

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

**PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL
PARK CRESCENT
BARGOED
CAERPHILLY
CF81 8PN**

SCHOOL NUMBER: 676 / 2381

DATE OF INSPECTION: 27 - 29 APRIL 2004

BY

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REGISTERED INSPECTOR: W260/16410

DATE: 17th JUNE 2004

UNDER ESTYN CONTRACT NUMBER: T/207/03P

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE REPORT IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER :

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

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PART 2: THE INSPECTION SCHEDULE

1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

The school is situated in the town of Bargoed and is part of the Caerphilly LEA. Gilfach Fargoed Nursery, South Bargoed Infants and Y Graig Junior schools were amalgamated in September 2002 to become Park Primary School. The new school is housed in a former Secondary school building, which has been refurbished to the highest standards. There are 154 pupils on roll aged from three to eleven.

Approximately 21% of pupils are on the SEN register which is around the national and local average; four are formally statemented and are in mainstream classes. Almost all pupils live in the immediate locality, with the majority coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Approximately 60% are entitled to free school meals. Baseline assessment indicates that the majority of nursery and reception children achieve significantly below the expected national standard. Most come from English speaking homes and two families are Turkish.

The school has a mission statement and appropriate aims. The SDP contains a large number of targets for improvement, covering all subjects of the curriculum, as well as links with parents, training for governors and staff, SEN and building maintenance. Performance targets are set for individual progress through the year and for improving pupils' performance in the national tests.

Gilfach Fargoed Nursery was last inspected in June 1999, South Bargoed Infants in November 1998 and Y Graig Junior School in June 2000.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

The amalgamated Park Primary School has made progress in many important areas since the previous inspections at the separate schools. There are many good aspects to its work and pupils, overall, make satisfactory progress.

The quality of the educational provision for the under-fives, taken overall, is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards in the nursery and reception classes in the six areas of learning are as follows:

Nursery

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

Reception

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

- Standards of achievement are satisfactory or better in around 98% of all the lessons observed; in about 70% they are good.
- Standards in the different subjects are as follows:

	KS1	KS2
English:	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Speaking	Good	Good
Listening	Good	Good
Reading	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Writing	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Good	Good
Welsh second language	Good	Good
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
History	Good	Good
Geography	Good	Good
Art	Good	Good
Music	Good	Good
Physical education	Good	Good
Religious education	Good	Good

- In NC assessments for KS1 in 2003 pupils performed slightly below LEA and national levels in English, mathematics and science. 72% of pupils attained level two or above in English, 72% achieved this in mathematics. In science, however, 81% achieved level two or above.

- In NC tests for KS2 in 2003 pupils performed below LEA and national levels in English, mathematics and science. 44% of pupils attained level four or above in English, whilst 64% achieved this in mathematics. In science, however, 72% achieved level four or above.
- Standards of achievement in the key skills of speaking, writing, numeracy and ICT are satisfactory in both key stages. In listening and reading they are good.
- Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good; Their spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils' response to the provision is good.
- The school has a mission statement and clearly sets out its vision and aims. It successfully promotes a warm, friendly, caring, family atmosphere. There is a strong community spirit and the quality of relationships is good.
- Standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently good. In a relatively short time pupils and staff have settled well and formed a caring and supportive community. Pupils are valued and work well with adults in a purposeful atmosphere.
- The level of pupils' attendance is satisfactory. At 91% (excluding the nursery) the average rate is below the LEA and all Wales averages. Although attendance in the reception class and KS1 is generally below 90%, pupils in KS2 frequently achieve around 94%. Absences are caused mainly through illness, but parents taking family holidays in term time and frequent short absences affect the overall rate. Although the school reminds parents of the detrimental effects of lateness and non-attendance on their children's education some are slow to respond.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in around 97% of the lessons observed. In about 45% it is good and in approximately 5% it is very good. However, there are shortcomings in both key stages.
- Teachers generally prepare lessons well and ensure that appropriate learning materials and resources are ready and available for pupils. Learning objectives, however, are not always clearly outlined at the beginning of lessons. Throughout the school, teachers have a sound knowledge of the NC. They attend appropriate training courses, co-operate well together as a team and work hard in a supportive and professional environment.
- Support staff know their roles well and work efficiently and conscientiously alongside the teachers; the quality of their support is good.
- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good overall. Assessment procedures are clearly identified in a whole-school policy; this provides effective guidelines for evaluating pupils' progress. Opportunities for assessment are identified in most schemes of work and in teachers' planning.
- The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. For the under-fives it appropriately promotes the Desirable Outcomes; a broad range of relevant and interesting learning experiences is provided in the nursery and reception classes. In both key stages the curriculum is broad and relevant. There are well considered

policies and schemes of work for all subjects of the NC and religious education; this framework provides a good basis for planning lessons and ensures clear progression. There is a good emphasis on the cwricwlwm Cymreig across the school.

- Support and guidance given to pupils is good; there is a real caring ethos in the school. Appropriate policies and procedures have been agreed between the head and the GB, including sex education, health education and racial equality. The school gives due regard to equal opportunities.
- The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their concerns and are confident in the knowledge that these will be dealt with promptly and sympathetically. The school places a high priority on involving all pupils in the activities taking place in the school; those with SEN are fully integrated into school life.
- The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good and in line with the CoP.
- The quality of partnership with parents, schools and other institutions is good. The partnership with the community is very good and has a positive impact on the quality of the pupils' learning.
- The quality of the partnership with industry is good. The head is the designated liaison officer and three teachers have benefited from industrial placements; one has been involved in developing a research pack.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory. The school has appropriate procedures to evaluate pupils' attainment. The recently appointed head regularly monitors teachers' planning and subject co-ordinators have undertaken some monitoring and evaluation but systems are not yet sufficiently rigorous in assuring the consistent impact of initiatives across the school. The SDP sets a wide-ranging agenda and the areas identified are wholly appropriate to the school's needs.
- Leadership and efficiency are good. The head provides very effective leadership and gives clear direction to the work of the school. An enthusiastic and hard working 'acting' deputy ably assists the head.
- The GB is well informed and actively involved in the life of the school. It is well led by its chairperson. Members are supportive and clear in their determination to effect improvements.
- Good use is made of staffing and learning resources. The school has an adequate complement of teachers for the number of pupils on roll; they provide a satisfactory range of skills and experience. All are provided with job descriptions and have participated in the first cycle of performance management.
- Day to day routines operate very effectively; the head is ably supported by an efficient school secretary. The current budget is well managed and controlled by the head and approved through the GB.

