

REPORT

on the

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

**YSGOL PENMACHNO
PENMACHNO
BETWS-Y-COED
CONWY
LL24 0PT**

School Number: 662/2086

Date of Inspection: 2 – 4 February 2003

By

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Registered Inspector W241/79113

Under Estyn contract number: T/130/02P

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

The school is situated on elevated ground in the village of Penmachno, about four miles from Betws-y-coed. It was built in 1908 and has an official accommodation figure of 104. The school has been well maintained over the years but the lack of a suitably sized hall limits whole-school activities and provision for physical education.

There were 53 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection, including nine children of nursery age who attend part-time. There has been a small but steady decrease in numbers over the last few years and the trend is likely to continue for the next year or two. The school draws its pupils from the villages of Penmachno and Cwm Penmachno and the surrounding rural area. The catchment is described by the school as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged and pupils represent the full range of ability. About 12% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and nine (17%) are identified as having special educational needs (SEN), including two with a statement of SEN. Just over a third of the pupils come from homes where Welsh is the predominant language.

The school's aims and objectives are clearly stated. They include enabling all pupils to develop to their full potential so that they can take part as full members of a rapidly changing society, and ensuring that each pupil has an opportunity to become fluent in Welsh and English.

The School Development Plan (SDP) reviews the programme set for the previous year and identifies priority areas for the current year; these include improving the library, reviewing religious education and addressing aspects of assessment.

The school was last inspected in the summer term of 1997. The headteacher has been in post since April 1978.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

The school has made progress in a number of areas since its last inspection in 1997.

- Pupils' standards of achievement were good or better in just under 75% of the sessions observed and satisfactory in the remainder.
- The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. The standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

Language, literacy and communication skills	Good
Personal and Social Development	Good
Mathematical Development	Good
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Very good
Physical Development	Good
Creative Development	Good

- In Key Stage (KS)1 and KS2, pupils' standards of achievement in the subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) and in religious education are as follows:

	KS1	KS2
Welsh first language	Good	Good
English	-	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Good	Satisfactory
Information technology	Good	Good
History	Good	Good
Geography	Good	Good
Art	Good	Good
Music	Good	Good
Physical education	Satisfactory	No lessons observed
Religious education	Good	Good

- As the number of KS1 pupils involved in the NC assessment in 2002 on the basis of teachers' assessment was fewer than five in two of the subjects, results are not published in this report. As the number of pupils who took the 2002 NC assessment at the end of KS2 was below 10 (9) overall performance indicators only are included (see Appendix).
- In key skills across the curriculum, the under-fives achieve good standards in literacy and numeracy and in their use of information and communications technology (ICT). Pupils in KS1 and KS2 achieve good standards in most aspects of language, and standards are good in numeracy and ICT.
- The quality of teaching was good in 68% of the sessions observed, very good in nine per cent and satisfactory in 23%. Teachers prepare lessons carefully and whole-class presentations are generally clear and lively. The content of lessons is appropriate and teachers ensure a good balance of individual, group and class work. Where teaching is satisfactory, the tasks given to the ablest pupils are not always sufficiently challenging and, occasionally, the work is over-directed by the teacher.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and their cultural development is very good. Pupils are provided with a daily act of collective worship, and they have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and the importance of respecting the rights and views of others. Welsh culture has a prominent place in the life and work of the school and pupils' awareness of other cultures is a notable feature, especially as a result of the work undertaken over the last few years within the Comenius project.
- The school is well aware of its responsibility to promote pupils' bilingualism in Welsh and English and succeeds to a very considerable extent in fulfilling its aim of enabling pupils to be confident in their use of both languages. Planning and provision of *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* are very good.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good and attendance figures over the last two full terms are good. The figures for the spring term 2002 were greatly affected by the unusually high level of illness, particularly among the youngest pupils.

- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good. An assessment policy and appropriate procedures are in place and teachers respond regularly and constructively to pupils' work. Annual reports provide parents with a clear picture of their children's progress.
- The quality of the curriculum is good throughout the school. It is suitably broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Policies and schemes of work are at least satisfactory, and in a number of cases good, as are the teachers' short and medium term plans. Pupils benefit from a number of extra-curricular activities, including team games and partaking in an annual swimming gala, and they make good use of educational visits to support their learning.
- The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good and they make good progress in acquiring basic language and numeracy skills. Standards of achievement are at least satisfactory. The school's policy for SEN is of good quality. Individual educational plans are clear, appropriately focussed and regularly reviewed.
- The school's partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions is good with some very good aspects; partnership with industry is also good.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory. The school's policy for self-evaluation outlines clearly the procedures to be undertaken when evaluating its provision and work, and the SDP identifies a number of aspects which the school plans to improve in the course of the current year. However, the SDP does not include plans and proposals for the next two years.
- The school is well led. The head administers the school effectively and provides sound guidance. Responsibility for co-ordinating the various subjects is shared equitably between the head and his colleagues, and adequate time is spent discussing pupils' progress and scrutinising samples of work. However, co-ordinators do not visit colleagues' classes as part of their monitoring duties.
- The school has responded positively and for the most part effectively to all the key issues identified in the 1997 report.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Pupils' standards of achievement were judged to be good in 69% of the sessions observed, very good in five per cent and satisfactory in 26%.

