones in Welsh; they accompany their singing with actions and instruments and display a good sense of rhythm and tone.

English

Standards overall are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good Features

- In KS1 pupils speak confidently and clearly. Older ones contribute enthusiastically in oracy sessions and often make extended responses when questioned. They enjoy recounting their news and ask pertinent questions.
- Pupils develop an understanding of phonics and begin to use this knowledge to read unfamiliar words.
- In KS1 better readers are able to discuss their books and retell a story to a visitor. A few understand the difference between information books and story books.
- In KS2 pupils listen well in different contexts; they ask relevant questions and respond meaningfully in class discussions. At the end of the key stage they talk with increasing confidence. Able pupils vary their vocabulary and expression to engage the listener.

- Many pupils in Y3/Y4 give imaginative and thoughtful answers to questions about the distinguishing features of fiction and non-fiction books. They use dictionaries appropriately during group work.
- Reading across KS2 is generally satisfactory. Pupils who read well show a keen interest in books; they discuss characters and themes in a critical way.
- Y6 pupils display a considerable enthusiasm for advanced texts and role play, when these opportunities are provided.

Shortcomings

- Listening skills in KS1 are underdeveloped.
- Insufficient emphasis is placed on evaluating books and exchanging and making inferences and deductions.
- There are significant shortcomings in the range and quality of writing across the key stages and the development of creativity and imagination. There is little evidence of pupils drafting and editing their work.
- A number of pupils make too many common spelling errors.

Mathematics

Standards are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.

Good features

- There is evidence of steady progression in each aspect of the mathematics NC throughout the school. Most pupils generally complete tasks and, especially in KS2, produce a good quantity and quality of work in the time that is set.
- In Y1 pupils are familiar with place value and can count to 100. They can recognise number patterns and can sequence up to 100. They can order, halve and divide numbers and add and subtract to 13. They understand halves and quarters.
- In Y2 pupils can count back from 100, subtract to 99 using decomposition and count in fives and tens. They can double and multiply numbers and compare them. They can order and sequence three figure numbers and construct graphs accurately. They recognise coins to £1 and measure using standard units of length, weight and capacity. They can tell the time to quarter of an hour in analogue and digital modes. The most able can add and subtract within 10 and add up to 20 mentally.
- In Y3 pupils can do short multiplication and division sums with remainders, add and subtract three digit numbers by carrying and borrowing and calculate simple equations. They know about fractions and percentages of numbers, symmetry and co-ordinates, and are introduced to thousands and probability. They can add money using decimals.

- In Y4 pupils undertake long multiplication and division calculations, using thousands and decimals. They continue to undertake more complex aspects of probability and measurement and use more advanced language of shape. They are familiar with factors and prime and squared numbers.
- In Y5 pupils develop further their understanding of decimals and co-ordinates and study speed, distance and time. They can convert fractions to decimals and percentages and vice versa. They know the properties of more complex two and three dimensional shapes.
- In Y6 pupils can add and subtract fractions and calculate using negative numbers. They know about angles and degrees and are familiar with the standard units for a variety of types of measurement. They can tell the time accurately in minutes using both the 12 and 24 hour clocks. They can change proper to improper fractions and vice versa. The most able are suitably challenged.
- By the end of KS2 pupils' mental abilities are generally well developed. The most able can answer quick-fire questions on all multiplication tables up to 12 and solve problems using alternative strategies to reach answers quickly. They can multiply and divide by tens and hundreds to two places of decimals and they are familiar with square roots.

Shortcomings

- Y2 pupils' mental abilities are relatively underdeveloped and their understanding of place value is insecure.
- There is a lack of challenge at times in KS1, especially for the more able, and work undertaken in Y1 is at times unnecessarily repeated in Y2 at the same level.
- In all classes pupils from each age group tend to study the same topic in a lesson and introductions are conducted with the whole class together with few differentiated questions. As a result, the discussion is pitched at a level that is sometimes too difficult or too easy for some pupils and thus learning is not maximised, although follow-up tasks are normally differentiated according to year groups or ability levels.