- The school has made good progress in addressing many of the key issues from the last inspection.
- The school gives good value for money.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Standards of achievement are satisfactory or better in around 98% of all the lessons observed; in about 70% they are good.

- Standards achieved in the six areas of learning are good in the nursery. In the reception they are good in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development and are satisfactory in language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development.
- In both key stages standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics are satisfactory; in science they are good.
- In the foundation subjects, standards in KS1 in Welsh second language, geography, art, music and physical education are good. In design and technology and information technology they are satisfactory. In religious education standards are good.
- In KS2 standards are good in Welsh second language, history, geography, art, music and physical education. In design and technology and information technology they are satisfactory. In religious education standards are good.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

Standards of achievement in the key skills of speaking, writing, numeracy and ICT are satisfactory in both key stages. In listening and reading they are good.

- The school has mapped the progressive development of the key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum.
- Children under five make satisfactory progress in developing the early skills of literacy and numeracy. They know how books work and count with increasing accuracy.
- In both key stages, teachers are good role models and pupils contribute to whole-class discussions. Speaking skills, however, are not consistently developed through role play or structured discussions.

- Where teaching engages pupils' interest, they listen attentively and often show a good understanding of what they have heard. Similarly, when opportunities are provided for them to work in small groups, they listen actively to their peers.
- A suitable range of good literature together with regular group and class reading times, has a positive effect on standards. Pupils in Y4, Y5 and Y6 learn and read a range of poetry and prose with good expression.
- In both key stages, pupils learn the conventions of writing. In KS1, they develop their skills satisfactorily and by the end of KS2, they learn to plan and structure their writing for a range of purposes. However, they do not make enough use of their reading and writing skills to extend their learning across the curriculum.
- In KS1 and lower KS2, pupils are beginning to use number patterns and relationships to make calculations in a range of subjects. Older pupils in KS2 gain confidence in using mental skills to solve problems. However, the use of numeracy to solve problems and present information in other subjects is limited. There is insufficient use of tables, spreadsheets and graphs, for example in science.
- Pupils begin to learn the skills of operating particular ICT programs but do not build on these abilities and develop their learning in other subjects. For instance, relatively little use is made of the computer for research work, to enhance writing in English and Welsh, to sharpen numeracy skills or to present data in various forms, for example, in science and geography.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good; their spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils' response to the provision is good.

- The school has a mission statement and clearly sets out its vision and aims.
- The school successfully promotes a warm, friendly, caring, family atmosphere. There is a strong community spirit and the quality of relationships is good.
- Assemblies are used effectively for celebrating success and to impart information; they provide the opportunity to reinforce moral values and to develop social awareness. Celebration of the Welsh language and culture is also an important feature. Music, singing and the use of visiting speakers are used well to enhance these joyous and thoughtful occasions.
- The caring ethos of the school positively encourages respect for self, others and the environment. Pupils display a strong awareness of the needs of others and enjoy participating in fund raising activities for those less fortunate than themselves.

- Pupils are encouraged to develop and display a good sense of right and wrong and to be honest and truthful. This is apparent in informal contacts they have around the school and in more formally structured lessons in PSE.
- The school actively promotes positive values and attitudes. Older pupils take responsibility for a few initiatives.
- The school celebrates personal achievements both academic and non-academic with its comprehensive credit system.
- The curriculum successfully reflects the language, culture and heritage of Wales. Opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures are provided successfully within religious education but insufficient emphasis is given to teaching about cultural diversity through other subjects such as history, geography, art and music.
- A good range of interesting extra curricular activities successfully enhances pupils' social development.
- The school has a clear equal opportunities policy which promotes racial equality through its commitment towards promoting the self-esteem of all pupils.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently good.

- In a relatively short time pupils and staff have settled well and formed a caring and supportive community. Pupils are valued and work well with adults in a purposeful atmosphere.
- The foundations for good behaviour are effectively laid in the nursery. Very young children learn how to relate to one another and behave well. They happily leave their parents and settle quickly into routines.
- All staff know pupils and their parents very well and have high expectations of their behaviour: relationships between pupils and adults are good. All adults are consistent in their implementation of routines and pupils know what is expected of them. The head's knowledge of individual pupils is impressive and pupils respond to her very well.
- Pupils enjoy school and are keen to do well; motivation and behaviour in the classroom are good. During lessons they listen well, are involved and show enthusiasm for their work. They settle quickly and willingly to tasks and sustain good levels of concentration and perseverance.
- Pupils collaborate and support each other well when working in groups. For example during a religious education lesson groups of pupils in Y4 and Y5 undertake impromptu role play sensibly and the youngest in KS1 learn to evaluate their peers performance in dance.

- Pupils behave maturely: they are friendly and show consideration to each other, staff and visitors. A number in each class have responsibilities appropriate to their age; they assist teachers with tasks and undertake their duties sensibly. Class 'buddies' support their colleagues well.
- Pupils know the school routines and move sensibly under supervision in and around the buildings. Their behaviour during whole school assemblies is exemplary. They enter the hall quietly and take up their places quickly. They talk naturally and freely to adults; they are quick to say they appreciate and value their new school.
- Schemes are in place to improve and maintain behaviour. Pupils respond well to the school and classroom rules they help to draw up and the reward system particularly the class credit scheme. Their achievements are celebrated in class and during whole school praise assemblies.
- Pupils know and understand the rules; they feel they are treated fairly and that their efforts are valued. Parents are happy with the standards of behaviour; they support the behaviour policy and feel that pupils play well together in and out of school. The majority have signed the home/ school agreement.
- The whole school positive behaviour management policy and the separate anti bullying policy provide sound guidance. Pupils are confident in approaching adults with worries and concerns.
- Trained midday supervisors contribute positively to the maintenance of good behaviour during the lunch period; they have a role in the reward system. Supervision in the dining hall and playgrounds is good; this is a valuable social time for pupils and younger ones willingly join in organised playground games.

4.3 Attendance

The level of pupils' attendance is satisfactory.

- At 91% (excluding the nursery) the average rate of attendance is below the LEA and all-Wales averages.
- Although attendance in the reception class and KS1 is generally below 90% pupils in KS2 frequently achieve around 94 percent. Absences are caused mainly through illness but parents taking family holidays in term time and frequent short absences affect the overall rate. Although the school reminds parents of the detrimental effects of lateness and non-attendance on their children's education some are slow to respond.
- The school takes a "better late than never" approach to the small number of pupils who arrive late at the start of the day; they are often responsible for getting themselves and their siblings to school. Individual lessons and sessions start on time.

