

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF
THE EDUCATION (SCHOOLS) ACT 1996**

Plas-y-Felin Infant School

**Lewis Drive
Churchill Park
Caerphilly
CF83 3FT**

SCHOOL NUMBER: 676/2271

DATE OF INSPECTION: 6 – 9 May 2003

BY

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REGISTERED INSPECTOR No: W086/16177

DATE: 10 June 2003

Under Estyn contract number C/T/198/02P

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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 some shortcomings.
4. Unsatisfactory: some satisfactory work but shortcomings in important areas.
5. Poor: many shortcomings.

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Plas-y-Felin Infant School is situated in the small town of Caerphilly and is housed in a main building with two Y2 classes in demountable buildings. There are 189 fte pupils on roll, taught in six single-age classes from Reception to Y2, with 48 pupils attending part time in the nursery. The number on roll has decreased slightly over the last three years. The school states that its pupils are drawn from an area which is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged; 35% of its pupils are entitled to free school meals and 22% are on the Special Needs Register. Almost all come from English-speaking homes, and there are no natural Welsh speakers.

The school aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe place in which pupils are confident, secure and happy in a stimulating environment. The school emphasises the inclusive aspect of education and the expectation that parents will be active partners in their children's education.

The School Improvement Plan covers the next three years, and currently focuses on improving English, mathematics and science standards, with ongoing work on key skills and information and communications technology.

The school was last inspected in March 1998, and has made very good progress since that date.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Plas-y-Felin Infant School has a caring, welcoming ethos, and all pupils are happy. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and has many good, and often very good, aspects of provision.

- Standards of achievement are at least satisfactory in almost all lessons and sessions seen. In 75% they are good, and in a further 10%, very good.
- The educational provision for children under five, taken overall, is appropriate and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards of achievement are:

Area of Learning	Nursery	Reception
Language, Literacy and Communication Skills	Very good	Good
Personal and Social Development	Very good	Good
Mathematical Development	Very good	Good
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Very good	Good
Creative Development	Very good	Good
Physical Development	Very good	Good

- In Key Stage 1 (KS1), standards of achievement are:

National Curriculum Subject	KS1
English – speaking, listening and reading writing	Good Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good
Science	Good
Welsh as an additional language	Satisfactory
Design and Technology	Good
Information Technology	Very Good
History	Good
Geography	Good
Art	Very Good
Music	Satisfactory
Physical Education	Satisfactory
Religious Education	Good

- In KS1, pupils achieve good standards in speaking, listening and reading, and satisfactory standards in writing. Pupils are aware of the need to listen carefully and speak clearly. They ask and answer questions and listen to the ideas of others. Pupils read a range of texts with increasing fluency. Standards in writing are limited by the number of worksheets used.
- Standards in mathematics are good; pupils are developing their awareness and ability in all mathematical areas, but some are slow in recall of number facts. Pupils achieve good standards in science and are keen to take part in scientific activities.
- Standards in information technology are very good. Pupils make good use of the technology to support their learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- The school's results for teacher assessment at the end of the key stage show that, when compared with schools of a similar intake, pupils are achieving very well in science, with almost 90% achieving level 2 or above. The school is above the median for the core subjects, with 74% of pupils achieving level 2 or above in English, mathematics and science.
- The school's careful comparison of the 2002 assessment has shown that overall girls are achieving better than boys in all core subjects, and the school is addressing this issue through a variety of effective strategies.
- Standards achieved in key skills used across the curriculum are:

Key Skill	Standard
Speaking	Good
Listening	Good
Reading	Satisfactory
Writing	Satisfactory
Numeracy	Satisfactory
Information and Communications Technology (ICT)	Very Good

- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural guidance is good. The values of respect for oneself and consideration for others underpin the ethos of co-operation within class and school communities. Pupils are aware of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves, and are developing a sound understanding of Welsh culture and heritage.
- Pupils' personal and social skills are thoughtfully promoted throughout the curriculum. Pupils express themselves honestly and ask questions courteously.
- Pupils participate enthusiastically in whole school acts of collective worship and are encouraged to reflect on their attitudes towards others. The weekly 'special mention' assembly enhances pupils' self-esteem and reinforces positive attitudes.
- Pupils have good standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning. They have good relationships with staff, and are generally friendly and courteous to each other and to adults.
- Attendance is satisfactory; registration is carried out promptly and absences are monitored closely.
- The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in almost all lessons observed. It was judged to be good in 45% of lessons and very good in 20%.
- In the nursery and reception classes, routines are well established and children respond well to them. Nursery children experience a wide range of appropriate activities, with a clear focus on learning in a stimulating environment.
- Teaching in the reception classes has clear objectives and initial input is appropriate for the children's age and stage of development. Some curriculum focuses are too lengthy, but there is evidence to suggest that the school will enable children to experience a curriculum similar to that offered in the nursery shortly.
- In the best practice throughout the school, teaching has a lively pace which keeps all pupils alert and involved. Lessons are very well structured and work is well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers use questioning techniques effectively to encourage pupils to think for themselves. All teachers use ICT very effectively in supporting work in all subject areas.
- Classroom assistants and support staff work efficiently and conscientiously alongside the teacher, making a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and welfare.
- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good overall. Ongoing assessment is used effectively to plan future work, and formal assessment data is used to track progress and set targets for school improvement. Portfolios of work record pupils' progress through the school. Marking is unsatisfactory at present, as it does not provide constructive written comments for pupils. Reports to parents are of good quality.
- The school provides a good quality, broad and balanced curriculum. The early years curriculum is well planned to ensure continuity and progression in the six areas of learning. The focus in some curriculum areas is overlong.

- Homework and extra-curricular activities contribute positively to the quality of the curriculum and are very well supported by pupils and adults. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is well established and pupils have many opportunities to develop their understanding of the wider culture of Wales.
- The quality of personal support and procedures for overseeing pupils' welfare is good. Staff ensure that pupils are enabled to explore new experiences and that purposeful learning takes place within a positive and supportive family ethos which emphasises the inclusive nature of the school.
- Midday supervisors caringly support the school's expectations of its pupils with their own reward system for positive attitudes. Adult volunteers and support staff contribute positively to the quality of provision.
- The quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good, and pupils make good progress in relation to their age and stage of development. The early identification of pupils with learning difficulties is effective and thorough.
- The partnership which the school has with parents and the community, schools and other institutions is good. Parents showed their support for the school in the pre-inspection meeting and the questionnaires returned. Parents are very well informed about the life and work of the school, and a small but active Parents Association organises social and fundraising events.
- Representatives of a wide range of local organisations are regular visitors, and pupils have a wide range of educational experiences through listening to visiting poets, authors, artists and local music societies.
- Partnership with industry is good; it has been developed effectively with local retail outlets.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is very good. Staff and governors are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. They make very good use of assessment data, subject audits and monitoring and evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching to identify appropriate targets for improvement.
- The quality of leadership and efficiency is very good. The school has appropriate aims and a strong sense of purpose. It is very well led by the head teacher who is ably supported by her deputy. The governing body is well-informed and totally involved in school developments which has a positive effect on the school's progress and improvement.
- Subject leaders have developed their role and have observed their subjects being taught in order to improve standards. They undertake an annual audit of the subject, and keep paired members of the governing body well informed about development.
- The school budget is managed very well and appropriate procedures are in place for the prioritisation of funds. Despite a fall in pupil numbers, the governing body

has sustained a good staffing provision. Expenditure is carefully monitored and evaluated. Overall, the school gives very good value for money.

- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are very good. Teachers are suitably qualified and provide the school with a wide range of expertise and experience. Very good use is made of ICT resource provision to support all areas of the curriculum.
- The school administrator, caretaking, cleaning and catering staff provide effective support for the school. The school buildings are clean and welcoming, and very good quality displays enhance the environment.
- The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in the majority of issues identified previously.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY THE PUPILS

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Standards of achievement are at least satisfactory in almost all lessons and sessions seen. In 75% they are good, and in a further 10%, very good.

- The educational provision for children under five, taken overall, is appropriate and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- Standards achieved by children in the nursery are very good in all six areas of learning. In reception, children achieve good standards in all six areas.
- In KS1, pupils achieve good standards in speaking, listening and reading, and satisfactory standards in writing. Pupils are aware of the need to listen carefully and speak clearly. They ask and answer questions and listen to the ideas of others. Pupils read a range of texts with increasing fluency. Standards in writing are limited by the number of worksheets used.
- Standards in mathematics are good; pupils are developing their awareness and ability in all mathematical areas, but some are slow in recall of number facts. Pupils achieve good standards in science and are keen to take part in scientific activities.
- Standards in information technology are very good. Pupils make good use of the technology to support their learning in all areas of the curriculum. Standards in art are also very good.
- Standards in design and technology, history, geography, and religious education are good.
- Standards in Welsh as an additional language, physical education and music are satisfactory
- The school's results for teacher assessment at the end of the key stage show that, when compared with schools of a similar intake, pupils are achieving very well in

science, with almost 90% achieving level 2 or above. The school is above the median for the core subjects, with 74% of pupils achieving level 2 or above in English, mathematics and science.

- The school's careful comparison of the 2002 assessment has shown that overall girls are achieving better than boys in all core subjects, and the school is addressing this issue through a variety of effective strategies.

3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum

Standards and progress in key skills achieved across the curriculum in the nursery are very good and good in reception. In KS1, standards in speaking and listening are good. In information and communications technology (ICT) they are very good. In reading, writing and numeracy standards are satisfactory.

- Children in the early years make good progress in applying and improving their developing skills in early literacy and numeracy across the six areas of learning. Many children use ICT confidently and make very good progress in its application.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress in the key skills in relation to their stage of development. The school's inclusive ethos ensures that all pupils are given appropriate support.
- Pupils develop good listening skills. They listen carefully to adults and respond appropriately to oral instructions. They are able to take turns and listen to each other in paired and group situations. While listening in class they are able to reflect and respond by asking and answering questions sensibly.
- Pupils are able to speak clearly and confidently in all subjects of the curriculum. They are beginning to apply appropriate subject specific vocabulary to related topics in their science and geography studies and use appropriate terminology when collaborating on IT related activities. When given the opportunity, extended responses to questions are evident in class discussions. This aspect of pupils' learning needs to be further developed in better time-managed plenary sessions.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in their reading skills across the curriculum and most read their own work with understanding. However, pupils need to develop their information retrieval skills further through simple research work in their topics and class discussions.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing across the curriculum. More able pupils write clearly and sequence their work appropriately. They write stories, re-tell experiences of famous people in history, write simple prayers in religious education and label plans and drawings. This aspect could be further developed in the foundation subjects and pupils enabled to use a full range of writing techniques for recording their experiences and findings. Written work varies in quality of presentation and is restricted by the extensive use of topic related worksheets.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing numeracy skills across the curriculum. There are good instances of using numeracy in other subjects, such as

measuring axles in design and technology, counting legs in science, rhythmical number songs in the early years, personal time lines and counting in Welsh lessons and folk dancing activities, but this aspect would benefit from further development.

- Pupils make very good progress in their use of ICT. Resources are used effectively to support pupils' understanding and reinforce their work in a range of curriculum topics. In Y1, pupils use a floor robot for estimating distance, degrees of turn and creating a whole route instruction. Effective use of ICT is made by Y2 pupils in drafting written work and in art when creating pictures in the style of Monet. Pupils use the electronic microscope effectively to support their work when studying mini-beasts in science. The electronic whiteboards are used purposefully to support a range of learning activities.
- The quality of whole school planning for the delivery of key skills is very good. Opportunities for the application of key skills are now clearly identified within teachers' short-term plans, and pupils develop their skills systematically.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

- In accordance with its aims the school provides a "caring, supportive and safe environment", in which pupils are confident, happy and secure. The values of respect for oneself and consideration for others underpin the ethos of co-operation within the class and school community.
- The quality of relationships within the school is good: a kindly and consistent approach by staff in establishing clear expectations within a welcoming and family orientated atmosphere is understood by pupils. This fosters good standards of behaviour and pupils' motivation.
- Whole school acts of collective worship are varied and planned using appropriate themes. They meet statutory requirements. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the singing of hymns, in readings and in aspects of role-play. They are encouraged to reflect on their attitudes in relationship to others. Opportunities for enhancing pupils' self-esteem and reinforcing positive attitudes arise in a weekly 'special mention' assembly.
- Pupils work well with each other in group and paired activities. They collaborate sensibly and most have a sense of fairness and consideration when sharing equipment and resources. Pupils know how rules help them and have been involved in the compilation of their own class rules.
- Older pupils show developing self-reliance when carrying out tasks and instructions within and outside the classroom. They develop a good understanding of having responsibility towards others when they read stories to younger children along with pupils from the adjoining Junior school.

- The school complies with the ACCAC framework (2000) in providing an appropriate programme of learning opportunities for the introduction of life skills. These skills are embedded into the daily life of the school through topic work and are reflected in the way in which pupils explain their views and share their feelings. Opportunities to develop these skills during more appropriately timed plenary sessions need further consideration in some classes.
- Visits to local churches, places of interest and fieldwork in local studies ensure that pupils' social skills are enhanced through contact with the immediate and wider community. Contributions by local clergy, adult volunteers, visiting speakers, performers, participation in annual festivals and in extra-curricular activities enrich their understanding and sense of community and contribute to the standards achieved. Pupils' awareness of their own responsibilities to the world in which they live and their understanding of sustainable development is addressed through re-cycling initiatives and topic related activities linked with the locality.
- Pupils are developing a clear understanding of others less fortunate than themselves and of the significance of equality issues through their fund raising for charities and talks by visitors to the school.
- The respect afforded to minority groups and pupils' understanding of other peoples lives, beliefs and traditions are promoted positively through stories and their studies in religious education. There is a policy in place which meets the legal requirements of the Racial Equality Act.
- Welsh culture and heritage has a secure place in the curriculum. Annual celebrations, educational visits related to geography and history topics, attractive displays, weekly held Welsh assemblies and extra-curricular activities enhance pupils' understanding of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig.

4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

Standards of behaviour and attitudes are good.

- The school has a good quality policy document on behaviour with a comprehensive section on dealing with bullying.
- Pupils are aware of the class 'golden rules' and comply with them in general.
- Staff have good relationships with pupils, who are generally friendly and courteous to each other and to adults.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning, persevering in their tasks and contributing eagerly to class discussions.
- Pupils are interested in the topics taught and are enthusiastic in sharing and explaining their work to visitors.
- In the majority of classes, pupils who present challenging behaviour are well managed and enabled to take a full part in class activities.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance is satisfactory.

- The average attendance for the last three terms prior to the inspection was 91.7%.
- Registration is carried out at the start of each session and absences are codified appropriately.
- The school has introduced a number of initiatives to reduce absences as much as possible. Sickness has adversely affected attendance, particularly in the Autumn term. Absences are monitored closely, and follow-up procedures are in place.
- The school has good support from the Education Welfare Officer on a regular basis.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

During the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in almost all lessons or sessions observed. It was judged to be good in 45% and very good in almost 20% of lessons.

- Throughout the school, teachers have a sound knowledge of the subjects and areas taught, and attend appropriate in-service courses (INSET). They share their subject expertise and teaching skills willingly with colleagues.
- In the nursery and reception classes, routines are well established and children have settled well into school. In the nursery, a wide range of appropriate activities is planned, with a clear focus on learning in a stimulating environment. Adult intervention in children's learning is effective and appropriately challenging.
- In reception classes, sessions have a clear objective and initial input is appropriate for children's age and stage of development. Some teaching focuses are too lengthy, but there is evidence that the school will enable children to experience a curriculum similar to that offered in the nursery very shortly.
- In KS1, planning shows continuity and progression across all subjects of the NC. Short term planning is directly linked to schemes of work. Key skills are beginning to be incorporated effectively.
- Teachers plan thoroughly and most lessons have clear learning objectives and outcomes, forming part of a well-structured sequence.
- Generally, the purpose of the lesson and how the objectives will be achieved is shared with pupils. Incidental opportunities for teaching arising from points made by pupils are used effectively.

- Teachers use a range of methods which meet the needs of the lesson objectives. These include whole-class input, paired activities and co-operative group work.
- Lessons begin promptly and transitions between subjects operate efficiently with little learning time being wasted.
- Teachers generally use questioning techniques effectively and extend pupils' responses. In the best practice, pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, and teachers' questioning enables pupils to explain the methods they have used.
- Where plenary sessions are of a sufficient length, pupils are able to reflect on their achievements and teachers reinforce their learning.
- In the best practice, teaching has a lively pace which keeps all pupils alert and involved. Lessons are very well structured and teachers set high but attainable expectations of both academic achievement and pupils' behaviour. Time management is good and pupils understand their personal targets.
- Work is matched to ability effectively and classroom assistants and support staff work efficiently and conscientiously alongside the teacher, making a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and welfare.
- In all classes, there is an over-reliance on worksheets. This has a negative impact on both standards achieved and presentation skills. This is particularly evident in standards of writing across the curriculum.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

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

- The policy for assessment, recording and reporting provides a sound basis for a whole-school approach to assessment. Strategies are in place for day to day informal assessment and recording of achievements and difficulties in both academic and social areas.
- Assessment is used effectively to plan work which is appropriate to the needs and abilities of individuals.
- Formal assessment data is used effectively to track progress, identify areas of weakness in individual performance and set targets for school improvement and development. The school evaluates its results in comparison with both local and national data.
- Portfolios of exemplar work are in place for most subjects. In the best examples, these are levelled and annotated effectively to give guidance on standards.
- Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to assessment, feeding back their observations to teachers to assist in planning future work for individual pupils.

- Marking is unsatisfactory at present. It does not provide constructive written comments for pupils pointing out achievements or areas for improvement. The school will benefit when the new policy document is applied consistently.
- Portfolios of pupils' work record their progress from the nursery through the school. These contribute positively to reports to parents and to transition to the adjoining junior school. Records of group reading are analytical and indicate individual achievements and difficulties.
- Parents are free to consult teachers about their children's progress throughout the year. Formal meetings are held in November and March, and parents have opportunities to discuss reports in the summer term. These reports are of good quality and comply with statutory requirements. They show what pupils have achieved in all areas and indicate how parents can help their children to progress.
- The school complies with the statutory arrangements for assessing and recording the achievement of pupils on the special needs register. It also uses assessment data to ensure that boys and girls have equal opportunities and achieve as well as they are able.

5.3 Curriculum

The school provides a good quality, broad and balanced curriculum.

- The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is well planned to ensure continuity and progression in all six areas of learning, and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Children enjoy a balanced programme of well-planned activities which are well matched to their particular learning needs and stage of development.
- The curriculum for children in reception tends to focus teacher intervention on specific areas such as mathematical and language development for whole morning sessions. However, teachers are aware of this and there is evidence that the school is planning that the early years curriculum will run similarly in both nursery and reception classes.
- In KS1, pupils study the full range of NC subjects and religious education. Time allocation is appropriate for most subjects, but lessons in Welsh are too long; this has an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and standards that pupils are expected to achieve.
- Whole school policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects in KS1. These are of good quality, provide effective guidance for teachers and ensure that pupils experience continuity and progression in their learning.
- Teachers plan together in year groups to ensure pupils experience a similar curriculum. Resources are used very effectively to support curriculum areas, particularly so in the case of ICT resources.
- Key skills are very well identified in medium term planning, and are beginning to be integrated effectively into lessons.

- Very good arrangements are in place to ensure the personal and social development of all pupils, and policy documents provide very good guidelines on a range of issues, including equal opportunities. Every child has good access to all aspects of the curriculum.
- Homework and extra-curricular activities such as Welsh Folk Dancing, Science Club and recorder sessions contribute positively to the quality of the curriculum, and are very well supported.
- Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig has a sound place throughout the school. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their understanding of the wider culture and heritage of Wales.
- The school has received the Quality Mark from the Basic Skills Agency, and has twice received the Investors in People Award.

5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

The quality of personal support and procedures for overseeing pupils' welfare is good.

