

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

**OUR LADY AND ST. MICHAEL'S  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

14 Pen-y-Pound  
Abergavenny  
Gwent, NP7 5UD

School Number: 679/3317

Date of Inspection: 3rd – 6th February, 2003

**PHILLIP EDWARDS**

**REGISTERED INSPECTOR: W227/15669**

17th March, 2003

**UNDER ESTYN CONTRACT NUMBER: T/145/02P**

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## CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

The term "reception" is applied to the year-group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) who attain the age of five during the academic year. "Year 1" (Y1) is applied to the year-group of pupils who attain the age of six during the academic year and so on to Y13 — the year-group who attain the age of eighteen 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; Key Stage 2 of Y3 to Y6; Key Stage 3 of Y7 to Y9; Key Stage 4 of Y10 and Y11 (which is the final year of compulsory education).

## GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The following five-point grading scale is used to represent the main judgments in the report:

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

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## 1. CONTEXT

### The School and its Priorities

Our Lady and St Michael Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School is situated in the town of Abergavenny in the County of Monmouthshire and is administered by Monmouthshire Local Education Authority. It has a roll of 229 pupils aged four to 11 years; the majority come from Abergavenny and the surrounding rural area. In general terms the school describes half the area it serves as relatively prosperous and half as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. The annual intake covers the full ability range. Approximately 9 per cent of pupils are registered as being entitled to receive free school dinners. 99 per cent of pupils come from homes where English is the main or only language and three pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language. There are 13 pupils identified by the school as requiring special educational needs (SEN) support.

The school has appropriate aims and a mission statement; its motto is – ‘Living, loving, learning and growing in Jesus’. It has recently gained the Basic Skills Agencies Quality Mark and Health Promotion Awards.

The current school development plan (SDP) has targets for the development of spiritual, social/emotional well being, staff evaluation, pupils' learning strategies, information and communications technology (ICT) teaching across the curriculum, greater parental involvement in children's learning and introducing a performance management scheme.

The school was last inspected in April 1997.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

### The Main Findings of the Report

- Standards of achievement in the lessons seen are satisfactory or better in approximately 98 per cent of lessons in both key stages, including 52 per cent where they are good and 48 per cent satisfactory.
- The educational provision for the under-fives taken overall is appropriate and 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	Good
Personal and Social Development	Satisfactory
Mathematical Development	Good
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) are as follows:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>KS1</b>	<b>KS2</b>
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good
Welsh 2 <sup>nd</sup> Language	Good	Good
Design and Tchnology	Good	Good
Information Technology	Good	Good
History	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Art	Good	Good
Music	Good	Good
Physical Education	Good	Good

- As this is a voluntary aided school, religious education was not inspected as part of this report. The school's governors arranged for this subject to be inspected in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Act 1996.
- National Curriculum teacher assessments for summer 2002 show that at the end of KS1, the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 and above in English was well above the national average for that year. The majority of pupils achieved the expected level 2 and above in reading, writing and speaking. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 and above in mathematics and science was above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in all the core subjects according to teacher assessment was well above the national average for 2002. These results overall, compare well with primary schools in the LEA and of similar schools in Wales.
- In the NC test and task results for summer 2002 at the end of KS2, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in English and above was significantly above the national average, with the number achieving the higher level 5 above the national average. In mathematics, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 4 and above was above the national average and in science well above at the higher level 5. The percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in all the core subjects by test was above the national average for 2002. These results overall, compare well with primary schools in the LEA and those of similar schools in Wales.
- In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils in KS1 achieve good standards in reading, listening, speaking, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT), and satisfactory standards in writing. In KS2 pupils achieve good standards in reading, listening, speaking, numeracy and ICT, and satisfactory standards in writing. Pupils' independent written work is progressing appropriately overall, but is often not extended, lacks sufficient challenge and a significant number of pupils make grammatical errors or spelling mistakes.
- The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a caring ethos arising from mutual respect and courtesy. Arrangements for collective worship comply with statutory requirements. The school effectively enhances pupils' personal and social development through a wide variety of extra curricular activities during lunch times and outside school time. The school, throughout its work, strongly promotes sound moral values and guides pupils' behaviour. Pupils consistently help others less fortunate than themselves through direct support and raising

substantial money for a variety of charities. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the heritage, culture, language and local history of Wales and experience a good diversity of other cultures in the school curriculum and from displays around the school. The school emphasises the need for equality for all including racial, gender and ability in its racial and personal and social education (PSE) policy. An outstanding feature is the inclusive way the school ensures all pupils have access to the whole curriculum including pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with temporary physical difficulties.

- Overall, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. The school is a happy, caring and orderly community. Overall, pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute to the efficient functioning of the school, to the standards pupils achieve and to their personal development. They are interested in their work and are keen to do their best. The headteacher and staff take the issues of bullying, racism and sexism very seriously. Procedures are in place to deal with any incidents that are brought to the attention of staff. No incidents of bullying, racism, sexism or aggressive behaviour were observed during the inspection.
- Attendance rates are satisfactory and instances of unauthorised absence are minimal. Pupils are punctual and keen to attend school. Registration sessions and lessons start promptly and are in accordance with statutory requirements.
- The quality of teaching throughout the school is good overall. It is at least satisfactory in all of the lessons inspected; it is good in 51 per cent and very good in 2 per cent of lessons seen. In the reception class, the quality of teaching is good overall with activities well planned to give children under five a sound start to their education. In both key stages the quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to good with occasionally very good teaching seen. Where teaching is less effective there is lack of challenge and inspiration to enthuse all pupils to be alert, involved and achieve their full potential.
- Medium and short term planning is generally sound with content, continuity and progression evident, but does not always include how the key skills are to be developed and used to support learning more effectively. Where planning is less effective, pupils, particularly the more able pupils have insufficient opportunities for independent learning and research. Support given to a few pupils with English as an additional language is appropriate and they make relatively good progress. Suitable, regular use is made of homework to support pupils' learning.
- Overall, good procedures have been established for assessment, recording and reporting on pupils' work. A baseline profile is drawn up of each child's attainments on entry to school. Good use is made of the information to plan future teaching. Progress is continuously and systematically assessed throughout each key stage. Targets are set for further improvement. Opportunities for assessment are not clearly identified in all teachers' weekly planning and in a significant number of plenary sessions. Marking generally assists pupils to make improvements in their work. Annual reports comply with statutory requirements and include information about how pupils can improve their performance.
- Overall, the curriculum is good and the school provides pupils with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that complies with statutory requirements. Long, medium and short-term planning is satisfactory overall. The scheme of work in design and technology is brief and does not yet give sufficient guidance for teachers' planning. The policy for the promotion of key skills across the curriculum has yet to

be fully implemented in medium and short-term planning. Strong emphasis is placed on personal and social education (PSE). Homework tasks are planned and well supported by the majority of parents. All children have equal access to all parts of the curriculum. Extra-curricular activities, including choir, orchestra, recorder, dance, gymnastics and theatre clubs, sporting activities, art and residential outdoor pursuits, are generally very good and contribute very effectively to children's learning.

- Good provision is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils. Pupils work and play in a caring, supportive environment where they feel safe and secure.
- Overall, very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Effective support is provided for pupils, who make sound to very good progress commensurate with their abilities. The quality of support provided by the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), classroom assistants and the external learning support service is overall very good. All pupils are fully integrated into school life and have equal access to all parts of the curriculum.
- The school places particular importance on its partnership with parents and the community, schools and other institutions and enjoys good relationships in all these areas. A number of parents and friends give freely of their time helping out in the classroom and accompanying pupils on educational visits. Their support is greatly valued by staff and they make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Good use is made of the local community as a learning resource. Educational visits and the expertise of members of the local community make a positive contribution to pupils' learning in many curriculum areas. The school regularly serves the community by supporting many civic, cultural and charitable projects.
- The school's partnership with industry is good and is well established throughout the school; the valuable links with industry, business and commerce enrich work in many curriculum areas.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good. The school has produced an appropriate self-assessment report showing how its analysis of performance data is used to set targets to raise standards of achievement, especially in the core subjects of the NC. The school's targets for its performance in the NC assessment tests for 2002 have been met successfully. Target setting is regarded as central to achieving school improvement. The SDP is detailed and along with the new mission statement provides good direction for the short and medium term. However, while the mission statement sets valid and worthy attributes for the school to aspire towards, the SDP gives little direction in the long term on how these are to be achieved. The school has good systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.
- Management and efficiency are good. The head provides encouraging leadership and has very good relationships with pupils, staff, parents and the GB. He is a positive influence on the steadily improving standards and the caring ethos of the school. Formal and on the whole effective systems are in place for the head to monitor teaching and learning in the core subjects and ICT, and for subject co-ordinators to evaluate pupils' work. The leadership role of co-ordinators is developing well where they ensure sharing of good practice in teaching, planning and learning in order to raise standards further. The GB is very supportive of the head and shares his values. Governors fulfil their role well and work hard to sustain

the high aspirations the school has for its pupils. The targets in the SDP include satisfactory descriptions of budget implications, but do not show any actual projected expenditure to measure the extent which budget-setting relates to the school's educational objectives and its priorities. The head and GB of the school are effective in managing the budget and resources. The school has a small deficit at present due to a period of adjustment from being grant maintained to voluntary aided status. Arrangements are sound to address the situation. Issues identified in the recent auditor's report have been addressed appropriately.