- Targets are set and incentives are in place to improve attendance. Pupils with perfect or almost 100% attendance and those who improve receive certificates at the end of each term. There is evidence that about a fifth of pupils achieved this accolade in the last three terms.
- Procedures are in place to monitor and follow up absences; the school works closely with the EWO. Registers are taken formally at the start of each session but there are inconsistencies in marking and as such registers do not fully meet the requirements of Circular 3/99.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in around 97% of the lessons observed. In about 45% it is good and in approximately 5% it is very good. However, there are shortcomings in both key stages.

- Teaching in the nursery class is well focused, relevant and lively. There is good emphasis on developing children's oracy skills and the two teacher's aides make a positive contribution. Teaching in the mixed age group class is good overall.
- Some lesson plans are ineffective in meeting the Desirable Learning Objectives for the Under Fives, in the mixed age class for reception children.
- Teachers generally prepare lessons well and ensure that appropriate learning materials and resources are ready and available for pupils. Learning objectives, however, are not always clearly outlined at the beginning of lessons.
- A limited variety of teaching strategies is used, although there are examples of consistently good practice across the school. Much of the work is teacher directed and there are limited opportunities for pupils to work independently and to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers know pupils well and relationships are very positive. However, the quality of diagnostic feedback to pupils is variable. In the best practice teachers' demands for high expectations of all pupils, the need for accurate and neat written work and stress the importance of pupils developing critical thinking and creativity.
- Good short term planning impacts positively on teaching and in developing pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Planning, however, lacks consistency and does not always demonstrate learning objectives and outcomes.
- Throughout the school, teachers have a sound knowledge of the NC. They attend appropriate training courses, work well together as a team and work hard in a supportive and professional environment.

- Support staff know their roles well and work efficiently and conscientiously alongside teachers; the quality of their support is good.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

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

- Assessment procedures are clearly identified in a whole school policy; this provides effective guidelines for evaluating pupils' progress. Opportunities for assessment are identified in most schemes of work and teachers' planning.
- The school complies with the statutory guidelines for NC assessment and for recording the progress of pupils including those with SEN. NC Assessment data are analysed and achievable targets are set. The early years baseline assessments are used to inform future planning and throughout the school a range of standardised tests are administered and the results used for diagnostic and target setting purposes.
- Annual reports, which comply with statutory requirements, are issued to parents in the summer term. Parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress following the issue of these reports and in the autumn term.
- Subject portfolios of work are in the early stages of development and have yet to be fully introduced in all subjects.
- Moderation of pupils' work is at an early stage of development. An appropriate start has been made in the core subjects and in KS1. This has yet to be developed into a whole school initiative of useful levelled and annotated records to help teachers assess standards of achievement and to show progression throughout the school in all subjects.
- The school has a clear marking policy. Comments by teachers are encouraging and supportive, however, areas needing improvement are not always identified.

5.3 Curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum for the under-fives appropriately promotes the Desirable Outcomes; a broad range of relevant and interesting learning experiences is provided in the nursery and reception classes.
- In both key stages the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. There are well considered policies and schemes of work for all subjects of the NC and religious education. This framework provides a good basis for planning lessons and ensures clear progression. However, there is variation in the amount of detail that is provided in the short and medium term planning from class to class.

- The planned allocation of time to subjects is balanced, but the emphasis given to some foundation subjects and religious education varies across KS2. Furthermore, there is only limited evidence in pupils' previous work in some classes to show topics have been adequately covered.
- There is strong emphasis on English and mathematics. Regular class and group reading sessions and the good attention given to mental work have a positive impact on standards.
- The arrangements for planning for key skills are well developed.
- There is a good emphasis on the Cwricwlwm Cymreig across the school.
- The overall effectiveness of the curriculum is reduced where investigative and research skills are not fully developed, for example in mathematics and science and scope and depth of pupils' studies are limited where topics are not covered in sufficient detail.
- Where homework is regularly set this has a positive impact on standards.
- There are good arrangements for pupils' PSE, including appropriate attention to issues of citizenship, in line with ACCAC guidelines. The school is socially inclusive with all pupils strongly encouraged to play a full part in school life.
- There is good provision to enhance the curriculum through educational visits and visitors to the school as well as through a good range of extra curricular club activities.
- In general the school successfully promotes equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum, but sometimes the needs of pupils of differing abilities are not adequately catered for and their work does not always fully reflect their capabilities.
- There are no pupils for whom the NC is modified.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

Support and guidance given to pupils is good.

- There is a real caring ethos in the school.
- Appropriate policies and procedures have been agreed between the head and the GB, including sex education, health education and racial equality.
- The school gives due regard to equal opportunities.
- Good liaison with the school nurse and visits from the police and fire service make a significant contribution to the health and safety of pupils.

- Arrangements for child protection conform to statutory requirements; the head is the designated member of staff responsible.
- Appropriate procedures are in place for the administration and supervision of medicines to pupils.
- Teachers and support staff know and care for pupils well. The headteacher, staff and governors work together effectively to provide very good support for all pupils.
- The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their concerns and are confident in the knowledge that these will be dealt with promptly and sympathetically.
- The school places a high priority on involving all pupils in the activities taking place in the school; those with SEN are fully integrated into school life.
- The school's PSE policy and scheme of work are an integral part of the pupils' support and guidance programme. A drug and alcohol abuse policy is in place and good cross-curricular links between physical education, science and PSE help ensure that pupils have a knowledge and understanding of topics such as personal care, hygiene and healthy eating.
- First aid equipment is available throughout the school and several members of staff have been trained. Records of accidents are maintained and there are details of individual pupil's medical needs. Fire drills are held on a regular basis and there are clear guidelines outlining procedures for the safe evacuation of the building in the event of a fire.
- The main entrances to the school have a controlled access system to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN

The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good.

- Thirty-six pupils (21%) are identified by the school as requiring SEN support. Sixteen are on School Action and sixteen are on School Action Plus; a further four have a statement. All are integrated within mainstream classes and have full access to the NC.
- The school's policy for pupils with SEN is in accordance with the CoP and in line with government guidelines. The relevant documentation is informative and supportive.
- Arrangements are in place for the early identification of pupils with SEN; support systems and procedures are very effectively managed by the SENCO, who maintains close liaison with all class teachers, support staff and non-teaching staff.