- The under-fives achieve good standards in language, literacy and communication skills, personal and social development, mathematical development, physical development and creative development; they make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- In KS1, in the core subjects, pupils' standards of achievement are good in Welsh, mathematics and science. In KS2, pupils achieve good standards in listening, speaking

and reading Welsh and satisfactory standards in writing. In English, they achieve good standards in all four elements. Standards in mathematics are good and they are satisfactory in science.

- In the non-core subjects, pupils' standards of achievement in KS1 are good in all subjects with the exception of physical education where they are satisfactory. In KS2, they are good in information technology, history, geography, art, music and religious education and satisfactory in design and technology. As no physical education was seen in KS2, no judgement could be made.
- Girls and boys achieve at broadly the same level throughout the school. Pupils with SEN make good progress in acquiring basic language and numeracy skills.
- As the number of KS1 pupils involved in the NC assessment in 2002 on the basis of teachers' assessment was fewer than five in Welsh (4) and English (1) and five in science and mathematics, results are not published in this report.
- As the number of pupils who took the 2002 NC assessment at the end of KS2 was below 10 (9) overall performance indicators only are included (see Appendix).

3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum

The under-fives achieve good standards in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and in their use of ICT. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 achieve good standards in most aspects of language, and standards are good in numeracy and ICT.

- The children in the early years listen well and speak with increasing confidence with adults and their peers. They use simple numeracy skills well in a variety of activities planned for them in the six areas of learning. They are aware of the various uses of ICT within the classroom and their skills are developing well.
- In KS1 and KS2, pupils speak fluently and with confidence in class discussions in both Welsh and English. They give extended replies to questions and express their opinions well. Pupils who are learning Welsh as a second language answer questions well on a variety of topics. Pupils learn and use appropriate vocabulary in their lessons in a range of subjects.
- Listening skills are good in both key stages. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to contributions by their peers.
- Good standards are achieved by pupils in both key stages in reading and this supports their learning well in all subject areas.
- Pupils' writing skills are developing satisfactorily across the curriculum in both key stages in English and Welsh. Their writing reflects the pupils' understanding of various concepts following good oral discussions prior to the written tasks. A minority of pupils pay insufficient attention to spelling and punctuation.
- The development of numeracy skills is good in both key stages. Standard measurements and aspects of numeracy are applied well in subjects such as science, design and technology and geography.

- In both key stages, pupils use an extensive range of ICT skills well to enhance their learning across the curriculum. Pupils are confident in their use of the computer and different software in various subject areas.
- Pupils with SEN are making generally good progress in their language, numeracy and ICT skills.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and their cultural development is very good.

- The daily acts of collective worship contribute well to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. They listen well and are keen to contribute by responding readily to questioning. They know and sing Welsh hymns with enthusiasm and sing in harmony. Y5-6 pupils play the recorders to a high standard and set the right tone at the beginning of a classroom service. Pupils are taught to respect other people's faiths and beliefs as well as their own.
- Pupils respect their peers and adults at the school. They are polite and considerate and relate well to adults that visit the school. Sound moral values are promoted effectively. The school has an anti-racism policy which is promoted within its day-to-day life and ethos.
- Pupils' social awareness is developing well. The staff provide good models of social behaviour and the quality of relationships between pupils and teachers and amongst pupils themselves is good. From a young age pupils share their resources and willingly help one another with their tasks. In all classes they respond well to the various responsibilities given to them on a rota basis. The close links with the community contributes to the pupils' social development and they develop a responsibility towards the environment through various curricular projects.
- Through Urdd activities, cultural celebrations and different aspects of curricular work in several subject areas, the pupils are aware of the culture of Wales. Pupils' involvement in the inter school European project Comenius has made them aware of the diversity and richness of a number of other cultures. This work has led to the school receiving an International School Award as recognition of the links that have been established with European schools and the curriculum work that has been undertaken as a result.

4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good.

- There are appropriate and effective policies on behaviour and discipline and pupils' response has a positive effect on the quality of life in the school.

- Pupils are friendly, courteous and supportive and they demonstrate increasing maturity as they progress through the school.
- They appreciate and care for the learning resources, as well as the general environment and property of the school.
- Pupils are attentive, committed to their studies and show good powers of concentration; these attitudes make a good contribution to their standards of achievement.
- There are sound procedures for handling any instances of bullying or aggressive behaviour, none of which was seen during the inspection.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance over the last two full terms was good; figures for the spring term 2002 were greatly affected by the unusually high level of illness, particularly among the youngest pupils.

- Registers are kept neatly and correctly and registration procedures comply fully with statutory requirements.
- There are no unauthorised absences. Parents are aware of the school's expectations as regard attendance.
- Punctuality at the beginning of the day and for lessons is good.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching was good in 68% of the sessions inspected, very good in nine per cent and satisfactory in 23%.

- Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and of the requirements of the NC.
- The under-fives are provided with a range of learning experiences ensuring that they make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Lessons are carefully planned with clear objectives for each session. Pupils come together at the end of sessions to discuss their findings and/or establish in their minds the teaching points.
- Where teaching is good or very good it is characterised by a lively presentation, skilful questioning to develop pupils' understanding, a brisk pace and the use of a variety of approaches to help pupils sustain their concentration.
- Classes are, without exception, very well managed.

- Pupils are praised for both effort and achievement. Their contributions are valued and they become more confident in giving responses.
- Where teaching is satisfactory, the tasks given to the ablest pupils are not always sufficiently challenging and, occasionally, the work is over-directed by the teacher.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting on pupils' progress is good.

- An assessment policy and appropriate procedures are in place to guide teachers.
- This area was recently targeted for improvement by the teachers; they have co-operated well to establish good strategies for developing assessment, recording and reporting on pupils' progress throughout the school and they are used effectively.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and encouraging comments are added, in accordance with the school's policy.
- The class teachers have a good understanding of the progress of their pupils and their expectations of them are mainly in line with the NC requirements in both the core and non-core subjects.
- Standard assessment tests are used for reading and spelling and the pupils' achievements are analysed. This process has been instrumental in identifying some pupils who need additional support.
- Pupils in the early years are closely monitored and their progress carefully recorded. An informative record is kept of the progress of the nursery pupils and a base line assessment is carried out during the pupil's first term in the reception year.
- Procedures for assessing and recording the progress of pupils with SEN are appropriate and in accordance with the new Code of Practice.
- The quality of written reports to parents is good. Pupils' achievements are clearly noted and targets for improvement set for each pupil. There is an opportunity for parents to discuss these reports in a meeting towards the end of the summer term.

5.3 Curriculum

The quality and organisation of the curriculum in the early years, KS1 and KS2 are good. It is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements.

- The curriculum for the under-fives is based on the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and due consideration is given in the planning to the six areas of learning.
- In KS1 and KS2, the curriculum includes all the NC subjects and religious education and reasonable time is allocated to each one. The planning of key skills across the curriculum is not set out explicitly enough in some documents, nevertheless they do feature prominently in much of the teaching.

- There are schemes of work for all subjects - unlike 1997, when there were no schemes for information technology, art and physical education - and they are reviewed to reflect the latest developments. All are of satisfactory standard, some are good.
- Teachers' planning is of good quality overall and gives effective support to day-to-day learning.
- The school is well aware of its responsibility to promote pupils' bilingualism in Welsh and English and succeeds to a very considerable extent in fulfilling its aims of enabling pupils to be confident in their use of both languages.
- Planning and provision of the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* are very good.
- Pupils are organised in three classes. One class contains pupils from the two KS1 year groups, as well as reception and part-time nursery children. There are also two year groups in each of the two classes in KS2. By using a variety of approaches the teachers invariably succeed in attracting and keeping pupils' interest and, with a few exceptions, they set them appropriately structured tasks that are sufficiently challenging.
- The school has a homework policy which is closely followed. In a questionnaire completed by the parents prior to the inspection almost all who responded indicated they were content with the nature and quantity of the homework given.
- The school has a personal and social education (PSE) policy, an equal opportunities policy, a racial equality policy, a policy statement on integrating disabled pupils and an international education policy. Pupils respond positively to these and do their best to implement and promote them.
- Pupils benefit from a number of extra-curricular activities, including team games and partaking in an annual swimming gala, and they make good use of educational visits to support their learning. The Comenius project has resulted in pupils getting to meet and know pupils of the same age in other countries and Y5-6 pupils undertake a bi-annual exchange with a school in the Irish Republic.

5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

The quality of the support, guidance and welfare of pupils is good.

- Teachers know their pupils and their families well. The interaction between pupils and the adults at the school is good; pupils turn confidently to their teachers for help.
- The comparatively small class sizes ensure that pupils receive good support and regular individual attention.
- Pupils are well supervised during the day, including during break times.
- There are useful policies on many aspects of the welfare of children such as health and safety, sex education, use and misuse of drugs and equal opportunities.

- Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and learning targets promote their development well. Pupils are also given their own individual booklet to set themselves personal targets which encourages them to become more independent and mature.
- The school follows the Local Education Authority's guidelines on Child Protection and the staff are aware of their responsibilities.
- Safety precautions such as ensuring that there is no unauthorised access during lesson time have been implemented. Appropriate attention is paid to safety aspects both inside the school building and outside, such as the repairs to the external railings. However, the surface of the school yard is worn in some areas and there is no appropriate, enclosed outside play area for the nursery pupils.
- Fire drills are held and reported on regularly and teachers are suitably qualified in first aid.

5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

The quality of the provision for pupils with SEN is good and the pupils are making good progress. Standards of achievement are at least satisfactory.

