

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

***SARN NURSERY SCHOOL  
HEOL CANOLA  
SARN***

***School Number: 672-1022***

***Date of Inspection: 4-5 March 2002***

***by***

***MRS M E EVANS  
Registered Inspector***

***Date: 24 April 2002***

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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

Sarn Nursery School is a local authority maintained school which is situated in the village of Sarn on the outskirts of Bridgend. The school is a nursery for children aged three and four and there are currently 53 full-time children on roll. Children are admitted to the nursery after their third birthday. The numbers of children on roll for the last three years have declined slightly. All the children are from English speaking homes and Welsh is taught as a second language. The school aims to provide an atmosphere that is warm, friendly, happy and secure in which children can play, learn and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.

The school considers its catchment area to be neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. The nature of the intake is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged and comprises the full range of ability. Currently there are three children on the school's Special Educational Needs (SEN) register. Baseline assessments are undertaken on entry and results indicate an average attainment for most children.

The school was last inspected in 1996 and has met the targets set in its post-inspection action plan to improve educational provision and children's standards of achievement. Some of the targets in the current School Development Plan (SDP) have already been met. The focus for the year will be to improve the teaching and learning and develop the curriculum. An analysis of school based assessments is the basis for target setting to improve standards.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

### The main findings of the report

Sarn Nursery School is an effective school with many good features. The school is committed to improving curricular provision in order to raise standards of achievement. The children's very good behaviour and their positive attitudes to work contribute to the good standards achieved. The seconded headteacher provides strong leadership in managing change in order to improve standards.

#### Educational standards achieved by children

- The educational provision for children is good and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Children's standards of achievement are good overall; they are making good progress in all the areas of learning and the majority make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes.
- Standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

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

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- Children's standards of achievement were very good in 13 per cent of the sessions observed, good in 81 per cent, and satisfactory in the remaining six per cent.
  - Standards are good overall in language, literacy and communication skills. Children's listening skills are very good; they listen attentively to adults and other children. Their speaking skills are good and they speak clearly and audibly with confidence and are keen to answer questions and contribute to discussion. Children are becoming familiar with Welsh vocabulary and respond well in oral and singing sessions. They achieve good standards in early reading and writing skills. They are making good progress towards achieving the learning outcomes in all these areas.
  - Children's personal and social development is very good. They show confidence, independence and establish effective relationships with other children and adults. They co-operate well during worktime and use their imagination well during play activities.
  - Standards are good in mathematical development and children successfully use mathematics as an integral part of a range of activities, which are effective in consolidating mathematical language, skills and understanding.
  - Standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are good. Children benefit from the good quality provision in this area. Well planned activities which promote practical investigation and exploration have a positive impact on their learning.
  - Children's physical development is very good. They show confidence and enjoyment; their physical mobility, co-ordination and control are very well developed through a range of daily outdoor and indoor activities.
  - Children achieve good standards in their creative development. They confidently use a range of materials and equipment to explore and create their own artwork. They thoroughly enjoy musical activities and are making good progress in their music making.
  - Children's standards and progress in the key skills across the curriculum are good and are constantly being reinforced as they move from one activity to another. Standards achieved in literacy skills are good overall; their listening skills are very good and they listen with interest and concentration. They make good progress in the use of speaking skills and in using early reading and writing skills across the curriculum. The use of numeracy skills in different activities is good. Children's use of a range of information and communications technology (ICT) for different purposes is good.

### **Ethos of the school**

- The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. The high standards in values promoted by the school reflect the caring ethos. Provision for children's social and moral development is very good.
- The quality of children's behaviour and attitudes to their work is very good. The school has high expectations and makes every effort to praise good behaviour, which has a positive effect on standards achieved.
- Levels of attendance are unsatisfactory and nearly all absences are due to children's illnesses. Registration at the beginning of the afternoon session does not comply with statutory requirements. Punctuality throughout the day is good but is unsatisfactory at the beginning of the school day.

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## **The quality of education**

- The quality of teaching was very good in 20 per cent of sessions observed, good in 74 per cent and satisfactory in six per cent. The staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. They have high expectations and set interesting tasks to increase children's skills, knowledge and understanding in the six areas of learning. Staff intervention during sessions is of high quality and succeeds in supporting children's learning.
- The school has good arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting children's achievements and progress. Assessments are used appropriately to set targets for improvement and to inform future planning. The reports to parents are of good quality.
- Curricular provision is of good quality and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Schemes of work are in the process of being developed for all areas of learning; at present they do not provide sufficient detail to support teachers' planning. The quality of curriculum planning is good and learning objectives are clearly focused on the skills, knowledge and understanding which the children are to acquire.
- The school provides a good standard of educational support, welfare and personal guidance for children. There are good procedures for promoting the well-being and health and safety of children and there are appropriate policies in place.
- The quality of the provision for children with SEN is good and complies with the Code of Practice. Children make good progress in line with the targets set in the individual education plans (IEPs).
- Partnerships between the school and parents, the community, schools and other institutions are good and have a beneficial impact on children's standards of achievement. Parents are well informed about the activities of the school and are supportive of school events and activities. However, they would like more information about the curriculum developments that are taking place in the school. The school's partnership with industry is satisfactory.