- The school provides a welcoming and stimulating learning environment where pupils are encouraged to develop responsible attitudes towards each other and the immediate community.
- All staff ensure that pupils are enabled to explore new experiences across the curriculum and that purposeful learning takes place within a supportive and positive family ethos.
- The head teacher, teachers and support staff know their pupils well and have a clear understanding of their needs. Good relationships between staff and pupils are underpinned by the sense of respect for the child and a sensitive concern for their welfare and safety.
- Children in the early years are happy and show increasing confidence in their ability to cope with new experiences and challenges. Routines which encourage developing independence are well established.
- Home-school visits by the nursery staff prior to entry ensure a smooth transition from home to school and reinforce the child's sense of security and belonging.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are sensitively supported and are well integrated into class and school activities. The school considers issues of inclusion carefully and enables learning support assistants and adult helpers to provide good quality support for the learning programme. All staff are positive and kindly in their encouragement of pupils.
- Photographic and other records of special achievements and initiatives are collated and carefully displayed alongside pupils' own work. These considerably enhance the school environment and enable pupils understand that everyone's contributions, including their own, are valued.

- The use of writing books for the recording of personal responses would further enhance pupils self esteem and sense of ownership.
- Personal and social education is integrated meaningfully through a balanced programme of learning opportunities across the curriculum and is consistently reinforced throughout the school day by all staff.
- There is an appropriate policy for personal and social education which complies with the ACCAC framework 2000. Sex education is promoted sensitively within the context of this provision and is linked to physical education and topics in science.
- Overall responsibility for child protection is conscientiously undertaken by the head teacher who has ensured that all staff are aware of relevant procedures and have received the appropriate training. Sensitive attention is given to pupils' concerns. The school is appropriately supported by contact with relevant external agencies.
- The school has an appropriate Health and Safety policy which is reviewed by the governing body. Designated members of staff have received training in first aid and this aspect is under review for all members of staff.
- The safeguarding of pupils' general safety and well-being is well documented. The school does however need to further consider the repair of fencing on the outer perimeter of the school and unfilled holes in the school grounds, which constitute a potential hazard.
- The school's behaviour policy addresses appropriate playground rules as well as classroom expectations. A minority of pupils need to be reminded to remain within the confines of designated areas during outdoor play.
- The school has a controlled access system to ensure as far as possible the safety of pupils and staff during the school day.

5.5 Provision for pupils with SEN

The quality of provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is good. Pupils make good progress in their learning commensurate with their age and ability.

- Forty-three pupils are currently identified as requiring SEN support. There is one pupil for whom a statement of special educational needs has been made. There are no NC disapplications and no pupils for whom the NC is modified.
- The school has a clear policy in place explaining the procedures and administrative arrangements relating to the identification and assessment of pupils with SEN which meet the requirements of the revised orders of the Code of Practice. The SEN policy is reviewed annually and arrangements are assessed by the governing body who, along with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), monitor the implementation of the policy.

- The designated governor for SEN is very supportive and has visited the school on a regular basis.
- The role of the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) is effectively and diligently carried out by the head teacher who is well supported by the nursery teacher, who has recently been given the responsibility of support SENCO, and all other staff.
- A significant strength of the support programme is the effective and thorough way in which the school implements the procedures for the early identification of pupils with learning difficulties. Parental comments in the pre-inspection meeting indicated appreciation of the efforts made by the school in the level of support given to pupils experiencing difficulties.
- Emphasis is placed on the partnership between home, school and adult helpers in enabling pupils make good progress. Inclusivity is seen as a strength of the school and regular praise and positive reinforcement are characteristic of the process. All pupils are well integrated into class and extra-curricular activities. Appropriate relationships have been established with outside agencies who support and advise the school accordingly.
- Appropriate individual education plans (IEP's) are viewed as working documents and inform teachers' weekly planning. These are reviewed regularly by the SENCO.
- Small, achievable targets inform the IEP's of pupils receiving support at school and pupils are made aware of their targets. Parental involvement is actively encouraged at each step of the process.
- In-class support by classroom assistants, under teacher direction, provides positive learning experiences for pupils and ensures good progress is made within a sensitive and secure learning environment.
- One pupil with specific difficulties is well supported by a full time learning assistant.
- The school is reviewing its arrangements in relationship to the recently appointed language support teacher who currently supports pupils in withdrawal sessions. There is need to ensure that pupils receiving support in small group sessions have equal access to the learning programme at all times.

5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions

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

- Parents are very well informed about the life and work of the school, and receive an informative school prospectus. Additional information is provided throughout the year through booklets, newsletters and open evenings showing what is being taught, and confirming children's progress.
- Pre-admission home visits for children entering the nursery provide very positive links with parents, who also receive a useful nursery booklet.

- The questionnaires and pre-inspection meeting with parents indicated that parents are very supportive of the school. Any concerns they may have are discussed with staff members, who are very approachable.
- A small but active Parents' Association is strongly supported by all parents when it organises social and fundraising events. A small number of parents regularly support work in school through running the library and reading with children.
- Representatives of community organisations are regular visitors to the school. Pupils also have a wide range of educational experiences through visiting poets, authors, artists and local music societies.
- Pupils regularly visit community centres such as the senior citizens' home, and also join other schools in community charity concerts and dance festivals.
- The receiving junior school shares the site and transition links are well established. These very close links are evident in activities such as shared reading with Y6 pupils in the reception class. Regular liaison also takes place with the local comprehensive school and through cluster group meetings.
- The school provides useful work experience and practical training for students from nearby colleges, and a formal partnership has been established with a teacher training institution.
- The school has worked hard to earn a number of awards from outside agencies.

5.7 Partnership with industry

Partnership with industry is good.

- Effective partnership has been developed with local retail outlets, and one of these also includes the involvement of parents.
- The partnerships encourage pupils' understanding of the environment and the importance of healthy living, and extend the English curriculum. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is particularly enriched by these partnerships.
- Partnership with a local garden centre and do-it-yourself store supports a mini-enterprise project in the nursery. This enables funds to be raised for the nursery and encourages children's understanding of the environment.
- The Education Business Partnership has sponsored visits of the Science Roadshow to the school and has developed partnerships with local commerce.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

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

- The school has developed a culture of self-evaluation and this has had a significant impact on progress made since the last inspection.
- Procedures for self-evaluation and target-setting are clear and implemented very well.
- Monitoring of learning and teaching is undertaken by the head teacher and all subject leaders. All staff are regularly involved in the process of evaluation through a combination of scheduled class observations, scrutiny of books and conducting staff meetings.
- Staff have developed skills in observation of teaching and learning as a result of in-service training and this has had a positive impact on the quality of feedback following class visits. Recognition of good features is accompanied by recommendations for action.
- Scrutiny of planning by subject leaders includes consideration of planned topics, the variety of recording strategies used by pupil, evidence of pupils' work, the quality of presentation and standards achieved.
- The head teacher monitors the quality of short term planning and resulting standards of pupils' work. Class observations undertaken by the head teacher also help to appraise the quality of teaching.
- The deputy head teacher monitors the quality of assessment records and their use in informing planning, and provides feedback to teachers.
- The results from teacher assessment at the end of Y2 are analysed by the head and deputy head teacher in comparison with national and local data, and in the light of the abilities of specific cohorts of pupils.
- Information gathered from the monitoring process is used to inform identification of targets in the school improvement plan (SIP) and for the governing body, who are well informed about standards achieved in the school.
- Questionnaires completed by parents and staff have been used to evaluate provision and plan future activities.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The quality of leadership and efficiency is very good.

