

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

YSGOL RHYDGALED

Denbigh

Conway

School Number: 662-2129

Date of Inspection: 13-15 January 2003

by

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Registered Inspector

Date: 17 March 2003

Under Estyn Contract Number: CT128/02P

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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 (KS) 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

Ysgol Rhydgaled is a community primary school and it serves a rural area around the village of Groes near Denbigh. The school provides for pupils between three and 11 years of age. At present, there are 28 pupils on roll including five children of nursery age who attend every afternoon. According to the school, there has been a significant change in the nature of the residential area from which the pupils come since the last inspection. In 1997, the area was described as being relatively prosperous, whilst now, it is described as being mainly economically disadvantaged. Forty-eight per cent of the pupils qualify for free school meals compared with not one at the time of the last inspection. There are six pupils on the special educational needs (SEN) register.

Ysgol Rhydgaled is a naturally Welsh school and Welsh is the medium of teaching, communication and administration in the school. Approximately 30 per cent of the pupils come from homes where Welsh is the main language. The school is made up of two classes, one for pupils between the ages of three and seven, and the other for pupils between seven and 11 years old.

The main aim of the school is to create an environment and atmosphere where pupils can grow, develop and mature to become confident individuals, aware of the well-being of others, and responsible members of society. The school development plan (SDP) includes targets for the period 2002 to 2005 together with specific priorities for the current school year. They include curricular and managerial priorities.

The last inspection of the school took place in the summer term 1997. The present headteacher was appointed to her post in September 2001.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Ysgol Rhydgaled is a good school with many strengths. Pupils' standards of achievement are consistently good and often very good. The school ethos is very good and there is a sense of purpose in every aspect of school life and work. The quality of the school's management and leadership is very good.

Standards achieved by pupils

Children under five

- The general quality of educational provision for those under five years old is appropriate to their needs. Standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

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

KS1 and KS2 pupils

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

Subject	KS1	KS2
Welsh	Very good	Very good
English	Not applicable	Very good
Mathematics	Very good	Very good
Science	Good	Good
Design and technology	Very good	Very good
Information technology	Good	Good
History	Very good	Very good
Geography	Good	Good
Art	Very good	Very good
Music	Good	Good
Physical education	Good	Good
Religious education	Good	Good

Standards in key skills across the curriculum

- Children under five make good progress when using their key skills across the curriculum and attain good standards in language, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT). In KS1 and KS2, standards in listening, reading, numeracy and the use of ICT are good, and speaking and writing standards are satisfactory. Although, the school addresses the development of key skills across the curriculum in medium-term planning, planning within individual lessons does not ensure that their development is consistent and balanced across the pupils' learning experiences.

The quality of education provided

- The quality of teaching across the school is mainly good. The quality of teaching for children under five is very good. In lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was very good in 42 per cent of them, good in 51 per cent and satisfactory in seven per cent. Good and very good teaching is characterized by detailed planning and the effective use of teaching aids and techniques by teachers. The teachers and support staff possess good quality language which enriches pupils' communications skills. The teachers' knowledge of what they teach is sound. Although planning for the development of key skills is addressed, sufficient opportunities are not provided in lessons for pupils to develop them individually or when they work in pairs and groups.
- A curriculum of very good quality is provided for children under five, KS1 and KS2 pupils. It is very well enriched by educational visits, visitors to the school and a variety of extra-curricular activities.
- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is very good. The school policy is clear and gives firm guidelines about assessment methods and procedures. Assessment is used effectively to plan the next steps in the teaching and learning.
- The provision for pupils with SEN is very good and fully conforms to the requirements of the Code of Practice. Pupils with SEN are well supported and have full access to the curriculum and all the work of the school.

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- A particular strength of the school is the quality of provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare. The comprehensive policies for pupils' health, safety and care are effectively implemented. A noteworthy aspect of the school's work is the staff and governors' dedication to ensure the best possible provision for each individual.
 - The quality of the partnership between the school and parents and the local community is very good. Good links have been developed with industry through setting up different ventures in the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effectively promoted through the act of collective worship and through curriculum subjects and the general life of the school. Pupils' behaviour is good.
- Pupils' social skills are well-developed. A good variety of extra-curricular events are organized which include daily and residential educational visits.
- Pupils learn a great deal about the culture and heritage of Wales. They have appropriate opportunities to become aware of other cultures.

School management and efficiency

- The school has a very good ethos and sense of purpose in its effort to provide education of the highest possible quality and create an environment where pupils can develop into confident individuals and responsible citizens.
- The headteacher offers very good leadership to the school. She has a clear vision with regards to the direction and development of the school. She kindles enthusiasm and a happy working relationship among staff and pupils; she has achieved a great deal in a short time.
- The governors have a very good understanding of the life and work of the school. They undertake their responsibilities very conscientiously. They have a very clear structure for making decisions and effective ways of evaluating them.
- Financial management is good and the school has appropriate systems to ensure value for money.
- Very effective self-evaluation methods have been devised and the school addresses planning for improvement very well.
- The school makes the best use of all resources and accommodation that is available in order to achieve high educational standards.

