

**Inspection under Section 10 of the
Schools Inspections Act 1996**

**Rhiw Syr Dafydd Junior School
Syr Dafydd Avenue
Oakdale
Blackwood
NP12 7JJ**

School Number: 676 2369

Date of Inspection: 31st October – 3rd November 2005

by

**Mr Peter Mathias
W203/78829**

Date: 2nd January 2006

Under Estyn contract number: T/083/05 P

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Rhiw Syr Dafydd Junior School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents more information about their child's school. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of **Rhiw Syr Dafydd Junior School** took place between **31st October and 3rd November 2005**. An independent team of inspectors, led by **Mr Peter Mathias**, undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This summary report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	many important shortcomings

There are three types of inspection:

For all inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject sections.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports in all subjects.

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who attain the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who attain the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y 13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The national curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving this report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. **Rhiw Syr Dafydd Junior School** with 251 pupils on roll aged from 7 to 11 years is situated in the village of Oakdale in the Sirhowy Valley in South Wales. The Unitary Authority (UA) is Caerphilly. It was built in 1908 and is due to close and merge with a nearby infant school to form a new school on the infant school site. This is planned to occur in September 2006. The school serves the local community and pupils come from a range of family backgrounds.
2. The school reports that many pupils enter the school with at least average achievement in English and mathematics. There are few pupils from socially deprived backgrounds. About 10% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is below the UA's average of 20.8% and the all Wales average of 19% of pupils entitled to free school meals. About 20% of pupils are considered to have some degree of special educational needs (SEN) for a variety of learning difficulties, of which five pupils have statements of SEN. This is an above average figure. All pupils have English as their predominant language of the home. All but a small number of pupils enter the school from the nearby infant school at the age of seven.
3. The aims of the school are: for pupils to acquire appropriate skills for life and employment; to help pupils understand the community in which they live; to develop in pupils caring, courteous and positive attitudes, to help pupils reach their full potential and to enable pupils to appreciate the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of life.
4. The school holds Investors in People status (2005) and the Basic Skills Quality Mark (2003).
5. The school was last inspected in 1999. Since then there have been significant staff changes. Currently the deputy headteacher is on long-term absence due to ill-health. His position is filled on an acting basis by a long serving member of the teaching staff.

The school's priorities and targets

6. The school's major priorities and targets for 2005/2006 are: -
 - To improve the process of self-evaluation.
 - To facilitate the amalgamation with Oakdale Infant School.
 - To improve transition arrangements between KS1 and KS2.
 - To develop a new scheme of work in history.
 - To raise standards further in English, mathematics and science.

Summary

7. Rhiw Syr Dafydd provides a good education for its pupils, which has no important shortcomings. It has a strong sense of community and an atmosphere where relationships between pupils and adults are very positive.
8. The inspection team agreed with the judgements made by the school about the standards pupils achieve and with five out of the six other judgements the school made about other areas of its work. In Key Question 4, the school over-estimated how well learners are cared for, guided and supported.

Table of grades awarded

Key question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	2
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	2
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	2
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	2
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	2
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

STANDARDS

Pupils' standards of achievement	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	8%	73%	19%	0%	0%

9. Standards of achievement in lessons are above the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) all Wales target for 95% of standards to be at least Grade 3 and 50% to be Grade 1 or Grade 2. In this inspection in 81% of lessons achievement was high. This is a strong feature.

Subject	Key Stage 2
English	2
Mathematics	2
Information technology	3
History	2
Art	2
Religious education	2

10. Pupils' standards and progress in the key skills have good features, which outweigh shortcomings. In the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing

and mathematics, standards of achievement are Grade 2, good features and no important shortcomings. Generally pupils across the school use these skills confidently in other subjects. Pupils' key skills in information technology (IT) have some shortcomings, which are linked to a lack of equipment. As a result, across the school pupils do not have sufficient confidence and knowledge to use IT well to support their learning. Pupils' bilingual skills are also limited because they have too few opportunities to use Welsh informally. Pupils' problem solving skills, their personal and social skills and their creative skills have strong features and not important shortcomings. Generally, pupils know what they should do to improve.

11. In KS2 national tests for eleven year olds in 2005, the percentage of pupils reaching or exceeding the expected standards (Level 4) was above the Unitary Authority (UA) and all Wales averages. In comparison to schools considered to have a broadly similar small proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, these results are below most of those similar schools. Since 1999, the school's performance in the test has improved year on year. In 2002 the school exceeded the UA and national averages. Since then its performance has remained above these benchmarks. From the provisional results available in these tests in 2005 the school would seem to have met the targets set for it by the UA. The performance of boys compared to girls in English and mathematics is broadly the same. In science boys perform better than girls, generally pupils achieve well. However, in some lessons the more able are under challenged.
12. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they have positive attitudes to their work. They show considerable respect for each other. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Pupils' personal and social skills are well developed. Levels of attendance at 94.5% compare well with both national and local averages. Nearly all pupils arrive promptly at the beginning of the day. The school meets the WAG guidance for the reporting and recording of attendance.

The quality of education and training

13. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching and learning were judged as follows: -

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	70%	27%	0%	0%

14. The percentage of lessons at Grade 3 or above is above the WAG target for 95% of lessons to be in these categories. Some 73% of lessons are Grade 1 or Grade 2. This is above the national target for 50% of lessons to fall into these categories.
15. In the best lessons teachers know their subjects well. Teachers ensure that pupils are fully aware of what they should learn during the lessons. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are warm and encouraging. Teachers ensure that all pupils play a full part in their lessons.

16. Where teaching has some shortcomings, there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' key skills and to promote their bilingual skills, a lack of real pace and appropriate level of challenge particularly for the above average pupils. In some lessons, pupils spend too much time listening and do not have enough opportunities to work things out for themselves.
17. There are extensive arrangements to monitor pupils' achievements and to use that information to judge pupils' progress. All statutory requirements are met in full. In the best lessons, teachers use the information they gather from pupils' achievement to set short-term targets for pupils to work towards. However, these arrangements are not put into effect consistently across the school to challenge all pupils including the more able.
18. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is accessible to all pupils. It meets legal requirements and the needs of all pupils, including those with SEN. Opportunities to develop pupils' bilingual skills and their knowledge of their Welsh heritage, for example in art are under-emphasised.
19. The school makes appropriate provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Pupils have a good understanding of environmental issues, sustainable development and world citizenship.
20. The curriculum is enriched by a good variety of out of school activities and visits. However, pupils' entrepreneurial skills are limited.
21. Pupils' social and moral development is promoted very successfully. However, pupils' spiritual and cultural development has some shortcomings as well as some strengths. For example, while assemblies are happy occasions and are of a broadly Christian nature, insufficient time is given to reflection on the principles being discussed. Similarly provision for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is limited.
22. There are well organised opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, to make decisions and to prepare for living in the community. Links with parents are generally positive and the school is well supported by a very active parents' association.
23. The school knows and responds to individual pupils' personal needs well. Staff create a caring and supportive environment. There are strong links with outside agencies and services. There are extensive and effective arrangements to enable younger and older pupils when they to transfer successfully to their new school. However, the organisation of some year groups based on pupils' standards in English and mathematics do not help pupils to develop a sense of equal worth and experience of working with pupils of different abilities who are of the same age. Pupils only work together in groups of wider abilities and achievement in physical education.