- The head teacher's high expectations for school performance have a strong impact on standards achieved. She encourages all staff to develop professional expertise and responsibility and this results in a team committed to school improvement.

- The deputy head teacher who is the co-ordinator for assessment, recording and reporting, and subject leader for mathematics and Welsh, provides invaluable additional leadership. Her support is particularly important as the school had, at the time of the inspection, two supply staff, one of whom is a newly-qualified teacher.
- Members of the governing body are very well-informed and totally involved in school developments. Shadow curriculum governors have been appointed and keep up to date with curriculum developments. Appropriate committees are in place and meet when necessary to support the work of the governing body.
- Subject leaders have a good knowledge of developments in their respective subjects and keep detailed logs of significant events and targets.
- Permanent members of staff have taken on additional temporary subject leadership roles to support development in the long term absence of two members of staff. Standards in these subjects have made progress since the last inspection.
- The school budget is managed very well. Despite a fall in pupil numbers, the governing body has sustained a good staffing provision. Appropriate procedures are in place for the prioritisation of funds.
- A number of minor shortcomings identified in the last financial audit have been addressed.
- School administration and routines operate effectively, largely due to the efforts of the school administrator.
- The school gives very good value for money.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is very good.

- There are sufficient teachers for the number of pupils on roll. Current permanent staff are well deployed. Teachers are well read in their areas of responsibility, and this has a significant effect on standards achieved.
- Pupils' learning is supported by a very good range of resources. Resources are both commercially produced and made by staff: in both cases, they address learning and teaching requirements very well. All resources are organised effectively for ease of access.
- Very good use is made of ICT resource provision. Outstanding examples seen during the inspection include the continual use of interactive whiteboards in all classes, digital camera and digital microscope and use of listening centres and floor robots.
- The main building and two demountables are in a very good state of repair, and are very well maintained by the school caretaker. Standards of cleaning are very good.

- One boundary fence and postholes remaining in the grassed area need attention.
- Attractive displays of pupils' work enhance the school's interior and are used effectively by pupils and teachers to enhance learning and celebrate achievement.
- Available space is used well. Classrooms are of good size and shared areas are used effectively for library and computer suite activities in Y1. Smaller areas are used for quiet class activities and withdrawal groups. The demountable classrooms are of a good size, and equipped with toilets and sinks.
- Both nursery and reception children have access to well-equipped outdoor areas, which are used regularly and effectively.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

The educational provision for children under five, taken overall, is appropriate and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

Children achieve very good standards in all six areas of learning in the nursery, and good standards in the reception classes.

Nursery

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills

- Children achieve very good standards in language, literacy and communication skills. They are willing to discuss activities with adults, and are happy to volunteer information. They take active part in imaginative play activities, based on their visit to the garden centre. They listen carefully in whole class sessions, and respond appropriately. They handle books well and enjoy stories and rhymes. Early writing activities show they are making very good progress.

Personal and Social Development

- Children achieve very good standards in their personal and social development. Children are confident and have good relationships with others and with adults. They know the daily routines and are able to work both as part of a group and independently, concentrating well and persevering in learning. They are eager to share new experiences, and are very excited by the miniature gardens they are growing. Most are happy to try new taste experiences at snack time and take turns and share very well.

Mathematical Development

- Standards in mathematical development are very good. Children are able to recognise and create patterns, and many can count to five and beyond. They recall number rhymes and songs well and use comparative language accurately. Their understanding of mathematical ideas such as ‘bigger’ and ‘smaller’ is developing well. More able children are beginning to recognise numerals and match them to objects.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- Children achieve very good standards in all aspects of their developing knowledge and understanding of the world. They are able to talk about their families and the work people do, and have an early understanding of past and future events. They use personal computers well, and are able to change the programmes effectively, commenting appropriately on what they are doing and seeing. They are eager to take turns using the interactive whiteboard to support their learning in many areas of the curriculum. They have very good understanding of growing things, and are able to talk about plants and animals with insight.

Physical Development

- Children’s physical development is progressing well. Their awareness of space is developing well both inside and outside the nursery. They climb, pedal and balance well, and many are excellent at throwing and catching. They use pencils, scissors and paintbrushes competently and are able to join construction materials effectively.

Creative Development

- Standards achieved are very good. Children take every opportunity to write, draw and paint. They manipulate dough and clay well, and can discuss what they are making. Play in sand and water enables them to make up stories, and they are entranced by their growing miniature gardens, putting up fencing and decorating them with shells and feathers. They enjoy singing and role play, responding enthusiastically to adults.

Reception

Good features

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills

- Children achieve good standards in language, literacy and communication skills. They generally listen to adults and each other effectively, and speak confidently. They are able to hold conversations during role play activities. They handle books well and are keen to repeat stories, both with an adult and by going through the powerpoint presentation on the interactive whiteboard. The most able can write their names, and are beginning to use early writing to describe their pictures.

Personal and Social Development

- Standards in personal and social development are good. Most are confident and can build effective relationships with adults and other children. They are willing to work as part of a group and are beginning to understand the need to take turns. Most will concentrate well and many will persevere to complete work. They can select their own activities independently and show an early understanding of the needs of others. They respond positively to Welsh greetings and are aware of greetings in other languages.

Mathematical Development

- Children's mathematical development is good. They understand mathematical ideas such as 'taller' and 'shorter' and are able to apply them in different activities. They are able to make patterns using two attributes when they look at the size and colour of fish. Most are beginning to recognise addition and equals symbols, and can use them in making number bonds to ten. They are beginning to recognise and name two-dimensional shapes.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- Children achieve good standards in all aspects of this area. They recognise how people help them and are able to talk about their environment. They show good recall of earlier experiences through looking at postcards and photographs. They recognise changes in clothing old and new and are able to talk about changes in the weather through the seasons. They are familiar with times of the day. They use computers to support their work in language and mathematics, and are able to discuss what they are doing competently. They can change the programmes effectively. When using the interactive whiteboard, they are able to use many functions very well, and it supports their learning in many areas.

Physical Development

- Children achieve good standards in physical development. They are able to use pencils, scissors and paintbrushes well, and are beginning to be able to trace early writing patterns. They make good progress with fitting jigsaws and construction toys together, and make good use of malleable materials. Daily access to outdoor play activities is a very positive aspect; children have good spatial awareness and this is evident in more formal physical education sessions.