Effectiveness dealing with issues noted in the previous inspection

- The school was last inspected in the summer term 1997, and in the report, seven key issues were identified for action. Each one of them has been addressed successfully. The school has substantially improved the general quality of its educational provision and

raised standards in curriculum subjects and aspects within teaching, assessment, planning and SEN where they were previously unsatisfactory.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

In the lessons observed during the inspection, standards were very good in 35 per cent of classes, good in 54 per cent and satisfactory in the remainder (11 per cent). This shows substantial progress in the standards which were reported on in the last inspection.

- Children under five make very good progress and attain standards which are consistently very good in each one of the six areas of learning.
- In KS1, standards are very good in Welsh and mathematics and good in science. Pupils achieve very good standards in design and technology, history and art and good standards in information technology, geography, music, physical education and religious education.
- In KS2, standards are very good in Welsh, English and mathematics and good in science. Standards are very good in design and technology, history and art and good in information technology, geography, music, physical education and religious education.
- As the number of pupils who sat Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in KS1 and KS2 in 2002 was less than five, details of the results are not included in the report.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

Although the school addresses the development of key skills across the curriculum in the medium-term planning, planning within individual lessons does not ensure that their development is consistent and balanced across the pupils' learning experiences. Childrens' standards and progress across the curriculum are good in the early years. In KS1 and KS2, standards in listening, reading, numeracy and use of ICT are good and speaking and writing standards are satisfactory.

- Children under five have good opportunities to apply and improve their developing skills in early literacy, early numeracy and use of ICT within and across the six areas of learning. In KS1 and KS2, pupils listen attentively to teachers' presentations and to the instructions they receive during lessons. Their skills in listening to other pupils' contributions are less well-developed because they do not have sufficient opportunities to work in pairs and groups.
- Pupils in both key stages use books and other texts effectively for research and study including the increasing use of on-screen reading. They make appropriate use of various reading materials in Welsh and English in different subjects.
- Progress made by pupils in speaking and writing Welsh and English in a range of contexts across the curriculum is satisfactory in both key stages. In some subjects such as history, design and technology and art, pupils have a good grasp of appropriate vocabulary, but in subjects such as science, geography, music and religious education, their grasp of correct terms is less strong and their ability to provide extended responses is more limited.
- In KS1 and KS2, pupils use their developing numeracy skills effectively in a suitable range of contexts. They use their measuring and counting skills well in their work in a number of subjects.

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- Pupils across both key stages make increasing use of ICT in their studies. Younger pupils use information technology to distinguish shape and size and by the end of KS1, they can use the mouse to load and choose appropriate programs and to print their work. These skills have been further developed with KS2 pupils. Pupils make increasing use of different computer programs in their studies including the use of the Internet.
 - According to their age and ability, pupils with SEN achieve good standards overall in literacy, numeracy and ICT when dealing with work across the curriculum.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good with some very good features.

- Through the curriculum and daily life of the school, regular opportunities are provided for pupils to obtain information about values and beliefs, which enables them to reflect upon their own experiences in a way which develops their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge.
- The school encourages pupils to show respect to one another, and principles are promoted which enable pupils to learn effectively the difference between right and wrong.
- Pupils show responsibility towards the school equipment and environment and contribute well to the everyday life of the school, with older pupils showing care and concern towards younger pupils.
- The daily act of collective worship makes a positive contribution to this aspect and promotes a sense of participation in the school community. Although the services are mainly of a Christian nature, they give appropriate attention to other religions in them as well as in the everyday life of the school. The school meets the statutory requirements in this respect.
- Within lessons, such as those in religious education and art, there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures.
- The pupils have a wide knowledge of Welsh culture and heritage and their awareness of their nation's authors and poets is well-developed.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good.

- Overall, pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They show interest in their work and the vast majority concentrate well on the tasks they are set.
- The disciplinary guidelines which have been adopted by the school have been successfully implemented and are an asset to raise pupils' standards of achievement.
- The pupils' relationship with teachers and support staff is respectful and friendly. The pupils are polite and well-mannered and are confident when talking to adults.
- No evidence of bullying or unsociable behaviour was witnessed during the inspection and no pupils have been excluded in the last 12 months.

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- The evidence gathered in the pre-inspection meeting with parents, and the questionnaires completed by them, confirm the standard of behaviour witnessed during the inspection.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance rates are good.

- Pupils' attendance is good, with an average of 95.25 per cent present during the last 12 months.
- Unauthorised absences are rare.
- Pupils arrive in school on time and are registered according to the statutory requirements.
- The school registers are correct and complete and parents' letters and records of telephone calls are kept. The registration arrangements conform to the statutory requirements.
- The school meets its targets on attendance.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

In lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was very good in 42 per cent of the total, good in 51 per cent and satisfactory in the remainder (seven per cent). The quality of teaching for children under five is very good.

- Teachers set clear learning goals at the start of lessons and all activities are planned carefully and thoroughly.
- Teachers have a strong knowledge of the subjects and their enthusiasm and interest in the topic they introduce at the time retains the pupils' attention and encourages them to respond and take part in activities.
- They use a good variety of techniques and teaching aids and extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding by skilful discussion and questioning.
- Teachers and assistant staff have good quality language skills and this ensures that pupils' communication skills are effectively developed.
- There is a good pace to the teaching and teachers make an effective use of praise and commendation in lessons.
- The relationship between pupils and all school staff is a warm and homely one.
- In planning work and in lesson introductions, teachers give good attention to relating work across the curriculum.
- Work is differentiated appropriately to correspond to age and pupils' ability.
- Although there is planning for the development of key skills, insufficient opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to develop these skills as individuals or when working in pairs and groups.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting pupils' achievements, as well as the frequency and usefulness of reports to parents, are very good. The use made of the assessment process promotes higher standards.