- Good use is made of staffing, accommodation and learning resources. The teachers are suitably qualified, show a very strong commitment to the school and effectively promote its aims. Accommodation is barely adequate for the number of pupils on roll, although the school is doing the best it can in difficult conditions. The music room, large hall and spacious classrooms in the main building offer good facilities for children, although there are large class sizes in some year groups. The demountable classrooms provide barely acceptable standards. During inclement weather they pose a health and safety risk to pupils as they lack toilet facilities. Buildings are kept clean and tidy and, apart from the demountables, are generally in good condition. The playground provides a safe and secure area during the whole of the school day, although the enclosed play area for pupils in the Early Years is small and congested.
- Effective use is made of resources to support pupils' learning. Provision is good in all areas of the curriculum. Good support is received from classroom assistants, midday supervisors, canteen staff, the caretaker, crossing patrol officer and two school secretaries. Duties are discharged efficiently and effectively.
- The school has made good progress overall since the last inspection.
- 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.

### **3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **3.1 Standards of Achievement in Subjects and Areas of Learning**

Standards of achievement in the lessons seen are satisfactory or better in approximately 98 per cent of lessons in both key stages, including 52 per cent where they are good and 48 per cent satisfactory.

- The educational provision for the under-fives taken overall is appropriate and successfully promotes the desirable outcomes for children's learning. Standards achieved in the reception class are good overall.
- In Key Stage 1 (KS1), standards are good in English, mathematics, science, Welsh as a second language, design and technology, information technology, art, music and physical education. No lessons were seen in history and geography to enable a secure judgment to be given; evidence from previous work and discussions with pupils and teachers suggests that standards are satisfactory in both subjects in KS1.

- In Key Stage 2 (KS2), standards are good in English, mathematics, science, Welsh as a second language, design and technology, information technology, art, music and physical education. They are satisfactory in history and geography.
- National Curriculum teacher assessments for summer 2002 showed that at the end of KS1, the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 and above in English was well above the national average for that year. The majority of pupils achieved the expected level 2 and above in reading, writing and speaking. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 and above in mathematics and science was above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in all the core subjects according to teacher assessment was well above the national average for 2002. These results overall, compare well with primary schools in the LEA and of similar schools in Wales.
- In the NC test and task results for summer 2002 at the end of KS2, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in English and above was significantly above the national average, with the number achieving the higher level 5 above the national average. In mathematics, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 4 and above was above the national average and in science well above at the higher level 5. The percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in all the core subjects by test was above the national average for 2002. These results overall, compare well with primary schools in the LEA and those of similar schools in Wales.

### **3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum**

In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils in KS1 achieve good standards in reading, listening, speaking, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT), and satisfactory standards in writing. In KS2 pupils achieve good standards in reading, listening, speaking, numeracy and ICT, and satisfactory standards in writing.

- Children under five years of age have appropriate opportunities to develop, practise and apply their emerging skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology. They make at least satisfactory progress and often good progress in relation to their abilities and different stages of development.
- In KS1, listening skills are generally of a good standard and contribute appropriately to pupils' quality of learning. They listen attentively and the vast majority wait their turn to answer questions or make oral contributions in lessons.
- Pupils' listening skills are generally good and sometimes very good in KS2, for example when listening to pupils being interviewed in the 'hot seat' during role play in English.
- In KS1, pupils speaking skills develop well. The majority of pupils at this stage speak with increasing confidence when discussing their work.
- In KS2, pupils are able to speak clearly in small groups and to the class, for example, when pupils practise Welsh sentences in pairs. A significant number of pupils do not speak up when addressing a larger audience.
- Pupils' reading is good in KS1 where pupils overall make good progress in their fluency, expression and understanding. Reading skills continue to be good in KS2 with a significant number of pupils very good.

- Pupils' writing skills develop satisfactorily across the curriculum in both key stages. Pupils' independent written work is progressing appropriately overall, but is often not extended, lacks sufficient challenge and a significant number of pupils make grammatical errors or spelling mistakes. The quality of handwriting is generally good.
- Pupils' development of numeracy skills is satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2. Pupils in KS1 are beginning to use number patterns and relationships to make mental calculations appropriately; they lack independence in using the skills of numeracy to solve problems in, for example, science and geography.
- In KS2 pupils extend their work in other subjects through the application of number skills, for example in graphical work and co-ordinates. Number skills are applied effectively to work in other areas in KS2; good use is made of measurements in design and technology and science. Pupils collect data from surveys and display their results using a good range of graphs and tables. Mathematical drawing at the end of KS2 is very good.
- The pupils' ICT skills and understanding improve steadily as they progress through the school. Pupils in KS1 begin to experience a range of activities to support their learning in mathematics. Pupils in KS2 achieve good standards overall, particularly in word processing and downloading pictures from a digital camera and using a digital microscope. Pupils access the Internet on a regular basis to support their work across the curriculum. All pupils have opportunities to use software in the computer suite to consolidate their learning in mathematics and language on a regular basis. The planning does not always support this as well as it could.
- Relative to their age and ability, the pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress in applying their speaking, listening, reading, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.

#### **4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

##### **4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

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

- The school has a clear mission statement and updated relevant aims, which promote sound attitudes and values firmly based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. There is a caring ethos arising from mutual respect and courtesy.
- The pupils participate in daily worship and prayers are respectfully recited at the beginning and end of each morning and afternoon. Whole school and class assemblies are interesting, orderly and meaningful occasions, when moral and religious themes are well planned and considered; occasionally opportunities for reflection are limited in whole school assemblies. Arrangements comply with statutory requirements.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers and between the pupils themselves are positive, friendly and supportive. Teachers and all other adults connected with the school set good examples in the constructive way they work with pupils and with

each other. Pupils generally work and play harmoniously together, take on initiatives appropriately and develop good social skills.

- The school effectively enhances pupils' personal and social development through a wide variety of extra-curricular activities inside and outside school time.
- The school, throughout its work, strongly promotes sound moral values and guides pupils' behaviour; they have a clear understanding of right and wrong; for example, one older pupil expressed valid concerns about the possibility of conflict in the Middle East. Pupils consistently help others less fortunate than themselves through direct support and raising substantial money for a variety of charities.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and the cultural traditions of others. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the heritage, culture, language and local history of Wales. Visits to places of interest, including adventure centres, broaden their knowledge and understanding. Pupils experience a good diversity of other cultures in the school curriculum and from displays around the school.
- The school emphasises the need for equality for all including race, gender and ability in its racial and personal and social education (PSE) policy. An outstanding feature is the inclusive way the school ensures all pupils have access to the whole curriculum including pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with temporary physical difficulties.
- Overall, pupils respond well to the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

#### **4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes**

Overall, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. The school is a happy, caring and orderly community.