Creative Development

- Standards in creative development are good. Children enjoy singing and respond positively to rhythm and rhyme. They are making choices about colour and use a good range of materials to create their own pictures and collages. They use pastels and pencils effectively when making observational drawings of fish. They enjoy imaginative role-play activities, dressing for the beach and taking a summer holiday. They are able to talk about what they are doing, and explain their choices.

Shortcomings

- Some writing activities are inappropriate as they are too structured for the children's age and stage of development.

- Planning for a whole morning of language or mathematical activities is inappropriate for reception children.

English

Standards in speaking and listening and in reading are good. In writing, standards are satisfactory. In relationship to their baseline capability, pupils have made good progress overall.

Good features

- Pupils make good progress in developing their listening skills. They are attentive to teachers' instructions and respond appropriately to requests. Pupils enjoy stories and listen intently in big book sessions and during topic discussions, their recall of relevant detail is good. They listen politely and take account of peers' responses in group activities. They use listening centres purposefully to support their language tasks.
- Pupils express themselves with growing confidence and make good progress in their speaking skills. They know the importance of taking turns, discuss sensibly in pairs and groups as in IT and science related tasks and are confident in sharing their thoughts and ideas with visitors. In geography lessons, pupils in Y1 select appropriate vocabulary and communicate thoughts and feelings clearly when describing the favourite aspect of a walk around the locality.
- In relationship to their ability and stage of development, pupils make good progress with reading by the end of the key stage. Pupils enjoy sharing books with visitors, they predict endings, distinguish important elements in stories and make pertinent observations about aspects of content.
- Guided reading sessions contribute positively to pupil's understanding of book skills. They can explain the use of titles and can talk about author, illustrator and blurb. They apply phonic skills and use a variety of strategies to interpret unfamiliar words. Home school reading diaries are a positive feature in supporting the reading programme.
- Pupils independent writing is progressing satisfactorily. They sequence work logically and begin to incorporate punctuation sensibly. They make good attempts to spell unfamiliar words and use dictionaries and word books to support their written work, In work related to big books pupils in Y2 develop writing skills using a given model and enjoy the experience of reading to peers.
- Pupils make good progress in the use of ICT in drafting their work and in the development of their reading and writing skills.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' ability to record personal responses and improve their independent writing in a range of contexts across the curriculum needs to be further developed; the number of worksheets used limits pupils ability to express themselves adequately at length.

- Pupils' handwriting skills and presentation in books is variable; this aspect needs to be further developed.
- Time constraints in some plenary sessions limits opportunities for pupils to give extended responses.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement in mathematics are good.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 build on the sound knowledge of number gained in the Early Years.
- At the beginning of the key stage pupils can count orally to 20, in twos to 20 and in tens to 100 with confidence. They can use these in dealing with coins and money sums.
- Pupils are able to complete addition and subtraction calculations with appropriate levels of understanding.
- Pupils can recognise and name a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes and use appropriate mathematical vocabulary to describe their properties.
- Older pupils are developing their knowledge and understanding of the 100 square. They can identify halves and quarters and recognise these when related to time.
- Pupils collect data and display the results using simple bar charts, pictograms and block graphs; some are displayed using computer graphics.
- Good use is made of ICT programmes to support mathematical development in Y1. Pupils also achieve good standards when using the interactive whiteboard to support their concept development.

Shortcomings

- Older pupils are slow and often inaccurate in mental arithmetic activities; pupils find it difficult to explain their thinking or describe the methods they are using.
- Pupils' experience of problem-solving and investigation in mathematics is limited.

Science

Standards in science are good.

Good features

- In the lessons observed, independent skills of investigation were developing effectively.

- Pupils work with interest and enthusiasm. They work collaboratively, share ideas and are beginning to recognise the need for a fair test.
- Pupils have a good understanding of materials and their properties. They can identify and describe a range of everyday materials and substances and learn through practical work that some materials can change through bending, twisting, stretching and heating.
- Pupils have investigated materials that are waterproof and the properties that make materials appropriate for building houses.
- Pupils study the local habitat around the school and treat small invertebrates with care and sensitivity. They make good use of the electronic microscope for examining features of woodlice, and use this knowledge to make very good observational drawings.
- Older pupils can describe their investigations into forces, and understand the different effects of pushes and pulls.
- They understand the life cycle of plants, butterflies and frogs and can explain the functions of different parts of plants. They are aware of the need to eat healthily and take exercise and of the effects of this.
- Older pupils can make an electrical circuit, identify various uses of electricity in the home, and are aware of some of the dangers of electricity.
- Almost all Y1 pupils take part in the Science Club, gaining silver and gold awards. They are enthusiastic and participate willingly in the activities, which support their scientific understanding very well.

Shortcomings

- The invariable use of worksheets limits the responses and methods of recording.
- Pupils' recall of previous work is limited, partly because their recording is not personal writing.

Welsh second language

Standards in Welsh as a second language are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons and make progress in learning basic vocabulary and sentence patterns. They are able to understand and follow simple instructions and commands, respond to greetings and answer registration appropriately.
- Pupils throughout the key stage are beginning to develop their skills in asking as well as answering basic questions relating to getting to know each other. Pupils in

Y2 know their colours, can relate these to clothing and can count objects confidently.

- Others in Y2 answer visitors questions regarding their well being and substitute vocabulary related to parts of the body into familiar sentence patterns.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their writing skills through exercises, which include labelling, copying sentences bases on given patterns and responding to questions based on stories from big books.
- Pupils develop appropriate reading skills from flash cards, big books and the interactive white board. In Y1, they mime weather words in response to reading from a big book and display an understanding of basic textual material by engaging in simple dialogue.
- Good use is made of ICT to support writing and oral activities. In Y1, pupils use phrases linked to the weather to generate computer drawings. Purposeful use is made of the interactive white board to consolidate target phrases and vocabulary.
- Cross-curricular work, including visits linked to geography and history topics, Anglo-Welsh stories, the study of Welsh artists and participation in Welsh assemblies contribute towards creating a Welsh ethos in the school. The assistance of the athrawes fro in supporting and encouraging teachers in the delivery and organisation of the subject programme has a beneficial effect on pupils' progress.

Shortcomings

- The good practice of utilising incidental Welsh during registration and throughout the school day in some classes, needs to be consistently applied using focused language patterns to ensure pupils' progression in developing oral skills in everyday situations.
- Some lessons are inappropriately long.

Design and technology

Standards achieved in design and technology are good.

Good features

- Pupils have a wide range of experiences and materials to make products. Work is linked well to other curriculum areas such as science and geography.
- Pupils are developing a good understanding of the design process and make and justify sensible choices.
- Good use is made of the computer suite in Y1 for designing and labelling pop-up toys.
- Pupils can talk meaningfully about their work; finished products are of a good standard and match their designs well.