- The school responds well to the requirements of the revised Code of Practice.
- There are five pupils at the School Action stage of the Code of Practice, two at School Action Plus and another two have a statement of SEN.
- Early identification of pupils with SEN ensures purposeful support by the class teachers, in the first instant, in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) at the school.
- Individual Educational Programmes (IEPs) are prepared in a careful and systematic manner for the pupils with SEN. These programmes give the class teachers and the support staff valuable information and outline achievable targets for individual pupils.
- The progress of individual pupils is reviewed on a termly basis and parents are included in the discussions.
- Specialist help is given to the two pupils who have a statement of SEN. Staff respond well to the advice and guidance from external agencies. Good, all round support is given in class by a support worker.
- Two pupils have been assessed by external agencies and the school awaits the outcome. Additional support is given to these, and to five others in KS2, for short periods on a regular basis by the SENCO. Formal records are kept of the pupils' response to the work provided and the progress they make. Pupils are making good progress and individuals are becoming more self confident.
- The provision ensures that all pupils have full access to all NC subjects.

5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions

The school's partnerships with parents and community, schools and other institutions are good with some very good aspects.

- Parents are provided with a good, regular supply of information through letters, reports and parents' evenings. They also feel they can approach staff with any questions or concerns they wish to raise.
- The school's prospectus is colourful and detailed. Its content, like that of the governors' annual report to parents, complies with statutory requirements.
- The home-school agreement is a well structured document of good quality; it has been signed by all the parents.
- Several parents help in the classroom, mainly in listening to pupils read, and they join teachers and pupils on educational visits.
- The 'Friends of Ysgol Penmachno' organise various events and functions in support of the school. A significant amount of money has been raised over the past few years which has been used to purchase additional resources for the school.
- Links with the community are very strong. Pupils attend religious services in the local chapel, entertain the elderly, attend craft fairs and help raise funds for a variety of charities. Local people are invited to school activities and to talk to pupils about their work and experiences.
- Good links have been established with the comprehensive school to which pupils transfer at the end of Y6; these include open evenings for parents and an induction day. There are also good links with other primary schools in the area, as well as with a number of primary schools in Europe as a result of the school's participation in the Comenius project.
- The school occasionally provides placement for student teachers from University of Wales, Bangor, and pupils from the secondary school visit on work experience.

5.7 Partnership with industry

The school's partnership with industry is good.

- The school has a clear strategy for delivering this aspect within the curriculum.
- Pupils have made structured visits to a variety of businesses and agencies, such as the Forestry Agency, Snowdonia National Park, Trawsfynydd and Dolgarrog power stations, and a printing and publishing business. These are linked to work in the curriculum and have enhanced the pupils' appreciation of the world of work.
- Pupils have benefited from a recent initiative in which they were closely involved in the production of a compact disc (CD) containing examples of school activities in song and verse. The CD was then marketed by the pupils with costs and profit identified following

its sale. A bank account was established and the profit monies that accrued were distributed among the classes for the purchase of additional resources, as identified by the pupils.

- Preparatory work is in progress for the 'Investment in People' award.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

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

- The policy for self-evaluation and planning outlines clearly the procedures to be undertaken when evaluating all aspects of the school's work in order to bring about improvement.
- Staff development is targeted and in-service training is well matched to the needs of individual members of staff and the requirements of the school.
- A careful analysis of the results of the statutory tests has been carried out and targets produced in all core subjects in order to raise standards.
- The school has identified aspects within the core subjects that need particular attention, such as spelling in English. New schemes have been purchased and are being used effectively in one KS2 class in order to improve this aspect.
- The SDP contains a review of the programme set out in 2001-2002 and identifies the priority areas for the current year, giving details of the aims, the tasks to be undertaken and the costs involved. However, the SDP does not include an outline of projected planning over the next two years.
- Curriculum leaders report back after attending various courses and regularly offer advice to other members of staff. However, their role in formally monitoring the teaching and learning across the school in their subject areas has not been fully developed.
- The school has responded positively to the key issues identified in the 1997 report.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The school is well led and its budget is administered efficiently.

- The school has appropriate aims and values, including a clear commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all.
- The head administers the school effectively and provides sound guidance. His teaching duties are substantial leaving him with limited time in which to deal with other matters, including aspects of management.

- Responsibility for co-ordinating the various subjects is shared equitably between the head and his colleagues, and adequate time is spent discussing pupils' progress and scrutinising samples of work. However, co-ordinators do not visit colleagues' classes as part of their monitoring duties.
- The governors are supportive of the school and some members are well informed about its life and work. Time is set aside in meetings to discuss the school's policies and plans and members ensure that the school meets statutory requirements.
- Governors and head share responsibility for managing the school budget appropriately. Decisions on expenditure are usually linked to target areas identified in the SDP.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing and resources are good and the accommodation is satisfactory.

- The school is well staffed with three full-time, suitably qualified and experienced teachers. Effective classroom support is available on three afternoons a week to help with the under-fives. A supply teacher is occasionally employed to relieve the headteacher from classroom duty to carry out administrative work.
- The annual programme of in-service training (INSET) for staff is well planned and has been effective in promoting good standards in areas such as ICT.
- The Comenius project has contributed to staff development by enabling the teachers to visit schools in different countries. Their experiences have broadened their outlook and also enriched the school curriculum.
- Staff exchange classes for music and physical education in KS2 and pupils benefit from this sharing of expertise.
- The accommodation is in good condition throughout and is kept clean. The school makes good use of the space available, but the lack of a suitably sized hall limits what can be achieved, particularly in aspects of physical education. Recent structural changes have been made to improve the girls' toilets and to include a toilet facility for the disabled.
- Good use is made of many features in the immediate locality of the school to extend the pupils' studies and make them aware of their heritage.
- The school is well resourced to provide effective learning experiences across the curriculum. The resources are conveniently stored and are accessible in the classrooms. Useful teaching resources and educational games are also made by the teachers themselves.
- The stock of hardware for developing pupils' ICT skills is generous, although some of the computers are over five years old.
- Reference books are classified and stored in the hall. There is a good supply of both English and Welsh reading books readily available in each classroom and an interesting collection of books from different cultural backgrounds.