- The school assessment policy is clear and gives firm guidelines about assessment methods and procedures, as agreed upon by the board of governors.
- All NC assessment requirements are fully met and consideration is given to the SEN Code of Practice. There are established arrangements for the completion of progress files.
- Every effort is made to identify pupils with specific special needs soon after they start attending school, through teachers' observations and suitable tests.
- The assessment process increases pupils' motivation and every effort is made to analyse according to pupils' ability, sex and linguistic background and the information is used to plan suitably for them.
- Assessments are used effectively when planning the next steps in the teaching and learning. Pupils' work is marked regularly, including a brief feedback to enable pupils to understand what aspects of their work need attention, and to encourage them to set themselves targets as they undertake their tasks.
- Parents are invited to discuss their pupils' work with teachers twice a year and a report is sent to parents at the end of the school year.
- Annual reports to parents are detailed enough to indicate pupils' performance in different subjects, and advice on the next steps in the learning is given in the discussions between teachers, parents and pupils.

5.3 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum provided for the children under five, KS1 and KS2 pupils is very good; it is appropriate, broad and balanced and meets NC and religious education requirements.

- There are detailed policies and schemes of work for each subject and all NC subjects are taught for suitable periods of time.
- The curriculum for children under five is very good and promotes the Desirable Outcomes.
- There is an appropriate policy for personal and social education and is effectively implemented across the curriculum and through 'circle time'.
- Pupils with SEN are regularly supported and the quality of provision for them is very good.
- The curriculum is enriched by a variety of visits to places outside the school and by visitors who come to the school to contribute to the pupils' education.
- Every pupil has an opportunity to receive instrumental tuition. At present, pupils have guitar and harp lessons.
- The curriculum is socially inclusive and every pupil has access to the full curriculum.

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- A good range of extra-curricular activities, such as sport, computer club, literacy club and ECO-plan environmental activities. These strengthen pupils' collaboration and communication skills.
 - The school has a plan for developing key skills but teachers have not mastered the way to plan carefully to develop them effectively in lessons, although they are keen to address this soon.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

The quality of support and guidance provided for pupils is very good and one of the schools' strengths.

- There are comprehensive policies and procedures to promote pupils' health and safety within classes and around the school. Clear guidelines have been prepared for the staff on how they should deal with pupils' health, safety and care issues throughout the day.
- Staff's dedication to provide appropriately for all pupils whatever their needs is a noteworthy aspect of the school's work.
- There is a written policy for health education, including drugs, and health education and sex education have been appropriately linked to the curriculum with the emphasis on caring for personal education. The 'healthy school' policy is effectively implemented.
- There is a written policy dealing specifically with child protection. The headteacher is responsible and clear guidelines are provided for staff.
- Pupils' personal and social skills are promoted effectively through experiences offered by teachers in activities such as 'circle time', and the good example which they set.
- A risk assessment is held regularly and the governing body is very aware of its responsibility to provide a safe environment for all pupils.
- Equal opportunities are assured to pupils in every aspect of school life and work.
- Pupils respond positively to the support and guidance given to them by showing respect and courtesy and appreciation of what has been provided for them.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN

The provision for pupils with SEN is very good throughout the school. The school has given detailed attention to the shortcomings identified in the last inspection and the current arrangements fully conform with the new Code of Practice guidelines.

- The school has an effective policy for helping pupils with SEN and the provision is monitored carefully.
- The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) has good oversight of the provision and ensures that the Code of Practice is fully implemented.
- Individual education plans (IEPs) are detailed and ensure that every individual is effectively developed by following clear and attainable steps.
- Reviews of pupils' progress are held twice a year and an opportunity is given to parents to make comments on IEPs, discuss progress and sign agreed statements, wherever appropriate.
- Pupils have a positive attitude towards learning and use a number of strategies to overcome difficulties which are found in language, numeracy and mathematics. They receive appropriate help when withdrawn and when working within their classes.
- A restricted number of computer programs are used to reinforce the learning.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

The school's partnership with parents, the community, schools and other institutions is very good.

- The school has created a successful partnership with parents by preparing good quality information on the education that is provided and on all aspects of school life. This is done by means of a parent handbook, regular circulars, governing body reports and parents' evenings. This was strongly endorsed by parents who were present at the pre-inspection meeting and in their responses to the questionnaires.
- The school has adopted an appropriate home-school agreement.
- Parents play a prominent part in the life of the school with some coming to help in classes and others providing plants and making the school environment more attractive.
- Parents transport pupils to extra-curricular activities and help to look after them on trips.
- "Friends of the School" contribute generously to the school funds and an account of their activities and a regular report about pupils' success appears in the local paper.
- The school plays a key part in the life of the local area and the school is an important part of the local community.
- Regular use is made of the village hall for physical education lessons and also for concerts, when members of the community are invited to see the pupils taking part.
- The chapel is used for seasonal services and the minister comes to the school to speak to the pupils.
- There are regular visits from members of the community to talk about their work and experiences and this contributes well to pupils' education.
- The school co-operates with a local school in sport and there are regular meetings for the heads of the schools as well as in-service training (INSET) meetings.
- The majority of pupils transfer to Ysgol Uwchradd Glan Clwyd and there are very good links between the two schools. Teachers from the secondary school make visits to the school and there are visits by Y6 to Ysgol Uwchradd Glan Clwyd.
- The school works with Llandrillo College in Rhos in arranging clubs, evening classes and family education.
- The school makes full use of all the relative services provided by the Unitary Authority (UA) and its officers make regular visits to the school.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

The school has created a good partnership with industry, an aspect which was unsatisfactory in the last inspection.

