

**REPORT**

**on the**

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

**ST GWLADYS JUNIOR SCHOOL  
CHURCH PLACE  
BARGOED  
CAERPHILLY  
CF81 8RN**

School Number: 676/2209

Date of Inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2004

**By**

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Under Estyn contract number: T/109/03P

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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:

{PRI VAT E }	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**

The school is situated at the lower northern end of the town of Bargoed in the Rhymney valley in the County Borough of Caerphilly in South Wales. It shares a campus with Bargoed Infants School, from which it receives most of its pupils. Pupils usually transfer to Heolddu Comprehensive School on reaching the age of 11.

- There are 197 pupils on roll aged from seven to 11. Children first start their education in Year 3 (Y3) when they reach the age of seven. The school's numbers on roll are below its maximum capacity by 41 pupils. Numbers have declined a little in recent years in line with the national trend. The headteacher was appointed as acting headteacher in 1999 and confirmed as headteacher in 2002. The school was last inspected in November 1998.
- The school describes the residential area, from which pupils are drawn, as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged, with 17 per cent of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, which is in line with the national average. Pupils are mostly English speaking, of local origin and white. Two per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and no pupils receive support in speaking English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language and no pupils are cared for by the Local Authority. No pupils have been excluded in the last year.
- There are 34 pupils on the register of special educational needs (SEN), which at 17.2 per cent is in line with the national average. Two pupils have formal statements of SEN, 15 pupils are at the School Action Stage, and 17 pupils are at the School Action Plus Stage of the new SEN Code of Practice. The school provides for pupils with SEN in mainstream classes, and in withdrawal groups. There are nine full-time teachers, including the headteacher, and two part-time teachers. The school has eight classes from Y3 to Y6.
- The school's aims are set out in detail in its prospectus. Its mission statement is "The child's imagination is tomorrow's reality." It has prioritised the raising of standards in speaking and listening, a better understanding of different learning styles, and the enhanced use of assessment for learning as key to its development.

## **2. THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REPORT**

St. Gwladys Junior School is a good school, which has made good progress in raising overall standards, the quality of teaching, and the quality of leadership since the last inspection.

### **Standards of achievement**

- Overall standards of achievement were good in all the work seen. Standards were very good in 19 per cent, good in 69 per cent, and satisfactory in 12 per cent of the work seen.

## Standards of achievement for pupils by the age of 11

Subject	Key Stage 2
Welsh second language	Good
English	Good
Mathematics	Very good
Science	Good
Design and technology	Good
Information technology	Very good
History	Good
Geography	Good
Art	Good
Music	Good
Physical education	Good
Religious Education	Good

- In the key stage 2 National Curriculum (NC) test results in 2003, pupils' achievements in attaining NC Level 4 or higher, were above national results in English by six per cent, in mathematics by 11 per cent and in science by six per cent.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher NC Level 5 was slightly above national averages in English, and well above national averages in mathematics, by 17 per cent, and in science, by 32 per cent.
- The results achieved by girls have been higher than those of boys in English and science, but boys did better in mathematics. In their English work, pupils' standards in speaking, reading and spelling were satisfactory.
- The school's NC test results for pupils who gained at least NC Level 4 in all three core subjects were above Unitary Authority (UA) averages in 2003 and have improved significantly since the last inspection, from 66 per cent to 79 per cent.
- The school's NC test results compare well with similar schools. The 2003 results were in the top 25 per cent for English and science, and in the top 10 per cent for mathematics.
- Overall, pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve good standards, and make good progress, relative to their ages and abilities.
- Standards of achievement in the key skills of numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) when used in a range of subjects are very good. Standards in the key skills of listening and writing are good. In many subjects, standards in the key skills of speaking and reading are satisfactory. Pupils sometimes encounter difficulty in understanding concepts because they lack an extended vocabulary.

## The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good, and for cultural development is good. Provision for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is very good.

- The quality of school assemblies and acts of collective worship is at least good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils respond very well to the school's very good provision, singing hymns and prayers tunefully and fervently. Pupils' responses to the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also very good.

### **Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning**

- Overall, pupils' behaviour is good. They have positive attitudes to their work and play and co-operate well with staff and their fellow pupils, settle quickly to tasks and sustain concentration through lessons. Teachers and assistants work skilfully with pupils to promote their understanding and acceptance of school rules.
- The school has a good policy to promote racial equality, and has good measures to prevent racism, bullying, sexism and other forms of discrimination.
- Attendance rates in recent times have been only just satisfactory, averaging 90 per cent, and instances of unauthorised absence are minimal. Most pupils are punctual but a few are regularly late. The school does not comply fully with the requirements of the Welsh Assembly Government, detailed in circular 3/99, in relation the marking of registers.

### **The quality of education provided**

- The overall quality of teaching was good. The quality of teaching was good or better in 83 per cent of the 65 lessons observed. Teaching was very good in 23 per cent, good in 60 per cent, and satisfactory in 17 per cent of lessons. This is a substantial improvement on the quality of teaching six years ago when only 50 per cent of teaching was good or better and five per cent was unsatisfactory.
- The quality of assessment is good, being accurate and consistent. The extent to which assessment is used to promote higher standards is satisfactory. The arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are very good, and the reports issued to parents are good. The school analyses assessment data about English, mathematics and science thoroughly in order to improve pupils' performance.
- In some subjects, such as mathematics, there are exemplary recording systems containing full assessments of most pupils' progress. However, in many areas of learning, the wealth of information and data available is not always used well in planning what to teach next.
- Teachers complete satisfactory written reports containing information about progress in each subject annually. They meet statutory requirements.
- The quality of the curriculum is very good. The school's curriculum fully meets the requirements of the NC. The quality of planning for the teaching of key skills is good.
- The arrangements for personal and social education (PSE) are very good. The school follows closely the guidance provided in the Framework of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales for the teaching of PSE.

- Planning for the Welsh Dimension is very good. Pupils gain an informed understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales through work in classes as well as by the visits they make.
- There are clear policies and comprehensive schemes of work for all subjects. All are at least of good quality and some, such as those for mathematics, music and information technology, are of high quality.
- The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. Teachers and other adults run a very good range of extra-curricular clubs for pupils to improve their skills, and pupils participate in a range of visits to places of educational value. These include residential visits to field studies centres.
- Teachers also organise interesting visits by a range of specialists to the school. These experiences benefit pupils' learning, enrich the curriculum, and help raise standards further.
- The quality of support and personal and educational guidance are good. The procedures for promoting pupils' health and safety are good. Child protection procedures are very effective. The school is highly inclusive in its approach.
- The school has adopted the policy of the UA to guide practice in health and safety issues. The headteacher, staff and governors monitor and implement the policy carefully.
- Pupils of all abilities and aptitudes have equal access to the whole curriculum and there is a separate policy to promote equality of opportunity.
- The overall provision for pupils with SEN is good. Generally, most pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve good standards, relative to their ages and abilities. A few in lower key stage 2, and pupils with statements of SEN, make satisfactory progress.
- Pupils with SEN are included very well in the school's daily life. The school follows the procedures of the new SEN Code of Practice for Wales well. The SEN coordinator (SENCo) has developed her role well, and she liaises well with visiting staff, classroom teachers and support staff.
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are of good quality. These are useful documents which are used well by staff.
- The quality of SEN teaching in withdrawal groups provided for pupils at School Action Plus stage is good and pupils make good progress in these sessions.
- Overall, pupils with behavioural difficulties usually make good progress with the help of the good strategies used by teachers.
- At times, a few Y4 pupils with learning difficulties, at School Action Plus stage of the SEN Code of Practice, are without extra in-class support. They become overly demanding of their teacher's time, at the expense of the rest of the class.

- A few of the pupils with SEN, at School Action Plus stage in lower key stage 2, are given work in class, which is not matched well to their abilities. SEN support staff do not sufficiently modify the work given to pupils with statements of SEN.
- Teachers assess pupils with SEN, using a range of diagnostic tests. However, the system does not allow a clear overview of their progress over time.

### **The partnership with parents and the community and the school's links with industry**

- The overall quality of the school's partnership with parents is good. Parents make a good contribution to school life. The quality of liaison arrangements with other schools and institutions is very good. The school places importance on its partnership with parents, other schools and the local community and works hard to build good relationships. A home/school agreement has been drawn up which is distributed to parents annually, and most parents complete and return it.
- The quality of the school's partnership with industry is good.
- The governors' annual report and the school prospectus are brightly produced and informative documents that convey the positive ethos of the school. Both need amending, however, to conform fully to Welsh Assembly Government regulations.

### **The management and efficiency of the school**

- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good. The school has identified its priorities and targets, which provide appropriate challenges for improvement. The school monitors progress made towards achieving each target. Problems are identified early and solved where possible.
- The quality of leadership and management are very good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior managers lead school development well. Governors provide good leadership, working with the headteacher and her colleagues to identify, monitor and evaluate the school's strengths and areas for further development.
- The quality of subject coordination is very good and subject coordinators lead subject development well. They work hard, advising colleagues, scrutinising planning, looking at pupils' work, and observing and feeding back on the quality of teaching. Subject coordinators have been closely involved in revising schemes of work and have developed a well-planned and rich curriculum.
- Financial management is good. The school's routine administration and organisation are effective and efficient and most of the statutory requirements and guidelines of the Welsh Assembly Government are complied with. The school gives very good value for money.
- The quality of staffing is good. There are sufficient well-qualified and experienced teachers, and they work industriously as a team.
- Support staff, including the school secretary, the caretaker, classroom support assistants, voluntary workers, lunchtime assistants and cleaners, make a good contribution to the quality of school life.

- The adequacy of the accommodation for the number of pupils on roll is satisfactory. The school is maintained to a high standard of cleanliness by ancillary staff and volunteer pupils, for example, through the eco-council.
- The internal accommodation has many good displays of pupils' work. However, the outdoor accommodation lacks a playing field, the hall is undersized, and access around the school is difficult for less mobile, wheelchair-bound pupils.
- The overall quality and range of learning resources are good and they are used well by teachers.
- The computer room is adapted well for ICT purposes with a good interactive whiteboard and 15 networked computers.
- The school library is very well equipped with a good range of books. The library is decorated with beautiful wall-murals based on Welsh legends, but is under-used during the school day.
- The school makes every effort to ensure pupils' safety during the day, but there are potential hazards when they have to cross the main road at lunchtimes to reach the school canteen. There are, at present, no traffic calming measures on that road and it is busy with heavy traffic at times.

**The effectiveness with which the issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed**

Overall, the school has made good progress in improving its provision since the time of the last inspection. Standards of achievement have been raised in five subjects and maintained in all others. A comprehensive system to monitor teaching is now in place. Standards in mathematics are now very good and in religious education are now good. The overall quality of assessment is now good. The safety and security of the accommodation has been improved. However, standards in spelling are still just satisfactory.

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

#### **3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning**

Overall standards of achievement were good. Standards were very good in 19 per cent, good in 69 per cent, and satisfactory in 12 per cent of the work seen.

- Standards of achievement are very good in mathematics and information technology. In all the other subjects, standards are good.
- In the 2003 NC test results, pupils' achievements in attaining NC Level 4 or higher, were above national results in English by six per cent, in mathematics by 11 per cent and in science by six per cent.

- The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher NC Level 5 was slightly above national averages in English, and well above national averages in mathematics, by 17 per cent, and in science, by 32 per cent.
- The results achieved by girls have been higher than those of boys in English and science, but boys did better in mathematics. In their English work, pupils' standards in speaking, reading and spelling were satisfactory.
- The school's national test results for pupils who gained at least NC Level 4 in all three, core subjects were above UA averages in 2003 and have improved significantly since the last inspection, from 66 per cent to 79 per cent.
- The school's results compare well with similar schools, as decided by the proportion of pupils who are in receipt of free school meals. The 2003 results were in the top 25 per cent for English and science, in the top 10 per cent for mathematics and also when compared with the average core subject indicator (CSI) attained by similar schools.
- Overall, pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve good standards, and make good progress, relative to their ages and abilities. Pupils who are gifted or talented also make good progress. There are few differences between the achievements of pupils with different ethnic backgrounds.

### **3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum**

Overall standards of achievement in key skills across the curriculum are good. They are very good in numeracy and ICT, good in listening and writing, and satisfactory in speaking and reading.

- Pupils' listening skills are good. They listen carefully, overall, and this enables them to learn effectively and recall previous knowledge learnt.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their speaking skills across the curriculum. The more able speak confidently, clearly and at length when answering questions about a range of subjects during introductions and plenaries. When working in groups, the more able share ideas and opinions on various topics well. A significant number of pupils cannot speak well at length to explain their thinking.
- Standards in reading across the curriculum are satisfactory. In history, older pupils make good use of higher-order reading skills to obtain information about aspects of World War 2.
- Standards in writing across the curriculum are good overall. Empathetic writing is often good, particularly in Y5 and Y6. Pupils' writing draws perceptive conclusions from the findings of investigations and research in the foundation subjects.
- Pupils make very good progress in developing and using their numeracy skills to support their work across the curriculum. They competently use, apply and interpret data, and collect information in a range of graphical forms. In science, for instance pupils measure very accurately when undertaking practical work.

- Pupils make very good use of their ICT skills in all subjects across the curriculum. They apply very well developed skills to word process, record and retrieve data in a variety of ways.
- Relative to their age and ability pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards in numeracy and the use of ICT. They make satisfactory progress in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

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

### **4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good, whilst the provision for cultural development is good. Provision for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is very good.

- The quality of school assemblies is at least good and sometimes outstanding. Assemblies have a profound influence on pupils' spiritual and moral development. During the inspection, the whole school listened with rapt attention to the moving story, read in Welsh by Y5 pupils, of Mari Jones' devotion to obtaining a Bible in Welsh. Pupils respond very well to the school's very good provision, singing hymns and prayers tunefully and fervently.
- Religious education gives pupils a good knowledge of Christian history and beliefs, and introduces them to other world faiths.
- Pupils understand that other people can hold beliefs different from their own, and they respect diversity.
- They develop an acute sense of right and wrong, and a will to care for the environment, for example, by reducing energy consumption and planting an environment-friendly garden.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibilities for many tasks around the school. Y6 pupils help to care for younger children, and have an important role in the smooth, daily running of the school.
- Teachers often encourage initiative. Pupils know that mistakes are part of learning, and this awareness promotes a greater tolerance.
- Pupils' knowledge of Welsh culture is very good. The school gives pupils some experience of other cultures, for example, in dances from India, clothing from China, and recently through being taught by an exchange teacher from Australia.
- However, overall, pupils' appreciation of cultural and ethnic diversity is underdeveloped. The very good information technology resources are not used sufficiently to expand pupils' understanding of the breadth and depth of cultures in the UK and overseas.

- Since the last inspection, the school has maintained its effective provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **4.2 Behaviour and attitudes**

Pupils' overall behaviour is good, and makes a significant contribution to the school's co-operative and purposeful ethos.

- Good teaching creates and maintains pupils' interest in their work and their good attitudes to learning.
- Staff praise pupils for trying hard, and pupils appreciate the efforts of their peers. As a result, pupils advance in self-esteem and inner confidence.
- Teachers' awards of house points for achievement and effort encourage team spirit.
- Pupils compile, agree, and abide by their own class rules, and accept the school rules as sensible guidelines for community life. The school council has played a key role in this.
- Teachers use a consistently fair approach when promoting good behaviour. Pupils confirmed that staff treat them equally and fairly, and that when bullying occurs, it is quickly dealt with. No instances of bullying were observed during the inspection.
- The school gives insufficient attention to the ethnic diversity of Wales and the United Kingdom.
- Boys and girls behave equally well, but girls tend to respond more enthusiastically when teachers ask for responses to questions.
- Standards of behaviour have been very well maintained since the last inspection.

## **4.3 Attendance**

Overall attendance is only just satisfactory, averaging 90 per cent over the last three terms. Unauthorised absences are minimal.

- Attendance rates have not improved since the last inspection. Too many pupils go away on family holidays in term time, despite the school's best efforts to limit holiday absence.
- Registers are marked at appropriate times but absences are not recorded consistently. As a result, the school does not comply fully with the attendance requirements set out in the Welsh Assembly Government Circular 3/99, *Pupil Support and Social Inclusion*.
- Most pupils are punctual but a few are repeatedly late.
- The headteacher has established procedures to encourage good attendance and punctuality, to ensure that absence is adequately explained, and to follow up situations when necessary.

- The school's partnership with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is productive. Regular meetings contribute to the successful monitoring of attendance and to the development of further strategies to improve attendance rates. Individual pupils with attendance problems are identified, contact is made with parents at an early stage, and other welfare agencies are involved when necessary.
- The school has set no formal targets for the improvement of rates of attendance but is working diligently to achieve better rates throughout the school. The school frequently promotes the value of good attendance and punctuality to pupils and parents but the outcomes do not match the effort.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

The overall quality of teaching was good. The quality of teaching was good or better in 83 per cent of the 65 lessons observed. Teaching was very good in 23 per cent, good in 60 per cent, and satisfactory in 17 per cent of lessons. This is a substantial improvement on the quality of teaching six years ago when only 50 per cent of teaching was good or better and five per cent was unsatisfactory.

#### **Good features**

- Teachers often have high expectations of pupils in lessons, adopt a good range of techniques, plan well, make effective use of resources, and introduce many cross-curricular links between subjects. They include pupils well in learning and celebrate pupils' work in well-mounted displays.
- Teachers know their pupils well, value them as individuals and establish good relationships with them. They display a very caring attitude towards them and offer a firm, fair and consistent approach to discipline.
- Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They plan effectively for the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.
- Teachers make clear what they expect of pupils in terms of achievement and behaviour. They praise pupils judiciously and often, and help build their self-esteem.
- Teachers use a good range of organisational strategies. They provide pupils with opportunities to work as a whole class, in groups, pairs and as individuals. They also use a good mix of teaching techniques and well-prepared resources to enliven their lessons.
- Teachers generally match work well to pupils' abilities, apart from for a minority of those who have SEN.
- Teachers provide pupils with exemplars of the standard of work expected of them. Pieces of work are read aloud to the whole class and pupils focus upon various good features.

Teachers have collected and assembled pupils' work in a series of attractive portfolios of their work. These portfolios serve well in celebrating pupils' achievements.

- In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to develop an enquiring attitude to learning by asking, as well as answering, searching questions. Most vitally, teachers inspire pupils with their enthusiasm to learn much at a rapid rate.

### **Shortcomings**

Where, rarely, there are shortcomings in teaching they are usually attributable to one or more of the following:

- Teachers do not speak Welsh often enough;
- the match of work to the needs and abilities of pupils is inaccurate; and
- lesson aims and objectives lack clarity.

## **5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting**

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good.

- The school has a very well defined policy and scheme for assessment and recording, which has been implemented successfully to improve standards since the last inspection.
- Pupils' work is formally assessed in standardised tests in English, mathematics and science. Teachers set clear targets, both generally and specifically, in the core subjects. In general, regular assessment ensures that teachers have good records of each pupil's achievements.
- Teachers involve pupils in the assessment process and personal folders are kept, which demonstrate clearly what they can do. Pupils evaluate their own work and discuss their progress astutely.
- The school fully complies with statutory requirements for NC assessment. The analysis of tests further identifies areas for improvement in the core subjects.
- The school analyses assessment data and uses it effectively to set whole-school targets, to follow the progress of individual pupils and to monitor its equal opportunities policy.
- In some subjects, such as mathematics, there are exemplary recording systems containing full assessments of most pupils' progress. However, in many areas of learning, the wealth of information and data available is not always used well in planning what to teach next.
- Teachers have a very good understanding of the NC levels. Full portfolios of pupils' work are kept in all subjects. The processes for moderation of these samples in order to exemplify standards are well developed.
- The quality of teachers' marking is generally good. Pupils' work is marked regularly and positively, and in some classes written comments provide pupils with a very good

understanding of what they need to do in order to progress further. However, occasionally in some classes, marking does not clearly identify how pupils can improve.

- Pupils with SEN are satisfactorily assessed using a range of tests. This information is not always used well to monitor pupils' progress.
- Reading records are insufficiently diagnostic.
- Annual reports to parents about their children are satisfactory. They provide evaluations of children's progress and achievement in every subject of the National Curriculum. They outline what pupils have learned and at times include guidance about the steps needed to improve.

### **5.3 Curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is very good. The school's curriculum fully meets the requirements of the NC. Planning for the teaching of key skills is of good quality. Planning for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is very good.

- Through work in classes, as well as by the visits they make, pupils gain an informed understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales.
- Many pupils gain enjoyment from their studies. Teachers ensure that pupils have equality of opportunity to learn.
- There are clear policies and good schemes of work for all subjects; some, such as for mathematics, music and information technology, are of high quality.
- Most lessons are planned well with work, which helps pupils develop the skills they need at that time as well as in later life. Teachers often make lessons enjoyable and, as a result, pupils find that learning is fun.
- The quality of planning for the teaching of key skills is good. Teachers use opportunities in lessons to focus upon the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, which are written into schemes of work. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and reading skills.
- The school manages the amount of time spent on teaching the curriculum each week and pupils get an appropriately balanced amount of time in most subjects.
- The arrangements for personal and social education (PSE) in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are very good. The school closely follows the guidance in the framework for the teaching of PSE provided by the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales. Pupils are given, for example, wise guidance on the evils of drug abuse.
- The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. Teachers and other adults run good extra-curricular clubs for pupils to improve their skills in drama, computing, chess, gardening, dragon clubs, gymnastics, rugby football, hockey, netball, folk dancing, outdoor adventure activities, URDD meetings, choral and instrumental music.

- Pupils' learning is enriched by a broad range of visits within the locality and further afield. Other activities include visits to places of educational interest, such as the Museum of Welsh Life at St. Fagan's, the residential field studies centre at Llangrannog and the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Manor House of Llancaiach Fawr. There are close links with the UA Museum and Library services.
- These visits not only enhance and extend pupils' learning about history, but also reinforce Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. The Welsh Dimension, generally, is promoted very well in subjects such as art, music, history and geography.
- Teachers organise interesting visits by a range of specialists to the school. For example, many classes have benefited from visits from local historians, painters and storytellers.
- The school has been awarded Eco-School status and pupils speak proudly of this and show great interest in caring for the environment and the eco-system.
- Teachers promote racial equality well. This is formalised through a policy to promote racial harmony and enshrined in the attitudes of staff and pupils.
- Teachers make good use of homework to extend learning opportunities. Pupils get more homework to reinforce learning as they grow older. Pupils who are gifted or talented are catered for well.

#### **5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

The quality of support and guidance is good. The attention paid to pupils' welfare is also good.

- The school provides good support for pupils of all ages and abilities. All members of staff know their pupils very well and support them well in their individual, pastoral needs. Educational guidance is good.
- Aspects of health, hygiene and personal and emotional wellbeing are incorporated into the curriculum through the school's very effective personal and social education (PSE) programme and are dealt with sensitively by staff. The use of circle time has contributed well to the development of pupils' self-esteem.
- Procedures for child protection are very good. The head teacher is the nominated person with responsibility and all staff are aware of the procedures to follow. