

REPORT

on the

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

**ST DAVID'S R.C. NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL
CALDICOT WAY
PONTNEWYDD
CWMBRAN
TORFAEN
NP44 1UF**

School Number: 678/3324

Date of Inspection: 10 – 13 June 2002

By

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Under Estyn contract number: T/273/01P

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

St. David's is a Roman Catholic aided primary school situated in Cwmbran. The school serves a mixture of mainly private and some rented homes. The school describes its intake as neither advantaged or disadvantaged.

The school was built in 1960s, originally as separate infant and junior departments. The present headteacher took over the school in September 1987. There are currently 217 pupils on roll aged between 3 and 11 years. Since the last inspection in May 1995, a morning nursery class has been established. The school roll is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. Currently, 16 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection (21 per cent). This proportion is below the average for schools both in Torfaen and in all Wales.

English is the predominant language for all pupils. Few come from ethnic minority groups. There are 28 pupils (13 per cent of the school population) on the school's register of Special Educational Need (SEN), including 2 pupils for whom a statement of special educational needs has been made. The proportion of pupils with SEN is similar to that at the time of the last inspection.

The School Development Plan (SDP) details the areas for development for this school year. The priorities are:

- Performance Management Framework
- New SEN Code of Practice
- Inspection Preparation
- Religious Education (RE) planning
- Behaviour management
- Review Basic skills
- Resources
- Home/School maths links
- Information and Communication Technology training

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

St David's is a good Catholic school that provides well for its pupils.

- Standards achieved by children under five in the six areas of learning are as follows:

Area of learning	Nursery (3-4 year olds)	Reception (4-5 year olds)
Language, literacy and communication skills	Good	Good
Personal and Social Development	Good	Good
Mathematical Development	Good	Good
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Good	Good
Physical Development	Good	Good
Creative Development	Good	Good

- The quality of the provision for children under five is good. Children make good progress from an average to below average entry base in the nursery. Teachers' assessments of children's skills when they enter the reception (YR) class show that their skills are generally average to above average. However, the present YR class has a number of children whose skills at the beginning of the school year were below the average compared with other schools in Torfaen.
- In Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2, pupils' standards of achievement in the different subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) are as follows:

Subject	KS1 (Y1 and Y2)	KS2 (Y3 to Y6)
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good
Welsh second language	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Good	Good
Information technology	Good	Satisfactory
History	Good	Good
Geography	Good	Good
Art	Good	Good
Music	Good	Satisfactory
Physical education	Satisfactory	Good

- In music, only composition was seen in lessons at KS2. In Welsh second language, all the lessons seen during the inspection were devoted to oral work. Standards in these lessons were satisfactory at both key stages. However, pupils' progress in reading and writing is uneven. The amount of teaching time devoted to Welsh is below that recommended nationally and this is a contributory factor to these shortcomings.
- In both key stages, standards of achievement in English are good in speaking, listening, reading and writing. In Y6, standards in writing are particularly good. In mathematics standards are good in both key stages. Pupils' use of mathematical language is especially well developed.
- During the inspection, standards were very good in 2 per cent of lessons, good in 63 per cent and satisfactory in 33 per cent. Good quality teaching makes a valuable contribution to the standards achieved by pupils.

- Pupils make good progress as they move through the under fives' and KS1 classes. Progress in KS2 is less even. There is a particularly strong emphasis on preparing pupils for the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with SEN make good progress towards the targets set in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Pupils from minority ethnic groups make similar progress to others in their classes.
- Standards achieved in key skills in speaking, listening reading, writing and numeracy are good and satisfactory in information technology. Pupils successfully apply their skills across the curriculum. They collaborate well with each other and their social skills are good.
- Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Moral development is very good; the reinforcement of right and wrong and the importance of taking responsibility for one's own actions are paramount in this school. Pupils recently studied their ancestry and heritage through a *Roots to Torfaen*, led by a local Caribbean historian, but their appreciation of the wider cultural diversity and traditions of modern day Britain is more limited.
- The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is satisfactory. There are limited signs and notice around the school in Welsh and the use of incidental Welsh varies from class to class. Opportunities are missed, for example, to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of important people and events in Welsh history.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are very good overall. In the vast majority of lessons, pupils are very well behaved and attentive. They concentrate well and join in enthusiastically. In and around the school, behaviour is also very good.
- Attendance is satisfactory with negligible unauthorised absence. A small number of pupils arrive late but these are not always recorded, as registers are not consistently taken at the beginning of school sessions in accordance with requirements.
- The quality of teaching is good. During the inspection the quality of teaching was very good in 18 per cent of lessons, good in 55 per cent, satisfactory in 25 per cent and less than satisfactory in 2 per cent (1 lesson). Good and very good teaching is evident across the curriculum. Teachers plan successfully to support pupils' acquisition and application of basic skills.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are good and their expectations of pupils' behaviour are high. Just occasionally, pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the work provided and teachers are not quick enough to respond to this situation. In most lessons, work is appropriately varied to meet the needs of pupils who learn at slower or faster rates.
- The overall quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good. The school complies with statutory requirements and staff have worked well together to produce a workable and purposeful policy which reflects school practice. Annual reports to parents are detailed but do not always point the way forward for pupils.

- The school provides a curriculum that is broad and relevant to the needs of its pupils. It reflects the aims of the school and successfully promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, and physical developments of pupils.
- The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes promotes good progress in all areas of learning leading to the Desirable Learning Outcomes and appropriately prepares children for KS1. The curriculum in both key stages meets with statutory requirements. Pupils with SEN and those from minority ethnic groups have full access to the school's curriculum. At both key stages, religious education is taught in accordance with the Diocesan guidance. Appropriate attention is given to pupils' personal, health and social education, including drugs awareness. Sex education is in line with the school policy.
- Schemes of work are in place for all subjects. The school is successfully adapting the published strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy to its own particular needs. Overall, curriculum policies and schemes address the requirements of the Wales Curriculum 2000. Control technology is not yet incorporated into the Design and technology scheme. Some schemes include additional work beyond that statutorily required.
- Planning for the development of key skills across the curriculum is guided by a helpful scheme of work. The school's coverage of the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is satisfactory.
- The overall amount of teaching time at both key stages is in line with the NAFW recommendations. In common with other denominational schools, additional teaching time is devoted to religious education. With the strong emphasis placed on literacy and numeracy, the amount of time available for the non-core subjects is limited, especially at KS2.
- The school aims to be fully inclusive by providing its pupils with full equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum. However, the school has yet to ensure that pupils who receive instrumental music tuition do not miss the same class lesson each week. The school emphasises gender issues by listing boys and girls separately on registers. In some classes and on the playground, pupils habitually line up by gender.
- Visits and visitors successfully enhance the curriculum. The school makes good use of the local area, to support pupils' learning. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities, which are well supported by KS2 pupils.
- The school provides a caring and supportive environment for pupils. Pupils feel safe and secure in the school. Lunchtime staff, support staff and office staff all make a valuable contribution to the care and welfare of pupils.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are good. The school actively encourages all pupils to participate in all aspects of its life and work. The school is implementing recently adopted policies for racial equality and disability discrimination in line with statutory requirements.