- The headteacher, teaching and support staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and most pupils respond positively to their consistent approach.
- The school has an effective policy and set of procedures to promote positive behaviour that are implemented fairly and consistently by staff. School rules are positive, relevant and reflect the caring ethos of the school.
- Pupils' relationships with teachers and support staff are mutually respectful and friendly. Pupils are courteous, polite and relate well to each other, to staff and to visitors. The behaviour of older pupils is particularly good. They are confident, act responsibly and display a high degree of self-discipline.
- The majority of pupils have good attitudes towards learning. They listen carefully to their teachers, co-operate willingly with adults and their fellow pupils, settle quickly to task and sustain concentration. They are interested in their work and are keen to do their best.
- On occasions, particularly in KS1 classes, noise levels are permitted to rise and pupils become distracted from their work.
- Good behaviour and effort are celebrated in the classroom and in whole school assemblies.

- The headteacher and staff take the issues of bullying, racism and sexism very seriously. Procedures are in place to deal with any incidents that are brought to the attention of staff. No incidents of bullying, racism, sexism or aggressive behaviour were observed during the inspection.
- Overall, pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute to the efficient functioning of the school, to the standards pupils achieve and to their personal development.

### **4.3 Attendance**

Attendance rates are satisfactory and instances of unauthorised absence are minimal.

- Rates of attendance for the past three terms average 94%.
- Pupils are punctual and keen to attend school. Registration sessions and lessons start promptly.
- Registration is conducted efficiently and in accordance with statutory requirements.
- The headteacher and the school clerk monitor attendance and punctuality carefully. Effective procedures are in place to encourage good attendance and punctuality, to ensure pupils' absence is adequately explained and to follow up situations where necessary.
- The school makes very good use of an efficient computerised registration system that provides staff with comprehensive information about attendance and enables the school to identify patterns of absence for individual pupils.
- Regular and effective liaison takes place with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- The school has set no formal targets for the continued improvement of attendance but the high priority given to attendance and punctuality is frequently made known to pupils and parents.
- The school complies with the requirements of National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99.

## **5 Quality of Education**

### **5.1 Teaching**

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good overall. It is at least satisfactory in all of the lessons inspected; it is good in 51 per cent and very good in 2 per cent of lessons seen. Teachers and pupils display mutual respect and have positive and productive relationships. This has a good effect upon the ethos of the school and gives pupils the confidence to improve their learning.

- Teachers generally have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects and children they teach through relevant training, assessment and formal monitoring of their work.
- In the reception class, the quality of teaching is overall good with activities well planned to give children under five a sound start to their education. They settle in

extremely quickly and receive sensitive and caring support from the teacher. The support teacher, nursery nurse and other adults make a positive contribution to the quality of learning. On a few occasions, introductions to lessons exceed the attention span of some children who then become restless.

- In both key stages the quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to good with occasionally very good teaching seen. Where teaching is effective, the range and flexibility of teaching techniques and organisational strategies employed by teachers set learning in interesting contexts and there is good variety and pace to the teaching; questioning extends pupils' thinking and encourages thoughtful responses. Where teaching is less effective, there is lack of challenge and inspiration to enthuse all pupils to be alert, involved and achieve their full potential.
- Medium and short-term planning is generally sound with content, continuity and progression evident, but does not always include how the key skills are to be developed and used to support learning more effectively. Where planning is less effective, pupils, particularly the more able pupils, have insufficient opportunities for independent learning and research.
- Teachers provide good role models and interact sensitively to the needs of pupils; they provide overall positive and constructive support. Relationships are positive throughout the school and teachers offer frequent praise and encouragement, which increases pupils' motivation to learn. Where marking is particularly good, pupils are informed about ways in which they might improve their work.
- Support given to a few pupils with English as an additional language is appropriate and they make relatively good progress.
- The organisation and teaching of Welsh as a second language is good due to the positive emphasis given to teaching the language by teachers and the effective contribution of the part-time Welsh teacher.
- Teaching for pupils with special educational and physical needs is good, including the contribution made by the teacher assistants (TAs) and other adults. They learn at an appropriate rate, build successfully upon what they have already been taught and have equal access to the whole curriculum.
- Suitable, regular use is made of homework to support pupils' learning.
- The work provided for pupils is, in the main, matched to their abilities and prior attainment. The new schemes of work, standardised planning, the culture of sharing information and resources and monitoring of standards, improve teachers' knowledge of the child. As these initiatives become more firmly embedded into the practice of teaching, they improve the continuity and consistency of pupils' progress through the school.
- A new initiative where very able pupils are given challenging tasks by a teacher works well for these pupils and they produce work of very good quality.
- A particular strength of the school is the caring way teachers, support staff and other adults help and support groups of pupils and individuals during activities.

## **5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Overall, good procedures have been established for assessment, recording and reporting on pupils' work

- Good use is made of the whole school policy that has been developed to meet requirements in this area.
- A baseline profile is drawn up of each child's attainments on entry to school. Good use is made of the information to plan future teaching.
- Progress is continuously and systematically assessed throughout each key stage. Commercially produced tests are administered each year to determine attainments in literacy, language and mathematics. Targets are set for further improvement.
- Analysis is made of National Curriculum standard assessment tests to identify strengths and weaknesses in performance and to inform future work.
- Procedures to identify the special educational needs of pupils are generally accurate and consistent.
- Opportunities for assessment are not clearly identified in all teachers' weekly planning and in a significant number of plenary sessions.
- School portfolios of moderated work in English, mathematics and science help to secure accurate assessment by teachers. Samples of work in the foundation subjects are retained to indicate standards pupils achieve.
- Due care is taken to comply with statutory requirements when assessing and recording pupils' achievements at the end of both key stages.
- Marking generally assists pupils to make improvements in their work. Teachers' observation of pupils at work in class generally leads to the provision of good assistance to help them to complete tasks with understanding.
- Three meetings are held each year to enable parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers adequately.
- Annual reports comply with statutory requirements and include information about how pupils could improve their performance.

### **5.3 Curriculum**

Overall, the curriculum is good and the school provides pupils with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that complies with statutory requirements.

- Pupils under five are given a range of interesting experiences, which fully accord with the *Desirable Learning Outcomes*.
- At KS1 pupils receive a broad range of experiences that are well matched to their needs.
- KS2 pupils receive a wide range of purposeful experiences that are generally matched to their individual needs.
- Long, medium and short-term planning is satisfactory overall. The policy for the promotion of key skills across the curriculum has yet to be fully implemented in medium and short term planning.

- Strong emphasis is placed on personal and social education (PSE). The school's policy and scheme of work meets the ACCAC framework to be introduced in September 2003.
- Homework tasks are planned and well supported by the majority of parents. In KS1, pupils are well supported by their parents in reading. In KS2, pupils make good progress in the core subjects as a result of planned homework tasks.
- The school is a caring community that provides good support for everyone in its care, especially children new to the school. All children have equal access to all parts of the curriculum.
- Extra-curricular activities, including choir, orchestra, recorder, dance, gym and theatre clubs, sporting activities, art and residential outdoor pursuits, are generally very good and contribute very effectively to children's learning.
- Visits to a wide variety of local museums, activity centres and workshops also contribute effectively to children's learning.
- The scheme of work in design and technology is brief and does not yet give sufficient guidance for teachers' planning.

#### **5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare**

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

- Pupils work and play in a caring, supportive environment where they feel safe and secure. The headteacher and staff know pupils well and effectively monitor and support their academic progress, their social development and their personal well-being.
- The school places great importance on the personal and social education (PSE) of pupils and an effective PSE programme is in place. Aspects of hygiene, health, personal and emotional well-being are incorporated into the programme and staff are skilled at delivering these topics with tact and sensitivity. Within the PSE programme, the introduction of the 'You Can Do It' initiative has contributed significantly to the development of pupils' self esteem and confidence.
- The school is part of the *Health Promoting Schools Initiative*. The benefit to pupils and the enjoyment they experience from this initiative is evident in many aspects of school life.
- The school has a policy and set of procedures to promote health and safety that are monitored and implemented by staff and the governing body. However, at present, arrangements to ensure the security of the school buildings are not fully implemented.
- A policy and procedures for dealing with child protection issues are in place. The school enjoys good working relationships with external health and welfare agencies.
- The school's policies and procedures to ensure equal opportunity, racial equality and social inclusion for its pupils are successful.

#### **5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

Overall, very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Effective support is provided for pupils, who make sound to very good progress commensurate with their abilities.