Science

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages have a satisfactory knowledge base across the science NC and undertake a range of systematic practical work, usually in small groups; they show interest in the subject.
- In KS1 pupils know about the life cycle of a butterfly and find out about mini-beasts, such as earth worms, through the construction of a wormery. They understand the conditions needed for life. They learn about building materials and energy and forces and how wheels assist movement. They are able to classify living things, such as apples, into different categories.

- In lower KS2 pupils study the planets, volcanoes and gravity, as well as friction, magnetism, electricity and the absorbency and dissolving of materials. They find out about solids and liquids and which materials will float and sink. They look at reversible and irreversible changes. They learn about parts of the body, how muscles work and the care of teeth.
- In upper KS2 pupils investigate the wind, weather and temperature; they find out how to use the wind as a brake and what happens when water is heated and cooled. They understand what a tree or plant needs to grow and how photosynthesis works.
- There is some evidence of very good practice in KS2, for example, when pupils have to discover which type of shoe will pull most easily along a surface, using Newton metres and gram weights. They predict the outcomes logically and ensure the test is accurate and fair by controlling different variables and measuring carefully; they repeat their experiments to ensure precision. Their evaluations are thoughtful, showing a good understanding of different shoe materials and grips in relation to friction.
- In all classes pupils learn how to undertake experiments through the use of a pro forma, which takes them through the scientific process of planning, predicting, testing and evaluating. The sheets are differentiated by class, so that the various questions posed become progressively more challenging as pupils get older.
- Pupils are familiar with the need for a fair test, commensurate with their age and ability, and older ones can sort out which variables should remain constant or change.
- There is generally a good use of scientific language in both key stages appropriate to age and stage of development; pupils know and use the correct terms for a number of processes and equipment.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, but in both key stages pupils have few opportunities to plan out their investigations, pose their own questions or devise their own recording methods; work tends to be done as a whole class together under the teacher's direction, with insufficient provision for the different ages and ability levels of pupils.
- Additionally, in both key stages work is collated and recorded in a range of books and folders, often as part of topic work, which makes it difficult to evaluate continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The school is addressing this issue.

Welsh second language

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good Features

- In KS1 pupils listen and respond with enthusiasm to greetings and commands. They participate in a range of oral activities.

- Pupils in KS1 volunteer information about themselves and speak confidently with good pronunciation. They contribute effectively to class books of their own, writing words, phrases and basic sentences.
- By the end of KS1 pupils can read sentences and recognise familiar words and phrases in stimulating displays and teaching aids.
- Pupils in Y3/Y4 recall such advanced terms as 'cyfrifiadur', 'bwrdd sglefrio' and 'sbectol haul'; they make good progress in their use of Welsh.
- At the end of KS2 pupils learn to describe local shops and to express preferences, for example in response to ' wyt ti'n hoffi?'
- In KS2 there is clear progression and development. Pupils respond to good and very good teaching techniques, where the target language is used as much as possible.

Design and technology

No lessons were observed in design and technology during the inspection, but evidence in the school indicates that standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages regularly design and construct a variety of different types of models and products, linked to the topic they are studying. They produce some well finished articles.
- In KS1, for example, pupils have made a transport vehicle that moves, a house for Pocahontas and a mini-beast with moving parts. In lower KS2 they have produced an astronaut's lunch, a Tudor documents box and a banana boat, and in upper KS2 they have devised a quiz board related to Offa's Dyke, a poster about environmental issues and a working water filter.
- Through these activities pupils develop appropriate skills of marking out, cutting, shaping, joining and assembling, using a variety of tools and rigid and flexible materials.
- Pupils in both key stages use a graded pro forma, which guides them through the design and make process. They plan out what they want to make, identify their needs in relation to materials and tools, explain the process they follow and evaluate the end result, indicating where improvements might be made. As in science, the sheets become progressively more challenging as pupils get older, enabling them to think more deeply about what they making and how they are doing it.
- Pupils have learning experiences in the different strands of the NC, including focused practical tasks, food technology, textiles and control mechanisms.
- The school has a good collection of tools and resources to support learning in the subject, including a potter's wheel and a kiln, which are used regularly.