## **Management**

- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good. The school has begun a system of self-evaluation; there are effective procedures for evaluating children's learning and monitoring the progress made towards achieving targets.
- Resources are managed efficiently and spending decisions are evaluated, ensuring good value for money. The school's monitoring and self-evaluation procedures are appropriate in identifying areas for development and the training needs of staff. The school sets targets for improvement which are incorporated into the SDP.
- The SDP contains details of educational developments, closely linked to the budget and is effective in moving the school forwards.
- There are a good number of experienced staff who are effectively deployed. The teachers and nursery nurses work well together as an effective team.
- The school has ample space for the number of children and the inside of the building is well maintained. Good use is made of all available space, both inside and outside, to enhance children's experiences.

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- Displays of children's work are effective in celebrating their achievements. The provision of resources is good, and staff and children make good use of all available books, materials and equipment.
  - The quality of leadership and management of the school is very good. The school's aims and values, including a commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity for all, promote a caring ethos and high standards and they give a clear sense of purpose and direction for the school.

### **School improvement**

- Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in meeting the targets set in the action plan which addresses the key issues from the previous inspection report. These include: the involvement of parents in the education of their children; improving standards of achievement in physical development; improving staff interaction with children in the creative areas of learning; improving curriculum documentation; reviewing the grouping of children and ensure opportunities for children to handle and enjoy books.

## **3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

### **3.1 Standards Achieved in the Areas of Learning**

Children's standards of achievement were very good in 13 per cent of the sessions observed, good in 81 per cent and satisfactory in the remaining six per cent.

- The children's standards of achievement are good overall. They are very good in personal and social development and physical development. Most children are making good progress towards achieving the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. They make good progress in all the areas of learning and are confidently developing their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Standards are good overall in language, literacy and communication skills. Children have very good listening skills and they listen attentively to adults and other children. Their speaking skills are good; they speak clearly and audibly and are keen to answer questions and contribute to discussion. Children are becoming familiar with Welsh vocabulary and respond well in oral and singing sessions. They make good progress towards the development of reading skills; they enjoy books, handle them carefully and choose books from the library to share with their parents. Their writing skills are developing well and they take every opportunity to use their emergent writing skills in the play areas. Many children can recognise and write their own name by the time they leave the nursery.
- Children's personal and social development is very good. They show confidence, independence and establish effective relationships with other children and adults. They work very well at their tasks, independently, in pairs or as part of a group. They concentrate well, persevere and seek help when needed. Their behaviour is very good and they have positive attitudes to their work; they play co-operatively, take turns and share fairly.
- Standards are good in mathematical development. Children successfully use mathematics as an integral part of their activities, such as shopping, cooking, building with bricks and constructional equipment, and in sand and water play. They can count accurately to 10 in English and in Welsh, sequence numbers correctly and sort by colour, shape and size.

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They can recognise and name two-dimensional shapes. They use mathematical language well and enjoy singing a variety of number rhymes and action songs which support their understanding of concepts.

- Standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are good. Children benefit from the good quality provision in this area, which has a positive impact on standards. They talk confidently about where they live, their families and the school environment. They use a computer confidently and control a mouse competently to select different options.
- Standards in physical development are very good; children make very good progress in developing their gross and fine motor skills. They are confident on large apparatus when climbing, crawling, sliding and balancing. They thoroughly enjoy the outdoor play activities and make good use of the variety of play equipment and wheeled toys. During movement sessions, they are confident to move with increasing control and co-ordination and an awareness of space and others.
- Standards in creative development are good. Children confidently explore line, colour, shape, texture and form through drawing, painting, paint mixing, printing, pattern making and collage work. In music, they enjoy singing a range of songs and rhymes which they sing tunefully with clear diction. They experiment with sounds from a range of musical instruments to create their own music.
- All children make good progress towards the targets for improvement set by the school in relation to assessment criteria. The targets are based on the effective assessment of children's achievements as well as baseline assessments. Children with SEN make good progress towards the targets set in the IEPs.

### **3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum**

Children's standards of achievement and progress in the key skills across the curriculum are good overall. Standards achieved in language, literacy and communication skills are good, especially in listening skills which are very good. Similarly the use of numeracy skills across the areas of learning is good and children's use of a range of ICT for different purposes is good.

- Children make good use of the key skills in many activities within the areas of learning. They benefit from the strong support provided to help them to concentrate and listen with interest and to speak clearly. The provision of creative play and drama activities are effective in promoting language and social skills. Recall sessions increase children's confidence to speak aloud, clearly and audibly. Children are encouraged to look at a variety of books and enjoy listening to the stories in Big Books whilst following the illustrations. They make effective use of their early reading and writing skills and enjoy experimenting with writing in the creative play areas.
- Children's standards in numeracy across the curriculum are good. They use numeracy as an integral part of many activities across the areas of learning. They consolidate their knowledge of mathematics through counting, sorting, ordering and matching activities as well as through scientific investigations with magnets and building with construction sets. They make good use of their knowledge of shapes and materials whilst creating collage pictures and models.
- Children's use of a range of ICT across the curriculum is good. They confidently operate a listening centre to listen to tape recordings of favourite nursery rhymes. They use

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computer equipment confidently in order to enhance their learning. They are familiar with a keyboard and concept keyboard; they control a mouse successfully to select and move items on the screen.