- Six per cent of pupils have special educational needs, including five who have statements.
- Learning difficulties are identified at an early age.
- Policies and procedures fully conform to the new Code of Practice (CoP). The special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is most conscientious in her duties and keeps relevant and appropriate documentation. All pupils have individual educational plans.
- Individual educational plans (IEPs) are reviewed every half term and new targets are set. The annual review of statements complies with statutory requirements.
- The SENCO uses ICT effectively to track pupils' progress and for support in mathematics and spelling.
- Teachers generally know their pupils well and in liaison with the special needs co-ordinator ensure that work is matched to their needs in English and mathematics.
- Withdrawal teaching is appropriate and beneficial for all pupils. Pupils with statements of need follow the same areas of the curriculum in English and mathematics, but are regularly withdrawn during the class English and mathematics consolidation time, in order to work with the co-ordinator at their own level and pace.
- The quality of support provided by the SENCO, classroom assistants and the external learning support service is overall very good.
- All pupils are fully integrated into school life and have equal access to all parts of the curriculum.
- Appropriate support is received from outside agencies.
- The school contributes substantially from its own budget to ensure that there is appropriate support for all pupils with special educational needs.

## **5.6 Partnership with Parents and the Community, Schools and Other Institutions**

The school places particular importance on its partnership with parents and the community, schools and other institutions and enjoys good relationships in all these areas.

- Parents are supportive of the school; they value the school's welcoming nature and appreciate the ready access they have to the headteacher and staff. A useful home/school partnership agreement is in place that has readily been accepted by parents.
- Throughout the school parents are kept well informed by regular newsletters, an informative annual report of the governing body and regular consultations with staff to discuss children's work and progress. The school prospectus is currently

being updated to ensure all statutory requirements are included. Parents appreciate the daily, informal contact they have with the headteacher and teaching staff.

- The school's active Parents Association provides a good link between home and school and makes a significant contribution to the life and work of the school. The association organises many fund-raising and social events that enhance links with the local community and provide the school with a vital source of additional income. Funds raised are used purposefully to enhance learning resources and enrich the learning environment for all pupils.
- A number of parents and friends give freely of their time helping out in the classroom and accompanying pupils on educational visits. Their support is greatly valued by staff and they make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- The school enjoys a close and effective partnership with the Roman Catholic secondary school to which many pupils transfer. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils are good and ensure that Y6 pupils look forward to secondary school with confidence. Regular liaison meetings, teacher exchanges between schools, bridging units that span Y6 and Y7 and a sharing of ideas help secure continuity of education between KS2 and KS3. Partnerships with the other schools that pupils transfer to are not so well developed.
- The school has established productive partnerships with two inner-city schools in England. Exchange visits have taken place and the enjoyment and benefits that staff and pupils gain from these partnerships are evident.
- The school has established successful partnerships with several institutes of higher and further education and provides training facilities for student teachers, nursery nurses and students undertaking vocational qualifications. Students from local secondary schools regularly undertake work-experience placements at the school. All students are well supported by staff and they make a positive contribution to the life of the school.
- Good use is made of the local community as a learning resource. Educational visits and the expertise of members of the local community make a positive contribution to pupils' learning in many curriculum areas. The school regularly serves the community by supporting many civic, cultural and charitable projects. The recent community and school production of 'Oliver' was a highly successful initiative.
- The school enjoys a very successful partnership with the parish church. The clergy and parishioners hold the school in very high regard and appreciate the contribution which staff and pupils make to the life and worship of the church community.
- Overall, the links established with schools, institutions, parents and community make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, motivation, standards of achievement and personal development.

## **5.7 Partnership with Industry**

The school's partnership with industry is good.

- Partnership with industry is well established throughout the school and the valuable links with industry, business and commerce enrich work in many curriculum areas.
- The school has a useful policy for industry links and effective strategies are in place to raise the economic and industrial understanding of pupils and to give them insight into the world of work.
- The school has developed a good working relationship with the Education and Business Partnership (EBP). Teachers have attended courses sponsored by EBP and several members of staff have undertaken relevant placements that contributed to staff development and enhanced curriculum provision for pupils.
- Through their visits to a number of industrial, retail and commercial sites within their locality and further afield, including supermarkets, shops, a post office, a football club and television studio, pupils gain first-hand knowledge of different working environments and a good understanding of the variety of work undertaken in the area.
- Staff actively encourage personnel from a wide variety of professions and occupations to speak to pupils about their work. The contribution of visitors including a postman, police officer, hospice worker, vet, politician and doctor has had a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Older pupils' understanding of the work of the emergency services has been enhanced by the school's involvement in the 'Crucial Crew' programme.
- A number of pupils are taking part in an exciting project with BBC Wales. They have visited the television studios and are now involved in evaluating the educational programmes shown on BBC Wales.
- Older pupils have had the opportunity to engage in an enterprise scheme, running a healthy eating tuck shop, which gave them insight into managing a business.
- Local business, industry and commerce view the school in a positive light and are supportive of the school. Sponsorship has been received from a number of local organisations, and businesses regularly assist the school in its fund-raising activities.
- The headteacher, staff and the governing body are committed to the continuing development of a positive partnership with industry. The links already established contribute significantly to pupils' motivation, learning and standards of achievement.

## **6. MANAGEMENT**

### **6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement**

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

- The school has produced an appropriate self-assessment report showing how its analysis of performance data is used to set targets to raise standards of achievement, especially in the core subjects of the NC. Identification of strengths and weaknesses has led to several initiatives included in the SDP, such as the introduction of a new spelling and phonic scheme, which have promoted higher standards of achievement in the NC assessment tests.

- The school makes good use of information from baseline, national test and task results and other assessments in order to set appropriate and realistic targets and to track the progress of individual pupils as they move through the school. The school's targets for its performance in the NC assessment tests for 2002 have been met successfully. Target setting is regarded as central to achieving school improvement.
- The school has very good procedures for the evaluation of standards achieved. The school employs a teacher clerical support assistant whose duties include making an in-depth analysis of test results, both national and school delivered, to enable the head teacher and governors to scrutinise and identify strengths and weaknesses. This greatly assists the school to identify the overall good standards achieved and provides valuable data to track the progress of individuals and overall subject and class improvement.
- The SDP is detailed and along with the new mission statement provides good direction for the short and medium term. However, while the mission statement sets valid and worthy attributes for the school to aspire towards, the SDP gives little direction in the long term on how these are to be achieved.
- The school has good systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The head and core subject co-ordinators monitor provision in the classroom in these curricular areas and appropriate records are kept detailing the strengths and weaknesses identified. Teachers are given feedback after monitoring and attend appropriate in-service courses to enhance their professional development.
- The school keeps celebration portfolios to record all aspects of the school life. Portfolios of NC work in each year are not levelled but there are plans do so to ensure consistency in judging the levels at which pupils are working in KS1 and KS2.

## **6.2 Management and Efficiency**

Management and efficiency are good.

- The head provides encouraging leadership and has very good relationships with pupils, staff, parents and the GB. He is a positive influence on the steadily improving standards and the caring ethos of the school.
- The clear aims and values adopted by the school contribute to a shared sense of purpose and a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and raising standards of pupils.
- Formal and on the whole effective systems are in place for the head to monitor teaching and learning in the core subjects and ICT, and for subject co-ordinators to evaluate pupils' work. The leadership role of co-ordinators is developing well where they ensure sharing of good practice in teaching, planning and learning in order to raise standards further.
- The GB is very supportive of the head and shares his values. Governors fulfil their role well and work hard to sustain the high aspirations the school has for its pupils. The head and school are ably supported by the deputy head who fulfils her management and leadership responsibilities within the school calmly and efficiently.

- The targets in the SDP include satisfactory descriptions of budget implications, but do not show any actual projected expenditure to measure the extent to which budget-setting relates to the school's educational objectives and its priorities.
- The head and GB of the school are effective in managing the budget and resources. The school has a small deficit at present due to a period of adjustment from being grant maintained to voluntary aided status. Arrangements are sound to address the situation. Issues identified in the recent auditor's report have been addressed appropriately.
- 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**

Good use is made of staffing, accommodation and learning resources.