Leadership and management

24. The headteacher provides an experienced and knowledgeable lead. Staff have a strong sense of purpose. They work together enthusiastically and support each other well. The school successfully promotes a caring family atmosphere. There are thorough procedures in place to assess pupils' progress and to raise standards further. New arrangements to teach English and mathematics across the school in similar ways have been successfully introduced by hardworking and well organised co-ordinators. However, not all co-ordinators have had planned opportunities to look at the teaching and learning going on and the impact of initiatives they are pursuing.
25. The governing body is very committed to the school. It is well led. Many governors are well informed and actively involved in determining the strategic needs of the school. They meet all regulatory requirements in full. Arrangements to evaluate the school's strengths and shortcomings are extensive and paint an accurate picture. The school has made sound progress since its last inspection.
26. There are a sufficient number of qualified teachers and support assistants who provide a good blend of youth and experience. The quality and quantity of resources for teaching are generally good. However there are a limited number of classroom computers which have a detrimental impact on pupils' key skills in IT. The school has identified the need to improve this provision when the new school is due to be completed later in the current school year. The school has a strong commitment to the continued professional development of teachers.
27. Overall, bearing in mind the progress pupils make and the quality of education provided, the school gives value for money.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school in the areas inspected the staff and governing body need to: -

- R1 improve pupils' bilingual skills, their knowledge and understanding of their Welsh heritage and their competence in IT;
- R2 put into effect when appropriate, the school's intentions to improve further its IT facilities and equipment;
- R3 review the school's policy for inclusion so that all pupils have good opportunities to work with pupils of different abilities within their age groups;
- R4 extend the roles of co-ordinators so that on a planned basis, all co-ordinators have opportunities to look at the success of teaching and learning at first hand and to assess the impact of initiatives they are pursuing;

- R5 make the good practice in some classes of setting short-term achievable targets for pupils consistent across the school.

Standards

Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

28. Overall, the findings match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation.

Pupils' standards of achievement	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	8%	73%	19%	0%	0%

29. Pupils' standards of achievement in lessons are above the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) all Wales target of 95% of standards to be Grade 3 and 50% to be Grade 2 or better. In this inspection in 81% of lessons achievement was high. This is a strong feature.

30. In KS2 in the subjects inspected the standards of achievement are as follows: -

Subject	Key Stage 2
English	2
Mathematics	2
Information technology	3
History	2
Art	2
Religious education	2

31. Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve the targets set for them.
32. Pupils' standards and progress in the key skills have good features that outweighing shortcomings. In KS2, pupils' standards and progress in the key skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics have good features and no important shortcomings. Generally, pupils across the key stage use these skills confidently in other subjects.
33. Pupils' skills in IT have shortcomings. However, pupils lack confidence and knowledge to use IT to support their writing and to investigate work. In some classes, pupils use digital cameras effectively to record their observations, but pupils' use of the interactive whiteboard is limited. Pupils do not consistently use IT to interpret and display information they gather.
34. Pupils' bilingual skills are limited because they have too few opportunities to build regularly on what they know. Pupils' problem solving skills are good. Pupils have well developed personal and social skills and work well together.

Pupils' creative skills are good. Across the school, some but not all pupils have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve their own work.

35. In the end of KS2 national tests for eleven year olds, the percentage of pupils reaching or exceeding the expected level was above the UA and national averages in English, mathematics and science. In comparison to schools considered to have a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, these results are below most of these similar schools. In these tests, the comparative performance of boys against girls in English has been considerably reduced so that the boys and girls performance is now very similar. Substantial improvement has also been made in the relative performance in mathematics of boys and girls. In science, boys perform slightly better than girls. The results in English, mathematics and science when taken together are above most schools in Wales. Generally, pupils achieve well. However, in some lessons the more able are under challenged.
36. Since 1999, the school's performance in these tests has improved year on year. In 1999, it was below the UA and all Wales averages. In 2002, the school exceeded the UA and national averages. Since then, its performance has remained above both benchmarks. From the provisional data available it would appear that the school has met the targets set for it by the UA in 2005. Pupils are well prepared to move to the next stage of their education.
37. Pupils' personal and social skills are well developed. Throughout the school, pupils are well motivated and enjoy their lessons. They work well independently and when in groups support one another in their learning. They are eager to answer questions and keen to learn.
38. Pupils' very good behaviour in and around the school contributes well to their progress and development and is an outstanding feature of the school. The school successfully creates a positive working atmosphere, which promotes good behaviour and this has a considerable impact on pupils' learning.
39. Pupils throughout the school are courteous, considerate and interact well with each other, with teachers and with visitors. Pupils willingly take on additional responsibilities. Older pupils act as prefects watching over children at play, manning doors and ensuring a safe passage into school from the playground. Other pupils help sort out the daily fruit allocation for each classroom or assist with assembly. Pupils understand the school rules and the values the school encourages. Class teachers are good role models and address any signs of inappropriate behaviour at an early stage. No incidents of bullying or any form of harassment were observed during the inspection and pupils and parents say that such incidents are rare, but if it does happen, staff deal with it promptly and firmly.
40. Whole school attendance during the three terms preceding the inspection averaged 94.5 per cent which is close to both national and local averages. Unauthorised absence is low. Registers are promptly called at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions, and provide an opportunity to exercise knowledge and understanding of Welsh. The school meets the requirements

set out in Welsh Office Circular 3/99. A small number of pupils are late arriving. Lessons throughout the day begin on time. There were no exclusions in the last 12 months.