## **4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **4.1 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Overall, the provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

- The school is successful in its aim to provide opportunities for children to develop 'spiritual, moral, social and emotional values'. Children respond well and achieve very good standards in their moral and social development and good standards in their spiritual and cultural development.
- The school is a caring community which children are keen to attend. They settle into the new routines quickly and soon develop confidence and independence. The quality of relationships within the school is good and, with a few exceptions, children are respectful of each other and adults.
- All staff set high standards for the values that are acceptable in the school. They respect the children and their responses and expect the children to follow their example. This has a good influence upon the children who show consideration for each other, school property and the environment.
- Solid foundations for personal and social development are laid. Almost all children behave very well; they know the difference between right and wrong and understand the consequences of undesirable conduct. Staff use effective behaviour management strategies for those who are not as well behaved.
- A valuable contribution towards spiritual development occurs daily. All children gather together when they sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. They pray and learn about caring, for example, they appreciate their mothers on Mothering Sunday. They celebrate festivals in the Christian calendar.
- From their earliest time in school, children work happily alongside each other and collaborate in pairs or larger groups. They are taught to be honest, share, care and be kind.
- The school helps children to become aware of others less fortunate than themselves and they respond by giving generously to a variety of charitable organisations, such as Children in Need and Marie Curie Cancer Care. The curriculum successfully reflects the language, culture and heritage of Wales. Children celebrate St David's Day by wearing Welsh costume and singing songs in Welsh. Other cultures are introduced satisfactorily through art, role-play resources, books and stories.
- The curriculum is enriched by a variety of visitors to the school and educational visits to places of interest. The children learn about the work of those who help them in school and in the wider community, such as the fireman, policeman and cook, while visits to the countryside and the seaside enable them to learn about and appreciate geographical differences.

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## **4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes**

Children's behaviour in all areas of the school is very good and they have very good attitudes to learning.

- Staff consistently operate the school's discipline procedures. They praise children appropriately for especially good work, behaviour and helpfulness.
- In the rare cases of significant misbehaviour by children, parents and members of the school's management committee are properly informed. Satisfactory disciplinary records are kept.
- Children have very good relationships with each other and with all members of staff. They are courteous and self-confident when talking to visiting adults.
- There have been no exclusions in the past twelve months.

## **4.3 Attendance**

Levels of attendance are unsatisfactory and nearly all absences are caused by children's illnesses.

- Even though the children are not yet of statutory school age, attendance is just below satisfactory levels having averaged 87.5 per cent during the previous term, a similar level to that during the rest of 2001. Attendance figures are slightly lower for the current term to date.
- Staff follow up with parents any unexplained absence by their children.
- There is normally no need for contact with the Education Welfare Officer but the health visitor occasionally helps by encouraging parents to send their children to school more regularly.
- Morning registration sessions are run efficiently, but the school's arrangements for the afternoon do not fully comply with statutory requirements.
- Punctuality of children at the start of the school day is unsatisfactory. Several children with their parents were seen to arrive up to 20 minutes late during the inspection. Activities during the day start promptly.

# **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

## **5.1 Teaching**

The quality of teaching was very good in 20 per cent of sessions observed, good in 74 per cent and satisfactory in the remaining six per cent.

- The overall quality of teaching is good and enables the children to make good progress, especially in key skills across the areas of learning which are constantly being reinforced. The staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and set high expectations to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in the six areas of learning. Staff intervention during sessions is of high quality and succeeds in supporting children's learning.

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- Weekly planning is effective and clearly identifies learning objectives linked to the desirable outcomes. Staff evaluate and plan the next stages in the children's learning. Activities are well planned and interesting tasks are set to develop children's skills, knowledge and understanding. The small group times consolidate previous learning and encourage children to take part in the practical activities, thus developing confidence and language skills.
  - All children are encouraged to choose and plan their own learning activities, thus promoting independence. Work is well matched to the needs of children, with appropriate tasks set for them to work as individuals or together in pairs or groups. They are provided with very good support in order to develop their learning skills. Those children with SEN are appropriately supported in line with the targets in their IEPs.
  - Sessions are well organised and staff manage the children well and have good relationships with them. They use effective strategies to promote good listening skills and encourage positive attitudes to their work. A good range of teaching techniques and organisational strategies are used effectively for different activities and purposes. The recall sessions are particularly effective and are used well to consolidate skills and knowledge, to assess understanding and to evaluate progress.
  - The assessment and recording procedures are good and assessment opportunities are used well to obtain information for future planning.

## **5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good. The system is manageable and provides a good record of the assessment of children's achievements.

- There is a good quality, detailed assessment policy which has appropriate aims and guidelines for implementing the assessment procedures.
- The school undertakes a baseline assessment shortly after children start school when they have had time to settle into their new routine. The information gained is used to set appropriate tasks and levels of expectation for individual children.
- Children with SEN are identified early and good records of their progress are kept.
- Dated records of planned assessments are kept in a child observation book and other observations are noted during class time on gummed notelets and later transferred to individuals' records. Together, they help to give a wide picture of children's weaknesses and strengths.
- Staff have regular planning meetings when they review children's progress and use this information to inform their future planning.
- Arrangements for consultation meetings with parents are appropriate. The first meeting with parents occurs about six weeks after children start and parents receive a short written report in that term. In the summer term, there is a second meeting with parents. When children leave the school they receive another report and a profile book containing examples of work which show their stage of development. Access to staff at other times is good. However, information from questionnaires returned and the pre-inspection meeting indicates that a good proportion of parents feel that they are not informed sufficiently about the work their children do and the progress they make.

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- The quality of the most recent reports to parents is good. They outline children's strengths and weaknesses and the best examples indicate what children need to do next.
  - The school has set suitable quantifiable targets for improving children's attainment.