- The teachers are suitably qualified and work together well as a team. All show a very strong commitment to the school and effectively promote its aims.
- Regular attendance at courses and school based in-service training has a beneficial effect on standards.
- Good provision is made for the induction of newly qualified teachers and the ongoing professional development of staff through the introduction of *Performance Management*.
- Accommodation is barely adequate for the number of pupils on roll, although the school is doing the best it can in difficult conditions. The music room, large hall and spacious classrooms in the main building offer good facilities for children, although there are large class sizes in some year groups.
- The demountable classrooms provide barely acceptable standards. During inclement weather they pose a health and safety risk to pupils as they lack toilet facilities.
- Buildings are kept clean and tidy and apart from the demountables, are generally in good condition. The playground provides a safe and secure area during the whole of the school day, although the enclosed play area for pupils in the Early Years is small and congested.
- Work on display around the school and in most classrooms reflects children's achievements in various subjects. Good quality displays of artefacts help pupils to reflect and gain understanding in many subjects.
- Effective use is made of resources to support pupils' learning. Provision is good in all areas of the curriculum.
- Good support is received from classroom assistants, midday supervisors, canteen staff, the caretaker, crossing patrol officer and two school secretaries. Duties are discharged efficiently and effectively.

## **7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **Early Years: Reception**

### **Language Literacy and Communication Skills are good**

- Good speaking skills are evident where a significant number of children speak in extended sentences and readily offer their ideas and observations.
- Children have a good range of vocabulary; for example, they can explain that a street light works because of sensors, the road is curved and the middle light in traffic lights is amber.
- They generally make good progress in their reading according to their age and ability. Many are able to underwrite sentences, with some able to write complete sentences.
- Children use a tape recorder to practise their sounds and can choose from up to 8 sentences. They listen and read stories recorded on a listening centre, turning pages at the appropriate time. They become familiar with following simple commands in Welsh.

### **Personal and Social Development is satisfactory**

- Children generally work together well in groups often using appropriate personal and social skills when they share and play with sand, water and building blocks.
- Children understand class routines, can put their coats on and use toilet facilities and wash their hands carefully; the majority share and take turns.

### **Mathematical Development is good**

- Children can order numbers to five and count to 20 and start adding numbers to 10. Their mathematical language improves steadily and they know the ordinals up to a 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Children know the difference between big and little when they colour in 4 big camels and 4 smaller camels, and learn to describe a numeral in terms of less than or more than a given number.
- Children learn to relate addition to combining two groups of objects. They understand more than/less than and bigger/smaller. They develop and reinforce their mathematical skills through a range of appropriate activities such as computer mathematics, water, maths bin, plasticine (make digits) and language development
- They can throw a dice and count the spots and record the number up to 6. They print fingerprints up to 6 independently to reinforce their number work.
- Some children use a calculator to add single numbers to make two figure numbers.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World is good**

- Children begin to appreciate the differences in and uses of materials. They choose five materials to stick in boxes and describe them according to texture – smooth rough, fluffy, and bumpy, and then draw them.
- They make choices and select materials for the houses the three pigs built, two of which are built of straw and twigs and are blown down by the children. They

reinforce their understanding of the suitability of building materials through various activities including drawing pictures of what happened on a worksheet and building a house from blocks. They can explain that bricks are better than straw and why.

- Children have a very good knowledge of everything that has happened during a class visit to the roadside. They speak knowledgeably about the traffic, road signs, traffic lights, vehicles and road markings. They can identify different directions; for example, up the hill and turn left and down the hill. They give good attention to health and safety issues and their use of appropriate language is good.
- They have a good idea of storing work on files on the class computer.

### **Physical Development is satisfactory**

- Children's cutting skills develop well. Children in the main handle equipment and tools effectively and safely. During physical activities increasing control is being acquired. Large outdoor toys provide appropriate opportunities for pushing and pedalling. When riding tricycles, they usually do so responsibly without bumping into one another.

### **Creative Development is good**

- Children make stencil drawings and most colour accurately to a line with some becoming more adept at doing so. They have frequent opportunities to use brushes and paints, mix colours and make paintings. Children, including the less able, can describe their paintings with joy and excitement. They colour Elmer the elephant with bright felt tip pens.
- Children stamp pictures and sequence them appropriately showing people growing older.
- Children play a wide range of untuned instruments with confidence and enjoyment. They can keep to a simple beat and follow instructions carefully. They sing a wide range of songs and rhymes and accompany themselves with their instruments. Children have made appropriate instruments at home with their parents including drums, shakers and strings. Children experience a very good range of musical styles that they find engaging and enjoyable. They interact well with the teacher when talking about what they have heard. They enjoy good quality demonstrations of percussion instruments and have plenty of opportunities to experience playing the many exciting instruments, including a wide selection of drums. All children have equal access to a computer and are able to use a child-sized mouse to control a cursor in a paint program where they create recognisable pictures about the bear hunt showing grass and trees.

### **Shortcomings**

- A small minority lack appropriate personal and social skills; they occasionally call out and speak over the teacher's voice and some misbehave when the teacher's attention is diverted elsewhere during activities.
- When they carry out physical activities or structured play such as using building blocks, a significant number of children are noisy and lack concentration.
- The small narrow, fenced outdoor area is too small for children to use wheeled toys and undertake robust physical activities.

## **English**

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

### **Good Features**

- Younger pupils in KS1 use some elements of a known story to structure their own writing and build simple profiles of characters from the stories read. Pupils have a good recall of the main elements of the Goldilocks story. They can suggest an appropriate start to a story such as 'Once upon a time'. Pupils suggest some interesting ways in which the story can develop.
- Older pupils in KS1 learn to spell words appropriately with a common spelling pattern, such as when using the vowel phoneme 'or'. Through practice they acquire good handwriting and begin to join letters.
- They listen well and enjoy traditional stories from other cultures and make sensible predictions for the development of the stories.
- Pupils in this key stage use verb tenses with increasing accuracy. They recognise the title of the book and know that sentences begin with a capital letter. Many can predict sensibly. They recognise and can explain the emotion of lonely as being on your own. The majority learn progressively the difference between the present and past tense and can give sentences using catch and caught adequately. They make up their own sentences using these verbs. They learn new words such as withered and blossom well.
- Pupils in KS1 listen well and are quiet when told. They speak confidently and quietly. Reading standards are good across the ability range with pupils reading well individually; they read confidently together from a big book story 'The Turtle who danced with the Crane'.
- At the beginning of KS2, pupils identify and discuss main characters in stories effectively from different genres such as Bible stories and legends and evaluate their behaviour. Pupils use a variety of vocabulary in their descriptions of villains, recognising the need to use adjectives to describe physical and personal characteristics. They produce 'wanted' posters, using imaginative descriptions. Pupils discuss, listen well to each other, offer suggestions and speak with confidence, using a wide range of vocabulary to describe the characteristics of heroes, villains and victims. Pupils write imaginative work. Working in pairs, pupils use a laptop effectively to draft and redraft their work.
- Later in the key stage pupils read a newspaper report, together and individually, with understanding and expression. They take on the roles of a reporter and characters in the story and write a list of questions and answers to act out their roles in front of the class with confidence, showing good understanding of the text

and empathy with the characters. They write a report for a specific audience such as newspaper readers and produce some interesting pieces of writing using a good range of vocabulary, anticipating and suggesting what ought to happen next. Many make imaginative and unusual endings to their story.