41. Pupils enjoy and respond well to problem solving and decision-making activities. They work well independently or in groups where they express their views with confidence and listen to the opinions of others. They are developing well their skills to enable them to work independently.
42. Pupils develop a good understanding of their community, and learn about work through visits to places of interest and through their involvement in community projects. The school was involved in the design and construction of the impressive Oakdale Colliery memorial. The school choir and pupils were involved with other members of the community in commemorating the 60th anniversary of the ending of World War 2. Pupils monitored the construction of a house on a nearby estate. These activities are successful in helping develop an understanding of, and involvement in, their community.
43. The school takes part in a good range of activities within the community. Pupils from the school visit the library and attend the parish church. Occasionally the vicar visits the school to talk to children and assist with assembly. The proceeds from the school's harvest festival are distributed amongst the elderly. Pupils enjoy taking part in the St David's day Eisteddfod and Christmas concert where they sing and dance and entertain visitors. Visitors such as the community police officer, members of the fire service and road safety talk to children about their work and help pupils understand their role in the community. Pupils support a number of charities, which helps them to have a clear understanding of the plight of those less fortunate than themselves.
44. A good range of visits and visitors contribute to pupils' development, their sense of community and their understanding of the world of work.

The quality of education and training

Key question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

45. Overall the findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was judged as follows: -

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	70%	22%	0%	0%

46. The percentage of good lessons is above the WAG target of 95% to be Grade 3 or better. The percentage of Grade 1 and Grade 2 lessons is above the national target of 50% of lessons to be in these categories.

47. In the best lessons, teachers show strong subject knowledge and high expectations of their pupils, for example, when using IT to design the front page of a newspaper or when explaining parts of speech in an English lesson. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards inventively to make their lessons come to life. A particular strong feature in the best lessons is the way in which teachers make pupils clearly aware of what they should learn in the lesson. They review these objectives thoroughly at the end of the lesson. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and encouraging. As a result, pupils work at a good pace in order to please their teacher. In the best lessons, teachers take opportunities very well to promote pupils' bilingual skills. They ensure that all pupils are involved in the lessons and treat them equally. The teachers recognise individual differences sensitively and promote pupils' learning well.
48. In the lessons where good features outweigh shortcomings, teachers missed opportunities to develop pupils' key skills. The lessons lacked real pace and failed to hold the pupils' interest because some of the tasks were not well matched to pupils' abilities. In a small number of lessons, pupils spent too much time listening and had too few opportunities to work things out for themselves.
49. The teaching of pupils with some degree of SEN is effective and ensures that the needs of these pupils are well addressed.
50. Arrangements to assess pupils' long-term achievements are extensive. They meet statutory requirements in full. Teachers keep records up to date and use them to track the progress of individual pupils carefully.
51. In the best examples, teachers set short-term achievable targets to enable pupils to make small gains in their learning and to recognise short-term progress and achievement. They share these targets sensitively with the pupils concerned. However, these procedures are not used systematically across the school to ensure that pupils of all abilities, and particularly the more able, are always challenged appropriately.
52. In English and mathematics, subject co-ordinators review pupils' work and the information available from reliable tests to identify strengths and areas of weakness. This has helped to continue to raise standards in these subjects. Co-ordinator reviews have not been extended to other subjects.

Key question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

53. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
54. The curriculum is good and it provides equal access to a broad and balanced range of activities, which reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum

and the agreed syllabus for religious education. There is effective provision for pupils' personal and social education. The curriculum is stimulating and enriched by many relevant practical experiences, with good continuity and progression throughout the school. The curriculum complies fully with legal requirements. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for Literacy and Numeracy.

55. The support for learning throughout the school is Grade 2 – good features with no significant shortcomings. The SEN policy reflects the requirements of the code of practice and the additional support provided for these pupils, enables them to make the required progress. Opportunities for the inclusion of some of these pupils with SEN to work alongside pupils of differing ability in most subjects are underdeveloped. Generally, pupils with profound needs and displaying challenging behaviour are positively managed, effectively raising their standard of achievement. Gender differences and social disadvantage are effectively addressed and all pupils have the opportunity to achieve high standards in all areas of school life. Opportunities for the gifted and more-able pupils to extend their learning are inconsistent and underdeveloped.
56. Curriculum planning builds systematically on existing knowledge, understanding and skills. The approach used by the school is very effective and the planning provides a clear structure which helps pupils to build systematically on what they already know and can do, resulting in good pupil progress.
57. Pupils benefit from a carefully organised curriculum so that most of the basic and key skills, which are considered necessary for pupils' learning, are well covered. However, there are shortcomings in the consistency of planning key skills and in particular, IT across the curriculum. The addition of an interactive white board in every classroom is recently contributing to raising pupils' standards in information communication technology across the curriculum. In some classes opportunities to develop bilingual skills are not always identified and taken up.
58. Pupils have equal opportunities to participate in an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities which are held during lunchtimes, after school or on a residential basis. The sporting activities are very wide with some pupils achieving high standards. Individual pupils have access to tuition on a range of musical instruments including brass and guitar with participation in a variety of competitions because of their association with the Urdd (the Welsh League of Youth.) Pupils of all abilities enjoy a Mathematics Club.
59. Provision for pupils' spiritual development has strengths and some minor shortcomings. School assemblies are happy occasions of a broadly Christian nature that offer moral guidance and promote a strong sense of community. Insufficient time is given for reflection during these whole-school assemblies. Pupils develop a good understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures, through religious education, geography and their close link with an orphanage in Zimbabwe. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig does not emphasise sufficiently the work of a good range of Welsh artists.