- Pupils in Y1 use mechanisms effectively to produce moving pictures related to their theme of underwater animals and can evaluate them orally.
- Pupils in Y2 design and make moving vehicles, measuring axles carefully to ensure they will work.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Information technology

Standards achieved in information technology (IT) are very good.

Good features

- Pupils make very good progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding of IT, and use it purposefully every day to support their learning.
- Pupils use computers to enhance learning in all subject areas. They are competent in keyboard skills, use the mouse accurately, can change fonts and save and print their work with no adult input.
- Pupils can interrogate a database which they have recorded and produce bar charts and pictograms with specific information.
- Pupils use interactive drop-down menus and icons effectively, and use word processing for drafting their work.
- Y1 pupils use 'paint' programmes effectively to illustrate designs in geography and design and technology. They can import text and illustrations and change background colour, brush and line effects competently. Y2 use different effects to produce excellent waterlily pictures after the style of Monet.
- Pupils use a floor robot to estimate distances in mathematics and geography and can programme and record complex pathways towards and around objects.
- Pupils use listening centres and tape recorders independently to support their work in other areas.
- All pupils use the interactive whiteboard competently, using drop-down interactive menus very well. They are able to use icons and select the materials they need for particular activities. They understand the functions available to them and can explain what they are doing clearly.
- Pupils use digital cameras to record their work in other subject areas, and can input and print these photographs.

- Pupils have used e-mail to correspond with other schools and the school is planning to make further use of the internet once it is connected to broadband.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

History

Standards in history are good.

Good features

- Throughout the key stage pupils have a clear understanding of the ways in which everyday life in the past is different from the present. They use appropriate vocabulary and terminology to compare and describe the passing of time.
- When answering questions and talking about their work on schools and houses of long ago their recall of previous learning is good. They compare their own schooling with that of children long ago, list differences and offer opinions on the comparisons made. Their understanding is further enhanced by questioning great grandparents about their own school experiences.
- Personal time lines, comparisons of clothes and homes from the past to the present, ageing toys and sequencing of topic related pictures contribute to pupils' chronological awareness.
- Through practical experiences and observing the paintings of Pieter Breugel, pupils in Y1 learn of playground games played by children long ago and compare these to present-day games. They record their findings through photographic evidence.
- Pupils in Y2 consolidate their understanding of the characteristic features of different periods in their study of ships through the ages and associated adventurers such as Henry Morgan. They use subject specific vocabulary with understanding in the resulting discussion following observation of related visual aids.
- Pupils understand that they can find out about the past from a range of historical sources including museum visits, photographs, talking to older children and adults and handling related artefacts. Purposeful use of visits, speakers, attractively displayed artefacts, photographs and ICT enhance pupils understanding.

Shortcomings

- Opportunities for pupils to communicate their knowledge and understanding of events in history through writing about the past in different forms could be further developed to include their own ideas and judgements.

Geography

Standards in geography are good.

Good features

- The emphasis placed on fieldwork in developing pupils' ability to observe, collect, record information and communicate opinions ensure that pupils' geographical skills are developed progressively throughout the key stage.
- Pupils make pertinent observations about physical and human features following a local environmental walk. They make good progress in the development of an appropriate geographical vocabulary which they are beginning to apply in a variety of relevant contents.
- Pupils geographical skills such as the drawing of maps, plans and routes, the use of photographs and symbols are developing appropriately throughout the key stage. Pupils make good progress.
- Pupils in Y1 record their first impressions of a walk to the local park and collate their findings in a class book. They can recall the main characteristics of their observations and sequence them correctly. Pupils create their own mapstep from collected materials and can justify their comments on aspects they found attractive and unattractive about their locality.
- In their observations on the local environment, pupils show an understanding of the undesirability of litter and rubbish and can give opinions on environmental concerns related to recycling.
- Past evidence and teachers' planning shows that pupils learn to compare their own locality with a different locality in visits to Caerphilly and Porthcawl. Photographic and recorded evidence suggest that pupils begin to understand why land use differs in different localities. They make effective use of their study of a Welsh artist to create land use maps of what was observed at the seaside.
- Pupils use ICT in a variety of ways to assist their work in geography. They are beginning to develop their skills in digital photography when studying their immediate locality, make use of a floor robot to estimate distance and create a whole route instruction and CD-Rom programmes to reinforce their understanding.

Shortcomings

- Opportunities for pupils to provide individual written responses to geographical enquiries need to be further developed.

Art

Standards in art are very good.

Good features

- The very good quality policy document and scheme of work ensure that pupils have a very broad experience of both two- and three-dimensional art activities, and experience very good progression in skills and understanding.
- Pupils observe carefully and are able to use a variety of media such as pencils, oil pastels and paints to draw what they see, producing sensitive pictures which are well finished.
- They explore line and tone when drawing insects and woodlice and look carefully for pattern and texture.
- They use a variety of printmaking techniques to produce illustrations for their work, including monoprinting and impressed printing.
- They are able to use techniques with fabrics, including paints, weaving and tie dye to produce effective results.
- Their work in three dimensions includes the use of papier mache, air drying clay and plaster bandage to make a variety of well-considered artefacts from small to large.
- Y2 pupils study Monet's waterlily paintings carefully for texture and colour, and use what they have seen in making textured bookmarks, weaving with paper and cloth, using watercolour paints sensitively to produce background pictures, and using oil pastels to build up colours effectively from dark to light in their observational drawings.
- Pupils also use 'paint' programmes to produce appropriately textured pictures of waterlilies. They understand that the whole page has to be filled to gain a similar effect to Monet's.
- Well-considered displays of pupils' work are a feature of the school, showing that art is being used effectively to support other areas of the curriculum, including Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig.
- The work of Welsh artists is studied and similar techniques used effectively in pupils' own work throughout the school.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Music

Standards achieved in music are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils have a good repertoire of hymns, songs and rhymes in both English and Welsh.

- Pupils enjoy singing in assembly; most are able to sing in tune and vary pitch appropriately.
- Pupils can identify and name untuned percussion instruments correctly, and are able to distinguish ones which are shaken, tapped or plucked.
- Older pupils are able to keep a steady beat and clap and play a simple rhythm.

Shortcomings

- There is little evidence of progression in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils do not always respond appropriately to instructions in music lessons, for example in relation to dynamics and pace.

Physical education

Based on observations of one games lesson and three dance lessons, standards were judged to be satisfactory. No lessons of gymnastics were observed.

Good features

- Throughout the key stage, pupils participate with confidence and evident enjoyment in their activities through which they develop good movement skills. Most respond well to instructions, are aware of the importance of rules and recognise the importance of safety. They work together sensibly.
- Pupils have a good awareness of space and know how to adapt their actions in contrasting fast and slow movements when changing directions. They have good body control.
- During their dance lessons, pupils in Y1 demonstrate good skills in putting together previously practised fish actions based on a story. They use body language effectively to portray pride and can produce contrasting shapes at different levels. They achieve good results in adapting linked movements to musical rhythms.
- Pupils in Y2 control their bodies well to interpret music portraying movements of balloons. They show a clear understanding of the relevance of rhythm and beat in their response to the mood of the music.
- During their games activity, pupils in Y2 co-operate well in teams and are attentive to teacher's instructions. They begin to develop their skills in controlling the ball with their feet and some achieve good standards.
- During an extra curricular dance activity, pupils respond appropriately to the music, have well co-ordinated movements and remember the sequence of patterns. They utilise space sensibly and work effectively in pairs.

Shortcomings

- Opportunity for pupils to make simple judgements on how to improve their own efforts and evaluate those of others would enable pupils to refine their skills.
- Pupils not participating in the physical education lessons need to be purposefully involved in evaluating their peers.

Religious education

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Within a supportive and sensitive school environment pupils have developed a very good sense of community and recognise the significance of belonging to a family. Good values are explained and caring relationships are promoted successfully; pupils are developing a clear understanding of the importance of these to daily life.
- Pupils can explore their own feelings in relationship to others. They talk with understanding of the importance of being kind and helpful to friends and show a sensitive realisation of how others feel. Relevant stories from the Bible and moral messages in assembly reinforce pupils' understanding of this aspect of their learning.
- Pupils in Y1 develop an understanding of their own self-worth and the feelings of others when participating in circle time discussions on the importance of having a name.
- In their study of special people, pupils in Y2 are thoughtful and perceptive in giving reasons for their choice. They clearly understand the need to give thanks and write meaningful messages on certificates awarded to the special people in their lives.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the purposes of places of worship of their own and other faiths. They learn tolerance and understanding of other religions through role play and visits to alternative places of worship. An imaginatively re-created classroom church, visits to the local church and support by the local clergy enhance pupils knowledge and understanding.
- Following visits to a synagogue in their study of the Jewish faith, pupils are able to talk about the significance of different symbols and state preferences. They make good progress in their understanding of significant celebrations such as christenings and have a good recall of shared celebrations such as Harvest and Christmas in their local church.

Shortcomings

- Overuse of worksheets is inhibiting pupils' personal responses. Opportunities for pupils to record their own thoughts and feelings need to be further developed.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The last inspection which took place in March 1998 identified four key issues for action.

- **Improve standards in information technology and religious education.**

The school has made very good progress with developing these two subjects. Standards in information technology are now very good, and those achieved in religious education are good.

- **Address the shortcomings in mathematics, design and technology, geography and physical education.**

The school has made good progress in mathematics, design and technology and geography, where standards achieved are now good. Standards in physical education are satisfactory, and the subject is included in the key issues in this report.

- **Review organisational procedures and the deployment of teaching and non-teaching staff in order to improve the adult-pupil ratio in KS1 and to support the needs of all pupils.**

Deployment of staff and organisation in KS1 is appropriate, and the needs of all pupils are well supported.

- **Improve and develop the outdoor play facilities for all pupils.**

The nursery play area has been considerably improved since the class is now in the main school building. Reception children have the opportunity to use the courtyard play area every day. Both areas have a soft landing surface and provide opportunities for children to undertake gardening activities. The KS1 playground has interesting games and, when dry, children have the opportunity to use the large grassed area at the back of the school.

Overall, the school has made very good progress in the majority of issues identified previously.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order to raise standards and build on the very good progress already made, the school and its governing body need to:

- improve standards in writing*, Welsh*, music and physical education*;
- address the issue of the over-use of worksheets throughout the school;
- improve marking of pupils' work*;
- fully implement the good quality policy document for key skills in order to improve standards in reading, writing and numeracy across the curriculum*.

* These aspects have been identified in the current School Improvement Plan for development.

The inspection team thanks pupils, parents, staff and governors of Plas-y-Felin Infant School for the kindness, consideration and co-operation that they gave the team during the inspection.

APPENDIX

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Plas-y-felin Infants
School type	LEA maintained
Age -range of pupils	3 – 7 years
Address of school	Lewis Drive Churchill Park Caerphilly
Post-Code	CF83 3FT
Telephone Number	02920 852524

Headteacher	Mrs L Gannon
Date of appointment	September 1995
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mr Dilwyn Jones
Registered Inspector	Mrs H R D Palmer
Dates of inspection	6 – 9 May 2003

B. School data as indicators

Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Total
Number of pupils	24	55	52	58	189fte

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	8	0	8

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	20.6 : 1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	10 : 1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	27.5
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.1 : 1

	R	KS1	Whole school
Term 1	88	93	90.4
Term 2	89	90	89.8
Term 3	88	92.3	90.2

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.	0
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C. Results of national curriculum assessments and public examinations

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2002			Number of pupils in Y2: 61					
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	3	18	61	1 8	0
		National	0	4	13	62	2 1	0
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	5	15	59	2 1	0
		National	0	4	13	54	2 9	0
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	10	15	62	1 3	0
		National	0	5	13	70	1 2	0
EN: Speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	18	61	2 1	0
		National	0	3	11	63	2 3	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	2	10	66	2 3	0
		National	0	2	9	60	2 9	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	11	57	3 1	0
		National	0	2	10	67	2 1	0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
In the school:	74	In Wales	81

D. The evidence base of the inspection

Before the inspection, meetings were held with the staff, the governing body and the parents of pupils registered at the school. Fifteen parents were present at the pre-inspection parents' meeting. Documents supplied by the school were scrutinised and 52 questionnaires returned by parents were analysed. A team of three gave ten inspector days to the inspection, in the course of which formal observations were made of 50 lessons or part lessons. In addition, 54 formal notes were made of aspects

of pupils' work and provision. Discussions with pupils from all age groups and abilities were undertaken, both inside and outside the classroom. A representative sample of pupils' work from all classes and for the whole academic year was scrutinised. Teachers' plans and records were examined. Inspectors considered the site, fabric and resources of the school. Discussions were held with the Head and with teachers, particularly about their subject management roles. Still within the context of the inspection, reporting back meetings took place with the Head, the staff and the governing body.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspection	Responsibilities
Mrs H R D Palmer Registered Inspector	1. Context 2. Main Findings 3. Standards of Achievement 5.1 Quality of Teaching 5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting 6.1 Self-Evaluation 6.2 Leadership and Efficiency 6.3 Resources 8.1 Progress since the last inspection 8.2 Key Issues Early Years Mathematics Science Design and Technology Information Technology Music Art
Mrs G Rees Team Inspector	3.2 Key Skills 4.1 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development 5.4 Support and Educational Guidance 5.5 Special Educational Needs Welsh as an additional language English History Geography Physical Education Religious Education
Mr C Hewitt Lay Inspector	4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes 4.3 Attendance

	5.6 Links with parents, etc. 5.7 Links with Industry
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