- Colourful displays enhance the appearance of the school and they are regularly used to provide visual references during lessons.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and they make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Nursery (3-4 year old) and reception (4-5 year old) children achieve good standards or better in each of the six areas of learning.

Standards of achievement in language, literacy and communication are good.

Good features

- The early years children listen well to presentations alongside older KS1 pupils.
- They are confident in their use of a good vocabulary when asking and answering questions.
- The nursery children are beginning to recognise sounds and form letters. Further progress is seen in the reception year with good word recognition through the use of language games and large class books.
- Early reading skills are developing well in the reception year and pupils follow books and use a tape recorder confidently to listen to their favourite stories.
- Both groups show increasing confidence when practising early writing skills and mark-making activities using a range of different media.
- Pupils are developing well in their first language and show very positive attitudes when learning a second language.

Children's personal and social development is good.

Good features

- All children have settled happily in the mixed age class. They understand the routine in the classroom and move around confidently.
- Pupils take care of their own personal hygiene needs and dress themselves with increasing independence. The four to five year olds know where to find various pieces of equipment and toys and how to put them away.

- The nursery and reception children share some time with KS1 pupils during presentations. They concentrate well and take an interest in the work. They take part in the activities that suit their needs within the six areas of learning, and have learnt to share and take turns when undertaking pair work.

Standards of achievement in mathematical skills are good.

Good features

- Both nursery and reception children count well orally. They recognise number symbols and are able to match objects to figures in the reception year.
- Through role playing activities the reception children understand the purpose of money.
- Reception children match items and set them according to shape, colour or their properties.
- Both nursery and reception children use an increasing mathematical vocabulary across their varied activities, such as, lighter and heavier, bigger and smaller.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is very good.

Good features

- Nursery and reception children use a range of construction toys and talk about their construction with interest.
- The computer skills of the reception children are developing well and they are confident in their use of the mouse to operate an educational program.
- Through stories, an involvement in an European project, meeting different visitors to the school and working with local artists, reception children are becoming aware of different cultures and customs in several countries.
- They have an increasing knowledge of their own community by taking walks and, along with other pupils, creating a class mural to depict aspects of the village.

Standards of achievement in physical development are good.

Good features

- Nursery and reception children are making good progress in their fine motor skills when using pencils, brushes and scissors.
- The reception children join the KS1 class in the village hall for dance sessions. Their control of movements and balance are developing well and they are able to follow instructions.

- Children's large motor skills are also developing well as they use the large play equipment available to them.

The children's creative development is good.

Good features

- Nursery and reception children draw pictures and paint, they make attractive collages and simple puppets to a good standard. Their drawing skills are developing well according to their age and ability.
- All the children develop imaginatively through role play and dressing up activities.
- The reception children know and sing a range of songs and rhymes with enthusiasm. They can recall and clap rhythms.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings in any of the six areas of learning.

Welsh

Standards of achievement are good in listening, speaking and reading in both key stages; writing is also good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2.

Good features

- Pupils' listening skills develop well across the school. They listen attentively in lessons and respond appropriately to teachers' questions and directions.
- In KS1, pupils express themselves well orally. They discuss in class and express opinions clearly and logically.
- Pupils' reading skills develop well. They have a good knowledge of phonics and by Y2 can convey the sense of what they are reading. They have an awareness of the difference between fact and fiction and recognise rhyming patterns.
- They make good progress in writing. They label their work, can create real or imaginary news bulletins and write letters. Their syntax is developing appropriately.
- In KS2, pupils make good progress in speaking Welsh and by Y6 the majority can discuss various topics expressing their point of view confidently.
- Pupils read correctly and have a good understanding of what they read. The more able pupils read fluently and with expression and can repeat the contents of a story in their own words and discuss the plot and characters well. All pupils enjoy reading and discussing poems by contemporary writers, some of whom have visited the school.

- Pupils write for different purposes using a variety of styles and forms suitable to the task in hand. They write factual accounts, book reviews, character portrayals and dialogues and they make good use of adjectives, similes and the occasional idiom in their creative work, which includes writing poetry.
- Pupils follow the process of redrafting and occasionally make use of ICT for this purpose.
- The quality of handwriting and presentation is good on the whole.

Shortcomings

- In KS2, a significant minority of pupils have difficulties with grammatical accuracy in written work, particularly mutations and spelling.

English

Standards of achievement in KS2 are good. Although Welsh is the main learning medium in KS1, pupils are gradually introduced to English in Y2; they have formal lessons in KS2.