- Pupils listen with interest to their efforts; many are keen to contribute and speak clearly and confidently. Pupils read with understanding, empathy and expression.
- A number of pupils in the school have contributed to a collection of creative writing in a recently published young writers' book 'Write on'. These are of a high standard.
- Older pupils in KS2 read, discuss and understand a piece of text from Alice in Wonderland Mad Hatter's tea party in an imaginary world. A significant number of pupils answer questions to show they comprehend well. They search for replies to questions and give clear responses, with some pupils picking up well on the more open-ended questions. They use wide-ranging expressive vocabulary to show appreciation of the story such as appropriate, confusing, adventurous and extraordinary. They have a good understanding of textual devices, e.g. Madness of the Hatter exemplifier. They have a good recall of other stories similar to Alice which lead to entry into imaginative places. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed when they make coherent recommendations about a book to a friend.
- Older pupils investigate the perspectives of the different characters by referring to text from the book 'Spellhorn' by Bettie Doherty. When they answer questions, they move beyond literal interpretation towards deduction and inference.
- Pupils take turns to read the story well, but quietly. Pupils make good efforts to answer questions posed by teachers. They refer to the text when answering questions well. Prediction skills are appropriately developed and pupils can use texts to develop their ability to infer and deduce. They are increasingly aware of underlying themes in the texts. They can discuss their likes and dislikes of the author and express perceptive viewpoints. Pupils work quietly and most refer to the text for reference. They speak fluently and confidently, and listen well. They demonstrate a strong sense of right and wrong.
- By the end of KS2 the oldest pupils increase their familiarity with significant writers and study in depth one genre. They study the format and framework for an interview.
- Pupils read an account written by Jenny Nimmo taken from a theatre programme for a production of the Snow Spider. They discuss the impact that the Welsh Legend of Gwydion had upon the authoress. They watch and listen attentively to a video of an interview with her. They write questions for an interview within a given a framework; these are appropriate with good use of open-ended questions. A few pupils take part in 'hot seating' where they are asked questions by the teacher and sometimes by the class. They read out well and clearly. Pupils in the hot seat answer very well, clearly and with authority. Pupils evaluate each other's contributions positively and suggest an area for improvement.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings, although younger pupils in KS1 on the whole lack creative imagination to explore very interesting and original ways of changing a story; in lower KS2 spelling is variable and presentation often untidy.

## **Mathematics**

Standards of achievement in mathematics are good overall in both key stages.

### **Good features**

- Throughout the school pupils develop reasoning skills that they use effectively to solve new problems.
- All pupils are familiar with a suitably wide range of mental and written calculation strategies to assist in problem solving. Good standards are achieved. Mental recall of number facts is very good.
- Appropriate use is made of ICT for the practice and consolidation of skills.
- Pupils at KS1 have a sound understanding of mathematical concepts and most are able to discuss their work clearly and logically and give sensible well-reasoned explanations. Their use of mathematical language is good.
- The majority of pupils recognise the different values of coins, calculate simple bills and give the correct change.
- Many pupils perform mental calculations quickly and accurately. They count in twos up to fives and tens and continue patterns to use in their work. They solve simple problems using knowledge of doubles and near doubles. Their understanding of the relationship between addition and subtraction is generally sound.
- Pupils explain why a number is odd or even and have sound understanding of the concept of halving. Many pupils have an understanding of place value to 100.
- Good knowledge is shown of two and three-dimensional shapes which they classify using terms such as faces and edges.
- Pupils complete surveys and record the information they discover using pictograms and bar charts appropriately.
- At KS2, pupils apply their knowledge of equivalent fractions to calculate simple percentages. Measuring skills are used effectively in areas such as design and technology.
- Good emphasis is placed on the consolidation and development of number work. By the end of the key stage pupils show good knowledge of place value and add and subtract to two places of decimals.
- By the end of the key stage, pupils calculate areas of regular rectangular shapes using multiplication; they identify different triangles and calculate a missing angle in the triangle.
- All pupils have a good understanding of a wide range of ways of recording data. The quality of mathematical drawings at the top of the school is very good; they have good understanding of probability.

- Pupils read and record co-ordinates in all four quarters. Their knowledge of rotational symmetry is developing well.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings, although there is an over-reliance by pupils on worksheets for recording work which limits their facility to develop a variety of skills and strategies.

### **Science**

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

#### **Good features**

- Pupils at KS1 carry out simple investigations and use labelled pictures, tables and short sentences to record their work. They know that sound varies with distance.
- Good understanding is shown of electricity and its importance to different kinds of machines. Pupils explain how to construct a circuit to light up a bulb. They have good understanding of light and light sources and explain that a shadow is formed when an object blocks light.
- Pupils name the different parts of a flowering plant and know that seeds need air, light and water in order to germinate. Good use is made of science vocabulary when explaining work.
- Appropriate attention is given to nutrition. Pupils have secure knowledge of what they should eat to remain healthy.
- Practical investigations help pupils to learn to classify materials and investigate forces of pushing and pulling. Pupils understand that materials can be shiny or dull, rigid or bendy. Good explanations are given of what happens when a car goes down a ramp.
- Pupils have been introduced to the concept of fair testing and most show an understanding of this concept.
- In KS2, pupils' knowledge and skills in all aspects of the science curriculum are developing well. They are able to plan for a fair test, carry out the investigation, make predictions, record their findings and draw conclusions from their work.
- Pupils explain the difference between solids, liquids and gases. They understand reversible and irreversible changes and talk knowledgeably about life processes and the classification of animal life.
- Good understanding is shown of the solar system and the force of gravity. Pupils explain clearly in scientific language the balance of forces that make an object float.
- At the top of the school pupils have very effectively employed their science knowledge to make moving toys. Parallel electrical circuits have been used to light a house and air and water pressure used to make parts of the toy move.
- ICT effectively supports science learning; for example, pupils are learning the effect of gravity on different planets and on their own body mass.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings, although in science, presentation of work varies throughout the school. In many instances, spelling is incorrect and sentence structure is ungrammatical.

### **Welsh as a Second Language**

Standards in Welsh as a second language are good in both key stages.

- Younger pupils in KS1 on the whole recall simple greetings in Welsh. They name the different names of foods on food cards and know their colours well. They make appropriate progress in learning new sentence patterns to enable them to make preferences. Most can give one-word answers and a significant number give full sentence answers.
- They make good efforts to recall vocabulary associated with food; they write sentences about their own favourite food well.
- As they progress through KS1, pupils make good progress in their reading and writing skills, with some pupils entering text using a word processor.
- Younger pupils in KS2 respond well and pronounce Welsh clearly. They have a good recall of recent work learnt on parts of the body and can ask questions and describe the colours of their eyes and clothes. Pupils read a doctor dialogue well with reasonably good pronunciation and expression.
- Later in the key stage pupils learn to use connectives appropriately to create extended sentences comparing something they can do with something they cannot do. They make satisfactory efforts with the support of flash cards. Pupils write down sentences they learn in each lesson, to create their own individual paragraph of significant length.
- Older pupils in KS2 consolidate and sing the days of the week confidently. They can answer questions on the hobbies in full sentences and most can extend the sentences to include negatives. They read dialogues adequately with good pronunciation. They write a dialogue which changes to their own circumstances using their own targeted language. They write well, with support, making significant progress with practice. They have a good and varied vocabulary. Their general understanding of language skills such as knowing the function of an apostrophe improves through the examples they encounter in Welsh. They begin to use a web site appropriately to improve their ICT skills in Welsh.
- The oldest pupils in KS2 reinforce sentence patterns through role play and practise reading text that is within their experience to develop their comprehension and enable them to write their own scripts. They read a given dialogue of an imaginary conversation between two popular television presenters Harri Morgan and Sara Edwards. They speak clearly and confidently with obvious understanding. They translate the sentences in the dialogue well and learn new words in a meaningful context. Pupils show increasing understanding as they read through the dialogue. By the end of the key stage pupils can talk about the weather and have a good grasp of the present and past tense.
- By the end of the key stages, pupils have good listening, speaking, reading skills and their writing is developing steadily.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings although some pupils are on occasions over reliant on flash cards to aid recall.

### **Design and Technology**

It was not possible to observe work in this subject during the inspection to make a secure judgement on standards achieved. Evidence from previous work and discussions with children and teachers indicates that standards are good overall.

#### **Good features**

- As pupils move through the school they make good progress in the development of skills for designing, making and evaluating. They are acquiring skills with a widening range of materials and components.
- Practical focused work helps pupils to dye and colour cloth and to practise sewing.
- Pupils in KS1 undertake a variety of practical tasks in all aspects of the subject and have recorded the process in making bread using a flow chart. Other pupils have designed and made Stone Age type pots using clay.
- The quality of pupils' design plans is overall good, with some very good examples of design planning at the end of KS2. Drawings are clear, materials are listed and the making process carefully described.
- All pupils demonstrate an understanding of design and technology. Evaluations measure the fitness of the product to its purpose and the pupils' own responses to the model itself; these are of a high quality.
- Finished work shows a good range of techniques and materials. Much of the work on display has been inspired by observation of naturally occurring objects. Shell-like structures and glistening paint clearly indicate the sea theme for spacecraft.
- Moving toys made by pupils at the end of KS2 show creativity and original thought. Good use has been made of gears, pneumatics, hydraulics and pulleys to construct these robust and very well finished toys.
- Cross-curricular work in history has enabled pupils to research and make Roman catapults of a very high quality.
- ICT is used well for research into mechanisms.