- An effective policy has been adopted to create links with the business world in a rural area.
- Local people from industry are invited to the school to talk to pupils and give them an understanding of the world of work.

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- The school has started a business venture to grow flowers on the school grounds and market them in the local community.
 - The school has received sponsorship in the form of prizes from a number of shops and businesses in Denbigh.
 - The school works closely with the BCTV voluntary agency.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

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

- Since her appointment in September 2001, the headteacher has worked diligently with the help of staff and governors to set strong foundations for school development in the future.
- Key issues noted in the last inspection report have been addressed and as this report shows, each one has been very effectively acted upon.
- The school has a clear policy on monitoring and evaluation which was formulated following consultation with staff and governors. Issues such as the quality of learning and teaching, schemes of work, resources, staff development, and parents' response are addressed.
- There is a definite structure and timetable to the monitoring plan and reports are regularly given to the governors by the headteacher, the co-ordinators and county advisers on the quality of education provided and standards achieved by pupils.
- The SDP identifies priorities and sets targets to which the school and pupils can aspire. Information about pupils' progress in NC tests is analysed and the information is used to plan the next stage in the teaching and learning.
- The governors have a very good awareness of their responsibilities and have an active role in the process of self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Members are linked to various curriculum areas; they visit the school regularly, discuss curricular developments with subject co-ordinators and then feed back to the full governing body.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

The quality of school leadership and efficiency is very good.

- The school has a very good ethos and sense of purpose in its effort to realise its main aim which is to: "offer education of the highest possible quality and create an environment and atmosphere where pupils can grow, develop and mature to become confident individuals, aware of others' well-being, and responsible members of the community".
- The headteacher offers very good leadership to the school. She has a clear vision regarding the school's direction and development as an educational institute as well as its relationship with the local community and the wider links which are being nurtured and developed. She leads by example and as a result kindles enthusiasm among staff and pupils. She has achieved a great deal in a short time especially in the work of drafting schemes of work, policies and effective self-evaluation procedures.

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- A happy and purposeful culture of working together has been established among all school staff. The staff work diligently and conscientiously as a team to try to ensure the best provision for every pupil.
 - The governors are hard-working and undertake their duties very conscientiously. Members have a good understanding of school life and work. They have developed a clear structure for making decisions and appropriate ways of evaluating them.
 - The budget is managed effectively. The governing body's finance sub-panel meets regularly to discuss financial issues. The school's spending priorities have been appropriately linked with educational aims. There are clear arrangements to evaluate the spending and to ensure that the school provides value for money.
 - The school has successfully applied for finance to establish a number of educational ventures. These ventures have a very positive influence on pupils' standards of achievement and greatly enriches their educational experiences.
 - The administration procedures and day-to-day arrangements are effective and efficient. Good and suitable use is made of all resources, accommodation and the facilities available in the school.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

As far as staff, accommodation and learning resources are concerned, provision is very good and has a positive influence on pupils' standards of achievement.

- There is a sufficient number of teaching staff, and other staff, who have appropriate qualifications and good experience to meet the needs of the school and its pupils.
- Teachers (and other staff where appropriate) update their skills by regular professional development.
- Subject co-ordinators have sufficient qualifications and experience to undertake their responsibilities, and there is some specialist teaching in design and technology and music for example.
- Teachers and assistant staff adhere closely to their job-descriptions and support staff make a valuable contribution to the school by spending time reading and sharing practical skills with pupils within the two classes.
- There is sufficient accommodation for the number of pupils on roll and for the curriculum provided, including outside facilities, such as the new playing field, garden and school yard. Good use is made of the buildings and site, and the village hall is used for physical education.
- The school building and grounds are maintained very well. The building is kept exceptionally clean and the walls are attractive and colourful inside.
- The supply of learning resources for the majority of subjects is very good, they are of high quality, and correspond well to curricular and pupils' requirements. They are effectively stored, clearly labelled and are within easy reach of the pupils.
- Part of the school grounds is allocated for children under five and the school has bought large toys and continues to improve the learning and playing facilities.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

Educational provision for the children under five is appropriate and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

Four-year-old children attend full-time and are taught within the reception class. A nursery assistant works part-time in the class, supervising and teaching a small group of nursery children who attend the school every afternoon.

Standards achieved by children in all learning areas are very good.

Good features

Language, literacy and communication skills

- Childrens' early reading and writing skills are well-developed. Children see and use books and other forms of written resources frequently. They are given good guidance on early reading and writing skills.
- Nursery children can recognise sounds and letters, name words and arrange objects according to initial sounds.
- They sit quietly and listen attentively, responding confidently to questions dealing with a story, knowing that there is meaning to words and pictures.
- The children converse in Welsh, although not all of them are fluent in the language, and they can discuss the main characters in books, by using simple terms.
- They form letters carefully by underwriting and copying, working with paint and sand.
- Four-year-old children can recall previous work and recognise sounds well.
- They enjoy handling books; they respond to stories and rhymes and choose sentences to correspond to text.
- They are beginning to build sentences and endeavour to write words and sentences independently.