60. Provision for promoting pupils' moral and social development is good with some outstanding features in behaviour, in and out of school. The aims of the school promote positive values and attitudes. Pupils know right from wrong and provision is enhanced through strategies promoting personal and social education within the curriculum. The school follows the guidance provided by the Qualifications Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC). The quality of pupil relationships within the school is good and is exhibited in very good self-discipline.
61. The partnership with parents is good. Communication is effective and parents are well informed about general administrative arrangements including their child's progress. A very active parent association raises funds and supports the school. There are strong links and close relationships with the infant school and staff have worked together to establish an effective transfer programme between the two stages. Partnership with the comprehensive school is equally well-developed and there is a high degree of cooperation in curricular activities and effective liaison arrangements in the transference of pupils with special educational needs. Links with colleges of further education are effective and the school provides good quality initial teacher training and work experience for student teachers.
62. The school has made considerable efforts to broaden pupils' experience of the world of work through its contacts with business and industry. The school has forged a link with a major building contractor and through this link, pupils have monitored the building of new housing in the area. Visitors to school have talked to pupils about their coal mining experiences. However, teachers rarely have the opportunity to experience work outside of school.
63. The school is committed to ensuring all pupils have equal access to all the school has to offer regardless of background or circumstance and this is borne out in practice. Pupils confirm that whatever the occasion, be it involvement in sports and games, clubs and extra curricular activities or visits pupils are encouraged and welcome to take part.
64. Understanding and awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship are good. Pupils' understanding of environmental awareness is developed through conservation schemes such as waste reduction and recycling. Pupils collect waste paper for processing. Currently the school lacks a grassed area in which to establish its own wildlife corner or nature reserve.
65. Opportunities for developing pupils' entrepreneurial skills are limited. Year 6 pupils assist in preparing and distributing fruit from the tuck shop, but are not involved in handling money or controlling the stock. Items such as calendars and cards are made and sold by pupils to raise money for charity.
66. The school endeavours to lay the foundations of lifelong learning and community regeneration by encouraging pupils to be responsible for their own actions and to be sympathetic to the needs of others. Qualities such as kindness, truthfulness and forgiveness are developed through circle time, pupil discussions and assemblies. Older pupils have the opportunity to take on the

responsibilities. All pupils willingly undertake tasks to help their teachers. These activities help prepare pupils for lifelong learning and for living in a community.

Key question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

67. The findings of the inspection team differ from the judgement of Grade 1 made by the school in its self-evaluation report because the school over estimated its performance in this area.
68. Overall, the quality of care, support and guidance for pupils is good. Pastoral care of pupils is given high priority. Pupils feel safe and secure whilst in school. Procedures are in place to support pupils' academic progress, their social development and their personal welfare. Staff know their pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. All pupils benefit from the school's determination to fully include pupils in both its academic and social life.
69. The school makes effective use of the support services that are available to the school. Education welfare services are consulted as and when required and are used effectively.
70. The school endeavours to develop a strong partnership with parents and carers in caring for, supporting and guiding their children. Parents are kept informed of events in school through the half-termly newsletter, letters and the school notice board. Formal parent/teacher consultations occur twice yearly and at other times by arrangement. Informal contact with the head teacher occurs daily. A governors' report is issued annually and a meeting is arranged for parents to discuss its content. School reports indicate progress made and include targets for future development. Through the questionnaire, a few parents indicated they would appreciate more information about achievement, a clearer understanding of what is taught and how best to help their children with homework.
71. The arrangements for receiving new pupils from the infant school and the transfer of year 6 pupils to the comprehensive school are an outstanding feature of the school. The arrangements for receiving pupils from the infant school are very well developed. Head teachers and staff of both schools work closely in coordinating policy and curriculum. Pupils feel safe and secure in their new school, and with the help of year 3 'buddies', soon settle. Pupils joining at other times are allocated a mentor to help them settle and make new friends. Arrangements for transferring pupils to Oakdale Comprehensive School are well practiced and ensure a smooth transition. An introductory booklet produced by the secondary school provides useful information for pupils and parents.
72. The school makes good provision for the support and guidance of pupils. The personal and social education policy adopted by the school is well implemented. Pupils have ample opportunities to discuss issues that concern them and the outstanding interpersonal relationships evident in the school facilitate frank

discussion between teachers and pupils. Teachers enjoy the confidence of pupils and are sympathetic to individual needs.

73. Attendance registers are accurately maintained, and absences coded. A few cases were observed where holidays in excess of 10 days were recorded as authorised absence. The school administrator reviews registers weekly as information is uploaded onto an electronic database. Most parents cooperate by informing school if their child is unable to attend. The school recognises and rewards good or improved attendance. The head teacher pursues absence but not necessarily on the first day. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is on call and investigates any absence where there are concerns.
74. The school's provision for ensuring the healthy development, safety and well being of all pupils is good. Staff are trained in first aid and there are good procedures in place for meeting the needs of pupils who are unwell or who have an accident. Pupils' contact details are regularly reviewed and the database updated. Health and Safety audits are carried out within the school and risk assessments undertaken before any educational visit takes place.
75. Pupils are very well behaved in school, and in the main conform to the rules of behaviour and codes of conduct displayed around the school. Teachers apply the policies for behaviour management consistently and act as positive role models. Pupils are aware of the consequences for unacceptable behaviour. There were no exclusions during the twelve months prior to inspection.
76. The procedures for child protection are based on Local Education Authority guidelines. The head teacher is the nominated focus and he, through regular training, ensures that his staff are vigilant and recognise the signs which may indicate that a child could need protection.
77. The provision for individual learners with specific SEN is good. The school's policy is comprehensive and complies with the Code of Practice and the framework for inclusive education. Early identification of pupils with SEN remains with the class teacher initially and is supported by the SEN team who meet regularly to update the register. The governor with responsibility for SEN is very effective and gives valuable support to the school.
78. The SEN team, teachers and support staff work effectively together. Targets, in individual educational plans (IEP's) are clearly stated. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is diagnostic. All pupils make good progress. Parents are consulted regarding their child's SEN status; they can speak to the class teacher or SENCO regarding their child's progress at any time. Parents are invited to become involved in the process, but do not always take up the offer. The relationships and support for pupils within the classroom is good. The school's support for the very small minority of pupils with profound and challenging behaviour is good.
79. The provision for learners with some additional needs has good features, which outweigh shortcomings. For example, additional outside agencies provide good group support for pupils who require literacy enhancement or specific multi-

sensory programmes. Ongoing assessment to identify the learning needs of these pupils is sufficiently diagnostic and pupils make good progress. However, some older pupils with additional learning needs have limited equality of access to work alongside other pupils with differing skills and abilities. They remain in their ability classes for English and mathematics and for all other subjects except physical education.

80. The school recognises the diversity of children's backgrounds and all pupils are treated in a caring and constructive way. The good practice is actively supported by policies, which are monitored and reviewed regularly.
81. Pupils' understanding of the diversity of race and the necessity for good race relations in our modern multi-cultural society are fully incorporated into the personal and social element of the school's curriculum. Given the circumstance of location and population, the school is effective in promoting good race relations.
82. Rhiw Syr Dafydd School has good measures in place to eliminate oppressive behaviour, bullying and all forms of harassment. Pupils understand the necessity to report immediately incidents of bullying or discrimination of any sort. The school follows up, and is effective in dealing with such incidents, involving the parents when appropriate

Leadership and management

Key question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

83. Overall, the findings of the inspection team match the judgements by the school in its self-evaluation report.
84. The headteacher provides an experienced and knowledgeable lead. The school has a strong sense of purpose. Staff work together enthusiastically and support each other willingly, for example, in putting into practice agreed strategies in English and mathematics. There are effective procedures in place for the headteacher to evaluate teaching, learning and standards. There is a positive ethos of support and care for pupils.
85. The school takes careful account of WAG and local priorities, for example, in developing links with local schools including the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. These have included a greater use of IT in lessons. However, due to the impending closure of the school building and the school's merger with the nearby infant school, the school has sensibly delayed extending its provision further in this area until next year.
86. The school makes effective use of information gathered from visits to classes by the headteacher and some co-ordinators in order to look at how successfully teachers teach and pupils learn. For example, the co-ordinators in English and

mathematics have provided well-organised and effective help to raise standards in these subjects through whole school approaches. However, these opportunities have not been extended on a planned basis to enable all co-ordinators to make the good practice in their subjects in some classes consistent across the school.

87. There are well-established procedures in place to manage and improve the performance of individual teachers and to continue their professional development. Appropriate arrangements to provide time for teachers to have opportunities to complete professional activities during school time are effective and well organised.
88. The governing body is very committed to the school and the chair of governors provides a strong lead. There is a clear vision for the long-term future of the new school due to be completed next year. Many governors are very well informed of the needs of the school both by their own involvement and by regular meetings with the professional staff. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities in full. Governors play an important role in determining, with the headteacher, the longer term strategic direction of the school such as leading up to its planned merger with the nearby infant school scheduled for the end of the currently school year.
89. Governors have a particularly well-developed oversight of the budget. They supervise and scrutinise expenditure very carefully. Decisions on spending priorities are closely linked to the priorities set out in the school development (SDP), which is accurately focused on the school's needs. The governors are particularly aware of the importance of finding good value for money in their spending decisions. They are well informed by the headteacher through detailed reports on the curriculum and pupils' progress.

Key question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

90. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
91. The headteacher, governors and staff are well informed about the performance of the school. The governors are kept up to date about the progress the school is making to meet the targets set by the UA. Teachers carefully review the performance of pupils in the national tests and other assessments. This information is generally well used to assess the progress of pupils. However, it is not always consistently used to set shorter term, achievable targets for individuals and groups of pupils to achieve.
92. The school has carefully reviewed its strengths and areas for development. The school's self-evaluation report is detailed and well founded in first hand evidence. It is accurate and closely linked to the school's three-year strategic

plan. This process has also enabled subject co-ordinators to identify areas for improvement, which are beginning to be addressed. For example, the next steps to improve the school's provision in IT have been carefully planned but are being delayed until the new school is completed. The areas for development are closely linked to the SDP, which has appropriately identified success criteria, cost implications and timescales. They are appropriately challenging.

93. All staff and governors have good opportunities to express their views which are carefully considered. The school is beginning to give pupils more opportunities to express their own views. The school has not formally sought the opinions of parents and other stakeholders as part of this process.
94. The school has made sound progress since the last inspection.

Key question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

95. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
96. Suitably qualified and experienced teachers staff the school. Support assistants provide high-quality support for pupils with SEN as well as for other pupils who need extra challenges in their work. There is a very supportive blend of youth and experience in the team who share their considerable breadth of knowledge willingly. Supply teachers and newly appointed staff feel valued. They all work together effectively in planning, teaching and recording pupils' progress.
97. The quality and quantity of resources for the teaching of the subjects inspected is good overall. The very good provision of interactive white boards in all classrooms is beginning to impact on raising the standard of achievement of IT across the curriculum. However, the limited supply of classroom computers has a detrimental effect on the skill acquisition, in information technology. All pupils benefit from a good range of educational visits supporting most areas of the curriculum.
98. There is adequate accommodation for the numbers of pupils. Pupils make very good use of the art/design technology room and the library, which offers a wide selection of fiction and non-fiction books. Classrooms also are well stocked with subject-based resources and other library books. The school has suitable arrangements of access for disabled persons. Throughout the school, colourful displays in classrooms and shared areas celebrate pupils' achievements and provide a cheerful, learning environment.
99. The school uses and deploys its teaching staff and teaching assistants very well. The school administrator and her assistant carry out their daily routines and a range of other responsibilities efficiently and effectively. The caretaker and cleaning staff work hard to maintain the school in good order.

100. The school works effectively with both Oakdale Infant and Oakdale Comprehensive schools to compare resource provision and to investigate and promote good practice, such as sharing resources and utilising staff expertise in the transition from one school to another. The school used the nearby comprehensive school's playing field for sports and other activities. Staff take good advantage of many opportunities to develop their professional expertise through attending courses to improve the quality of their teaching.
101. The school make efficient use of its finances to support teaching and learning. The school development plan is costed and spending is in line with the school's priorities. The governing body is committed to achieving "best value" in its spending. Due to the pending closure of the school in 2006, only essential maintenance budgets have been allocated.
102. Taking into consideration the progress pupils make and the quality of education provided, the school gives value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

Key Stage 2 – Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

103. Younger KS2 pupils achieve good speaking skills with no important shortcomings. They speak confidently and clearly in lessons using an appropriate range of vocabulary. Pupils are keen to take part in discussions and in expressing their ideas. Older KS2 pupils act out their thoughts logically, for example, when discussing 'The Tempest' or when considering how to write a script.
104. Pupils' listening skills are good. They listen attentively and with concentration to stories, and to other pupils' views and opinions. They ask appropriate and relevant questions. In upper KS2 pupils are beginning to use and develop specific vocabulary; for example, in science and physical education. They know that there are different forms of English, which are used in different contexts.
105. Standards in writing have good features and no important shortcomings. Pupils use a range of strategies to help them read new words. They have well developed skills in working out the sounds that letters make. In lower KS2, pupils talk confidently about their favourite part of a story. They read with expression and predict what is likely to happen next. Older pupils read with a sense of pleasure and expression. They read confidently. They know how to use reference books and other sources to research a topic. They discuss their favourite authors and why they like to read their books.

106. Throughout the school, the standard of pupils' writing is good with some outstanding features. Pupils have well developed handwriting. They write neatly and take a pride in producing neat work. They know parts of speech and how to punctuate accurately. They spell carefully using a dictionary where necessary.
107. Pupils write sensitively for a very wide range of reasons. They use different styles of writing to suit their purposes. For example, they tell the story of 'Osiris' in factual writing. They strive to produce balanced writing when describing 'Sir Gauvain's' character. They write in the first and third person in lively and interesting styles. Pupils précis longer well known stories for example by Roald Dahl. They write poetry sensitively and with a good awareness of meter and rhythm.

Shortcomings

108. There are no shortcomings.

Mathematics

Key Stage 2 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

109. In lower KS2 pupils use a variety of strategies well to calculate when counting in tens from three digit numbers. They recognise and extend sequences when counting on. They have a good recall of number pattern. They measure accurately using centimetres and metres. They carry out simple calculations to determine journey times and the distances covered. They understand symmetrical shapes, and organise regular and irregular shapes according to characteristics.
110. Older pupils in KS2 have a secure understanding of place value and calculate using decimal notations. They understand how to simplify fractions and identify proper and improper fractions. Older pupils calculate percentages. They have a good basic understanding of probability, recognising the differences between 'no chance' and 'no risk'.
111. Older pupils use calculators to handle large numbers. They know how to make realistic estimates before they start their calculations to ensure that they do not make simple mistakes. They use negative numbers accurately and calculate angles confidently. They know how to use co-ordinates to fix a position.

Shortcomings

112. While there are no important shortcomings, the achievement of some higher ability pupils across KS2 in some lessons is limited through a lack of challenge. In some classes across the key stage, pupils' understanding of how to apply the skills of IT when handling data is limited.

Information Technology

Key Stage 2 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

113. Word processing skills develop well across the key stage. Younger pupils, produce good work in a range of different formats, varying layout and font. Lower key stage pupils, change the font size and colour when making a list of “playground” rules, writing greetings cards or nursery rhymes.
114. Other pupils, using advanced word-processing skills demonstrate a very good understanding that text and graphics can be combined to communicate information through a newspaper article. They demonstrate a very good knowledge of format and present their completed articles carefully.
115. All pupils make good use of the interactive white boards and are developing skills appropriately. In their 2D work on shapes, pupils insert, rotate, copy and drag shapes to plan a design of their classroom. Pupils demonstrate an increasing understanding of the use of the interactive whiteboard, and a few develop appropriate skills to access the Internet and research their learning.
116. Pupils demonstrate good use of the digital camera in field work illustrating weathering on graveyards and use it appropriately in their “circle time” sessions demonstrating team effort and working as a caring community.
117. The quality of pupils’ Internet research and ability to retrieve information from CD-ROMs is good. Decision-making skills develop appropriately as pupils sort and refine their work using search engines. Pupils’ ability to add graphics, sound and animation as a means of communication to others, is developing well.

Shortcomings

118. Pupils’ skills in interpreting, analysing and communicating data are under developed.
119. Pupils’ use of computers in the classroom to extend their own individual achievements is limited by the lack of resources.

History

Key Stage 2 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

120. Pupils in lower KS2 know that Celtic society was organised in the shape of a pyramid. They know how the Celts organised their farms and their settlements. They know the main features of the Roman invasion of Britain. Pupils study at

first hand the artefacts available at the Legionary Museum at Caerleon where they become 'historical detectives'. They know that life in a legion was hard. They use their skills in literacy well to write a recruiting poster to encourage men to join the legion.

121. Younger pupils know how the model village of Oakdale grew out of the development of the coal industry in the area. As a result of a visit to the 'Big Pit' mining museum they have a good understanding of a collier's life. They know how the colliers funded their local institute to promote educational and social improvements.
122. Older pupils know the chronological order of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs. They know that in those times criminals were harshly treated. For example, they know that those involved in the Gunpowder Plot were hanged, drawn and quartered. They know about living conditions during this time as a result of their visit to Llancaiach Fawr. In Year 6, pupils know about some of the social, political and economic changes which took place in Victorian Wales. For example, they know that the Chartists marched on Newport from various parts of their own area. They know that the soldiers shot 22 men outside the Westgate Hotel during this protest. They are aware of the reasons why war was declared against Germany in 1939. They know something about the lives of Adolf Hitler and Anne Frank.

Shortcomings

123. While there are no important shortcomings, in some classes, pupils have limited skills to explore subjects in depth and in finding out for themselves.

Art

Key Stage 2 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

124. Pupils are generally very enthusiastic in their approach to art and are excited by the work they do. They collaborate well and show appreciation of each other's work.
125. Throughout the key stage, pupils develop a good understanding of mixing colour using a variety of media. Pupils in the lower key stage mix coloured paint to create individual interpretations of a secret forest and merge charcoal and pastel shades well in their completed pictures for St David's Day competitions.
126. Use of line and tone are developed well in pupils' observational drawings. Younger pupils include interesting fine detail such as the black slate roof tiles, in their sketches of old and new houses. Upper key stage pupils empathise with prisoners of war, and work productively to capture and sketch the emotions of that time, such as the portrait of Anne Frank.

127. Ideas of pattern and texture progress well through the key stage. Lower key stage pupils, produce good symmetrical patterns in their cross-curricular work on the life of a butterfly and produce good 3D models through folding and pleating paper. Very good printing techniques highlight detailed pattern and texture of roof-tiles, and brickwork produced by pupils in their work on buildings in their local environment.
128. Appreciation of the work of artists and designers of other cultures also features in pupils' work. Older pupils develop good evaluative skills and appreciate the work of other designers in incorporating African images in their mask designs.
129. Pupils use different techniques and materials confidently when making collage. Younger pupils use a variety of materials to good effect in their study of portraits from the Tudor period. Older pupils study the works of designers such as Peter Blake and his work on the cover of Sgt Pepper's, Beatles album. Pupils observe fine detail in the designer's work and ably discuss how they can adapt and use it in their own collage. Pupils' use of IT to produce a collage of facial expressions is good.
130. Throughout the key stage, pupils' use sketch books to make drafts. They appraise their own and other pupils' efforts progresses well throughout the key stage.

Shortcomings

131. While there are no important shortcomings, pupils' work in fabric art is underdeveloped. Some pupils generally have only a limited knowledge of the work of a wide range of Welsh artists.

Religious education

Key Stage 2 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

132. Pupils' knowledge of the beliefs and practices of Christianity, Islam and Judaism develop appropriately. Their knowledge is enhanced through experiencing a range of artefacts and visiting places of religious significance. In discussion, all pupils make good links between their own experiences and the religious practices they study.
133. Lower key stage pupils' oral responses demonstrate a good understanding of the reasons for celebrations such as Christmas and Easter. They recall some of the parables Jesus taught, understand the importance of people who help them in school and being an important part of the wider community. They relate this understanding to the parable of the Good Samaritan.
134. In discussion, older pupils understand the importance of respecting and caring for each other. They know right from wrong and consider how religious

understandings can contribute to this. Younger pupils talk with understanding of the importance of being kind, helpful to others and appreciate the importance of friendship. Pupils are actively involved in supporting charities and make good connections with the need for charitable giving, through recent world tragedies.

135. Older pupils develop a good awareness of the diversity of religious beliefs. Pupils know that there are different rules, rituals and symbols within different faith groups and they examine and recall some of these details very well. They experience and empathise with a vicar's extensive role and their recall of Muslim rituals before prayer is very good. In discussion, pupils interpret the teachings of the Bible, demonstrate an understanding of the Torah and readily demonstrate various prayer positions in relation to Mecca.
136. Throughout the school, pupils' writing demonstrates a development of sufficient knowledge and understanding of fundamental religions, ideas and concepts. They have written and studied prayers, examined their own feelings and made good comparisons of the religions studied.
137. Pupils know from various visitors the importance of being tolerant. By the end of KS2, pupils know that each religion has its own traditions, customs and beliefs and that each deserve respect.

Shortcomings

138. There are no important shortcomings.

School's response to the inspection

The inspection findings recognise that in most respects we have maintained high standards since our last inspection and have improved standards in subjects such as English, art and information technology (IT). However, we recognise there is still work to do to continue to raise standards in IT further and in pupils' use and knowledge of incidental Welsh so that they more closely match standards in other subjects. We are pleased that the inspectors found that pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes to their work. The inspectors found that pupils show considerable respect for each other and for adults. The report also confirms that pupils are well cared for and supported. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and there are extensive procedures to support pupils' academic, social and personal development.

The skill and dedication of teachers and the care and talent of the support staff are duly acknowledged. The inspection recognises the close and effective working relationship between teachers and governors. We are pleased that the inspection confirms in six out of the seven key questions the accuracy of our own judgements about our performance as a school. The report highlights the fact that our plans for the future are appropriate to the needs of the school, for example in improving further provision in IT.

Where it is possible to do so, staff and governors will address the recommendations before the end of the school year through an action plan. Raising standards further in IT will be a priority. However we would like to highlight that the inspection has taken place in the context of the planned closure of this junior school on this site at the end of this academic year. When the new primary school is opened, governors will be better placed to review the provision and resources for IT across the new school. The recommendations from this inspection will be included in our current school development plan. This document will help to form the basis for future planning for school improvement in the new school.

A copy of the school's action plan in response to the inspection recommendations will be sent to all parents. The governors' annual report to parents will report on the progress we are making on the inspection recommendations.

We would like to thank the inspection team for the professional and thorough manner in which the inspection was conducted.

Appendix A

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Rhiw Syr Dafydd
School type	Junior
Age-range of pupils	7 - 11
Address of school	Syr Dafydd Avenue Oakdale Blackwood
Post-code	NP12 7JJ
Telephone number	01495 224813

Headteacher	Mr A J Charrington
Date of appointment	September 1988
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr A Pritchard The Governing Body
Registered inspector	Mr Peter Mathias
Dates of inspection	31 st October – 3 rd November 2005

Appendix B

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	0	0	0	0	64	65	61	61	251

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	11	0	11

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	22.8:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	-
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25:1
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection		
Term	KS2	Whole School
Autumn 2004	93	93
Spring 2005	95.98	95.98
Summer 2005	94.64	94.64

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	10
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

Appendix C

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2004			Number of pupils in Y6		80							
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School							14	43	39	
		National					1	6	16	45	31	
	Test/Task	School		1					14	44	40	
		National						5	12	38	40	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School						1	21	44	34	
		National						4	19	46	30	
	Test/Task	School		1				4	11	49	35	
		National						4	18	42	33	
Science	Teacher assessment	School							5	73	22	
		National						2	13	49	35	
	Test/Task	School		1					5	80	14	
		National						2	11	47	38	

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	75	In the school	78
In Wales	70	In Wales	72.2

- D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

At the time of the inspection only provisional results for the 2005 National Assessments were available.

Appendix D

Evidence base of the inspection

- A team of three inspectors who were present at the school for 10 inspector days carried out the inspection. They were assisted by a nominee from the school and a peer assessor.
- Pre-inspection meetings were held with parents and the governing body to discuss the life and work of the school.
- Seventy-three questionnaires were completed by parents and carefully analysed.
- Discussions were held with the head and staff with responsibilities and support staff.
- School documentation and samples of pupils' work were examined.
- Forty lessons or sessions were observed.
- A sample of pupils' work from across the ability range in each year group was examined.
- Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils from each year group reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils about their work and about the life of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during break periods, at lunchtime and at the beginning and end of the school sessions.
- Inspectors attended assemblies and observed extra-curricular activities.
- Post inspection meetings were held with the staff and the governing body.

Appendix E

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Peter Mathias Registered Inspector	Summary and recommendations Key Questions 2, 5 and 6 Contribution to Key Question 1 English Mathematics History
Mr Charles Brentnall Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4 and 7
Mrs Julie Jones	Contributions to Key Questions 3, 4 and 7 Special educational needs Information technology Art Religious education
Mrs Cerian Pugh Nominee	Contributing to all Key Questions
Mr Rob Purchase Peer Assessor	Contributing to all Key Questions

The contractor was:

Lincolnshire Inspection Team
37 Park Drive
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DN32 0EG

Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.

**Inspection under Section 10 of the
Schools Inspections Act 1996**

**Rhiw Syr Dafydd Junior School
Syr Dafydd Avenue
Oakdale
Blackwood
NP12 7JJ**

A Summary Report for Parents

School Number: 676 2369

Date of Inspection: 31st October – 3rd November 2005

by

**Mr Peter Mathias
W203/78829**

Date: 2nd January 2006

Under Estyn contract number: T/083/05 P

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Basic information about the school

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Date of appointment	September 1988
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr A Pritchard The Governing Body
Registered inspector	Mr Peter Mathias
Dates of inspection	31 st October – 3 rd November 2005

Rhiw Syr Dafydd Junior School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents more information about their child's school. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of **Rhiw Syr Dafydd Junior School** took place between **31st October and 3rd November 2005**. An independent team of inspectors, led by **Mr Peter Mathias**, undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This summary report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	many important shortcomings

There are three types of inspection:

For all inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject sections.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports in all subjects.

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who attain the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who attain the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y 13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The national curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Summary

7. Rhiw Syr Dafydd provides a good education for its pupils, which has no important shortcomings. It has a strong sense of community and an atmosphere where relationships between pupils and adults are very positive.
8. The inspection team agreed with the judgements made by the school about the standards pupils achieve and with five out of the six other judgements the school made about other areas of its work. In Key Question 4, the school over-estimated how well learners are cared for, guided and supported.

Table of grades awarded

Key question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	2
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	2
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	2
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	2
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	2
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

STANDARDS

Pupils' standards of achievement	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	8%	73%	19%	0%	0%

9. Standards of achievement in lessons are above the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) all Wales target for 95% of standards to be at least Grade 3 and 50% to be Grade 1 or Grade 2. In this inspection in 81% of lessons achievement was high. This is a strong feature.

Subject	Key Stage 2
English	2
Mathematics	2
Information technology	3
History	2
Art	2
Religious education	2

10. Pupils' standards and progress in the key skills have good features, which outweigh shortcomings. In the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing

and mathematics, standards of achievement are Grade 2, good features and no important shortcomings. Generally pupils across the school use these skills confidently in other subjects. Pupils' key skills in information technology (IT) have some shortcomings, which are linked to a lack of equipment. As a result, across the school pupils do not have sufficient confidence and knowledge to use IT well to support their learning. Pupils' bilingual skills are also limited because they have too few opportunities to use Welsh informally. Pupils' problem solving skills, their personal and social skills and their creative skills have strong features and not important shortcomings. Generally, pupils know what they should do to improve.

11. In KS2 national tests for eleven year olds in 2005, the percentage of pupils reaching or exceeding the expected standards (Level 4) was above the Unitary Authority (UA) and all Wales averages. In comparison to schools considered to have a broadly similar small proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, these results are below most of those similar schools. Since 1999, the school's performance in the test has improved year on year. In 2002 the school exceeded the UA and national averages. Since then its performance has remained above these benchmarks. From the provisional results available in these tests in 2005 the school would seem to have met the targets set for it by the UA. The performance of boys compared to girls in English and mathematics is broadly the same. In science boys perform better than girls, generally pupils achieve well. However, in some lessons the more able are under challenged.
12. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they have positive attitudes to their work. They show considerable respect for each other. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Pupils' personal and social skills are well developed. Levels of attendance at 94.5% compare well with both national and local averages. Nearly all pupils arrive promptly at the beginning of the day. The school meets the WAG guidance for the reporting and recording of attendance.

The quality of education and training

13. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching and learning were judged as follows: -

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	70%	27%	0%	0%

14. The percentage of lessons at Grade 3 or above is above the WAG target for 95% of lessons to be in these categories. Some 73% of lessons are Grade 1 or Grade 2. This is above the national target for 50% of lessons to fall into these categories.
15. In the best lessons teachers know their subjects well. Teachers ensure that pupils are fully aware of what they should learn during the lessons. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are warm and encouraging. Teachers ensure that all pupils play a full part in their lessons.

16. Where teaching has some shortcomings, there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' key skills and to promote their bilingual skills, a lack of real pace and appropriate level of challenge particularly for the above average pupils. In some lessons, pupils spend too much time listening and do not have enough opportunities to work things out for themselves.
17. There are extensive arrangements to monitor pupils' achievements and to use that information to judge pupils' progress. All statutory requirements are met in full. In the best lessons, teachers use the information they gather from pupils' achievement to set short-term targets for pupils to work towards. However, these arrangements are not put into effect consistently across the school to challenge all pupils including the more able.
18. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is accessible to all pupils. It meets legal requirements and the needs of all pupils, including those with SEN. Opportunities to develop pupils' bilingual skills and their knowledge of their Welsh heritage, for example in art are under-emphasised.
19. The school makes appropriate provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Pupils have a good understanding of environmental issues, sustainable development and world citizenship.
20. The curriculum is enriched by a good variety of out of school activities and visits. However, pupils' entrepreneurial skills are limited.
21. Pupils' social and moral development is promoted very successfully. However, pupils' spiritual and cultural development has some shortcomings as well as some strengths. For example, while assemblies are happy occasions and are of a broadly Christian nature, insufficient time is given to reflection on the principles being discussed. Similarly provision for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is limited.
22. There are well organised opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, to make decisions and to prepare for living in the community. Links with parents are generally positive and the school is well supported by a very active parents' association.
23. The school knows and responds to individual pupils' personal needs well. Staff create a caring and supportive environment. There are strong links with outside agencies and services. There are extensive and effective arrangements to enable younger and older pupils when they transfer successfully to their new school. However, the organisation of some year groups based on pupils' standards in English and mathematics do not help pupils to develop a sense of equal worth and experience of working with pupils of different abilities who are of the same age. Pupils only work together in groups of wider abilities and achievement in physical education.

Leadership and management

24. The headteacher provides an experienced and knowledgeable lead. Staff have a strong sense of purpose. They work together enthusiastically and support each other well. The school successfully promotes a caring family atmosphere. There are thorough procedures in place to assess pupils' progress and to raise standards further. New arrangements to teach English and mathematics across the school in similar ways have been successfully introduced by hardworking and well organised co-ordinators. However, not all co-ordinators have had planned opportunities to look at the teaching and learning going on and the impact of initiatives they are pursuing.
25. The governing body is very committed to the school. It is well led. Many governors are well informed and actively involved in determining the strategic needs of the school. They meet all regulatory requirements in full. Arrangements to evaluate the school's strengths and shortcomings are extensive and paint an accurate picture. The school has made sound progress since its last inspection.
26. There are a sufficient number of qualified teachers and support assistants who provide a good blend of youth and experience. The quality and quantity of resources for teaching are generally good. However there are a limited number of classroom computers which have a detrimental impact on pupils' key skills in IT. The school has identified the need to improve this provision when the new school is due to be completed later in the current school year. The school has a strong commitment to the continued professional development of teachers.
27. Overall, bearing in mind the progress pupils make and the quality of education provided, the school gives value for money.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school in the areas inspected the staff and governing body need to: -

- R1 improve pupils' bilingual skills, their knowledge and understanding of their Welsh heritage and their competence in IT;
- R2 put into effect when appropriate, the school's intentions to improve further its IT facilities and equipment;
- R3 review the school's policy for inclusion so that all pupils have good opportunities to work with pupils of different abilities within their age groups;
- R4 extend the roles of co-ordinators so that on a planned basis, all co-ordinators have opportunities to look at the success of teaching and learning at first hand and to assess the impact of initiatives they are pursuing;
- R5 make the good practice in some classes of setting short-term achievable targets for pupils consistent across the school.

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving this report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.