#### **Shortcomings**

- No major shortcomings were seen in the available evidence.

### **Information Technology**

Standards of achievement in information technology are good in both key stages.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils use a range of information technology equipment effectively such as a digital camera, a digital microscope, an interactive whiteboard, radios, television, videos, listening and music centres to enhance their learning experiences.

- Pupils in both key stages use word processing skills with increasing confidence and sophistication, selecting, amending and editing their work to suit the particular audience.
- Pupils in KS1 develop good mouse control using track, fill and brush tools. They use a menu to select images of colourful animals which they then print.
- Information technology is used effectively by pupils in Welsh to produce pictures and text depicting common greetings. They use paint tools, shapes and the spray effectively.
- In lower KS2, pupils use a digital camera to insert a digital image into a word processing document to combine text and graphics.
- Later they go on to use other tools such as a pencil tool, spray to draw and insert text and print their work.
- KS2 pupils are able to recall using a programmable robot well. They can describe how to plot a robot's route using a sequence of accurate instructions.
- Pupils in this key stage use a search engine on the internet effectively to find out about Roman catapults to inform their design technology work.
- Pupils develop their research skills and enrich their curriculum knowledge appropriately through accessing a good range of CD-ROMs.
- The computer is used effectively to print off effects in art inspired by Pier Mondrian. They use different fonts, sizes and colours to print off Welsh action words.
- Pupils have appropriate recall of using Logo to create triangles and squares.
- Pupils use computers to draft and redraft prayers and create well-presented graphs in science. They insert graphics and text into a word document.
- A significant number of older KS2 pupils are fully conversant with word processing. They can edit imported images to illustrate their work and design attractive pictures using an art program.
- They use a movie editor program to explore filter effects with digital photographs; they explore patterns with two lines of symmetry in 'Fresco'.
- Some pupils insert digitally scanned and Internet acquired images into slideshow presentations on endangered species. They incorporate animated effects.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings, although pupils' progress in modelling and simulation work is variable.

### **History**

At KS1 no definite judgements can be given about standards as no lessons were seen in the subject. Evidence from previous work and discussions with pupils and teachers suggests that standards are satisfactory. Standards at KS2 are satisfactory

### **Good features**

- Throughout the school pupils have an appropriate sense of chronology.
- Pupils at KS1 are helped to develop an awareness of the past through investigation of artefacts. They describe differences between old and new toys and learn about old and new houses. Good use is made of timelines.
- Older pupils in the key stage learn about famous people in history and talk about Florence Nightingale's work.
- At KS2, pupils study the Stone Age and investigate how people lived at that time. They have used ICT successfully to find out about tools and weapons of the time and compare these with their modern equivalents. Sound knowledge is displayed of the houses and cave dwellings.
- When discussing work, pupils display appropriate familiarity with historical terms and use these to talk about the Romans and the Victorians.
- The oldest pupils research from their own school log book, census data and commercially produced texts to investigate life in Victorian times. They have sound understanding of life in an industrial community near to Abergavenny and express empathy with the children.
- Visits to places of interest enhance the curriculum and help pupils to gain an understanding of times past.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils' recall of previous work is slow and limits stimulating discussion at both key stages.
- Written work is relatively limited. Much recording depends on the use of worksheets. Both extended writing and worksheet activities show untidy presentation.

### **Geography**

At KS1 no secure judgements can be given about standards as no lessons were seen in the subject. Evidence from previous work and discussions with pupils and teachers suggests that standards are satisfactory. Standards at KS2 are at least satisfactory with some good aspects to the work.

### **Good features**

- At KS1, pupils talk about their journey to and from school and describe the route they take. They express what they like and dislike about their neighbourhood. They have an elementary understanding of pollution.
- Pupils draw simple plans of their route to school and by the end of the key stage draw plans of their classroom and demonstrate understanding of the use of keys.
- Pupils name and locate the countries that make up the UK and name the capital cities. They can locate Abergavenny on a map of the British Isles and also the Isle of Coll in the Inner Hebrides.
- Good understanding is shown of the Isle of Coll, the contrasting area of study in KS1. Pupils describe the farming industry on the island and have a good sense of the remoteness of a Scottish island in comparison with their busy home town.

- At KS2, pupils further develop their knowledge and understanding of place. During the inspection pupils were studying Caribbean Islands. They use correct geographical terminology to describe landscapes and physical features. Most pupils have an early understanding of how human activity and environment are linked.
- Pupils at the top of the school have sound knowledge and understanding of pollution and of changes in a mining community near to the town from conducting a local study.
- Sound use is made of ICT for research and the interactive whiteboard during lesson introductions. Pupils are gaining an in-depth knowledge of volcanoes and other physical features of the islands from their reading and use of ICT. Pupils investigate rocks types and use the digital microscope competently for this activity.
- ICT has also been used for a beautifully presented study of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Good attention has been paid to landscape features, land use and tourism in the area.

### **Shortcomings**

- Younger pupils are hesitant when reading map co-ordinates.
- Knowledge and understanding of world climates and associated vegetation and human activity is relatively limited.

### **Art**

Standards in art are good overall.

### **Good Features**

- Pupils experiment with colour, pattern, texture and shape, and use an appropriate range of techniques and materials.
- At both key stages, pupils take care with pencil and charcoal shading to create depth and contrast in their observational drawings. Pupils have completed self-portraits and sketches of the landscape around the school, including the Blorenge.
- Pupils in KS1 work with paint to mix colours to create shades that they then use in their work. Some interesting paintings of toys have been produced as a result of colour mixing.
- Pupils in Y2 show good understanding of illustration and have designed plates using blue felt tip pens to tell the story of *Yum Sang* in the style of the Willow Pattern.
- Pupils have opportunities to experience a range of techniques. They weave using simple looms and repeated colour patterns.
- In KS2, pupils have successfully downloaded images of themselves from the digital camera and have created special effects using filters.
- Observational drawing shows progressive development of skills. A small number of pupils successfully extend their skills in this area at the school art club. They complete self-portraits and are developing interesting styles in creating the effects of distortion.

- Appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to study the work of artists such as Mondrian. During the inspection, for example, pupils at KS2 were studying landscapes by Welsh artists such as Tress, Hobb, G Thomas and Tripp. Good use was made of pastel shading to copy and work in the style of these artists using images downloaded from the Internet. The work is of high quality.
- Work is successfully linked to other subjects; for example, in history pupils use scraperboard techniques to create a variety of pictures to illustrate lifestyles in Victorian times in Blaenavon.
- Pupils benefit greatly from working with professional artists from *Pioneer Arts*. They have created a large mosaic in the school hall and have made another mosaic to represent Tonga for the walkway at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. In this way good links have been established with Tonga.

### **Shortcomings**

- No significant shortcomings were observed.

### **Music**

No lessons were seen in KS1, although evidence of musical activities during the inspection such as assemblies, music portfolios and talking to children indicates that standards are good. Standards of achievement in music are good in KS2

### **Good features**

- Around a third of the pupils in both key stages learn to play a musical instrument well from music notation, ranging from recorders, violins and woodwind, through school and extra-curricular activities. The school has a good choir and orchestra and some pupils have attained high grades in external music exams with the Associated Board at Trinity College. This resource of music talent contributes significantly to the overall good standard of music in the school.
- Pupils in KS1 learn to sing the song 'I love the sun' tunefully and are able to play a good range of untuned percussion instruments sensibly
- They can keep a steady beat when clapping out a variety of rhythms.
- Pupils listen to a good variety of recorded music and are able to give valid observations about them.
- There is evidence of pupils recording their music using sequence of pictures as a form of graphical representation to assist them to perform music together as a class.
- Younger pupils in KS2 recognise clearly the different sections in dance music. They compose a dance with a partner in time to the music in the four sections. Some choose to play a drum or tambourine in time with the music. The final performances are good. Music and dance is used effectively in some assemblies to create a strong spiritual element.
- Older pupils listen with enjoyment to a recording of the Scottish tune 'Three Crow'. They join and sing tunefully and with good intonation. They evaluate sensibly and give valid reasons for why they like the song – particularly for its humour and Scottish flavour. They compose their own version of the tune using a

simple four-note accompaniment on the glockenspiel. Their final performances are good.