### 5.3 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- Policies and schemes of work are in place for all areas of learning and are in the process of being updated. At present the schemes of work do not provide sufficient detail to support teacher's planning nor do they reflect the varied curriculum and range of activities provided. The quality of curriculum planning is good and learning objectives are clearly focused on the skills, knowledge and understanding which the children are to acquire in each activity.
- A range of very good quality experiences are organised for children which successfully promote their skills of speaking and listening, enquiry, investigation and exploration.
- Provision for personal and social development is well integrated through the curriculum. Parents, at their meeting and through their questionnaires, confirm that their children respond particularly well to this aspect, which is a strength of the school. However, they would welcome more information about curriculum developments and their organisation. Parents are encouraged to support their children with home/school tasks and through sharing books which they choose from the school library.
- The curriculum is planned and organised through a range of activities within each area of learning. These effectively promote and develop children's independence, ability to take responsibility and to use personal initiative. Key skills are planned for each area and are constantly being re-inforced across all activities.
- The quality of curriculum planning is good. The staff work well as a team to evaluate previous work and plan the next stages of learning. Results of evaluations and assessments are carefully analysed and information is fed back into the planning.
- Teachers and nursery nurses share the responsibilities for the three pastoral groups and ensure focused adult intervention in children's learning. The groups are split further for 'small group time' and the focused learning is particularly successful in developing skills of speaking, listening, numeracy, personal and social skills and in promoting knowledge and understanding of the world.
- There is a policy for *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* which promotes the use of incidental Welsh and an understanding of Welsh culture; this was particularly successful when celebrating St David's Day. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities for children to undertake educational visits both locally and further afield, such as to the Brecon Mountain Railway. These visits succeed in extending children's knowledge of Wales and Welsh culture.
- Curriculum provision is effective in ensuring that all activities are socially inclusive and all children, including those with SEN, have full access to the curriculum.

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## **5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare**

The quality of the provision for the support, guidance and welfare of children is good.

- All adults involved with the school are very considerate for the well being of the children.
- The school is organised so that children belong to one of three pastoral groups where they register on arrival each morning and where they come together at different times of the day for a variety of purposes, such as recall and small group work. This results in the children having a sense of belonging and adults to whom they can turn to in times of need.
- The children and their families are well known to all the staff and the positive relationships displayed ensure that pastoral and educational needs are catered for very effectively. The positive approach has a very good influence upon children's attitude to school. They come to school happily, relate well to the adults in the school and feel safe and secure.
- The medical needs of children are well catered for. Staff have recently updated their first aid training.
- The headteacher requested a health and safety survey of the school shortly after taking up her post. As a result, several issues were identified both inside and outside the building and dealt with promptly.
- The school makes suitable arrangements to support children when they first start school. A gradual introduction and familiarisation process starts with visits, a 'Link Up' educational group and meetings for parents and children before they start their nursery education.
- Appropriate Child Protection procedures are in place, with the headteacher being the designated responsible teacher. Staff are aware of the procedure to follow if there is cause for concern.
- Procedures for measuring progress are good, demonstrated by the careful assessment and recording of achievement. Individual files containing assessment booklets and examples of children's work provide a good record of progress and achievement. Children's work is dated, but not all examples are annotated to explain what achievement or difficulties they demonstrate.
- The monitoring of attendance is satisfactory. The low attendance is due to illness, with very few absences for holidays. Parents are aware of the need to inform the school of non-attendance.

## **5.5 Provision for pupils with SEN**

The quality of provision for children with SEN is good. Children make good progress towards the targets set in their IEPs.

- There is an appropriate policy for SEN which complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice. It provides guidance to all those involved in the SEN procedures. The policy does not contain a statement about the school's provision for equality of opportunity and inclusion, but the school intends to update the policy in line with the new Code of

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Practice. The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO), supported by the headteacher, monitors the implementation of the policy and children's progress. The SENCO is well supported by the school's management committee whose members take an interest in developments.

- There are three children on the SEN register, all on Stage 3. Their IEPs are appropriate and have achievable targets. They make good progress in line with the targets set in the IEPs and are well supported by the staff. The level of additional support for these children is in the process of being assessed.
- There are good systems for identifying and assessing the needs of children with SEN, including baseline assessments. The quality of planning is good and realistic targets are set for children to achieve. Targets are reviewed regularly and detailed records are kept of children's progress. Parents are kept informed of procedures and are encouraged to support their children's learning.
- There is effective liaison between the SENCO, the staff and outside agencies.

## **5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions**

The school has a good partnership with parents and organisations in the local community.

- A large majority of the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and/or responded to the questionnaire expressed support for the school. These views were confirmed by further brief discussions with parents during the inspection. There was, however, some concern about the lack of information provided about curriculum developments.
- About 20 parents regularly help in the school, for example, in the library, with computer work and with preparation of resources. Parents also provide significant financial assistance for the school by running fund-raising events.
- The vicar of the nearby church visits termly to lead the 'gather together' session and to support the curriculum.
- There are good links with local agencies including the local education authority (LEA), the health visitor, the fire service and the community police. The policeman visits the school twice each term to advise children about road and personal safety.
- There is a good partnership with local primary schools which children visit with their parents to try and ensure that their subsequent transfer there is as smooth as possible. Good quality curricular and personal information is also passed to the primary schools. Students from Bridgend College and the nearby comprehensive school frequently provide good quality help in the nursery and several were present during the inspection.
- Children entertain local residents at a day centre several times each year.
- There are good links with the local community council, one of whose members is on the school's management committee. The council helps the school with donations and gifts for the children to mark special occasions such as the forthcoming Queen's Jubilee.