Good features

- Pupils speak fluently and respond appropriately and with enthusiasm to class presentations. They express their opinions and points of view well using good vocabulary.
- Pupils read meaningfully and with expression. The majority read well in terms of understanding and are able to discuss the content of the text well, sharing their views about it. They employ a range of strategies for reading and use them effectively to read new words.
- Pupils know the alphabet and are able to access information in dictionaries independently.
- The standard of writing is good across the key stage with pupils showing an increasing grasp of writing conventions such as the use of a full stop, capital letter and quotation marks.
- Correctness in spelling is improving as a result of the numerous schemes adopted to strengthen this aspect and provide basic rules and patterns for the pupils to follow.
- The standard of hand writing is good generally and pupils across the key stage are able to word process their work confidently.
- Pupils produce a variety of forms of writing including lists, posters, stories, dialogues, instructions and poetry to good standards. Creative and descriptive work is of a good standard across the key stage.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' editing and redrafting skills are insufficiently developed.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils develop good numeracy skills. They are competent and confident orally in mental arithmetic and clearly enjoy their mathematics lessons.
- Pupils have a good understanding of number bonds and place value. The majority identify patterns quickly and use them to help their calculations.
- They can count forwards to, and backwards from, at least 20 in multiples of twos, fives and 10s. The more able can do so in threes. They understand the concept of zero and odd and even numbers.
- Pupils recognise and name the most common two and three-dimensional shapes. They have a good understanding of simple symmetry.
- They use mathematical language accurately and use different standards of measure well.
- In KS2, pupils build upon the skills acquired in KS1 using the four operations well.
- Pupils are aware that different methods can often be used to obtain correct answers to computation problems and they explain well how they have worked out their answers.
- Pupils are developing a good understanding of the usefulness of estimations when working in mathematics.
- Pupils know and describe the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes correctly using the proper mathematical terminology.
- Pupils have a good understanding of decimals, fractions and percentages and of acute, obtuse and right angles.
- Prior work shows that pupils make good progress in their understanding of time, money, and units of measurement.
- Good use is made of ICT skills to support the work.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Science

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils undertake a range of simple, practical experimental work and they observe, classify and investigate well in accordance with their age and ability.
- Pupils use their senses effectively to sort out different materials according to selected properties. They relate the work well to everyday situations.
- Across the school, pupils record their work using different methods of presenting information such as graphs, a digital camera and the computer.
- Predicting and hypothesising skills are developing well in both key stages.
- The concept of a fair test is introduced to KS1 pupils and they can explain it in simple terms. Progression is seen in KS2 with pupils beginning to offer their own ideas for investigative work.
- KS2 pupils follow a structured pattern when carrying out scientific investigations, making predictions and recording them on the proformas available to them.
- At the beginning of KS2, current work on measuring shadows results in pupils discussing their work, predicting results and taking accurate measurements. They work in pairs and display their results well by using both line and bar graphs on the computer.
- Efficient and effective use is made of ICT by pupils to record work and also to find information about various topics, such as the planets.

Shortcomings

- Older KS2 pupils' ability to conduct investigations that are sufficiently challenging is underdeveloped.
- In KS2, pupils' skills in measuring and recording investigative work do not show sufficient progression.

Design and technology

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2.

Good features

- In KS1, design skills are developing well with pupils recording their own ideas by making simple drawings or sketches.

- Their making skills are progressing well as they shape, join and combine different materials.
- They create simple mechanisms and produce puppets, cards and vehicles with an element of movement.
- In KS2, pupils make good progress in developing the basic skills of cutting, joining and assembling a range of materials over a period of time. Y3-4 pupils understand how to join various pattern pieces and permitting a seam allowance when making a cap. Pupils in Y5-6 explain well how they strengthened their basic structure when designing and making a vehicle.
- Pupils understand how to use a range of tools and they remember safety guidelines when using cutting tools.
- Designing skills are developing well across the key stage and pupils draw detailed, annotated diagrams of their design ideas, including measurements.
- At the beginning of KS2, pupils' knowledge and understanding of different aspects of their design and making work are developing well through a series of small focused practical tasks, where considerable discussion of ideas and evaluation takes place.
- Across the school, pupils record their work in suitable booklets according to their age and ability, and their evaluation skills are progressing.

Shortcomings

- Pupils have not developed skills that allow them to explore aspects of computer control work and designing using the computer.
- At the top end of KS2, pupils do not record the evaluations of their work in sufficient depth so that they can draw on them to adjust and improve their ideas and designs.

Information technology

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- In both key stages, pupils' confidence in using ICT hardware and software is developing well and this is effective in supporting their learning across the curriculum.
- Pupils in KS1 and KS2 generate and communicate their ideas in different forms using text, drawings, tables and graphs.
- They enter and store information and retrieve and display what has been stored effectively. Their computer skills are used across the curriculum to save data following various investigations.

- KS2 pupils are familiar with the internet to find information about various topics they study and they can select and print out relevant information and illustrative material that they need.
- Pupils in both key stages use tailored programs to support spelling and aspects of mathematics with confidence.
- In KS2, pupils use E-mail regularly to keep in touch with pupils in other European schools and also make use of other on line facilities to exchange news with their peers in these schools.

Shortcomings

- In KS2, pupils' ability to explore aspects of modelling on the computer is underdeveloped.

History

Standards of achievement are good in both KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils use historical terms correctly to describe the passage of time.
- Their understanding of chronology develops well as they learn about changes in their own and their families' lives, and changes to familiar places.
- They listen to stories from the past and about the past and understand that they depict life in a time different from their own.
- Pupils are aware of distinctions between the past and present when they compare washing day activities in olden times with those of today, and discuss similarities and differences between the games their parents and grandparents played and their own.
- Pupils understand that information about the past can be discovered from a range of sources including pictures, photographs, artefacts and clothing.
- In KS2, pupils extend their knowledge of specific periods in time and can place a range of events and people within a chronological framework.
- In Y3-4, pupils have an increasing knowledge about change and development in the area of writing. They can explain how writing originated and how pictures and symbols came to be used to represent objects, concepts and sounds in the hieroglyphic form of writing in ancient Egypt. They know about the contribution made by monks in the middle ages to the development of a particular style of writing.
- Pupils in Y5-6 have a good understanding of some aspects of life in Victorian times, including the hard life of children working as chimney sweeps or in the coal pits in Wales, and can make effective comparisons between people's conditions and customs then and those of people today.

- Pupils appreciate that many of the sources through which information about the past comes to us can be interpreted in different ways,
- Pupils use ICT to support their work.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Geography

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- Pupils' geographical skills are developing well across the school. All pupils have a good knowledge of their local area and they make sound progress in their general knowledge of Wales and the world beyond.
- In KS1, pupils develop their mapping skills well and produce good quality plans and maps of real places using pictures, symbols and keys.
- Pupils use geographical terms appropriately to describe features of the environment. Y2 pupils can describe accurately the main features of the river Machno's journey from its source in the uplands to the sea.
- They have a good awareness of changes in weather conditions at different times of the year.
- In KS2, pupils develop their mapping skills effectively making use of a range of maps and pictures.
- Pupils in Y3-4 can correctly locate on a map of the world where several different foods originate and areas where the inhabitants have too little food to eat.
- Pupils compare their local area with a contrasting neighbourhood in Wales. They are also able to explain how the physical features of Penmachno differ from those in Helsinki in Finland and Chembakoli in India. They make good use of a variety of resources to support their study, including written material and ICT.
- They have an increasing knowledge of environmental issues and their effects on communities. Pupils in Y5-6 have undertaken a survey of different shops and supermarkets in the area and assessed the extent to which their location influences people's movements and life styles.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Art

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- In both key stages, pupils use an extensive range of techniques such as painting, collage, pastel work and sketching successfully to create interesting work that is of a good standard.
- Pupils in KS1 make good use of drawings to illustrate their stories and class books, and the quality of drawings by KS2 pupils in the published EuroTales book is good.
- Pupils develop good colour mixing skills from an early age in KS1; further progress is made in KS2 and pupils use these skills to good advantage in their paintings.
- In both key stages, the standard of sketches as a result of close observational work is good. In KS2, charcoal is used effectively as a drawing medium, following useful experimental work on creating tone.
- Pupils have worked with artists and craftspeople from the local community to produce cards, banners and large scale class murals of a good standard. There is photographic evidence of the culmination of some of this work in an exhibition that was arranged in the school hall.
- Pupils in both key stages describe and talk about the work of several Welsh artists and simulate their techniques well.
- Drawing skills on the computer are developing well and there is evidence of good quality three dimensional work across the school.

Shortcomings

- Pupils in KS2, when discussing the work of others and comparing it with their own work, are not sufficiently familiar with the visual elements of art and terms such as texture, pattern and tone.

Music

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- The standard of whole-school singing in assembly is good. Pupils sing in tune and enunciate words clearly.
- In KS1, pupils recall a good variety of songs and rhymes; they know the words well and sing with enthusiasm in class. They are able to sing a round well and keep correct pitch and pace. They enjoy singing and performing action songs and can remember the sequence of verses and the accompanying movements well.

- Pupils select instruments to create sounds and use them effectively. They produce a pictorial graphic score to represent their simple compositions.
- Lower KS2 pupils listen attentively to a piece of music. They discuss the music and describe its elements using a good selection of musical terminology. They make intelligent links between this music and previous work undertaken in history. In groups, they compose and perform vocally a short piece using the same principle as was used in the music presented to them.
- KS2 pupils have a good repertoire of songs, including traditional Welsh songs and hymns as well as some from other countries.
- Across KS2, pupils record their compositions and make effective use of ICT in the subject.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Physical education

Standards of achievement in the dance lesson observed were satisfactory. Standards in KS2 could not be judged as no lessons were seen.

Good features

- Pupils dress appropriately for lessons.
- They follow their teacher's instructions closely and make good use of space. In moving about the hall in the opening session they change direction and speed well. They complete a sequence of movements effectively.
- Pupils achieve at least satisfactory standards when performing patterns of movement derived from a Welsh folk dance linked to the song 'Dacw mam yn dwad'. Most pupils also make progress in learning the more intricate movements of a dance originating from Finland.
- The majority of pupils work hard on their performance. They evaluate one another's efforts and then apply themselves to refining their own performances.
- Most pupils have good body control and work effectively as individuals, in pairs and in groups.
- KS2 pupils have swimming lessons and take part in seasonal activities and team games such as football and netball. According to the school, progress made in these is generally good.

Shortcomings

- A small number of pupils perform below their capabilities.
- Pupils' development of the full range of gymnastic skills is adversely affected by the lack of an adequate school hall.

Religious education

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and KS2. The programme of work in both key stages is based on the county's Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages have a good understanding of the importance of worship within various religions.
- In KS1, pupils know that the Bible is important to Christians and that it is divided into two main parts. They know that stories about Jesus and the stories he told are to be found in the New Testament.
- Pupils understand the purpose and meaning of baptism. They can explain who baptises and what happens, and is said, during the ceremony. They are beginning to appreciate that by making a vow the people concerned are undertaking an important religious commitment.
- Pupils are making good progress in their knowledge of the Jewish religion; they know the meaning of synagogue, kippah and mezuzah.
- In KS2, pupils continue their study of stories in the Bible. They visit local places of worship and come to know the main features of the buildings.
- They learn about the festivals mainly associated with Christianity, Judaism and Islam and they compare aspects of their beliefs and customs.
- In Y3-4, following their work on Moses and the giving of the Ten Commandments, pupils can describe the importance of rules and religious principles to adherents of different faiths and how they shape their behaviour and life styles.
- Y5-6 pupils know that symbols of various sort play an important part within all religions.
- All pupils are aware of the important contribution made by Bishop William Morgan to the development of religion in Wales and the survival of the Welsh language. They have visited his birthplace which is only a few miles from the school.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The key issues identified in the previous inspection which was held in the summer term of 1997 were as follows:

There was a need to:

- increase opportunities for KS2 pupils to develop their understanding through discussion;
- raise standards in dance in KS1 and improve standards in the weaker aspects of other subjects;
- extend good practice in marking pupils' written work;
- pay greater attention, in the planning, to linking activities with specific educational aims and to progression and continuity in KS2;
- create schemes of work in art, information technology and physical education;
- develop methods of evaluating pupils' standards of work across the school;
- meet the statutory requirements with regard to the contents of the school handbook and the governors' annual report.

The school has responded positively and for the most part effectively to these key issues. Standards have improved in almost all the subjects or aspects of subjects where shortcomings were identified in the previous report and pupils are now provided with good opportunities to develop their oral skills. There is greater consistency in marking across the school and planning generally is of better quality. Schemes of work are now available in art, information technology and physical education and the school's handbook and governors' annual report to parents now meet statutory requirements in respect of content.

8.2 Key issues for action

The school needs to:

- address the shortcomings in the subjects or aspects of subjects where pupils' standards of achievement are satisfactory, namely, in writing, science and design and technology in KS2 and physical education in KS1;
- develop further the role of subject co-ordinators in the monitoring process;
- include in the SDP its projected planning over the next two years.

APPENDIX

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Penmachno
School type	LEA maintained/Community
Age -range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Penmachno Betws-y-Coed Conwy
Post-Code	LL24 0PT
Telephone Number	01690 760394

Headteacher	Mr D A Hughes
Date of appointment	April 1978
Chair of Governors	Mr E Owain
Registered Inspector	Mr E Lloyd Williams
Dates of inspection	February 2-4, 2003

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	5	2	7	3	6	6	7	13	49

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	3	0	3

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	15:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	15
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School
Term 1	79	90	91	87
Term 2	94	93	94	94
Term 3	91	96	97	95

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	12%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2002

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2002	Number of pupils in Y2: 5
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 was fewer than five in two of the subjects, summary information is not included.	

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2002

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2002	Number of pupils in Y6: 9
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 was greater than 4 but fewer than 10, overall performance indicators only are included.	

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:	77%	In the school:	67%
In Wales:	68%	In Wales:	68%

D. Evidence base of the inspection

- Three inspectors, including the lay inspector, visited the school for a total of six inspector days.
- Thirty lessons or parts of lessons were observed.
- A number of pupils, representing different ages and abilities, were heard reading. Many pupils were spoken to and asked about their attitudes to their work.
- Samples of pupils' written work and practical work in all of the subjects were examined.
- The inspectors held discussions with the head and teachers on a wide range of issues regarding the school's work. Consideration was given to the school's planning documents and various files and records.
- Six parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and 21 questionnaires were completed.
- The inspectors held a meeting with the governing body before and after the inspection.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Mr E Lloyd Williams	Regl	1; 2; 3.1; 4.3; 5.1; 5.3; 6.2; 8.1; 8.2.	Welsh; mathematics; history; geography; physical education; religious education.
Mrs E R Davies	Team	3.2; 4.1; 5.2; 5.4; 5.5; 6.1; 6.3.	Early years; English; science; design and technology; information technology; music; art.
Mr W Owen	Lay	4.2; 5.6; 5.7.	

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