- By the end of the key stage, pupils have a good appreciation and knowledge of the sounds different musical instruments make and their contribution to orchestral music. They clap previously learnt beats in time and can read the musical notation accurately.
- Pupils at the end of KS2 compose tunes using five notes and learn effectively how to maintain an instrument part as a member of a group. They refine their ideas and compose various interesting and tuneful compositions using a wide variety of tuned and untuned percussion, stringed and woodwind instruments well for accompaniment. Afterwards they evaluate each other's efforts positively and suggest valid ways for improvement.

### **Physical Education**

Standards of achievement are good both key stages.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils in both key stages understand well the importance of warming up and cooling down during physical activities and wearing appropriate clothing.
- Younger pupils in KS1 explore moods and feelings and develop their responses to music well.
- They develop control, co-ordination, poise and elevation in basic actions of travelling, jumping, turning, gesture and stillness.
- They make large, slow steps with appropriate strength sustained like a steam roller. Pupils discuss, as a class, their movements adequately. They move their arms and hands in turning circles well. Pupils synchronise appropriately in groups, show sufficient tension and crouch well.
- Older pupils in KS1 develop good two-handed sending and receiving skills with large balls and are able to catch and balance on one hand. They work well in pairs, take care to keep their eye on the ball and develop good spatial co-ordination.
- Early in KS2, pupils explore different ways of turning, rolling, jumping, balancing and travelling on hands and feet and how to adapt, practise and refine their actions both on the floor and using apparatus.
- They pick up their knees, change speed and stretch fully, working high and low. They recognise the difference between twisting and turning. Pair work with mirror images is well synchronised.
- Pupils jump, stretch, land and roll with due care and good style. They make narrow and wide jumps effectively. On apparatus they walk, balance, move over and under carefully; they jump with appropriate emphasis to improve their landing styles.
- Older pupils in KS2 work co-operatively in pairs during games lessons and have good passing skills, including chest and shoulder passes. They are quite agile and confident in moving round the yard and they exhibit good sportsmanship and

understand rules and play well as a team. They listen well and respond to instructions.

- They improve their performance well through practising their skills. Some demonstrate well in pairs. They twist and turn with jumps on the bench with due care and begin to perform sequences with increasing confidence.
- Older pupils in KS2 listen well to a recorded radio lesson to enable them to create lively sequences involving tiny jumps, coiling, springing and spiralling movements during individual, pair and small group work. They make effective contrasting movements such as tension/release, heavy/light, and gradual/sudden .
- Pupils at the end of the key stage realise that safety means good behaviour and show increasing control as they practise dance movements. They make reasonable efforts to sequence their body movements gracefully working in pairs and in juxtaposition.
- Pupils in KS2 take part in appropriate swimming and athletic activities and a residential stay.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings, although pupils seldom evaluate their own performances or those of others in order to encourage them to achieve higher standards.

## **8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection**

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

In order to enhance the quality of education provided and raise the educational standards attained, there is a need to:

- maintain the good standards achieved, and build upon existing achievements to secure higher standards where they were judged not to be good;

The school has succeeded in improving standards in all the NC subjects judged not to be good in the last inspection apart from history and geography where the evidence indicates standards are satisfactory.

- provide under-five pupils with a separate, secure, outdoor play area;

This issue has been addressed, but the area provided gives limited space for physical activities such as big toys and is in a storage area for four tall, heavy netball posts next to two demountable classrooms. Children in the early years have to use one of the school yards partitioned off with PE benches to use larger apparatus and big toys.

- provide under-five pupils with large toys for outdoor play;

Provision is now good, although children have to use large toys in the school yard partitioned off with PE benches.

- provide more time for specialist support staff to work with the younger pupils who have SEN;

This issue has been addressed adequately with a full time nursery nurse designated the SENCo. Although not a specialist qualified teacher, she carries out her responsibilities very well and along with the classroom assistants, gives sufficient time for younger pupils who have SEN.

- comply with statutory regulations with regard to recording attendance data;

Statutory regulations are now in place and are good.

- proceed with the plans that exist to improve the security arrangements in and around the school.

This is satisfactory, with CCTV cameras around the school and a locked coded front door in place. Adequate arrangements are taken to limit access to the public at the rear of the school building during school time.

## **8.2 Key Issues for Action**

The school needs to:

- Raise standards in the two foundation subjects judged satisfactory;
- Continue to develop strategies for the teaching of key skills across the curriculum;
- Explore ways to broaden the range of teaching strategies in order to produce challenging activities;
- Produce a more detailed scheme of work for design and technology;
- In conjunction with the LEA, continue to explore ways to resolve fully the health and safety issues identified in section 6.3 in the report and discussed with the governing body.

## APPENDIX A

Name of School	Our Lady and St Michael's V.A. Roman Catholic
School Type	Primary
Age-Range of Pupils	4 - 11
Address of School	14 Pen y Pound Abergavenny Monmouthshire
Post Code	NP7 5UD
Telephone Number	01873 735080

Head	Mr John Healy
Date of Appointment	January 1991
Chairman of Governors	Mr Tony Ring
Registered Inspector	Mr Phillip D. W. Edwards
Dates of Inspection	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2003

## APPENDIX B

<i>Number of Pupils in Each Year Group</i>								
Year Group	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of Pupils	25	30	31	43	31	34	35	229

<i>Total Number of Teachers</i>			
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time Equivalent (fte)
Number of Teachers	9	1	9.1

<i>Staffing Information</i>	
Pupil : Teacher (fte) Ratio	25.2 : 1
Average Class Size	28
Teacher (fte) : Class Ratio	1.14 : 1

<i>Percentage Attendance for Three Complete Terms Prior to the Inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School
Term 1	92.1	94.6	94	93
Term 2	94.8	93.5	93.6	94
Term 3	95.5	95.6	96.2	96

Number of Pupils Excluded during Twelve Months prior to Inspection	0
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## APPENDIX C

### NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2002

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2002			Number of Pupils in Y2: 39					
Percentage of Pupils at Each Level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	5	0	64	31	0
		National	0	4	13	62	21	0
ENGLISH: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	5	3	56	36	0
		National	0	4	13	54	29	0
	Task/Test	School						
		National	1	3	13	53	30	
ENGLISH: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	5	5	82	8	0
		National	0	5	13	70	12	0
	Task/Test	School						
		National	0	5	10	75	9	
ENGLISH: Speaking and Listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5	46	49	0
		National	0	3	11	63	23	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	3	3	54	41	0
		National	0	2	9	60	29	0
	Task/Test	School						
		National	0	2	6	56	36	
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5	44	51	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:	95%	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 28						
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	3	10	44	43	0
		National	0	0	3		0	1	5	16	45	29	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0			3	4	50	43	
		National	0	2	2	1			4	12	41	38	
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	3	11	42	44	0
		National	0	0	3		0	1	4	19	46	27	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0			0	14	50	36	
		National	0	2	1	1			4	19	43	30	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	0	14	43	43	
		National	0	0	3		0	0	3	13	49	33	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0			0	4	46	50	
		National	0	2	0				1	10	47	38	

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:	75%	In the School:	82%
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.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Record of Evidence Base of 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 headteacher, staff and governing body.
- 23 parents attended a meeting with two members of the inspection team.
- 113 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.
- 61 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 headteacher, 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 headteacher.
- Attendance and pupil records were inspected.
- Inspectors attended acts of collective worship.

## APPENDIX E

### Composition and Responsibilities of Inspection Team

Team Member	Subject Responsibilities	Aspect Responsibilities
Mr Phillip Edwards	Provision for Children Under Five English Welsh Information Technology 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 Teaching Quality of Self Evaluation and Planning for Improvement Leadership & Efficiency Progress Since Last Inspection Key Issues
Mrs Val Howells	Mathematics Science Design and Technology History Geography Art	Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs Curriculum Assessment, Recording and Reporting Staffing, Accommodation and learning Resources Key Issues
Mrs Janet Warr		Behaviour and Attitudes Attendance Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions Partnership with Industry Key Issues

The inspection team would like to thank the headteacher, staff, governors, parents and pupils of Our Lady and St Michael's VA Primary School for their kind hospitality, willing co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection period.