- Appropriate child protection arrangements are in place. Risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis. No major health and safety risks were identified in the school during the inspection week but the school's attention has been drawn to the storage of equipment and resources in the school halls.
- The provision for pupils with SEN is good. There are 26 pupils on the school's register of SEN, including two who have statements. Appropriate documentation is in place and the Register is up to date. Pupils' Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) are reviewed regularly by the SENCO and class teachers, and shared with parents. These plans are appropriate to the needs of the individual pupil, have achievable targets and are regularly updated.
- Teachers provide additional attention during lessons and modify work to meet pupils' particular needs. Teachers and support staff ensure that pupils are fully included in discussions and practical work.
- Very good links are in place with parents and the community, schools in the locality and other institutions. The information provided for parents is very good and they are kept up-to-date by regular letters home. Most parents have signed the home/school agreement.
- Parents and other adults help in school and with school trips. The Home, School and Parish Association organises fund-raising activities for additional resources and other social events, bringing the whole community together.
- The school's partnership with industry is good. Visits and visitors enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding. Staff have undertaken placements and worked with others on *Action Learning* projects.
- The scope and effectiveness of the school's procedures for evaluating standards achieved and the quality of provision is good. Curriculum co-ordinators provide effective support for colleagues. A planned programme of lesson observations is in place.
- The school development plan (SDP) is satisfactory. It presents the aims of the school, an overview of the plans set by the school over a three-year period and its current priorities. The professional development activities of all staff are linked to the SDP. The annual evaluation section clearly identifies future needs. However, not all actions are costed and arrangements for monitoring their development not clearly identified. Many actions lack clear targets to evaluate success and the outcomes do not include their effect on pupils' learning or on raising standards
- The leadership and efficiency of the school are good. The headteacher successfully fosters the strong, caring atmosphere of the school. Daily routine are well established and the school runs smoothly. The day-to-day administration of the school is good.
- The governing body is supportive of, and knowledgeable about, the school. A range of relevant policy documents is in place. These are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- There are sufficient teachers, all of whom are appropriately qualified. Support staff assist teachers effectively and provide good levels of support for pupils, especially in nursery and reception. Parent helpers also offer effective support to the teaching staff. .

- The school building is cleaned to a high standard. Attractive displays of pupils' work enhance the learning environment. The overall floor area of the school is satisfactory but some of the teaching areas, especially the IT suite, are cramped. The school makes good use of the available space but storage space is at a premium in the school. There are adequate resources for the effective teaching of the curriculum.
- The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous inspection report.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Standards of achievement are good overall.

- The school assesses what children know and can do when they enter the nursery and again when they start the reception year (YR). The local education authority (LEA) processes this information. It provides the school with comparisons with other schools. These show that the majority of children have average skills when they start their full time education in YR. However, groups do vary from year to year, the present class having a number of children whose skills at the beginning of the school year were below the average compared with other schools in Torfaen.
- Standards of achievement in language, literacy and communication, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, physical development and personal and social development are good in both the nursery and reception classes. Children make good progress in each of these areas of learning and the majority reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five.
- In both Key Stages 1 and 2, standards of achievement in English are good. They are good speaking, listening, reading and writing. In Y6, standards in writing are particularly good. In mathematics standards are good in both key stages. Pupils' use of mathematical language is especially well developed.
- In science, art, design and technology, geography and history, standards are good in both key stages. In information technology and music, standards are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2. In physical education, standards are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.
- Overall standards in Welsh second language are satisfactory but there are shortcomings in the progress made by pupils in reading and writing. A contributory factor is that the amount of teaching time devoted to Welsh second language is below that recommended nationally.
- During the inspection, standards were very good in 2 per cent of lessons, good in 63 per cent and satisfactory in 33 per cent. Good quality teaching makes a valuable contribution to the standards achieved by pupils. Pupils make good progress as they move through the

under fives' and KS1 classes. In the under fives', standards were good in almost nine of out ten lessons and in three-quarters of lessons at KS1.

- Progress in KS2 is less even. There is a particularly strong emphasis on preparing pupils for the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science. In KS2, standards were good or better in over half the lessons seen. They were unsatisfactory in one lesson (2 per cent) in mathematics, where pupils were not sufficiently challenged.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress towards the targets set in their IEPs. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make similar progress to other pupils.
- National Curriculum Assessments (NCA) in 2001 indicate that the proportions of pupils in Y2 achieving Level 2, the level expected of pupils at the end of KS1, were above the national and Torfaen averages in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. There were no significant differences in the performances of boys and girls.
- The percentage of pupils assessed by teachers as attaining at least Level 2 in English, mathematics and science in combination (the core subject indicator) for KS1 in 2001 was 92 per cent. This is above the national average of 81 per cent.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in the KS1 tests in reading, writing and mathematics in 2001 was above the national average. In reading, 52 per cent of pupils reached Level 3, with 52 per cent reaching this level in mathematics and 32 per cent in writing. In science, teachers did not assess any pupil as reaching the higher levels.
- The NCA in 2001 indicate that pupils in KS2 achieved results above the national and Torfaen averages in English, mathematics and science.
- The percentage of Y6 pupils attaining at least Level 4 in the tests in English, mathematics and science in combination (the core subject indicator) for KS2 in 2001 was 76.5 per cent. This is above the national average of 68 per cent. Teacher assessment of the core subject indicator was precisely in line with the test results. Girls achieved slightly higher results in English but boys did better than girls in mathematics and science.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in the KS2 tests in 2001 was above the national average. In English, 50 per cent of pupils reached Level 5, with 56 per cent reaching this level in mathematics and 59 per cent in science. Nearly half of the test group achieved Level 5 in English, mathematics and science in combination.
- The school has set targets for pupils to achieve in the 2002 KS2 NC tests in English, mathematics and science. Inspection evidence indicates that these are challenging but achievable.

3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum

Standards achieved in key skills in speaking, listening reading, writing and numeracy are good and satisfactory in information technology.

- The children in the nursery and reception classes achieve good standards in speaking and listening, and in early reading and writing skills. They understand and make good use of number and show a good level of independence when working on the computer.
- The vast majority of pupils listen carefully to adults and each other. They value the opinions of others, even when they do not always agree with the views expressed.
- Pupils use a wide range of subject vocabulary in order to explain their thinking on a variety of topics. Younger as well as older pupils confidently expand upon their answers to questions.
- Pupils successfully use reading skills to look for information, as in history and geography. Older pupils analyse what they read to answer specific inquiries.
- Writing skills are generally well developed across the curriculum. By Y6, pupils have access to a range of different ways of presenting information. However, the quality of handwriting and presentational skills is variable as pupils move through the school.
- Skills in numeracy are good. Pupils benefit from regular mental mathematics activities. They successfully apply numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils are confident in their use of computers. They successfully use their developing skills to support learning across the curriculum. However, some older pupils lack experience of the use of spreadsheets, databases and multi-media presentations.
- Pupils collaborate well with each other. Their social skills are good.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Collective worship sessions are reverent and appropriate and offer pupils' very good opportunities to learn about spiritual and moral issues.
- In collective worship and lessons, pupils respond very well and with interest but they are not always given enough time for reflection.
- Assemblies include the celebration of pupils' achievements and fully promote the positive attitudes that prevail throughout the school. Statutory requirements for collective worship are fully met.
- Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils are very good. The reinforcement of right and wrong and the importance of taking responsibility for one's own actions are paramount in this school.