- Good use is made of information gained from a baseline assessment to plan appropriate learning activities for the children under five. Children with SEN are well supported.
- IEPs are drawn up by the support teacher in cooperation with class teachers and include appropriate learning aims that are regularly reviewed. Detailed records of stated pupils' progress are kept. Pupils with SEN have well designed IEPs with specific targets and these are regularly monitored in accordance with pupils' progress.
- The 0.5 teacher, with responsibility for pupils with SEN, provides very good support through both the withdrawal of pupils, and through in-class help.
- Parents of pupils with SEN are informed of their child's progress and are invited to the school for review meetings.
- The GB member with designated responsibility for SEN is enthusiastic and liaises closely with the SENCO, and monitors provision efficiently.
- Effective liaison is also maintained with external support agencies.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

The quality of the partnership with parents, schools and other institutions is good. The partnership with the community is very good and has a positive impact on the quality of the pupils' learning.

- The quality of written information for parents is good. Letters and other communications, both formal and informal, keep parents informed about activities and events. The prospectus and GB annual report to parents provide valuable information about the school but there are a small number of omissions in both documents and so they do not fully meet the requirements of Circulars 14/01 and 15/01.
- There is good daily informal contact between parents and teachers particularly in the early years.
- The head works hard to foster good relations with parents with a good measure of success. The PTA and the Helping Hands group are very active; they organise fundraising and social events that are family oriented and provide generous financial support.
- A significant number of adults, including GB members, make very positive contributions to the life of the school and to the standards pupils achieve. They regularly assist teachers in the classrooms; a small number provide support on a daily basis. Others help by, for example, making folk dance costumes.

- The school has very good links with the community. Pupils are involved in projects such as the Woodland Park bulb planting initiative. They go out into the community to entertain; for example, the choir sings to residents at the nearby nursing home and provides a musical presentation at the mayoral inauguration service. The folk dance group takes part in the annual day of dance. Concerts and celebrations are open to invited members of the community and are well attended.
- Pupils' enhance key skills through working with theatre groups and school based discovery workshops. They learn research skills and work with authors at the local library. Children in the early years develop their creative and dance skills through visits to the Fairy Castle.
- There are close links with the church. The clergy lead assemblies and pupils visit the church and use it for celebrations, such as the annual carol service and harvest festivals.
- There are good links with surrounding primary schools and the receiving secondary school. The schools share facilities and events such as theatre company visits, and pupils are involved in inter- school competitions.
- Transition arrangements with the receiving secondary school are very well established. Pupils are involved in cross-phase projects in ICT and science, for example.
- Home/school transition arrangements for children in the nursery are well planned and implemented. Children settle quickly into routines at a very young age.
- The school is in partnership with an initial teacher training university and provides good quality training and work experience for student teachers. The head is a trained student mentor. There are also good links with surrounding colleges of further education; the school provides work experience for child care and comprehensive students.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

The quality of the partnership with industry is good.

- The school's statement on links with industry is included in the community links policy. The head is the designated liaison officer and three teachers have benefited from industrial placements; one has been involved in developing a research pack.
- Visits and visitors help to raise awareness of the world of work both past and present. Pupils benefit from working with a small number of professionals, such as the police liaison and road safety officers, professional sports coaches and a dentist. Their creative and literacy skills are enhanced through their involvement in commercially sponsored competitions, such as designing a Christmas card and National Poetry day.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

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

- The school has appropriate procedures to evaluate pupils' attainment. The recently appointed head regularly monitors teachers' planning and subject co-ordinators have undertaken some monitoring and evaluation. The school's systems accurately identify strengths and shortcomings in provision.
- The SDP sets a wide-ranging agenda and the areas identified are wholly appropriate to the school's needs.
- The head and GB are aware that there is a need to have an agreed ethos for the new school.
- The school sets detailed appropriate targets for improvement to July 2004 and takes into account the outcome of the LEA benchmarking data, baseline assessments and standardised tests.
- Activities are planned to have consistent assessment, target setting and teaching practices, which it considers to be particularly important since the three former schools approaches and expectations.
- The school's evaluation of improvements since the previous inspections for the three former schools identifies many improvements in provision but monitoring and evaluation systems are not yet sufficiently rigorous to assure the consistent impact of initiatives across the school.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

Leadership and efficiency are good.

- The head provides very effective leadership and gives clear direction to the work of the school. An enthusiastic and hard working 'acting' deputy ably assists the head.
- The head and GB have developed an appropriate mission for the school with specific aims and broad objectives. There is a very positive community ethos in the school, based on sound values, which are conducive to effective teaching.
- The role of the SMT is developing well and much has been achieved in a short space of time to unite the three schools into one cohesive unit.
- The GB is well informed and actively involved in the life of the school. It is well led by its chairperson. Members are supportive and clear in their determination to effect improvements.

- Day to day routines operate very effectively; the head is ably supported by an efficient school secretary.
- The current budget is well managed; it is controlled by the head and approved through the GB.
- The school gives good value for money.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

Good use is made of staffing and learning resources.

- The school has an adequate complement of teachers for the number of pupils on roll and they provide the school with a satisfactory range of skills and experience. All are provided with job descriptions and have participated in the first cycle of performance management.
- The teacher for pupils with SEN provides very good support, but the time she has available for every pupil with a need is limited.
- Good arrangements have been made for the professional development of staff as a result of performance reviews; training is linked to the whole needs of the school.
- Non-teaching staff carry out their duties efficiently and effectively.
- Since the amalgamation of the former nursery, infant and junior schools a year ago, much effort has been made to form the new school into a cohesive primary unit. It is not possible, however, to access the infant and junior buildings without going outside. This does not aid the amalgamation process and causes great difficulty in inclement weather, as the hall cannot be accessed for collective worship and physical education.
- The school building is kept clean by the caretaker and team of cleaners.
- The school is generally well resourced with books and apparatus well matched to curricular needs. Reading books are plentiful and carefully graded so that pupils can select from a very wide range.
- The school library in the junior school is a good room and well situated. The school is building up its stock of library of books and the space is ideal for independent curriculum research.
- The school has good play areas that provide for secure outdoor play all through the year. There is a secure nursery play area.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

The quality of the educational provision for the under-fives, taken overall, is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Twenty-six nursery age children attend the nursery class full time. Six nursery age children attend in the afternoon only. Eleven reception age children attend the mixed reception and Y1 class full time.