Personal and social development

- Nursery children play well together and enjoy role-playing activities where they develop effective relationships with adults and their peers. They are ardent to explore new experiences and begin to discuss ideas and solve problems.
- Four-year-old children work well as part of a group, or independently. They can concentrate and persevere in their learning and ask for help when it is needed.
- The children are sensitive to other peoples' needs and respond positively to a range of experiences. They express feelings and behave well, by taking their turn and sharing fairly.
- They learn that everyone is different and learn how to deal with these differences in a friendly way.

Mathematical development

- Nursery children arrange objects according to size, colour and shape. They count confidently to five and 10 and explain how many objects they can see. Children can recall numeracy rhymes and songs. They enjoy working on simple counting games and practice their counting and subtracting skills through role-play in the shop and the *tŷ bach twt* for example.
- They are aware of shapes and are beginning to learn their names. The children are also developing a good vocabulary for comparing objects according to size and shape, and they can find them in the environment.
- Four-year-old children can count forwards and backwards up to 10 and to at least 20 by the end of the reception year. They count forwards and backwards from a definitive number.
- Four-year-old children describe 2-D and 3-D shapes and name them, noting simple properties and arranging and pairing shapes, correlating them, sorting them and putting them in order and following a pattern. They link shapes and objects in everyday life and in the environment.
- Four-year-old children understand the concepts 'more/less', 'adding/subtracting', 'lighter' and 'heavier'. They use ICT skills to develop number skills, arrange objects according to shape, pattern and colour, and to draw pictograms and simple graphs. They show good control of the mouse and a practical understanding of moving objects on the screen.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- All children have developed good basic research skills.
- Nursery children name animals, and talk about pictures in a large book. They understand that different materials have strengths and different uses, and they are familiar with objects and places in everyday life. They partake in a role-play about looking after animals, working with living things and various materials.
- They take part in practical activities by showing increasing care and control. The children make very simple conclusions and ask appropriate questions. They sort according to simple features, sort into sets and correlate familiar objects in a sensible way.
- Children recognise the importance of places and recognise the value of help provided by the ambulance service, the police and postman. They understand the importance of hygiene and care for the body. They can name the main external parts of the body and compare themselves with other living things.
- They can follow directions and simple instructions and discuss the use made of buildings and land in the local environment.

Physical development

- Nursery children move confidently and are full of imagination, with control and increasing synchronisation. They use a range of small and large equipment carefully showing improvement in balance skills and body control. They use climbing apparatus very effectively.
- Four-year-old children show good control when tracing and cutting shapes, using small and large equipment and by climbing and keeping balance. They begin to respond to

suggestions for dance, by imitating movements. They enjoy role-playing, singing and drama.

Creative development

- The children make good progress in creative work, learning a good range of techniques and a wide range of skills.
- Nursery children produce pictures, by controlling the brush and pencils effectively. They use paint and glue with care and express their ideas and feelings through art. The children work with flexible materials and create simple shapes on paper, in sand and in clay.
- Four-year-old children express their ideas by painting, drawing and modelling.

Shortcomings

- There are no shortcomings.

Welsh

Standards of achievement are very good in KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- Pupils' communication skills are developing very well in both key stages by listening attentively to good quality language presented to them by the teachers.
- In KS2, pupils listen well to stories being introduced and respond enthusiastically to their content. They are aware of a story's order and progression and can describe the main events in it. They discuss characters and events and, when dealing with simple poems, they identify rhyming patterns.
- Reading skills are developing strongly in KS1. Pupils read aloud clearly and with meaning. They know about the main features of a book such as the cover, title, author and blurb. They use phonic strategies and context to establish meaning. They enjoy books and are keen to share their experiences with teachers and other adults especially the books written by themselves.
- Pupils make good progress in their written work in KS1. By the end of the key stage, they write in a variety of forms and much of the work displays vivid imagination and very good writing skills.
- Key Stage 2 pupils can skilfully discuss a variety of literary material. They are observant when dealing with characters' behaviour and feelings in the story of Branwen. The more able pupils can give extended comments.
- Pupils in KS2 read clearly and the majority of them read meaningfully with appropriate emphasis and expression. They have good understanding of the construction of a story and authors' way of beginning, developing and ending a story. They find information from a variety of print sources and use it effectively in their work across the curriculum.
- Pupils across KS2 write for different purposes using a variety of forms appropriate to suit the task. They show originality choosing appropriate words and phrases in their creative writing and when writing poems. They use idioms and adjectives effectively to enrich their work.

Shortcomings

- There are no shortcomings.



English

Standards of achievement in English are very good.

English lessons are introduced early in KS1, but programmes of study and NC assessment arrangements are undertaken in KS2.

Good features

- Pupils' listening skills are very well-developed in both key stages. They concentrate for an extended period and have a good recollection of what they have heard.
- Their oral skills are strengthened through a wide range of contexts; they speak clearly and confidently.
- Pupils are able to read correctly, fluently and with appropriate expression.
- Pupils can respond orally, and in writing to texts of increasing complexity and a large majority of them understand implicit meanings as well as explicit meanings.
- They read a wide range of literature, showing enjoyment, the ability to analyse text and to discuss characters.
- Pupils can turn to books as well as the 'web-site' to research and convey information.
- Pupils write in a variety of forms, for different audiences and purposes.
- Pupils discuss their work, re-draft it and present it appropriately, according to the requirements.
- Standards in punctuation and spelling are well-developed and have improved significantly since the last inspection.