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## **5.7 Partnership with Industry**

The school has a satisfactory partnership with local companies which enables children to learn something of the world of work around them.

- About six local shops support the school through the donation of money and/or materials. A nearby garden centre also supplies plants.
- The manager of a local supermarket is a member of the school's management committee. The store itself sponsors the school brochure and supplies produce as part of the school's healthy eating programme.
- During recent visits by children to the Brecon Mountain Railway, they learnt about the job of an engine driver and about transport methods. A parent who is employed by a local bus company has told children about his job and his company have donated the use of a bus for school trips.
- No teachers have recently attended business-related courses.

# **6. MANAGEMENT**

## **6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement**

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good and has a direct impact on children's standards of achievement.

- The school has begun a system of self-evaluation and there are effective procedures for evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. There is a self-evaluation procedure for evaluating performance and quality, which is used alongside monitoring procedures.
- Good use is made of assessment data, monitoring procedures and action plans from the previous inspection to evaluate standards and plan for improvement. Targets are set and incorporated into the SDP.
- The action plans in the SDP are effective in moving the school forwards. Each action plan in the SDP has clear targets, success criteria, identified responsibilities, planned expenditure and time schedules. The plans are reviewed regularly by the staff to improve the quality of provision and raise the standard of children's achievements.
- The school evaluates the progress made towards achieving the targets through monitoring children's work and the quality of teaching and learning. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and the school has met the targets in its post inspection action plan to improve the teaching and learning and curricular provision.
- Monitoring procedures are effective in identifying areas for improvement. Staff development needs are closely linked to school improvement priorities, such as developing the roles of curriculum co-ordinators.

## **6.2 Leadership and Efficiency**

The quality of leadership and management of the school is very good.

- The school's aims and values promote a caring ethos and give a clear sense of purpose and direction for the school.

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- There is a good ethos which includes social inclusion and a commitment to equal opportunity for all, which is successfully promoted by the staff. They provide a caring, secure environment in which children feel valued and encouraged to achieve their full potential.
  - The seconded headteacher has a full-time teaching commitment and provides strong leadership and support for the staff in improving the educational provision and standards of achievement.
  - There is a management committee which represents the school community and members are very supportive of the school. They are well informed and understand their roles in supporting the school. Some make regular visits to the school and are involved in various educational projects.
  - The school aims to maintain and improve the standards of achievement and the quality of educational provision by setting targets in the SDP and through the process of self-evaluation. The recent targets were to improve and implement changes in approach to teaching and learning through the process of self-evaluation, review the aims of the school and the school brochure and to carry out a health and safety audit of the building and resources. All have been successfully completed. The current targets are to review the schemes of work for the six areas of learning and develop the roles of the curriculum co-ordinators and management committee.
  - The LEA administers the school's budget and the school has a capitation budget which is efficiently administered. The LEA finance department provides appropriate advice and support. The management committee monitors spending and progress towards achieving targets.
  - The school manages its resources efficiently and reinforces the aims of the school, ensuring good value for money.
  - The headteacher and part-time clerk undertake administration tasks to ensure the efficient day-to-day running of the school.

### **6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources**

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall.

- The school has an appropriate number of staff. There are three teachers and three nursery nurses giving a ratio of one adult to nine children. The headteacher is currently on secondment from another nursery within the authority.
- Staff deployment is arranged through group planning and is very effective. The experienced nursery nurses make a valuable contribution towards the good achievements of the children through the consistently good quality of their interaction and teaching.
- The secretary and caretaker give good support. The school is clean and welcoming and the daily routines run smoothly.
- Professional development for staff is linked to the SDP and recent in-service training has had a good effect upon the changes in organisation and teaching.
- The school is housed in purpose built accommodation that was constructed in 1974. Internally, it is bright, welcoming and attractively presented. There is one large multi-

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purpose room and a small room used as a library and computer room for the children, with a small staffroom, headteacher's office and utility areas for adults.

- The large room is organised into sections appropriately resourced for the areas of learning. There are carpeted and wet floor areas designated for different types of activity and the whole is enhanced by good quality displays of children's work.
- The accommodation is used effectively throughout the day to provide all children with a range of activities across the six areas of learning.
- Outside, there is a spacious enclosed play area. This is made up of a grassed section, which is used when possible for a variety of activities, and a good sized hard surface area. There is a covered way on two sides of the building that allows shelter for outdoor activities in wet weather and as a shaded area for tabletop activities in summer. Good use is made of the outdoor areas whenever possible.
- Externally, the building is in need of decoration and general maintenance. Parts of the playground are prone to flooding in very wet conditions, which limits its use.
- There is a good range of resources, in good condition, for all areas of learning. They are used effectively to support the curriculum. The need for new resources was established when the new headteacher started at the school. They were duly identified and ordered.
- Children gain an insight into the world around them and of work adults do from visits from outside agencies related to health education, including the nurse, dentist and doctor, and from visits into the community that include supermarkets, hairdressers and the home for the elderly.
- Children benefit from educational visits to the Brecon Mountain Railway, to the pantomime in Porthcawl and to Techniquet in Cardiff.

## **7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **Standards achieved by children**

#### **Language, Literacy and Communication Skills**

Standards of achievement are good overall. Standards in listening skills are very good. Standards in speaking, early reading and writing skills are good.

#### **Good features**

- Children have very good listening skills. They listen attentively to the staff and follow instructions appropriately. They listen with interest to other children, especially in recall sessions and join in discussion. They enjoy listening to stories, poems and rhymes and respond very well to questions showing good comprehension. They listen with concentration and follow the text and illustrations in Big Books and like to repeat the text of favourite stories and rhymes. They use the listening centre with confidence to play taped recordings of their favourite stories and songs.
- Children's speech and communication skills are developing well. During planning group sessions they make good attempts to explain clearly what they intend to do in each area of their choice. During recall sessions they confidently and clearly talk about their activities. Encouraged by the effective strategies used by staff to develop language skills,

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children speak clearly and confidently, take turns to speak and listen carefully to the contributions of others in the group.

- The children talk with increasing confidence about their experiences and are developing their vocabulary to express their thoughts coherently. They are willing to take part in role-play and movement activities and make good attempts to talk about their activities. Through oral activities, they are becoming familiar with Welsh vocabulary and sing Welsh songs with enthusiasm. They respond well to incidental Welsh used through the day, such as greetings and instructions.
- Children's early reading skills are developing well and all children enjoy books and handle them carefully. They enjoy sharing books with others and they respond well to stories and rhymes and identify characters and themes in familiar stories, such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. Some children can recall the events of a story and predict the next stage. They are beginning to recognise letters and single sounds and some read familiar words, including their own names and those of others.
- Good standards are achieved in early writing skills and children take every opportunity to practise their emergent writing skills in the writing area and play areas. Good attempts are made to write letters to family members using drawings, symbols, letter patterns, individual letters and some words. Children enjoy these early attempts at writing and many begin to develop this skill independently. Some children can recognise and write their own names, clearly and legibly.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Personal and social development**

Children's personal and social development is very good.

#### **Good features**

- The provision for the development of personal and social skills is very good and children achieve very good standards.
- All adults contribute towards the calm and purposeful working atmosphere that pervades the nursery and to which the children respond positively. They gain in confidence and learn to make positive relationships with adults and other children. They seek help from adults when required.
- Almost all children are very well behaved and are developing an appropriate awareness of what is right and wrong.
- Children respond well to classroom routines and demonstrate good progress in exercising self-control and regard for each other. For example, when eating lunch together, adults sit with the children to provide a good social experience where children respect and wait for others.
- The provision of a wide range of interesting activities encourages children to explore new learning and initiate ideas. They demonstrate very good attitudes towards their learning and are eager and confident in their work and play.

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- They show increasing independence in organising their activities and many work for considerably long periods of time at chosen and directed activities.
  - Children work well independently and many demonstrate the ability to co-operate in pairs or small groups and to help each other when difficulties arise. Children share resources and take turns happily, while some more mature children identify the needs of others and volunteer help, such as the offer to cut and distribute sellotape when folding and joining paper.
  - When preparing for physical activities, children are developing good routines; they remove shoes and clothing with minimal adult assistance and leave their clothes folded tidily. They respond well to 'tidy up' time and clear away equipment and toys, returning them to the correct places.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Mathematical development**

Children achieve good standards in their mathematical development.

#### **Good features**

- The planned and incidental provision of mathematical experiences in real situations is effective in providing practice and reinforcement of concepts and vocabulary. Children respond well to the many opportunities adults provide and make good progress.
- Children use mathematical language effectively in a range of activities. For example, they solve and explain the problem of having too large a blanket by folding it in the role-play area and, when using construction apparatus, talk about length, compare sizes and suitability of shapes. They name familiar two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes when working with the construction kits.
- While learning about how babies grow, children match baby clothes and compare their sizes with their own clothes and discuss suitability by using comparative vocabulary. They sort animal families when playing with the farmyard and later sort pictures by colour.
- Children sort magnetic pictures by colour and respond well to the teacher's challenging questions, using correct vocabulary.
- They join in number rhymes and games with enthusiasm and, through songs such as 'Five Welsh Cakes' are learning about the purpose and use of money.
- The role-play area provides good opportunities for children to identify size and again learn about the purpose of money. Children's knowledge, skills and understanding are developed appropriately by play in these real life situations.
- Many children can count to five and beyond, with some counting to almost twenty. Some children are starting to recognise the written numbers.
- Whilst distributing the cups for their morning drink of water, for example, children are learning, in a meaningful way, about one to one relationships and to calculate how many more they require.

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- Good quality interaction by adults in activities, such as sand and water play, enables children to maximise the learning opportunities. For example, they discuss how full vessels are and whether the contents will be too little or too much when tipped into another.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

Children achieve good standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

### **Good features**

- They undertake a wide variety of practical activities that help them to learn and remember. Good quality adult intervention and questioning make a substantial contribution to the quality of children's learning. Children are made to think about the activities and to explain, using appropriate vocabulary, what they are doing or thinking.
- When learning about their growth and about families, children think about how babies grow and what they eat. They make and taste sandwiches and mashed banana to learn about the textures of food given to babies and relate this to the way babies' teeth develop and how babies grow in size.
- They learn about similarities and differences when looking at clothes of different sizes and talk about who might or might not wear them. They name items accurately and sort them into the correct sets using given criteria.
- In technology, the children make models using a variety of construction kits and engage in imaginative play. They learn to compare shapes and link them to the stability of their models.
- Children are enthusiastic in their use of the computers. For example, they match shapes and colours using the concept keyboard and some demonstrate good manipulation of the mouse to control the cursor when matching shapes.
- Cooking and making sandwiches, for instance, help the children to begin to understand where their food comes from.
- Outdoor activities all through the year enable the children to experience the changes in weather and to learn about the clothes they wear according to the season. Daily discussions about the days of the week, the month and the date help the children to develop their understanding of the passing of time, while reminders of what they are going to be doing next enable the children to learn about sequences within the school day.
- Visits from individuals and visits to places of interest make a valuable contribution to the children's understanding of people who help them. The children learn about the work they do and participate when possible, for example, using the fire hoses.
- During role-play, children demonstrate a growing awareness of some of the features of the area in which they live. They talk about the different shops in the locality and indicate different directions to take.
- Children learn about the suitability of materials and fixings for different purposes in their creative activities. They select from a range of recycled resources to make models of their

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choice, deciding whether glue or tape is the most effective means of joining and decorating the models.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Physical development**

Children achieve very good standards in their physical development.

#### **Good features**

- Children enjoy physical activities and show confidence and enthusiasm when using the outside area and during movement sessions.
- They are interested in improving their own physical skills and exploit the outdoor opportunities adventurously. They demonstrate confidence and independence on the climbing equipment. They show good physical skills, such as climbing, balancing, sliding and jumping, when moving across and within apparatus. Adults successfully encourage and support children's achievements, skilfully guiding them to improvement. They respond very well to commands such as 'climb over the blue tunnel'.
- Children confidently ride and manoeuvre a range of wheeled vehicles with good co-ordination; some can pedal backwards as well as forwards. They enjoy games with balls and skittles and quoits on sticks. They play co-operatively, take turns and help each other to count the skittles and quoits. When playing in the sand they play with toys imaginatively and share them with others.
- During movement sessions, they listen attentively to percussion instruments and taped music and move appropriately, responding well to the music and instructions. They perform different movements with good awareness of space and others around them. They can march, jump and skip at different speeds and with good control.
- Children have very good manipulative skills. They enjoy using dough and handle tools appropriately as they push, pull, roll and cut it to make shapes and models. They use finer skills for construction kits and tools, such as scissors, paintbrushes, felt pens, pencils and tape with increasing confidence. They successfully use a glue stick to apply glue carefully during creative activities.
- A very good range of opportunities is always available for children to develop their physical skills. The staff observe children well and support them effectively to promote their development.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Creative development**

Children achieve good standards in their creative development.

#### **Good features**

- Children enjoy painting activities and choose colours well, using brushes confidently to create attractive paintings. They explore colour through painting, colour mixing and

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printing patterns using two or three colours to produce a sequence of patterns. Their observation paintings of daffodils are very effective.

- Children appreciate the work of famous artists and make close observations of portraits by Van Gough, Modigliani, Hockney and Archimboldo. They make good attempts to draw portraits with detailed features of the faces, using pencil and pencil crayon. Their figure drawings are developing well with recognisable features of the face and body. They explore line through experimenting with chalk and ‘water painting’ on outside paving slabs.
- Children enjoy making printed patterns. They use a variety of tools and paint to produce effective repeating patterns. They successfully make fruit prints using a selection of cut fruits and a variety of paint colours. When printing with shapes they can name the shapes they have used. They make effective hand print patterns to represent the colour of their group.
- They explore texture through making collage pictures. A variety of media and textures is used to produce effective ‘Mother’s Day’ cards. They make good attempts to create junk models and use their cutting and sticking skills well. They carefully choose the materials they need, explaining clearly what their model is and how it is made. They confidently use playdough to create models and shapes using cutters and tools skilfully.
- In music, they enjoy singing a range of songs and nursery rhymes. They sing confidently and tunefully in English and in Welsh and join in with actions and clapping rhythms with enthusiasm. They play percussion instruments well, keeping a steady beat. They explore sounds and instruments on the music trolley to create their own music. They know the difference between loud and quiet sounds. They succeed in operating a tape recorder to play musical tapes. When listening to their favourite songs, they sing along enthusiastically, with good recall of the words.
- Children enjoy role-play activities which are effective in developing their imaginative and creative abilities. Whilst playing in the home area, they enjoy dressing up and explain clearly what they are doing and which characters they are playing. They respond well to music and movement sessions and listen carefully to the music and instructions, moving creatively in time with the music.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings but children’s work in three dimensions including clay is underdeveloped.

## **8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection**

The school was inspected in 1996 and has made good progress in meeting the targets set in its action plan, which addresses the key issues from the previous inspection report. Most have been implemented and some are in the process of being further developed.

#### **Key Issue 1**

**‘Continue the present good practice and the relationships achieved by involving parents in the education of their children and enhancing the life of the school.’**

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- The school analysed elements of good practice and identified areas for further development.
  - The action plan evaluation in 2001 describes the progress made in the school's partnership with parents which includes the pre-school link-up group, a rota system of parents helping in school and parents' involvement in fund-raising activities.
  - The school self-assessment report 2001/2 states that parents are involved in children's daily planning and are encouraged to extend their involvement in literacy by developing the library.
  - The current inspection found that parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. Parents at their meeting and in the questionnaires stated that they wish to have more information about the curriculum and its organisation.

### **Key Issue 2**

**'Update the present planning framework to meet the requirements of the Desirable Outcomes for Children's learning.'**

- The existing schemes of work were reviewed and revised in line with the Desirable Outcomes and were used to inform medium and short-term planning.
- The action plan evaluation in 2001 describes the progress made by curriculum co-ordinators in revising the documentation which is reviewed regularly.
- The school self-assessment report 2001/2 states that staff have recognised the need to further develop the schemes of work; this is a target in the SDP.
- The current inspection found that the schemes of work do not provide sufficient detail to support teachers' planning.

### **Key Issue 3**

**'Continue to review the areas of imaginative play and role-play as stated in the SDP and to explore more fully the role of adults in supporting and developing this activity.'**

- Existing provision and practice were reviewed and areas for development were identified. A programme of training was arranged.
- The action plan evaluation 2001 describes the progress in developing the role-play areas and the purchasing new resources. A rota for adult support ensures good quality intervention during free play activities.
- The school self-assessment report 2001/2 states that the imaginative/role-play area is in the process of being refurbished. Staff have discussed the need for written foci for work in this area which will be introduced to the weekly planning.
- The current inspection found that the provision for creative play is good and that there is good interaction between adults and children.

### **Key Issue 4**

**'Ensure that more opportunities are provided for children to handle and enjoy books.'**

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- The book corners were reorganized, new resources were purchased and training in pre-reading skills was provided for staff. The children's use of the book corners was monitored.
  - The action plan evaluation 2001 states that reading sessions were introduced to encourage children to handle books with care and to practice acting as readers.
  - The school self-assessment report 2001/2 states that parents and staff take part in sharing books with children. Non-fiction books are used in other parts of the nursery to encourage children to refer to books as part of key skills. The development of the library will help encourage children to handle and enjoy books.
  - The current inspection found that the provision of books and pre-reading opportunities is good and children enjoy looking at books and sharing them with others. The development of the library has been particularly successful.

#### **Key Issue 5**

**'Focus on developing the gross motor skills of children in the physical area of learning.'**

- The organisation of outdoor play areas was reviewed and appropriate resources were provided. Training in physical development was provided.
- The action plan evaluation 2001 states that physical development provision was available indoors as well as outdoors with improved resources.
- The school self-assessment report 2001/2 states that concerns about Health and Safety of outdoor climbing equipment have restricted the use of the area. Weekly movement sessions have been introduced.
- The current inspection found that children's physical skills are very good and benefit from the good provision of outside play and movement sessions.

#### **Key Issue 6**

**'Consider sensitively the grouping of the less mature children for the directed teaching sessions.'**

- New strategies were put in place for specific groupings of children. Programmes of work were planned to promote the development of less mature children and to improve the confidence of all children.
- The action plan evaluation 2001 states that baseline assessment results are used as the basis for grouping children.
- The school self-assessment report 2001/2 states that for directed sessions, the pastoral groups are split into smaller groups according to the activity and desired outcomes. Occasionally children are put into differentiated groups for the teaching of specific skills.
- The current inspection found that the groupings of children are appropriate for the directed teaching sessions.

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## **8.2 Key Issues for Action**

To build on the good standards achieved by the children and to improve aspects of the provision, the school needs to:-

- maintain and improve the good standards achieved by children across the curriculum;
- make sure that afternoon registration complies with statutory requirements and encourage parents to ensure that their children attend regularly and arrive promptly at the beginning of the school day;
- review and revise curriculum policies and schemes of work to reflect the varied curriculum provided for children;
- ensure parents are provided with information about curriculum developments.

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**APPENDIX****A. Basic Information About the School**

Name of School	Sarn Nursery School
School type	Nursery
Age-range of pupils	3-4
Address of school	Heol Canola Sarn Bridgend
Post-Code	CF32 9NU
Telephone Number	01656 720978

Headteacher	Ms L Evatt (seconded)
Date of appointment	1 September 2001
Registered Inspector	Mrs M E Evans
Dates of inspection	4-5 March 2002

**B. School Data and Indicators**

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>		
Year group	N (fte)	Total
Number of pupils	53	53

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

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	9:1
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>		
Term	N	Whole school
Spring 2001	89	89
Summer 2001	87	87
Autumn 2000	88	88

<i>Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection</i>	0
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## **C. The Evidence Base of the Inspection**

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors who spent a total of five inspector days at the school.

Before the inspection:

- meetings were held with the headteacher and staff, the school management committee and with the parents; 15 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting;
- questionnaires were distributed to all parents and the 39 completed questionnaires were analysed; the inspection team took note of the results, including 13 further additional submissions;
- school documentation was examined.

During the inspection:

- evidence of sessions observed was based on approximately 12 hours of the inspection of the nursery in a total of 31 sessions;
- discussions were held with the headteacher and the staff about their roles and responsibilities;
- discussions were held with the children about aspects of their work and life in school;
- a scrutiny was made of a sample of the children's work as well as work in the classroom and on display around the school.

After the inspection:

- meetings were held with the headteacher, the staff and the management committee to provide oral feedback on the inspection findings.

## D. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Subject Responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect Responsibilities</b>
Mrs M E Evans	RgI	Language, literacy and communication skills; Physical development; Creative development.	Main Findings; Standards of achievement; Standards in key skills; Quality of teaching; Curriculum; SEN; Quality of self-evaluation; Leadership and efficiency; Progress since the last inspection; Key Issues.
Mrs C Llewellyn	Team	Personal and social development; Mathematical development; Knowledge and understanding of the world.	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Assessment, recording and reporting; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Mr S Page	Lay		Attendance; Behaviour and attitudes; Partnership with parents and the community; Partnership with industry.

**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.**