Nursery

Language, literacy and communication skills

Standards are good.

Good features

- Most children listen attentively and enjoy a range of stimulating activities, in which they experience challenge and opportunity. They write their names using plastic letters and can overwrite demonstrating good pencil control. They use emergent writing in the role play area.
- Children respond to simple commands in Welsh and join in enthusiastically with Welsh action songs and rhymes.
- Children respond positively to a variety of different sounds played on a tape. They listen with interest to a visiting speaker.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

Personal and social development

Standards are good.

Good features

- Most children settle happily in school and relate well to adults. The majority take part in role play and begin to show imagination and enthusiasm.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

Mathematical development

Standards are good.

Good features

- Children count forwards and backwards to ten and sort objects into groups according to colour. They begin to develop positional vocabulary. They become familiar with coins and are able to identify them. They are aware of pattern and use shapes to draw pictures.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Standards are good.

Good features

- Children develop confidence in using the listening stations and the computer. They know their own address and can describe their house. They understand the role of the postman and the traffic patrol lady and talk about them with increasing confidence. They know the names of farm animals and their young and know how to plant seeds and that plants need water and sun to grow.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

Creative development

Standards are good.

Good features

- Children begin to appreciate the work of others. They explore and experiment with a variety of media. They can glue and paste different materials to make an attractive collage. Their cutting and threading skills are developing well and they handle tools and malleable materials safely. They enjoy making choices whilst mixing water and paint. They successfully make clay plaques and imaginatively paint faces and decorate them with glitter.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

Physical development

Standards are good.

Good features

- Children use sand, water and construction toys with increasing confidence and enjoy regular opportunities to play on large apparatus.
- In dance lessons children show confidence through teacher led activities introducing space well and can make set formations and patterns by moving in and out.
- Children listen well to music and respond using appropriate actions. They sing enthusiastically and in tune and keep a steady beat. They experiment with a variety of instruments to make interesting sounds.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

Reception

Language, literacy and communication skills

Standards are satisfactory.

Good features

- Children recognise familiar words and have a satisfactory knowledge of letters and sounds. They handle books well and enjoy pictures and words. They copy and continue with more complex writing patterns and can write their own name. Most can copy a sentence with appropriate spacing.
- The use of incidental Welsh is a strong feature. Children confidently ask and answer questions about their health. In role play situations they talk about simple items of food and have good pronunciation. They can count to ten in their second language.

Shortcomings

- Many children have limited vocabulary and this limits progress in language development.
- In language sessions the children are not always well supported in the mixed age class for reception children.

Personal and social development

Standards are good.

Good features

- Children treat one another and their environment with care and concern. They develop the ability to keep on task and work independently.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

Mathematical development

Standards are satisfactory.

Good features

- Children can repeat numbers up to ten and back again. They understand the concept of buying and selling and giving change. They recognise 1p, 2p and 5p coins and are able to count 1p less than, with amounts up to 10p.

Shortcomings

- Many children have limited vocabulary and this limits progress in mathematical development.
- In mathematics sessions the children are not always well supported in the mixed age class for reception children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Standards are good.

Good features

- Children confidently talk about a walk in the locality. They successfully sort photographs of houses into very old, old and new. A few use a word processing package to write a simple sentence about the houses.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

Creative development

Standards are good.

Good features

- Children confidently explore materials and their use. They practise painting, cutting, sticking and decorating and successfully make teddies. They show willingness, appropriate behaviour and enjoyment when participating in musical activities.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

Physical development

Standards are good.

Good features

- Children respond to instructions and sounds and can vary their pace. They are able to put a series of actions together. They develop good spacial awareness, poise and balance.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

English

Standard are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features.

- Listening skills are well developed throughout the school. Pupils are generally attentive in lessons, especially when the pace is appropriate and the content well planned. They respond promptly to questions and most maintain a satisfactory level of concentration.
- Lower KS1 pupils begin to use their imagination when writing in sentences. Their vocabulary develops well aided by role play, for example, setting up 'Park Opticians'.
- KS1 pupils further their language development by distinguishing between similar sounds. Work in the main is suitably differentiated.
- Pupils in both key stages use a structured scheme to develop their individual reading; overall they make good progress.

- KS1 pupils are able to read aloud using a big book, and begin to develop age appropriate language skills.
- KS2 pupils show a good appreciation of poetry and are able to recall many poems committed to memory, for example 'Days' by Phillip Larkin.
- KS2 pupils act out role play situations from a given text when developing writing skills.
- KS2 pupils with SEN design book covers and respond well to questions posed, eagerly offering opinions.
- Older KS2 pupils focus on authors' writing techniques. Their written work is becomes increasingly more accurate in terms of spelling and punctuation.

Shortcomings

- Insufficient use is made of ICT for reading and writing in different forms.
- Presentation and handwriting is variable in both key stages; Pupils do not develop a cursive style sufficiently early.
- Pupils' creative writing is underdeveloped in both key stages.

Mathematics

Standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1 pupils make satisfactory progress in understanding number and place value. They are able to count on and back using a 100 square. They are able to find half way numbers for given pairs, for example between 200 and 300. They can work out the cost of three things using coins and pounds. They recognise halves and quarters and can find the fraction of a simple number.
- Younger pupils in KS1 use everyday language to describe features of familiar two and three dimensional shapes. They suggest suitable non-standard units and measuring equipment to estimate and then measure a length, mass or capacity. They can explain a simple block graph and a Carroll diagram.
- Older pupils use the mathematical names for common two and three dimensional shapes; they sort shapes and describe some of their features. They estimate, measure and compare masses and lengths suggesting suitable units and equipment for such measurements. They use mathematical vocabulary to describe position, direction and movement.

- In KS2 younger pupils can say and write the time using minutes past and minutes to; the more able pupils can match digital times to these on a clock with hands and sensibly arrange them in order throughout the day. They use a software package to reinforce their learning.
- Pupils in the middle of the key stage can order a set of four digit numbers and write them in figures such as 'four thousand and thirty-one'. They round three digit numbers to the nearest 10 or 100 and a sum of money to the nearest pound. They find the difference mentally by counting up from the smaller to the larger number.
- More able pupils in KS2 recognise decimals and percentages and find simple percentages of a number or a sum of money. They use negative numbers in their work on temperature. They can change metres to centimetres, a sum of money from pounds to pence and a mass from kilograms to grams.
- Pupils in upper KS2 work out the area of an irregular shape. They draw a rectangular shape that is the same or nearly the same as their irregular shape. They understand that different shapes can have the same area. More able pupils notice a pattern emerging between the size of certain rectangles compared with the size of certain squares. They recognise and draw acute, obtuse and right angles.
- By the end of the key stage most pupils can explain the value of each digit in a number with six or more digits and write in figures numbers like two million, fifty six thousand and sixty. They can order a set of decimals with one or two decimal places. They use a written method to add or subtract decimals up to two places and explain it and check by approximating.
- Most pupils by the end of KS2 can recognise parallel and perpendicular lines and properties of rectangles. They can classify polygons and know the difference between regular and irregular ones. They successfully make nets to create polyhedrons.
- Pupils in KS2 understand the concept of reflecting shapes and lines of symmetry. They use Logo to create simple shapes.

Shortcomings

- In KS1 progress in number work slows when pupils are insufficiently aware of number patterns and relationships.
- In KS1 pupils use and understand a limited range of mathematical terms, such as those associated with investigation of shape and measure.
- In lower KS2 work in space and shape and handling data is underdeveloped.
- In the middle of KS2 work is not always planned for the wide range of abilities in a class and this slows the progress of certain groups of pupils.

Science

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good Features

- Pupils have a good background knowledge across the different ATs of the NC.
- Pupils make good progress in their use of scientific terms and language when observing and investigating.
- Pupils in both key stages predict their results and evaluate findings. They have a good understanding of a fair test.
- Upper KS1 and lower KS2 pupils are able to name the basic parts of a flowering plant and understand their functions; they are able to complete detailed drawings of the flower and label the parts.
- KS1 pupils investigate materials used to build houses and examine their properties.
- KS2 pupils investigate whether or not people with dark eyes have better vision than those with light coloured eyes. They are able to explain orally their findings and to make appropriate conclusions to their experiments.
- With respect to scientific enquiry across both key stages, pupils work well with a partner or in small group situations; they observe test protocols properly and are aware of the scientific processes of prediction and evaluation. They generally undertake scientific investigations with care, giving appropriate importance to completing their work.
- Upper KS2 pupils recall basic facts about forces and that they act in particular directions. They further understand that friction is a force, which slows moving objects by resisting movement.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, but occasionally, work is not challenging enough, with research skills being limited to the text given.

Welsh second language

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning Welsh. They listen well, both to their teachers and to each other.

- Younger pupils in KS1 know the names of simple food items and can use simple weather terms. They can ask and answer simple questions.
- Older pupils in the key stage can read and answer questions relating to their health. They sensibly take part in role play using this vocabulary. They have good pronunciation. They write complete sentences to match the relevant pictures.
- Younger pupils in KS2 confidently ask and answer questions using sentence patterns previously learnt. They are able to ask and answer questions in the present tense. They use the affirmative and negative. They know the names of a wide range of animals. They use ICT packages to reinforce their learning.
- Older pupils in the key stage are comfortable with the language. They are able to understand a wide range of sentences in Welsh. They compose their own questions and ask and answer in pairs. They recite Welsh poetry and have good pronunciation. They describe a variety of characters using appropriate vocabulary.
- By the end of the key stage pupils use the affirmative and the negative and the present and past tense. They read with good pronunciation and expression from books that are appropriate for their age and ability.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

Design and technology

Standards are satisfactory in both key stages. No lessons were observed in Y4, Y5 and Y6 during the inspection.

Good features

- In KS1 the youngest pupils make teddy bears; they successfully use different patterns and textures.
- Pupils in the mixed KS1 class make tube pencil cases. Younger ones use non-standard measures to measure and cut their template; older pupils use standard measures. They all use scissors correctly and cut out the shapes neatly. They sensibly use a graphics package to design the pattern for their fabric.
- KS1 pupils make model vehicles and are aware of the need to plan and design their work before they begin the making process. They select wheels and axles from a variety of materials. They successfully evaluate their work.
- Y3 pupils successfully design and make finger puppets and glove puppets using an appropriate range of materials.
- Y3 successfully complete a fruit evaluation sheet noting the taste, texture and appearance and their preference of fruit. They sensibly write a specification with

the correct amounts of fruit. They watch carefully how to prepare the fruit and decide on a way to attractively present it.

- Pupils in Y4 and Y5 make musical instruments. They plan and design their work before they begin the making process. They evaluate their products well.
- Y6 pupils take part in a transition graphics unit with the high school. They pay due regard to freehand sketching, controlled lines, lettering, one point perspective drawing, shading and monograms.

Shortcomings

- Pupils in some classes in both key stages do not make a wide enough range of products or extend the range of tools they work with. Consequently, there is variable progression in the acquisition and use of skills throughout the age range.
- The use of ICT within this subject is in the early stages of development.

Information technology

Standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Y1 pupils select a suitable logo for road safety from a selection within a KS1 computer program.
- Y1 pupils develop a number of basic skills, such as executing program commands, using the mouse and pointer and operating a number of facilities on the toolbar such as the airbrush, the spray and the pen.
- Y2 pupils develop skills in word processing; with help they are able to save and print their work.
- Younger KS2 pupils improve their information technology capability in their word processed writing, for example, by using a range of fonts and styles of text in their letters. They use computers to combine text and images.
- Y2 pupils draw themselves using electronic imaging software and creating faces using a variety of shapes and painting tools to good effect.
- As part of a science investigation KS2 pupils enter information into a prepared table in a simple graphs program and sort according to one criteria. They produce a bar graph of the results.
- Pupils in KS2 are encouraged to use computers to support their research in geography, for example by using digital encyclopaedias on multimedia CD-ROMS.

- In the middle and end of KS2 pupils continue to develop their skills in word processing by writing stories and poems.
- KS2 pupils continue to use electronic imaging software in art to create water pictures.

Shortcomings

- In KS1 pupils do not sufficiently develop the skills of computer modelling through the use of simulation programs. They use a limited range of software and this slows progress.
- In KS2 pupils do not consistently build on their previous knowledge and skills. There is little evidence of continuity and progression in learning across age groups or of pupils regularly using a sufficient range of applications.
- In some classes in the key stage the internet is used to search for information that is far above their age and ability level.
- Pupils have not used electronic mail to send and receive information.

History

Standards are good in both key stages.

- Pupils develop an awareness of chronology and understand what is meant by the present and the past. Timelines are used to good effect in most classes.
- Pupils are able to compare and contrast their own lives with those of people who lived in earlier times. They develop a good knowledge of stories from the past, including those from Welsh History.
- KS1 pupils are able to refer to pictures taken of houses in the locality and can sort them into very old, old and new.
- KS1 pupils begin to have a good understanding of changes overtime. They look at photographs and artefacts concerning the school now and contrast these with those of the past. They are able to ask pertinent questions to a visiting governor who described school days fifty years ago.
- Pupils in KS2 understand the use of primary and secondary sources to study the past.
- KS2 pupils look at historical evidence from, for example, Tudor and Stuart times and World War Two; they begin to understand the difference between fact, opinion and propaganda.
- KS2 pupils are able to gather evidence from a census form about changes of occupation and living conditions in the Rhondda between 1841 and 1881.

- A range of educational visits to support pupils' learning are undertaken, to such places as the Museum of Welsh Life and Llancaiach Fawr. These are used to enhance pupils' learning in historical topics.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, but pupils' independent research skills are underdeveloped and there is inconsistent use of information technology to support pupils learning.

Geography

Only two lessons were observed in geography; however, these, plus evidence from pupils' work indicate that the standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- The study of the locality is a good feature of the work in both key stages.
- KS1 pupils' mapping skills develop through focused classroom based activities enhanced through fieldwork in the immediate locality, for example, Bargoed Park and Woodland Park.
- KS1 pupils are able to collect and record information and communicate ideas through pictures, speaking and writing.
- KS2 pupils further their geographical enquiry skills by studying the local area and the contrasting area of Porthcawl.
- Upper KS2 pupils also study the local area and Wales as a part of the United Kingdom.
- Upper KS2 pupils study the climate including deserts, cold climates and the Amazon rain forests. They can design a questionnaire for both pupils and parents to seek views on 'protecting the environment'.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings but mapping skills are not always successfully developed throughout KS2.

Art

Standards in art are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in Y1 have a secure and developing knowledge and understanding of art and use a good range of materials in their work. They produce clay facades of houses which are of a good standard.
- Pupils in KS1 are given good opportunities for colour mixing and sensibly discuss and investigate the texture they have created. They also create attractive monoprints.
- Y2 pupils talk sensibly about the style and technique of Van Gogh. They describe and identify a range of marks used by different artists. They begin to understand how dots and lines can be used to make an area look darker or lighter. They experiment successfully with pencils, pens, crayons, pastels and chalk to create darker or lighter areas.
- Y2 pupils also study the work of Cezanne, in particular his still life paintings. They successfully draw flowers from books, memory and observation.
- Younger KS2 pupils make clay faces and successfully learn the technique for creating the features. They experiment successfully with pastels to create a portrait of their partner. They understand the need to show the character of the person.
- KS2 study the painting of 'The Millinery Shop' by Degas and apply their knowledge and experience of different media to create effective paintings.
- KS2 pupils work collaboratively whilst weaving pictures entitled 'Under the Sea', using wools and ribbons to produce work which is aesthetically pleasing and of a good standard. They draw and model sea creatures from salt dough and spray the finished article.
- Y4 and Y5 pupils experiment with paint producing various shades of blue. They develop their awareness of tone, pattern and colour and apply it to their work. They study the work of Picasso and use the knowledge gained to enhance their own art work. Some pupils refine their work producing some good computer aided design. They sensibly and sensitively evaluate each other's work.
- They experiment with some of the techniques used by Paul Klee, to produce textures. They experiment with batik and tie and dye. They study the work of David Hockney and experiment with a wide range of media to produce very interesting designs. They work collaboratively to produce attractive large marquetry pictures of their environment.
- Y6 pupils study computer generated images of the sun and talk about them. They successfully create their own original and interesting designs based upon this research. They use the appropriate vocabulary to explain how they have made their designs. They create an observational drawing of a fine leaf, rotate it symmetrically and study the new pattern. They use electronic imaging software, repeating images in patterns to good effect. They describe and make comparisons between their own work and that of other artists.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

Music

Standards overall are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages sing very tunefully and memorise words for songs. Singing is a particularly strong feature of the school.
- Music is used to best effect during assemblies to develop pupils' listening skills.
- KS1 and KS2 pupils are able to select and organise sound to produce a specific mood. They perform a range of sounds, using untuned percussion, arranging the sounds imaginatively and with good musical expression to illustrate a story. They perform confidently and sensitively.
- In KS2, pupils are able to record rhythm using a standard notation and to beat out rhythms they have composed.
- Pupils in KS2 are confident in their knowledge of tempo, being able to distinguish between light and dark, fast and slow and soft and loud.
- Many pupils receive additional music tuition from the peripatetic teachers from the School Music Service. They have opportunities to perform at school concerts and assemblies. All other pupils participate in whole school performances which they enjoy.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings, but pupils' appraisal skills are underdeveloped and they do not listen to music sufficiently in order to express feelings and thoughts.

Physical education

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 make sensible use of space and move around in a variety of ways whilst placing their weight on different parts of the body. They have good spatial awareness and respond quickly to teachers' instructions.
- The majority of pupils have a sound understanding of the effect of exercise on the body.

- Pupils in both key stages apply themselves well to the task with very good concentration and a developing sense of self-control.
- During peer evaluation time, they make sensitive suggestions about each other's performances and many less confident pupils showed improvement during the lesson.
- KS1 pupils are available to move from low to high positions, responding well to non-verbal instructions using a tambourine in order to vary pace.
- In both key stages pupils are encouraged to demonstrate their work and listen carefully to their peers' evaluations. In the main they make every effort to improve their movement and enjoy success.
- KS2 pupils refine their body control becoming increasingly aware of the need to warm up and warm down. They show good co-ordination when using a ball in a co-operative play situation.
- Team games; promote pupils'sense of competitiveness and fair play. The majority understand the rules and play to win within these. The school provides several teams that participate in local tournaments.
- Speaking and listening skills are generally used effectively when evaluating performance.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

Religious education

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages share their thoughts and feelings and understand the way others feel. They appreciate the importance of friendship and of being kind and helpful to others. Religious faith is used well to underpin the moral as well as spiritual development of pupils.
- Appropriate emphasis is placed on the study of Christianity and pupils throughout the school develop a good understanding of other faiths.
- Pupils in KS1 begin to understand about special days and special books including the significance of the Bible.
- Pupils begin to understand the significance of festivals, celebrations and special days.

- Pupils begin to develop their understanding of friendship and family and express their thoughts about things that make them happy or sad.
- In KS2 pupils further develop their understanding of religious celebrations and beliefs. They begin to reflect on the significance of religion in people's lives and how it affects communities.
- At the end of KS2 pupils reflect on the similarities and differences between religious faiths and denominations. They realise the significance of a number of religious festivals and customs, for example, Diwali and Ramadan.
- Pupils understand the importance of rules and show consideration for others.
- In 'Circle Time' pupils listen to and respect each other's views. They share precious objects with a sense of awe and wonder and take turns when talking about their own special things. They express emotions and feelings and support each other well.
- A 'circle of friends' exists at the end of KS2, in order to help a SEN pupil to overcome problems he encounters within the class on a regular basis.

Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

Due to the amalgamation of three separate schools, it is not possible to comment on all key issues from the previous reports, as they are either not applicable in the present setting or it is impossible to make comment.

Outlined below are the previous key issues and comments on progress where it is possible.

GILFACH FARGOED NURSERY SCHOOL

INSPECTION - MAY 1999

Key Issues for Action

In order to sustain and extend its existing high standards, the nursery needs to:

- further develop curriculum planning to include opportunities for assessment and specific detail of the learning outcomes to be achieved;
- make safe and good the defects evident on the exterior of the building.

SOUTH BARGOED INFANTS SCHOOL

INSPECTION - NOVEMBER 1998

Key Issues for Action

The school needs to:

- improve standards of achievement in English particularly aspects of reading and writing;
- address shortcomings in subjects in which pupils achieve only satisfactory standards;
- include targets and strategies in the School Development Plan for improvements in pupils' standards of literacy;
- ensure further improvements in pupils' attendance and punctuality;
- provide more detailed comments in reports to parents on pupils' achievement and the next steps in their learning;
- review the policy on handwriting and improve the standard of presentation of written work;
- enhance the quality of the accommodation by removing the mobile classroom and resurfacing the school yard.

Y GRAIG JUNIOR SCHOOL

INSPECTION - JUNE 2000

Key Issues for Action

The school needs to:

- raise standards in Welsh as a second language;
- establish more rigorous and focussed arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and delivery of the curriculum throughout the school;
- share existing good practice in short-term planning to identify clearly what pupils should know, do and understand by the end of the lesson in order to raise standards of achievement of pupils further;
- address the needs of less able pupils in the mainstream classes by developing a broader range of strategies to support their learning in key skills, particularly reading;

- improve assessment and reporting by developing strategies which provide common understanding of NC levels;
- assist pupils' understanding of how improvements can be achieved by identifying their strengths and weaknesses when marking their work;
- establish better links with industry by taking advantage of the opportunities available to the school;
- ensure statutory requirements are fully met.

Progress

- Curriculum planning has improved since the last inspection. Baseline assessments are used to inform future planning and as a diagnostic tool for target setting purposes.
- Standards of achievement in reading have made good improvement; writing too has also improved, but it still requires further development.
- Targets for improvement for literacy are now clearly embedded in the School Development Plan.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory.
- Annual reports to parents meet statutory requirements; parents now have ample opportunities to discuss their child's progress and the next steps in their learning.
- A handwriting policy is in place and pupils have made satisfactory progress with presentation of work, however, there are still shortcomings, for example, cursive writing.
- Good progress has been made in Welsh as a second language.
- A good effort has been made in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching but the monitoring of standards remains a key issue.
- Good support is now provided for those pupils with SEN.
- Assessment, recording and reporting is now good overall.
- Links with industry are now good.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order to build upon the progress already achieved since amalgamation, the school needs to:

- raise standards in English, mathematics, design and technology, information technology and key skills in both key stages and any other shortcomings in subjects identified in Section 7 of this report;
- critically review the existing planning system in order to create a whole school process for teaching and learning to ensure continuity and progression of pupils' experiences.
- provide opportunities for curriculum leaders to directly and indirectly monitor standards thus assuring curriculum continuity and progression in all NC subjects.
- ensure the GB report to parents and any other issues contained within the report, meet all statutory requirements.

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

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Park Primary School
School type	Community
Age -range of pupils	3 - 11 years
Address of school	Park Crescent Bargoed Caerphilly
Post-Code	CF81 8PN
Telephone Number	01443 875524

Headteacher	Mrs M Evans
Date of appointment	September 2002
Chair of Governors	Mr T Mills
Registered Inspector	Mr R Thomas
Dates of inspection	27 - 29 April 2004

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	16	11	27	25	15	22	13	25	154

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	1	7.5

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	18:4
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	5:3
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	27.6
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.25:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>					
	N	R	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Term 1	90.0	88.0	85.0	92.0	88.0
Term 2	88.0	89.0	89.0	93.0	90.0
Term 3	89.0	91.0	89.0	94.0	91.0

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

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2003			Number of pupils in Y2: 11						
Percentage of pupils at each level									
		School	D	A	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	27	45	27	0
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	28	36	36	0
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	28	44	28	0
EN: Speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	18	54	28	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	28	36	36	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	18	73	9	0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school:	73%	In Wales:	81%

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

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2003							Number of pupils in Y6:25						
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	36	44	0	0
		National	0	0	1	n/a	1	1	6	17	46	30	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	4	0	0	0	20	32	36	8	0
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	5	12	41	38	n
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	24	60	4	0
		National	0	0	1	n/a	0	1	4	19	47	28	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	4	0	0	0	8	24	56	8	0
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	4	19	43	30	n
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	72	0	0
		National	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	2	13	50	33	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	56	16	0
		National	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	10	47	38	n

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	40%	In the school:	40%
In Wales:	68%	In Wales:	68%

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

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

The inspection took place over three days, three inspectors were involved and 63 sessions were observed. During this time all teachers were visited, all classes seen and all subjects of the NC inspected.

Discussion with pupils to ascertain their knowledge of curriculum areas and their attitude to learning took place on a regular basis. Pupils' work across the age and ability range was examined systematically and the school provided the inspection team with a comprehensive record of pupils' work and other school activities.

Discussion also took place with the head and staff, including non-teaching staff, to establish their specific responsibilities and professional perspectives. School documentation was examined and a detailed discussion took place with the head and support staff concerning financial matters.

The views of parents and governors were received and analysed. 25 parents' questionnaires were returned; 88% of the responses were positive.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

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