Shortcomings

- There are no shortcomings.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement are very good in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils perform different number tasks confidently showing understanding that there is more than one way of setting out sums, be that in columns or across. Pupils understand the place value and use the information skilfully to add and subtract and solve simple problems.
- They can switch from one type of mathematics to another without any difficulty, by completing a variety of topic and number work.
- They understand concepts such as 'less' and 'more' and are confident working with number bonds up to 20 and 100. They complete adding/subtracting/dividing and multiplying sums increasingly correctly by the end of KS1. They can use symbols correctly and interpret number sentences and understand how to halve numbers and shapes.
- They use coins and learn how to count and give change correctly. They make effective use of the interactive white board to practice their skills.

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- They have a good understanding of time and can discuss different times of the day and the week and understand the concept of seasons by the end of KS1.
 - They recognise 2-D and 3-D shapes, can name them, note their properties easily, by using the correct mathematical vocabulary. They can note where in the environment use is made of these shapes.
 - They measure using non-standard units and standard metric units.
 - In KS2, pupils have a developing understanding of place value, number patterns and bonds and use them confidently to solve problems and handle numbers up to 1000.
 - They develop mental skills gradually throughout the key stage and learn different strategies. They begin to explain their method of working and justify and check their results with increasing confidence, with regular practice.
 - Pupils understand fractions and can deal with them increasingly correctly and with more complexity by the end of Y6. They understand the relationship between fractions and decimals and percentages and work towards improving their ability to switch from one to the other.
 - By the end of KS2, pupils can relate a good range of 2-D and 3-D characteristics correctly.
 - They can estimate measurements effectively and can switch from one unit to the other with increasing success and solve more complex problems, according to their age and mathematical ability.

Shortcomings

- There are no shortcomings.

Science

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- Key Stage 1 pupils can name the main external parts of the body correctly. They can list things which are familiar to them as living things and non-living things.
- They know that exercise and eating the right kinds of food help human beings to remain healthy.
- They can name different items of everyday equipment that use electricity. They build a simple circuit using batteries, wires and bulbs. They understand the bulb will not light if there is a break in the circuit and that a switch can be used to control an electrical device.
- Key Stage 2 pupils have a good knowledge of life processes and living things. They know the function of teeth and how to look after them and a varied and ample diet is needed to remain healthy.
- They can explain what the effect of exercise and resting has on the heartbeat and how blood runs through veins and arteries in the body.
- They understand that some solids dissolve in water to give solutions, but some others do not do this.

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- In undertaking investigations, they acknowledge the need for fair tests. They present their observations in a variety of ways including the use of computer programs to draw simple graphs.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' research skills are not sufficiently developed especially to develop their own scientific ideas.
- A minority of pupils in both key stages have difficulty using appropriate scientific vocabulary when describing their work orally and in writing.

Design and technology

Standards of achievement are very good in both key stages.

Good features

- In both key stages, pupils work through the process of research into products carefully to see how they work and how they are created. They use suitable vocabulary to discuss texture, feeling and appearance of products, their strength and ability to do what they were planned for.
- In KS1, they spend time creating their own simple designs, implementing them and then orally evaluating them.
- In KS1, pupils are seen matching their scientific knowledge with their design and technology skills to discuss which fruits are best to make a salad. Pupils show a good understanding of the importance of hygiene.
- At the beginning of KS2, pupils think about manufacture and construction when researching products, to improve their designing skills. They study different uses to discover their suitability for a particular project. They look at objects that are already on the market to measure their virtues, their weaknesses and consider a way of improving their performance.
- Pupils show an ability to use sewing, cooking, building and controlling skills carefully with appropriate consideration given to health and safety requirements. They understand different aspects of mechanisms and use appropriate finishings to their product to complete work to the best possible standard.
- They make decisions on how to command the Roamer to move, change direction, follow a special path and return to its initial location.
- By evaluating, they explain their method of working and their reasons for making decisions. They consider how to make their finished work attractive.
- When they have the opportunity, they use their mathematical skills and ICT to promote their work.

Shortcomings

- There are no shortcomings.

Information technology

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 and KS2 learn basic skills well. They have frequent opportunities to practice their skills as the school has invested well in information technology equipment.
- They use ICT to investigate and solve problems in the context of work across a variety of subjects.
- Key Stage 1 pupils use computer programs appropriately to strengthen their work in language and number. Their word-processing skills are well-developed and by the end of the key stage, they can create attractive story books by combining picture and text. They create graphs to process and exhibit stored information.
- Key Stage 2 pupils' word-processing skills are well-developed. Pupils can vary shape, form and font colour. They make cards, advertisements and attractive covers for their personal files.
- They use their numeracy skills to separate and classify information effectively as in the use of a database to create graphs and to make questionnaires and a reading record. They make appropriate use of sensors in their work in science.
- Pupils' controlling and modelling skills are developing satisfactorily in both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils can give simple directions to control the movements of the Roamer. Key Stage 2 pupils can create a variety of shapes by changing the values in a Logo procedure.
- They use the Internet and CD-ROMs to research and obtain information. They can copy and paste material from one program to another.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills in using control and modelling technology are not sufficiently developed.

History

Standards of achievement are very good in KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to become aware of chronology through visits they make to historical places such as Penrhyn Castle. They learn about notable characters in history like Gerallt Gymro and William Morgan.
- They come to understand the changes in their lives and life years ago by comparing different equipment used in homes compared with those used in the past. They listen to visitors' contributions and use photographs and stories from different periods to find information about the past.
- They use historical vocabulary dealing with the passage of time and the ways the past is different to the present by recording their visits to historic places in the form of pictures and sentences.
- In KS2, direct experiences introduced to the pupils are extended and deepened. They ask and answer questions about the past confidently.

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- Pupils have a good awareness of chronology. They can correctly put significant historical events on a time line. They use the conventions which describe the passage of time correctly.
 - Older pupils' research skills are well-developed. The pupils make very good use of a wide range of sources to research into an historical topic. They begin to select and combine information from historic sources dealing with the Celts, for example, to shape their own interpretations. They understand the significance of evidence and the work of archaeologists to historians.
 - In both key stages, pupils use ICT effectively to research and convey historic information.

Shortcomings

- There are no shortcomings.

Geography

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils' knowledge of their local area is well-developed. They can name and describe simply the main features of the area such as buildings, roads, fields and farmhouses.
- When studying shops in the area, they refer to some of the differences in the services the village shop offers and those available in the supermarket in the nearby town.
- Their mapping skills are well-developed. They identify the main physical and human features on a simple plan of the village. They can locate main buildings on the plan. They can locate the local area and name some features on a map of Wales.
- Key Stage 2 pupils begin to understand the way in which people can effect the environment and why it is important to protect it. As a result of their study of Snowdonia National Park, they can identify some of the pleasant and unpleasant features relating to the Snowdon area and the way the environment can be improved. As a part of the Eco-School project, the pupils get valuable direct experiences by being part of the programme to improve the school environment.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of how the weather affects peoples' lives and their way of life. They can explain why information about the weather is important to different people. They use ICT confidently to find additional sources of information and to help with the work of handling, classifying and presenting evidence.

Shortcomings

- Overall in both key stages, pupils' geographical vocabulary and their ability to give more extended responses orally and in writing are underdeveloped.

Art

Standards of achievement are very good in both key stages.

Good features

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- In KS1, pupils develop their knowledge about world-wide artists and Welsh designers and craftsmen, and respond to various methods and ideas of Welsh artists, in a practical way. Also, very effective work was seen on sketching, line work, colour, tone and texture.
 - Pupils develop their observational and sketching skills effectively. Careful attention is given to shape, form and mixing colours. Pupils experiment sufficiently with different styles, a variety of materials, equipment and processes. They begin to explore different types of art, craft and design in the local environment and from different cultures effectively.
 - In KS2, pupils' knowledge and understanding of artists, craftsmen and designers who work in a range of media are well-developed through working with an experienced artist. They respond well to other peoples' ideas and methods by experimenting with different styles, techniques and resources of all kinds.
 - Their sketch work shows care and good awareness of shape, form and space. Pupils can discuss their work using art visual language, which includes line, essence, colour, pattern and texture. They manage to apply these elements effectively in their own work.
 - Pupils experiment with a range of materials, processes and 2-D and 3-D techniques and a very attractive exhibition was designed in the school of 3-D work on Twm o'r Nant.
 - Pupils evaluate, review and adapt their work where appropriate. They meet with professional artists to learn about art techniques and language. This has a good influence on childrens' work and encourages them to take care when using their creative skills.

Shortcomings

- There are no shortcomings.

Music

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 learn to control their breathing and create high and low, loud and quiet sounds effectively. They can keep a steady rhythm, experimenting with more than one type of beat through using lyrics and percussion instruments.
- They learn about musical elements and their understanding of dynamics is gradually increasing through both key stages. Pupils' ability to sing with expression, hit a note correctly and maintain it is exceptionally good.
- Key Stage 2 pupils control their voices and discuss instruments with increasing confidence while performing. They show understanding and appropriate use of musical elements while composing. They use imagination when experimenting with sounds and when performing their work.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not have sufficient awareness and understanding of music from different world-wide cultures and traditions.
- Pupils ability to recall subject vocabulary is uncertain, and they are over-reliant on the help of posters and teacher support when discussing their work and when evaluating.

Physical education

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

A physical education programme is provided which meets NC requirements. A good number of pupils also take part in the good variety of extra-curricular activities organised by the school.

Good features

- Key Stage 1 pupils use a variety of ways of moving around the hall in their warm-up activities.
- They run, jump and skip responding well to the music beats.
- They manage to follow instructions on how to perform a traditional folk dance. They enjoy the experience and take part enthusiastically in the activity.
- Key Stage 2 pupils are aware of the importance of warm-up before exercising hard and they know the effect this has on the heart beat and blood circulation.
- They respond enthusiastically and creatively when making a sequence of movements at different levels, and creating shapes which portray the life and spirit of the Celts.
- They evaluate their work regularly and offer suggestions on how to improve their own performances and the performance of others.
- Older pupils take part in a good range of team sports and athletics with and against other schools.

Shortcomings

- A minority of KS1 pupils do not have sufficient control on their movements to work effectively with others.
- A minority of KS2 pupils are unable to adapt their responses to cope with the activity's physical requirements.

Religious education

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- Pupils develop a knowledge and understanding of beliefs and customs of Christianity and other religions such as Judaism and Islam.
- Through using different artefacts, pupils become aware of the importance of symbolism within the Christian and other religions. They understand and show sympathy with the ways different believers express their faith.
- Pupils become familiar with stories from the Bible and other religions and can interpret the different moral lessons which arise from them.
- Pupils are aware of the ways peoples' lifestyles are affected by their beliefs and learn what the significance of this is on the extended life of different ethnic groups.
- Pupils know why and how believers worship, pray and celebrate their faiths in different religions. They gain information about various places of worship and holidays and

celebrations of different faiths. The pupils' knowledge is strengthened by work they do in art, geography and personal and social education.

Shortcomings

- Although pupils' knowledge is good, they do not develop their own ideas when responding individually to what they are learning.
- Overall, pupils' ability to discuss spiritual issues and meditate on how they have an effect on their own lives is underdeveloped.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

Seven key issues were listed for action in the last inspection. The school has made very good progress in addressing every one of them.

1. Raise standards in history throughout the school and, in KS2, in English and geography.

Since the last inspection, standards in each one of these subjects have improved. Standards in history were judged to be very good throughout the school and in KS2, standards in English are very good and in geography they are good.

2. Improve questioning techniques in KS2.

Questioning techniques are used effectively in classes to explore pupils' understanding of what has been previously taught. The quality of teaching was at least good in the substantial majority of classes inspected this time and in a good number of them, the quality was very good.

3. Improve the quality of long-term planning, particularly in those subjects where standards are unsatisfactory, to have a more direct influence on co-ordination and progression in the work.

By now, good quality schemes of work are provided in every subject which meet NC requirements. The quality of long-term planning is very good.

4. Develop teachers' expertise in subjects where standards are unsatisfactory.

Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed to the school, and she is also mainly responsible for teaching KS2. Effective self-evaluation systems are in place and appropriate arrangements for staff development and these are implemented effectively. In this inspection, teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach was judged to be sound.

5. Prioritise more clearly in the SDP and formulate specific schemes for future development.

The current SDP is detailed and comprehensive. Clear priorities are noted for the year 2002-3 and targets are set for the period 2002 to 2005.

6. Continue to improve the quality of recording assessments and the use made of them; improve the marking in KS2; improve aspects of reports to parents.

Since the last inspection, the assessment policy has been revised. The quality of assessment and reporting is now very good. The marking in KS2 is constructive and directs pupils on how to improve their work. The quality of reports to parents is good.

7. Improve the provision for pupils with SEN in KS2.

Detailed attention has been given to the provision for pupils with SEN since the last inspection. The school has responded to the new Code of Practice and extra help has been made available for pupils with SEN. The present provision is very good.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order to maintain and build on the good and very good standards which have already been demonstrated in the work of the school, there is a need to:

- address the few shortcomings noted in subjects and aim towards excellence in every field;
- further address the development of key skills across the curriculum by providing opportunities in lessons for pupils to work in pairs, groups and individually to discuss, analyse, solve problems, express opinion and come to conclusions.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Ysgol Rhydgaed
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Groes Denbigh Conway
Post-Code	LL16 55D
Telephone Number	01745 550357

Headteacher	Mrs Gwenda Pringle
Date of appointment	September 2001
Chair of Governors	Mrs Meinir H Jones
Registered Inspector	Mr D G Evans
Dates of inspection	13-15 January 2003

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	2.5	4	5	3	2	2	5	2	25.5

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	2	2	2.14

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	10.7:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	11.5
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.07:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>			
	R a KS1	KS2	Whole school
Spring 2002	94.4	97.6	96.0
Autumn 2002	93.2	97.2	95.2
Summer 2002	94.4	94.7	94.58

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.	0
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C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2002

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results: 2000	Number of pupils in Y6: 1
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of KS2 was fewer than five, summary information is not included.	

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

The school was inspected by a team of three inspectors who were present in the school for five inspector days.

Thirty-one lessons or part-lessons were inspected.

A sample of pupils in both key stages were listened to reading. A number of pupils were spoken to and asked about aspects of their work in NC subjects and religious education.

A sample of their written and practical work in all subjects was scrutinized.

School policies and documents were studied before the inspection.

The inspectors held discussions with teachers during the inspection period on a wide variety of issues dealing with their responsibilities and school work. School planning documents were looked at as well as its numerous files and records.

Attendance registers were studied.

Inspectors were present for every act of collective worship.

Eleven parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and 16 questionnaires were completed.

The Registered Inspector met up with the governors before and after the inspection.

A pre-inspection meeting was held with staff and were provided with an oral feedback after the inspection.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Mr D G Evans	RgI	The school and its priorities Main findings of the report Educational standards achieved by pupils Teaching Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement Leadership and efficiency School improvement	Welsh science information technology history geography physical education
Mr G Morris	Lay	Behaviour and attitudes Attendance Partnerships with parents and community, schools and other institutions Partnership with industry	
Mrs S Clough	Team	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Assessment, recording and reporting Curriculum Provision for pupils with SEN Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	English mathematics design and technology music art religious education children under-five

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