Information technology

Standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- The majority of pupils have well developed keyboard and mouse skills, commensurate with their age. They work well on their own or together in pairs and small groups.
- Building on the good foundation in the early years, pupils in KS1 continue to develop their computer skills through the use of CD-ROMs, dictionary work and word processing programs. They are able to produce simple graphs and flood fill pictures. They search for information related to their topic, using data bases and an electronic encyclopaedia.
- In lower KS2 pupils produce word processed stories and poems, which combine text and graphics. They complete fact sheets through cutting and pasting information from CD-ROMs related to their topics on the Tudors and the Caribbean. They experiment with different fonts, type sizes and colours. They interrogate, for example, data bases of the 1851 and 1861 censuses to find out about people who used to live in the local area and they print off their findings in the form of a graph.
- In upper KS2 pupils continue to combine text and graphics and to cut and paste to organise their ideas. They edit and amend their work through word processing techniques and are introduced to the use of spreadsheets for entering, storing and retrieving data. They use a mathematics CD-ROM to learn, for example, about fractions. They know how to use the control keys to perform various functions quickly.
- The school has made considerable progress recently in raising pupils' skills and understanding in the subject. It is now well resourced in relation to hardware and software and the use of ICT equipment is increasingly becoming an integral part of lessons. On almost all occasions during the inspection work using ICT was closely linked to the subject or topic of the lesson.
- In some classrooms clear instructions are posted to enable pupils to use the various functions on screen independently.
- Good assistance is provided in KS2 through the use of an ICT support teacher, who helps pupils develop their skills effectively through small group work.

Shortcomings

- There is generally a lack of modelling activities to explore real and imaginary situations, for example through the use of simulations; the school is in the process of purchasing more software to address this deficiency.
- The use of the Internet and e-mail facilities are at an early stage of development.
- In some lessons computers are switched on but not used, and at times pupils are unfamiliar with the program set for them, so that learning time is wasted.

- Because much of the hardware and software has only recently been purchased, staff expertise and pupils' knowledge and skills overall are relatively underdeveloped in relation to the new equipment.

History

No lessons were observed in history during the inspection, but evidence in the school indicates that standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good Features

- Pupils in KS1 develop a sense of chronology in their study of family history and through topic work on the history of transport.
- Some KS1 pupils create effective time lines based on topic-related themes, such as the history of flying and space travel in recent decades.
- Appropriate attention is given to stories about famous people, such as William Morgan, Christopher Columbus and Lord Shaftesbury.
- In KS2 the Tudor and Victorian periods are used as the basis for historical understanding. Effective use is made of ICT and artefacts in Y3/Y4 to gather appropriate information about the Victorians.
- By the end of KS2 recall of previous work is generally sound.
- Strong emphasis is placed on visits to places of interest, so that pupils are given first-hand experiences of life in a previous age.

Shortcomings

- Written work in both key stages is relatively limited.
- Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills in historical investigation and research.
- Pupils are not always aware that interpretations of the past can differ for a variety of reasons.

Geography

No lessons were observed in geography during the inspection, but evidence in the school indicates that standards are unsatisfactory in both key stages.

Good Features

- KS1 pupils produce surveys of their own villages and their journeys to school; they collect data on the colours of cars in the locality as part of their topic work on transport.

- Pupils in Y3/Y4 produce appropriate work on landscapes and climate and a good knowledge of the globe is displayed by abler pupils in Y6.
- KS2 pupils study contours and the demographic and topographical patterns of St Lucia, as a contrasting environment in an economically developing country.
- Appropriate emphasis is placed on educational visits to places of interest, such as local woodlands and the Elan Valley dams.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' knowledge of the geography of Wales is limited.
- There is too little emphasis on the development of mapping skills and recording work in an appropriate manner.
- Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their geographical investigative and research skills.
- Overall, too little attention is given to work on contrasting environments in both key stages.

Art

Standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good Features

- In KS1 pupils show enthusiasm for a variety of activities and enjoy making different shapes.
- Satisfactory attention is paid in KS1 to colour mixing and matching colours to familiar objects.
- Studies are made of the work of famous artists such as Monet, whose paintings pupils are encouraged to consider when producing work of their own.
- In KS2 there are appropriate cross-curricular links, for example with history, when pupils display sound knowledge of the Victorian William Morris.
- In Y5/Y6 pupils are encouraged to produce self-portraits for passports.
- In upper KS2 pupils study the use of light, colour and brush techniques in the work of the Impressionists.

Shortcomings

- Little evidence is available to show that due attention is given to the artistic heritage and culture of Wales.

Music

Standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good Features

- In KS1 the quality of singing is good; pupils display a clear sense of rhythm and pitch.
- In KS1 instrumental work is usually matched to age and ability.
- Pupils in the early years and in KS1 know songs and rhymes in English and Welsh.
- Pupils in both key stages have opportunities to appraise pieces of music.
- A number of pupils benefit from instrumental tuition from visiting teachers, whilst others engage in extra-curricular activities, such as a school choir and recorder groups.
- The school has developed over the years a robust tradition of Christmas productions for parents and the local community.
- Pupils took part in the All-Wales Final of the Millennium Song competition in the Brangwyn Hall, Swansea, and subsequently recorded their own high quality compact disk.

Shortcomings

- Evidence indicates that there is little written or compositional work completed by pupils.

Physical education

Only one lesson was observed in physical education, involving a small number of Y1 pupils being taught alongside children from the early years. Standards in this lesson were judged to be very good.

Good features

- Y1 pupils participate enthusiastically and follow instructions well. They move confidently for their age and handle small equipment, such as balls, bean bags and hoops, competently, displaying appropriate skills relevant to their stage of development. They perform assuredly in front of their peers, when asked to demonstrate their abilities and achievements. They use space effectively and clearly enjoy the opportunity to express themselves physically.
- Pupils are suitably attired for physical education lessons and respond well to praise and encouragement. They are continually active and motivated to succeed, especially when an element of competition is introduced to challenge them to improve their skills. A variety of tasks enables them to practise a range of different skills. Due attention is given to health and safety.
- Although there is no fully formulated scheme of work, teachers' planning indicates that the different strands of the NC are appropriately covered; during the week of the inspection all pupils in KS1 and KS2 were involved in swimming lessons at a local pool.

- Older pupils have the option to participate in a number of outdoor and adventurous pursuits during an annual residential visit to a local field centre, which the school has organised for many years.
- Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular sporting activities at different times in the year, including netball, football, rounders and athletics. The school takes part in cluster group matches, which in the past have involved netball, rugby, football, cricket and athletics. There is an annual sports day.

Religious education

Although only one lesson was observed in religious education during the inspection in KS2, evidence in the school indicates that standards are unsatisfactory in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2.

Good features

- Most KS2 pupils are familiar with some of the major stories from both the Old and New Testaments.
- Recent work in KS2 indicates that pupils are developing a good awareness of the meaning of faith in relation to some of the world's major religions, such as Buddhism and Judaism.
- In the one lesson observed in KS2 pupils gained a sound understanding of the significance and meaning of the Jewish festival of Shabbat through the use of relevant artefacts, video and symbols.
- Pupils in both key stages have opportunities to learn about festivals and celebrations from a range of faiths. Through a recently developed festival fact sheet they are able to compare and contrast some of the differences and similarities between various rites and traditions, which enhances their understanding of the meaning of belief.
- Pupils in both key stages also have opportunities to explore values and moral issues, through such topics as caring for the world and saying sorry.
- Visits are made to the local Church for curriculum purposes, as well as services at festival times, such as Harvest.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject are underdeveloped and their recorded work is not kept in an organised manner; there is a lack of evidence of what has been achieved, particularly in KS1.
- In Y5/Y6, although there is evidence of very recent studies in the subject, very little work related to the Locally Agreed Syllabus has been undertaken for several years.

- Although pupils in both key stages have studied some of the major Christian festivals, such as Easter, their recall of events and their understanding of the significance of these to Christians is insecure.
- Since the subject in both key stages is planned almost entirely through topic work, it is difficult for teachers to assess continuity and progression in pupils' learning and to ensure coverage of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

The last inspection report of Spring term 1996 identified six key issues for action:

1. The school should maintain the current high standard of care provided for the pupils and sustain the good quality relationships that are a feature of its ethos.
2. Standards in design and technology and in information technology should be improved in KS1 and KS2; the work in music and geography should be broadened and deepened and standards raised.
3. There is a need to comply with the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
4. Better use should be made of assessment to inform the teaching and to ensure that tasks are matched appropriately to the learning needs of pupils at different stages in their development.
5. There is a need for a more equitable distribution of subject responsibilities and for curriculum leaders to be more actively involved in monitoring whole-school standards in the subjects or aspects for which they have special responsibility.
6. There is a need for a more sharply focused school development plan which includes reference to the cost of initiatives and criteria for monitoring and evaluation of targets.

Although progress has been achieved to some extent in each of these issues, the school has not made major changes over the last five years to the way it is managed and organised, with the result that various aspects of the shortcomings highlighted in the last report remain as key issues for development in the current inspection:

1. The high standard of care provided for pupils has been sustained and relationships between pupils and with staff generally remain good, although in recent years certain tensions within and outside the school have had an adverse effect on the family and community ethos, of which the school is justly proud.
2. Standards in design and technology are now good in both key stages and the design process has been effectively promoted through the introduction of differentiated planning and evaluation sheets throughout the school. Standards in information technology have also improved and are now at least satisfactory; much progress has been made recently with the purchase of several new computers and a more consistent approach to the planning and delivery of the subject. Little progress, however, has been made in geography, where mapping skills in particular remain underdeveloped, although this was a target of last year's SDP. Standards remain satisfactory in music.
3. Statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are now fulfilled.

4. The school has a consistent approach to assessment and in most lessons teachers differentiate work by task and outcome between and within year groups, particularly in mathematics, but the assessment process requires further development and refinement if it is to be fully effective in informing teaching and learning and ensuring all pupils are working on tasks that are matched appropriately to their needs.
5. Subject responsibilities for curriculum leaders are now more equitably distributed, although the head still carries a heavy load. No formal system for monitoring whole school standards within each subject, however, has been introduced.
6. A more sharply focused SDP, which included references to costs, monitoring and evaluation of targets, has been produced, but the most recent one only covered curriculum issues up to the end of the 2000-2001 academic year, due to the retirement of the previous head. There is thus a need now to produce a new SDP that provides a long term vision for the school with specific targets over the next few years.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school needs to:

- raise standards in geography across the curriculum in both key stages and in religious education and listening in KS1 and address the shortcomings in other subject areas listed in section seven of this report;
- develop effective strategies to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes;
- develop curriculum planning procedures to ensure that:
 - completed schemes of work are in place for all subjects over a specified time period;
 - there is consistency in teachers' medium and short term planning;
 - key skills and the common requirements of the NC are addressed;
- review the approach to the delivery of the curriculum to ensure that there is breadth, balance and full coverage of the statutory curriculum, and that there is clear continuity and progression in pupils' learning in all subjects;
- ensure curriculum time for KS2 pupils meets the recommended 23.5 hours per week and that statutory requirements for information for parents are fulfilled;
- produce an SDP with projected short, medium and long term targets for the next three years for all relevant aspects of the school;
- develop further the role of the subject co-ordinator, with particular reference to the monitoring of standards, teaching and learning.

The inspectors wish to express their thanks to the governing body, head, staff, parents and pupils of Irfon Valley Primary School for their co-operation and assistance before and during the inspection.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Irfon Valley County Primary School
School type	Community
Age -range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Garth Llangammarch Wells Powys
Post-Code	LD4 4AT
Telephone Number	01591 620281

Headteacher	Mrs S Dolphin
Date of appointment	1 September 2001
Chair of Governors	Mrs B Davies
Registered Inspector	Dr P D Ellis
Dates of inspection	2 –3 October 2001

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	1	6	9	19	9	10	14	19	87

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	4	1	4.3

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	20:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	21.5
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	97	95	98	96
Term 2	97	84.5	95	93.4
Term 3	97	96	98	96.5

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2001	Number of pupils in Y2: 8
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 was greater than four but fewer than 10, overall performance indicators only are included	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school:	88%	In Wales:	81%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under sections 364 and 365 of the Education Act 1996 or, in the case of the Task/Test were absent.
A Pupils who have failed to register a level due to absence
W Pupils who are working towards level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for level 1.

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2001							Number of pupils in Y6: 12						
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	42	50	0	0
		National	0	0	1	n/a	0	1	6	19	48	25	0
	Test/Task	School	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	58	17	0
		National	0	2	2	0	n	n	4	14	47	31	n
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	42	42	8	0
		National	0	0	1	n/a	0	1	4	19	47	28	0
	Test/Task	School	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	33	25	0
		National	0	2	1	1	n	n	4	19	42	32	n
Science	Teacher assessment	School	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	58	0	0
		National	0	0	1	n/a	0	0	3	15	52	29	0
	Test/Task	School	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	75	0	0
		National	0	2	0	1	n	n	2	13	51	31	n

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	50%	In the school:	58%
In Wales:	68%	In Wales:	68%

- D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
N Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
B Pupils not entered for tests because they are working outside the levels of the tests.
W Pupils who are working towards level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for level 1
n tests do not cover these levels.
n/a not applicable.

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors over a two day period. The two professional inspectors each spent two days, and the lay inspector one day, in the school.

- Twenty-six learning activities were assessed, 22 by the professional inspectors and four by the lay inspector.
- Each class was visited at least five times.
- All classes were observed by each inspector.
- Discussions were conducted with the head, all curriculum co-ordinators and ancillary staff, as well as with pupils.
- A cross-section of present and past work from all year groups was reviewed, particularly in English and mathematics.
- A representative sample of pupils was heard reading.
- Assemblies were attended and playtimes, lunch times, registration periods and other school routines were observed by all the inspectors.
- The resources for each subject and for general school use were examined.
- The school building and the site were surveyed.
- The full range of documentation available in the school was studied, including teachers' long, medium and short term planning and pupils' records.
- Pre-inspection meetings were held with staff, parents and governors.
- The views of parents and governors were received and analysed. Twenty-four questionnaires were returned; 87.3% of responses were positive. Twelve parents attended the pre-inspection meeting.
- Forty-one general observation forms were completed.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

NAME	ASPECTS	SUBJECTS
Dr P D Ellis	1. The school and its priorities 2. Main Findings 3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 5.1 Teaching 6.2 Leadership and efficiency 8.1 Progress since the last inspection 8.2 Key issues for action	Early Years Mathematics Science Design and technology Information technology Physical education Religious education
Mrs G Rofe	4.2 Behaviour and attitudes 4.3 Attendance 5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions 5.7 Partnership with industry	
Dr D Evans	3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum 5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting 5.3 Curriculum 5.4 Support, guidance and pupils welfare 5.5 Provision for pupils with SEN 6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement 6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Welsh second language English History Geography Music Art