- Pupils display initiative and respond enthusiastically to teachers' requests. Heads of Houses are given additional responsibilities but generally the Y6 class have limited opportunities to help with the younger pupils. Some paired-reading occurs and Y6 do escort the reception and nursery pupils to the local Church.
- Pupils are extremely polite and welcoming to visitors. They are respectful of people and property. Pupils support various charitable organisations within and beyond their own community developing a good sense of social awareness.
- As part of their cultural development, pupils visit the local museum and other places of historical interest further afield which significantly benefit their learning. A very successful initiative occurred recently when pupils studied their ancestry and heritage through *Roots to Torfaen*, led by a local Caribbean historian, and celebrated the cultural diversity of the area. Although some learning takes place about other faiths and cultures within RE lessons, pupils' appreciation of the wider cultural diversity and traditions of modern day Britain is limited.
- Pupils show an understanding of the beliefs and opinions of others. Pupils get on well with each other. The school is socially and racially inclusive.
- The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is satisfactory. Pupils have opportunities to learn about Welsh authors and artists, people and places through events such as 'Welsh Week'. However, there are limited signs or notices in Welsh around the school and the use incidental Welsh varies between classes. Opportunities are missed to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of important people and events in Welsh history.

4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

Overall, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are very good.

- In the vast majority of lessons, pupils are very well behaved and attentive. They listen to instructions and have positive attitudes to their work, settling down quickly to their tasks. They concentrate well and join in enthusiastically.
- A comprehensive policy is in place giving very good guidance as to how to handle any problems and a very good reward system is in place, which is much valued by pupils who strive eagerly to win house points.
- In and around the school, behaviour is also very good. Pupils play very well together on the playground, and are properly supervised. Behaviour during dinnertime is also very good.
- The school takes any bullying seriously and any incidents are dealt with appropriately.
- The pre-inspection questionnaire showed that the parents are very pleased with the standards of behaviour and discipline achieved by the school.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance levels are satisfactory but the school does not comply fully with statutory requirements.

- Average attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection was 92.9%. No pupils were excluded in the last 12 months. The school does not consider that it needs to set any targets to improve attendance, as there is very little unauthorised absence.
- Registers are not always called at the beginning of each session in accordance with the requirements of the National Assembly for Wales (NafW).
- An attendance policy clearly sets out parents' legal obligations regarding pupils' regular and uninterrupted attendance at school. Small proportions of pupils are withdrawn for annual holiday in excess of statutory allowance. Parents are made aware of the regulations and school marks these as unauthorised.
- The school has established good procedures for recording phone messages from parents regarding absence and these are kept in the class registers. Parents are contacted should pupils be absent for two days without contacting the school.
- The school maintains close links with pupils who have long-term absences, for example, for hospital treatment. Parents are appreciative of the school's support.
- Punctuality of pupils at the start of the day is not consistent. A number of pupils were seen to arrive late during the inspection and their lateness was not recorded.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching is good.

- During the inspection the quality of teaching was very good in 18 per cent of lessons, good in 55 per cent, satisfactory in 25 per cent and less than satisfactory in 2 per cent (1 lesson). Good and very good teaching is evident across the curriculum.
- In the under fives' classes teaching was never less than good. It was very good in 40 per cent of the lessons. In KS1, teaching was very good in 17 per cent of the lessons seen, good in 66 per cent and satisfactory in 17 per cent. In KS2, teaching was very good in 12 per cent of lessons, good in 44 per cent and satisfactory in 40 per cent of lessons.
- In the best lessons, the pace is brisk and learning objectives are well focussed. Teachers share these objectives with pupils at the start of the lesson and review them at the end. In the best practice, pupils are reminded of the lesson objective as they work and this helps to focus their attention on what is required of them.

- In the under fives' classes, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the areas of learning for under fives are good. At KS1, teachers have a good all-round knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the NC. At KS2, teachers' knowledge and understanding are satisfactory with some good individual specialist knowledge evident. The way in which these strengths are harnessed makes a positive contribution to the standards achieved by pupils.
- Teachers plan successfully to support pupils' acquisition and application of basic skills. In the under fives' and KS1 classes, incidental Welsh is regularly used as an integral part of conversation. This practice is more variable in the KS2 classes.
- Since the last inspection, Welsh has been introduced into the curriculum for KS2 pupils. Teachers throughout the school have worked hard to develop their own knowledge and understanding. The quality of teaching in the oral-based lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory. Teachers, on the whole, act as good role models for speech.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently good in the under fives' and KS1 classes. Although KS2 teachers' expectations are good, there is a much wider variation. Throughout the school, teachers set targets for pupils to achieve, notably in literacy and numeracy, and identify those who need particular help in reaching them.
- Teachers effectively use the information they gather from formal and informal assessments to focus their planning on the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. They have a good understanding of the way forward for individuals and groups of pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and relationships between adults and pupils are good. In the vast majority of lessons, there is a good working atmosphere and a clear sense of purpose in pupils' learning, which encourages progress. In these lessons, teachers' management of pupils is good and often very good. Just occasionally, pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the work provided and their concentration lapses. In some circumstances, teachers are not quick enough to respond to this situation.
- Teachers follow school's planning guidelines. Long, medium and short-term plans are in place. There is some repetition in planning that could be streamlined. Specific key skills are identified in planning. In most lessons, work is appropriately varied to meet the needs of pupils who learn at slower or faster rates but this is not consistently reflected in teachers' written planning which makes limited reference to the IEPs of pupils with SEN.
- It is established school policy for teachers in YR to plan to the subjects of the NC in the summer term. In practice, they provide a good transition for pupils by, for example, teaching elements of the literacy and numeracy strategies or some investigative work within the areas of learning for children under five. Teachers' planning in the under fives' and KS1 classes to an interest theme provides good continuity in learning between specific subject areas and helps pupils to value learning as a continual process rather than in individual subject compartments. In KS2, the different subject areas are appropriately developed.
- Teachers make good use of questions and they encourage all pupils to take a full part in discussions. They purposefully organise activities where pupils work co-operatively and

collaboratively with each other, as seen, for example, in a Y2 science lesson and Y4 literacy lesson.

- Although staff encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and to become independent workers, the extent to which these skills are built upon year-on-year varies. In KS1, teachers give pupils every encouragement to find or checkout information from reference books. In KS2, older pupils have successfully researched and presented information about the development in Cardiff Bay.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked and in the best examples seen, teachers' comments are constructive yet challenging. This helps pupils to appreciate the strengths and shortcomings of their work and move their learning on.
- The school has a homework policy. Teachers make effective use of homework to support learning in school.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

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

- The ARR policy has been re-written in an attempt to make it clearer and more useful for teachers. The ARR co-ordinator successfully involved all the teaching staff in the re-writing thus ensuring joint ownership, greater awareness and improved implementation.
- The school complies with the requirements for the national baseline assessment of the under fives. This provides both an effective system for assessing the achievements of children under five and useful information for future planning. Staff in both classes work well together and successfully share information, which further supports planning.
- Procedures for the assessments undertaken at the end of each key stage meet statutory requirements. Benchmarking is successfully used to identify how the school is doing in order to highlight any areas of concern or those that need further development.
- The school has successfully developed systems to analyse results of NC tests looking at, for example, the results of boys and girls and those with SEN. Increased use of assessment procedures and analysis of the data in the core subjects assists the school to identify needs at an early stage. This data is used to set targets for individual pupils. Links between assessment and planning have been strengthened.
- Target setting has been introduced at both class and individual level and pupils have an active role in this process. Targets include some for individual subjects and others of a more general nature. Parents are made aware of these targets and are kept informed on their child's progress in meeting them.
- Pupil tracking in the core subjects has recently been introduced and is being used to monitor individual pupil's progress over time. Pupils who do not reach expected targets are identified and steps taken to help them improve their performance.

- Although satisfactory, assessment and recording procedures in the non-core subjects are less advanced and not as consistently applied.
- Pupil's work is marked regularly. Comments are encouraging and often inform pupils how their work can be improved.
- End-of-year reports to parents give a good indication of a pupil's progress during the academic year and offer the opportunity for a written comment by parents. However, there is not always sufficient indication of the way ahead for the pupil.

5.3 Curriculum

Overall, the school provides a good curriculum that is broad and relevant to the needs of its pupils. However, the balance of the curriculum is less secure.

- The school's curriculum reflects the aims of the school and successfully promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, and physical developments of pupils.
- The school provides a rich curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes. It is well balanced, relevant to the children's ages and needs, and promotes good progress in all areas of learning leading to the Desirable Learning Outcomes. In YR, children are appropriately prepared for KS1; the school's existing policy for transition to the specific subjects of the National Curriculum has been enhanced by good professional practice.
- The curriculum in both key stages meets with statutory requirements. All the prescribed subjects of the NC are provided. Pupils with SEN have full access to the school's curriculum. In the last academic year, there were no pupils for whom the NC was modified or for whom it was disapplied.
- At both key stages, religious education is taught in accordance with the Diocesan guidance. Appropriate attention is given to pupils' personal, health and social education, including drugs awareness. Sex education is in line with the school policy. The school's coverage of the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is satisfactory.
- Schemes of work are in place for all subjects. These outline learning outcomes and indicate opportunities for assessment. The school is successfully adapting the published strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy to its own particular needs. Overall, curriculum policies and schemes address the requirements of the Wales Curriculum 2000. Control technology is not yet incorporated into the design and technology scheme. Some schemes include additional work beyond that statutorily required.
- Planning for the development of key skills across the curriculum is guided by a helpful scheme of work.
- The overall amount of teaching time at both key stages is in line with the NAFW recommendations. In common with other denominational schools, additional time is devoted to religious education. The school has reviewed its allocation of teaching time to individual subjects. For instance, it has increased the amount of time devoted to science

in KS1. This is in response to teachers' analysis of the NC assessments in 2001 where no pupil was assessed as reaching the higher levels.

- With the strong emphasis placed on literacy and numeracy, the amount of time available for the non-core (foundation) subjects is limited, especially at KS2. The school alternates between art and design and technology, and between history and geography to make best use of the time available.
- Some of the school's schemes of work, such as history, include work that is not required by the Wales Curriculum 2000. This adds to the pressure on staff. The amount of time available for Welsh falls below that recommended nationally and this has an impact on the amount of progress pupils make, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils have too few opportunities to gain practice, understanding and enjoyment from reading the language.
- The school aims to be fully inclusive by providing its pupils with full equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum. Staff provide valuable help for those pupils who have particular learning needs. The school is aware of the need to challenge more able pupils and is, overall, successful in this. However, the school has yet to ensure that pupils who receive instrumental music tuition do not miss the same class lesson each week.
- The school emphasises gender issues by listing boys and girls separately on registers. In some classes and on the playground, pupils habitually line up by gender.
- Visits and visitors successfully enhance the curriculum. The school makes good use of the local area, especially the immediate environment, to support pupils' learning.
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities, which are well supported by KS2 pupils. A choir rehearses for special services at the Church and there is a lunchtime recorder group.

5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare is good. The school provides a caring and supportive environment for pupils.

- Pupils feel safe and secure in the school. Staff know pupils well and they successfully monitor their academic progress, social development and personal well being. Lunchtime staff, support staff and office staff all make a valuable contribution to the care and welfare of pupils.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are good. Pupils are confident in their dealings with adults and each other; they feel valued as members of the school community.
- The care and welfare of children under five is good. Appropriate attention is given in lessons and routines for their personal development.

- The school runs an appropriate personal, health and social education programme. Health education, including drug awareness, is actively promoted. The school has a sex education policy, reflecting Diocesan guidance.
- There are suitably trained first-aiders within the school and first-aid resources are readily available. Parents report that the school staff deal speedily with any pupil who needs attention.
- The school actively encourages all pupils to participate in all aspects of its life and work. Pupils are included in all lessons and activities. Those with SEN have appropriate support.
- The school is implementing recently adopted policies for racial equality and disability discrimination in line with statutory requirements. There is adequate wheelchair access to most areas of the school.
- Pupils are carefully supervised at break and lunch times. Breaktimes are staggered to enable pupils to enjoy ball games and quieter activities unimpeded. There is sufficient shade in the playground although there are no seats for pupils. This is something the school is considering now that there is secure storage available.
- Sufficient time is given for pupils to eat their lunch but there is not always the time available for the youngest pupils to develop their table manners. Water is available in the dining halls at lunchtimes. At other times, pupils are able to quench their thirst at water fountains or in classrooms but these arrangements are rudimentary and the school is looking at the possibility of providing water dispensers.
- The headteacher is currently the designated member of staff with responsibility for dealing with child protection issues. He receives regular and relevant training. All staff are aware of the school's procedures.
- No major health and safety risks were identified in the school during the inspection week. Risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis. The school's attention has been drawn to the storage of equipment and resources in the school halls, which are used for physical education and dance.

5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

The provision for pupils with SEN is good.

- There are 26 pupils on the school's register of SEN, including two who have statements. The headteacher is the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and there is a governor with oversight of the school's provision. Appropriate documentation is in place and the Register is up to date.
- Pupils' Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) are reviewed regularly by the SENCO and class teachers, and shared with parents. These plans are appropriate to the needs of the individual pupil, have achievable targets and are regularly updated.

- Pupils with SEN have access to all parts of the curriculum. Pupils' needs focus mainly on literacy and numeracy. Teachers provide additional attention during lessons and modify work to meet pupils' particular needs. Teachers and support staff ensure that pupils are fully included in discussions and practical work. Throughout the school, pupils respond well to the support provided and make good progress towards the targets they are set. Relationships between staff and pupils are good.
- During group reading sessions, small groups of pupils work with a special needs teacher. This provides valuable individual help to pupils in improving their reading skills and raising their self-confidence.
- The school is starting to tackle the recently introduced new Code of Practice. Staff and governors are aware of forthcoming changes to the school's provision.

5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions

Very good links are in place with parents and the community, schools in the locality and other institutions.

- The school places great emphasis on the importance of working closely with parents. The information provided for them is very good and they are kept up-to-date by regular letters home. Particularly good are the curriculum guidelines provided for parents. These help them to understand what is being taught in school and how they can help their child.
- Most parents have signed the home/school agreement. Parents say that they find the school approachable.
- Parents and other adults help in school and with school trips. There is a Home, School and Parish Association. This organises fund-raising activities for additional resources and other social events, bringing the whole community together.
- Very good links are in place with the local church. The priest visits regularly and pupils attend celebratory services in the Parish Church.
- Very good liaison is also in place with the police, fire and other services. Y6 pupils attend workshops at an outside centre with the emergency and other services, covering safety issues and other aspects of law. These sessions are very beneficial.
- The secondary school and its feeder primary heads meet termly to discuss areas of common interest. Pupils have several opportunities to visit the local Catholic Secondary school prior to transfer and good links are also in place with the local comprehensive.
- The school has a formal partnership agreement with a local teacher training university. Students undertake teaching practice in the school. Students from the local college taking the NNEB/carers course also come into school during their course.

5.7 Partnership with industry

The school's partnership with industry is good, taken as a whole.

- Younger pupils have visited a local supermarket to learn about aspects of food and a local pet store. Much use is also made by the school of the facilities offered at the nearby community farm. These initiatives have a beneficial effect on learning.
- Older pupils have visited a building site in connection with their studies and members of the community visit to talk about their work, for example, doctors, dentists and nurses. The school has also made good links with the factory next door to the school site and with British Telecom. Overall, pupils' learning about the world of work is satisfactory.
- There is no separate policy for the school's links with industry but mention is made under the sub-heading, *Links with the Wider community and the World of Work* as part of the Home/School Links Policy. This section mainly lists activities undertaken rather than guidance as to how industry links can be embedded into the curriculum and opportunities taken to further learning by liaising with shops, factories, offices and businesses in general.
- The headteacher participated in an *Action Learning* exercise, which took place over one year. With three other primary heads and one secondary head, they studied and solved various problems that occur in industry. Another teacher was seconded to the local library service in order to produce materials for schools.
- The school has limited links with the local Educational Business Partnership.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

The scope and effectiveness of the school's procedures for evaluating standards achieved and the quality of provision is good. The quality of developmental planning is satisfactory.

- Self-evaluation of assessment arrangements is ongoing and the aspects of recording, analysing results, setting targets and tracking pupils are good.
- Curriculum co-ordinators provide effective support for colleagues, mainly through the provision of schemes of work and formal discussions. The role of the co-ordinators in school self-evaluation through classroom observation is good. A planned programme of lessons is in place. English, mathematics and science have been monitored this year. Monitoring of lessons in the non-core subjects starts in September 2002.
- The school development plan (SDP) presents the aims of the school, an overview of the plans set by the school over a three-year period and its current priorities. The annual evaluation section clearly identifies future needs. The professional development activities of all staff are linked to the SDP.

- However, not all actions are costed and arrangements for monitoring their development not clearly identified. Many actions lack quantifiable targets to evaluate success and the outcomes do not include their effect on pupils' learning or impact on raising standards.
- Teachers know their pupils well and are committed to school improvement and to raising standards. There are shared values and norms about learning, behaviour, relationships and equality of opportunity.
- The school analyses its test results and is starting to make use of national comparative data. The school has been awarded the *Basic Skills Quality Mark*.
- Schemes of work and assessment procedures provide the teaching staff with guidelines that help to provide continuity and progression in most subjects. With some minor exceptions, such as design technology, the schemes of work correctly reflect the requirements of the Wales Curriculum 2000 programmes of study.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The leadership and efficiency of the school are good.

- The school's aims and values are well reflected in its work. The school enjoys very good support from parents and the church community. The headteacher successfully fosters the strong, caring atmosphere of the school. This is consistently reflected in all aspects of its life and work. Daily routine are well established and the school runs smoothly.
- The headteacher is the SENCO and co-ordinates in-service training provision. Each subject has a curriculum co-ordinator. Through a rolling programme, teachers have some non-teaching time to undertake their co-ordinator responsibilities.
- The governing body is supportive of, and knowledgeable about, the school. Its members are representative of the church and local community. The headteacher keeps governors informed about the work of the school through written and oral reports. Governors visit the school on a regular basis and are involved in monitoring the standards achieved by pupils. The governing body's role as the school's "critical friend" is developing well.
- A range of relevant policy documents is in place. These are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The school has recently put in place a policy for racial equality, in line with statutory requirements.
- Financial planning is related to priorities for improvement. The headteacher and governors give a good oral account of their stewardship of the funds available to the school. However, the SDP does not record a clear enough picture of how the allocation of funds impacts on the standards achieved by pupils.
- The school's budget reserves are currently in line with recommended levels. With the reduction in class sizes to meet national criteria and some smaller than anticipated year groups, the school has had to plan carefully to maintain its present organisation. Some adjustments to staffing are planned for the end of this academic year and the school

anticipates that, in the absence of additional funding, it will do no more than balance its budget for the current financial year.

- The governing body's evaluation of the impact of spending decisions is effective. Governors gained valuable experience from planning, monitoring and evaluating the provision of the school's information technology suite.
- The day-to-day administration of the school is good. Appropriate financial procedures are in place. The school has responded to the recommendations arising from the most recent financial audit report.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory.

- There are sufficient teachers, all of whom are appropriately qualified, for the delivery of the curriculum and religious education. All have appropriate job descriptions.
- Support staff assist teachers effectively and provide good levels of support for pupils, especially in nursery and reception. Parent helpers also offer effective support to the teaching staff.
- There are good arrangements made to support newly qualified and new teachers to the school. A programme of in-service education and training (INSET) successfully supports teachers' continuing professional development (CPD). This is appropriately linked to individual professional needs, the needs of the curriculum and the priorities identified in the SDP.
- Nearly all staff have completed nationally approved training in information technology and this is helping to raise pupils' standards of work. The co-ordinator for Welsh second language has been instrumental in supporting the development of the subject in the school and in building up colleagues' confidence.
- The school building is cleaned to a high standard and is in a good state of repair. Attractive displays of pupils' work enhance the learning environment.
- The school makes good use of the available space. The overall floor area of the school is satisfactory but some of the teaching areas, especially the IT suite, are cramped. Storage space is at a premium in the school.
- Due to the development of the IT suite, the school library has limited space for pupils to develop more advanced independent research and study skills.
- There is sufficient hardstanding for play and games' lessons. The school makes regular use of grassed games' pitches.
- Children in the early years have access to an external play area and this contains sufficient large equipment to aid physical development and the development of gross motor skills.

- There are adequate resources for the effective teaching of the curriculum. They are of satisfactory quality and are stored in the classrooms or the halls.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

The educational provision for children under five is good and they make good progress. The school's provision covers all the areas of learning and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning (DLOs). By the age of five, the majority of children achieve the DLOs in all areas of learning.

Children are admitted to the nursery on a part-time basis when they are three years of age. They attend the reception class on a full-time basis from the September following their fourth birthday.

Curriculum planning is good and provides a good balance of activities through which children develop a range of skills. There is a straightforward system in place in the nursery to ensure that all children experience a range of activities. In the reception class, a good balance is achieved through a combination of class teaching and organised group activities.

Baseline assessments administered soon after children enter the reception year indicate that standards are broadly similar to those expected nationally. However, year groups vary and the present reception class has a number of pupils who started school with limited skills.

Nursery (part-time)

Good features

- Children make good progress in the development of their personal and social skills. They are familiar with daily routines and settle down happily when they arrive each morning. Children relate well to adults and to each other. They make good progress in self-control and in their regard for each other's property and work. Children work happily alongside each other. Most children play co-operatively, for example, in the "Vet's Surgery" area and with construction apparatus.
- Children make good progress in the development of the skills in language, literacy and communication. They listen carefully to adults and follow instructions. Many children talk about their own experiences. Most children speak clearly and demonstrate an effective vocabulary. They ask and respond to questions. They happily use their imagination when working in the role-play area or talking about their computer-based paintings.
- Children enjoy listening to stories and take part willingly. They handle books responsibly and use the pictures to tell the story. They understand that the written word carries

meaning. All children recognise their name and most can successfully copy it, following the writing direction appropriately. Some children recognise the shape and sound of letters.

- Children listen to and respond readily to simple phrases and prayers in Welsh.
- Children make good progress in their mathematical skills. They join in with number rhymes and songs, count confidently to ten and recognise written numbers. They sort and match shapes by colour and properties. They can also categorise objects by such criteria as “little, big or middle-sized” or “full and empty”.
- In the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world, children make good progress. They use a computer with confidence, controlling the cursor well. They recognise the main parts of the human body. In their themed work on “The Seaside”, they know that Cwmbran does not have a beach or the sea. Many recall their own visits to the seaside. They know that, in order for the postman to deliver a postcard, it must be correctly addressed.
- Children make good progress in their physical development. They handle a variety of tools, materials and small equipment with increasing care and precision. They use equipment carefully. They use construction kits to make, for example, a train to get them to the seaside. They develop a good awareness of outdoor space through climbing activities and the use of large wheeled vehicles.
- Children make good progress in their creative development. They confidently choose from a given range of materials and media. They mix paints, naming the different primary and secondary colours. They choose and arrange shapes and know how to join them using glue, as in their “Hungry Caterpillars”. Children sing enthusiastically and join in with simple action songs.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Reception (full-time)

Good features

- Children continue to make good progress in their personal and social skills. Their behaviour is good and they collaborate well. They listen and follow instructions well, taking turns as required. They concentrate for increasing lengths of time, as in the literacy and numeracy work. Children of all abilities are willing to ‘have a go’ at all class activities.
- Good progress is maintained in language, literacy and communication skills. Children listen carefully to adults, visitors and each other. They take part in small group conversations and make a good contribution to larger group discussions. They recognise letter shapes and sounds.

- Pupils are successfully developing reading skills; although not all children may reach the DLO in this particular area of learning, they are, nevertheless, making good progress. Many children write in sentences or phrases, using their phonic knowledge to build up identifiable words. Their handwriting is successfully developing, with good letter formation actively promoted.
- Children know a number of songs and simple phrases in Welsh. They respond enthusiastically to simple questions or instructions.
- Children continue to make good progress in the development of their mathematical skills. Children make and discuss patterns, put numbers in order and recognise numbers to twenty and beyond. Many children add and subtract numbers, work out number problems and apply different methods to work out the answers. They sort shapes by their properties, weigh objects and estimate which is heavier and lighter. They use money appropriately in games involving 2p, 10p and 20p coins. Many choose their own way of working when given simple problem solving activities and most can explain what they are doing.
- In their knowledge and understanding of the world, children make good progress. They understand the differences between light and dark, night and day, and sound and silence. They know that materials can change when they are frozen or heated and that plants need water and light to grow. They are familiar with different animal homes. They know that their school is in Cwmbran and that this is in Wales. They know how to control the computer and respond effectively to visual and oral commands.
- In their physical development, children make good progress. They handle various tools, including scissors and brushes, and construction toys with increasing control. They are developing skills in balancing, travelling, skipping and crawling. When holding and stroking a visiting puppy, they understand the importance of being gentle.
- Children make good progress in their creative development. They know and enjoy a number of Welsh and English songs. They name a range of colours, use different techniques – such as sponges, brushes and hands - to apply paint, and create two-and three-dimensional models and products.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

English

Standards of achievement in English are good in both KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- Speaking and listening skills are good at both key stages. Pupils speak clearly and communicate with adults and each other with increasing confidence. Their vocabulary successfully develops as they move through the school. On the whole, pupils listen carefully to instructions and to each other.

- At both key stages, standards in reading are good and many pupils achieve above average standards at an early age. Pupils read accurately and most are confident in trying unfamiliar texts. As they move through the school, pupils develop good expression and a growing awareness of an audience. Y2 pupils are particularly proud of their “reading voices” and “question voices”.
- KS1 pupils are familiar with such terms as *author* and *illustrator*. Younger KS2 pupils use an index to seek information on a range of topics and older pupils at this key stage summarise their opinions and preferences in book reviews.
- KS2 pupils’ study of complete books, as well as selected extracts, gives them a broader perspective on a range of fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils’ reading skills benefit from group reading sessions where pupils at a similar level work well with their teacher. Pupils identified as needing particular help with reading skills benefit from additional help which bolsters their confidence and focuses on their particular needs. Y5 pupils know what to expect from a non-fiction book and understand terms such as *index* and *glossary*.
- Standards in writing are good at both key stages and pupils progress well. Y1 pupils successfully order a chain of events and can suggest different endings to a story. Y2 pupils successfully select adjectives to improve and enhance their writing. When writing independently, pupils use a good range of vocabulary. Spellings are reasonably accurate and more able pupils have a growing understanding of the correct application of punctuation.
- In KS2, pupils’ writing skills are effectively developed. Overall standards of spelling are good. Y3 pupils model a first-person account, making effective use of a planning sheet. Y4 pupils’ development of story writing demonstrates their good understanding of textual structure. They successfully recognise such elements as statement, question, command and exclamation of feeling and incorporate these into their work. In Y5, pupils appraise each other’s writing and suggest improvements when re-drafting work. The quality of Y6 pupils’ writing is very good. They write most successfully in a wide range of styles and in good depth. Pupils have a strong identity with their intended audience and their individual style and grasp of creative language shines through their work.

Shortcomings

- Pupils’ handwriting is not always correctly formed and standards vary from class to class.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages are very competent in using appropriate mathematical language.

- KS1 pupils have a good understanding of number up to 100. They are confident counting in twos, threes, fives and tens and know that addition can be done in any order to do mental calculations effectively. Many show they understand the concept of multiplication and of odd and even numbers.
- KS1 pupils are familiar with coins up to an including one pound, understand simple fractions and create graphs using data about birds. They tell the time using o'clock and half past as well as matching digital with analogue time.
- Correctly identifying and naming 2D and 3D shapes and the ability to explain their mental calculations are strong features of pupils' work in this key stage.
- In KS2, pupils successfully reinforce their earlier work in numeracy with an increasing understanding of pattern and relation. They have a good understanding of place value, show good recall of mathematical tables and are confident in the computation of number. They are competent in calculating perimeters and areas of regular shapes and older pupils have a well developed understanding of angles.
- By Y6, pupils recognise equivalencies between percentages, fractions and decimals. They read and plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants. They apply their mathematical knowledge in a confident, logical way and use a variety of strategies when problem solving.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills in handling and interrogating data using computer programs are limited.

Science

Standards in science are good at both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils' investigative skills develop well at both key stages. KS1 pupils successfully measure and record their findings in an on-going investigation on plant growth. In KS2, pupils are aware of the importance of conducting a *fair test* and of only changing one variable at a time as, for example, switching electrical circuits.
- Pupils' have a good understanding of living and non-living things at KS1 through their study of topics such as birds and water. They recognise similarities and differences.
- In KS1 pupils use pictures, diagrams and reference materials to check their observations and increase their knowledge and understanding.
- In KS2, pupils classify materials according to a range of different properties. They know that many materials can be used for different purposes and conduct investigations to ascertain which is the most appropriate for a given purpose. They are aware of the effect of forces and the relationship of the earth, moon and sun. Older pupils are aware of

the harmful effect of alcohol, drugs and solvents. They know that medicines are drugs and that, when used correctly, maintain health.

- At both key stages, pupils record their predictions and findings systematically, using a range of diagrams and illustrations.
- Pupils make increasing use of information and communication technology to support their work in science.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Welsh second language

Standards of achievement in the lessons seen at both key stages are satisfactory but pupils make uneven progress in the development of reading and writing skills.

Good features

- Sound foundations are laid at nursery/reception level with pupils absorbing simple vocabulary in areas such as colour and the weather. Pupils in both KS1 and KS2 respond well to incidental Welsh. Pupils in both key stages speak clearly and their pronunciation is developing well.
- At KS1, pupils know a suitable range of words that they then use in simple sentence patterns in work related to topics such as the weather and parts of the body. They participate in a range of oral activities such as class prayers and songs. They effectively reinforce this vocabulary through labelling, drawing and writing simple sentences related to the topic. Pupils' reading from "big books" effectively promotes the development of their early reading skills.
- Pupils in KS2 ask questions of each other and by the end of the key stage engage enthusiastically in lengthy role-play scenarios.
- Pupils read signs, notices and instructions. They write short commentaries, letters, postcards and instructions.

Shortcomings

- When writing, KS2 pupils make uneven progress in their acquisition and use of a wide vocabulary and a comprehensive range of sentence structures.
- Some pupils, particularly in Y6, lack confidence and fluency in reading texts appropriate to their ages.

Design and technology

Although no lessons were observed in KS2, evidence from records, completed work and discussion with pupils show that standards of achievement in both key stages are good.

Good features

- In both key stages, pupils' planning shows that they successfully brainstorm ideas, identify areas to investigate and research, prepare specifications, design, build and evaluate. They finish their work to a good standard.
- Pupils in KS1 succeed in producing original designs and make good quality kites which meet a clear need and fitness for purpose.
- KS1 pupils acquire basic food technology skills and apply appropriate knowledge from science to their work.
- Pupils in KS2 produce original, detailed designs and, in turn, produce quality products such as their work on Motte and Bailey Castles and their quilt telling the story of Easter.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not have sufficient skills in using control technology in their work.

Information technology

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

Good features

- Pupils use the computer with growing proficiency and confidence as they progress through the school.
- KS1 pupils understand the functions of the mouse and successfully use it to access and run programs. They make effective use of word processing and can save with some help, retrieve and amend as shown in their work on 'My Pet Dragon'.
- KS1 pupils successfully use Roamer and develop this work further in modelling using Roamer World in their work on canals. Other modelling work is seen in their use of My World to illustrate the life-cycle of a butterfly.
- Pupils in both key stages effectively use data handling packages to store and present information. KS 2 pupils are familiar with terms such as 'record' and 'field' and are able to amend and create a database.
- Displays of pupils' work in throughout the school show a good range of achievement in word processing; computer generated graphics, pie charts and graphs.

- KS2 pupils make good use of the Internet to search for information. They are learning to be discerning in its use. Pupils successfully use information gleaned from the Internet to produce an information leaflet, showing a high level of desktop publishing skills.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills in interrogating databases are limited, especially in KS2.
- Pupils in KS2 have limited skills in making multi-media presentations and in the use of spreadsheets.

History

Although no lessons were observed in KS1, evidence from records, displays, completed work and discussion with pupils show that standards of achievement in both key stages are good.

Good features

- KS1 pupils' chronological awareness develops appropriately across the key stage. Younger pupils recognise changes in themselves since they were babies and older pupils understand that change occurs over time and are able to compare and contrast old and new when looking at transport, especially the local canal.
- The *Roots of Torfaen* project has helped pupils in both key stages to understand that historical artefacts and photographs are valuable in finding out about the past. Pupils successfully use these to develop their knowledge and make judgements.
- Pupils make effective use of the opportunities to visit places of historical interest such as Caerphilly castle. As a result of such visits pupils show enriched understanding and interpretation of history and an enhanced range and depth of knowledge.
- Pupils successfully view and handle artefacts loaned to the school. Younger KS2 pupils use these well to fire their imaginations when studying the Roman period and to promote historical enquiry and reasoning when studying the Tudor period.
- Older KS2 pupils make good use of the internet to search for relevant information and some combine pictures and text in booklet form on World War Two. Their work demonstrates understanding of the effects of war on peoples' lives and empathy for children who were evacuees.
- Good links are made with other areas of the curriculum. Design and technology skills have been utilised to design, construct and evaluate a model of a Motte and Bailey castle.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' awareness of some key events and characters in the history of Wales is limited.

Geography

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

Good features

- KS1 pupils have a growing knowledge of the local area and can describe many of its features. They can draw simple maps of the immediate locality and map their journey from home to school. Pupils identify and name types of housing. They know the differences between a village, town and city. They use suitable key symbols to describe various landmarks.
- Older KS1 pupils have a good knowledge of the local area. They can talk about the effects of dumping waste in the local canal and are aware of environmental issues.
- Through the travels of *Dai the Dragon* and work associated with *Roots of Torfaen* pupils have a good knowledge of the wider world. They can use a globe and atlas to find other countries.
- Pupils successfully use of maps and aerial photographs in both key stages.
- Lower KS2 pupils make comparisons between lifestyles in Cwmbran and that in Chembakoli in India and link these to climate and available resources.
- Older pupils, undertaking a field study of a contrasting area in Wales, apply their previous knowledge well in map reading and the use of aerial photography to distinguish the physical features and land use in Morryston. They then use this knowledge to draw a map of the area on computer identifying these features.
- By the end of KS2 pupils demonstrate well developed geographical skills in their field study of Cardiff Bay. They present these findings well using high level word processing skills which include importing pictures from the internet, using a digital camera, watermarking graphics on a page and producing a well presented columned leaflet.

Shortcomings

- Younger KS2 pupils have a limited knowledge of the geographical features of Wales.

Art

Standards in art are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 have a good grasp of mixing and matching colours, as seen in their paintings of birds. They use a range of media such as pencil, paint, crayons and pastels to develop their ideas.

- Pupils successfully work with different textures and forms through collage and paper sculpture.
- In KS2, pupils' work includes large scale collaborate work, such as the design for a book cover, as well as much smaller scale individual work.
- Younger KS2 pupils' work in the style of Roman period demonstrates a growing attention to the use of different shades and patterns to foster the impact of perspective. Older pupils successfully develop these skills as they work in the style of established Impressionist and modern-day artists.
- In KS2, pupils' use of IT to design posters is successful. Pupils have designed anti-smoking posters for a doctor's surgery.
- Pupils have experience of an appropriate range of artistic styles and schools, including some Welsh artists. This includes two- and three- dimensional work.
- Pupils' appreciation of their own work, and that of others, is enhanced by the high standard of mounting and display.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' use of sketchbooks for observational drawing is limited, particularly in KS2.

Music

Standards in music are good in KS1 and satisfactory in KS2. Only composition work was seen during the inspection at KS2.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. They know a range of songs in both English and Welsh. When performing action songs, they successfully co-ordinate their actions to the underlying rhythm of the songs.
- Pupils handle instruments carefully. They recognise the difference between sound and silence and maintain a regular beat when performing a simple rhythmic pattern.
- In KS2, pupils select suitable instruments and work well together. They work on sound patterns that represent bird song or the sound of elephants on the move, using excerpts from *Carnival of the Animals* as a starting point.
- Pupils appraise each other's performances maturely, offering constructive comments and ideas.

Shortcomings

- At KS2, incorrect breathing and posture affect the quality of pupils' singing.

Physical education

Standards in physical education are good in KS2 and satisfactory in KS1. It was only possible to see dance in KS1 during the inspection.

Good features

- Pupils at both key stages have an appropriate awareness of space. The majority listen carefully to instructions. Pupils have regard for their personal health and safety. They know the importance of warming up and cooling down before rigorous exercise. KS2 pupils are aware of the effect of physical exercise on their health and wellbeing.
- KS1 pupils work co-operatively to plan and perform a sequence of movements. They successfully travel in different ways, stopping, starting and changing direction as they explore different basic actions such as jumping, turning and stillness. They successfully respond to the different moods in music.
- Pupils in KS2 successfully travel in different directions and at varying speeds. They anticipate the next step in a sequence and successfully join up each step. They successfully balance and stretch, developing good springing actions to achieve height when jumping.
- Pupils evaluate their performances well; they sensibly discuss how they can improve their movements and carefully plan and modify sequences.
- In athletics, pupils work well as a team in baton races. They sustain their efforts to improve their starting and hand-over times.

Shortcomings

- Pupils at KS1 evaluate what they have done but do not discuss fully how they can improve.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

- The school was last inspected in May 1995. The school has made good progress in addressing the three key issues identified for action.

Clearly identify pupils with SEN, establishing specific aims and objectives for each pupil, and have clear definition of the periods of time for review, criteria for evaluation and the identification of the personnel involved. (Aspect 5.5)

Progress is good. The school has successfully implemented a policy that addresses these issues. It is working towards the implementation of the requirements of the revised Code of Practice.

Use the well planned, established assessment procedures for informing and shaping future curriculum planning. (Aspects 5.1 and 5.2)

The school has made good progress in addressing this issue. Assessment information is successfully used to inform planning, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

Build upon the good work in curriculum management by establishing formal procedures for evaluating the quality of provision. (Aspects 5.3 and 6.3)

Good progress is evident in this area. A planned programme of monitoring pupils' work and teachers' planning is in place and some governors are involved in working alongside subject co-ordinators. Core subject co-ordinators have monitored teaching and this is being extended to the non-core subjects in the next academic year.

8.2 Key issues for action

The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- Ensure a more consistent progress in reading and writing in Welsh second language to raise standards in these aspects of pupils' work.
- Ensure that a balanced amount of teaching time is allocated to each subject area so that all the requirements of the Wales Curriculum 2000 are systematically and progressively developed as pupils move through the school.
- Improve the quality of developmental planning by identifying more closely:
 - links with the budget;
 - monitoring arrangements;
 - the impact of priorities on pupils' learning.
- Ensure that attendance procedures consistently follow local and national guidelines.

APPENDIX

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	St David's RC Nursery and Primary School
School type	Primary
Age-range of pupils	3-11 years
Address of school	Caldicot Way Pontnewydd Cwmbran Torfaen
Post-Code	NP44 1UF
Telephone Number	01633 482580

Headteacher	Mr Allan Cowhig
Date of appointment	1 st September 1987
Chair of Governors	Mr David Williams
Registered Inspector	Dr Michael Best
Dates of inspection	10 th – 13 th June 2002

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	12.5	30	25	22	26	31	27	28	201.5

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	3	8.5

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	27:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	27
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.06

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Term 1	92.5	93.5	95	93
Term 2	93.5	94	94	94
Term 3	93	94	94	93.5

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 1: 2001

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2001			Number of pupils in Y2: 25					
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	8	52	40	0
		National	0	4	13	62	21	0
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	8	44	48	0
		National	0	4	13	54	29	0
	Task/Test	School	0	0	8	40	52	
		National	1	3	13	53	30	
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	8	56	36	0
		National	0	5	13	70	12	0
	Task/Test	School	0	0	8	60	32	
		National	0	5	10	75	9	
EN: Speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	64	36	0
		National	0	3	11	63	23	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	56	44	0
		National	0	2	9	60	29	0
	Task/Test	School	0	0	0	48	52	
		National	0	2	6	56	36	
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	100	0	0
		National	0	2	10	67	21	0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment

In the school:	92	In Wales:	81
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D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2001

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results: 2001								Number of pupils in Y6: 34					
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	3	15	44	38	0
		National	0	0	0		1	1	6	19	48	25	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0			6	12	29	50	
		National	0	2	1	1			5	14	47	30	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	3	3	47	47	0
		National	0	0	0		0	1	4	20	47	28	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0			6	3	32	56	
		National	0	2	1	1			4	18	42	32	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	0	6	41	53	0
		National	1	0	0		0	0	3	15	52	29	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0			0	6	32	59	
		National	0	2	0	1			2	13	51	31	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	79.5	In the school:	76.5
In Wales:	64	In Wales:	63

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under sections 364 and 365 of the Education Act 1996.
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence.
N Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence.
B Pupils not entered for tests because they are working outside the levels of the tests.
W Pupils who are "working towards" level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for level 1.

D. Evidence base of the inspection

Three inspectors spent a total of ten inspection days in the school. Forty-five lessons were observed in whole or in part.

- Pre-inspection discussions about the life and work of the school were held with the headteacher and staff, the governing body and parents.
- Thirty-nine responses to the questionnaire for parents distributed before the inspection were analysed.
- During the inspection, discussions were held with the headteacher, staff and pupils in the school.
- Policy documents, schemes of work and other documentation were read, analysed and discussed with the headteacher and staff.
- A range of pupils' past and present work was examined.
- Post inspection meetings were held with the governors, headteacher and staff.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Michael Best	Rgl	Context Main findings Standards of learning achieved in subjects and areas Key Skills Quality of teaching Curriculum Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Special educational needs Leadership and efficiency Progress since the last inspection Key issues for action	Early Years English Science Art Music Physical education
Rhiannon Boardman	Lay	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Behaviour and attitudes Partnership with parents and community and other institutions Partnership with industry	
Maldwyn Pryse	Team	Assessment, recording and reporting Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement Accommodation, staffing and learning resources	Mathematics Design and technology Information technology History Geography Welsh second language

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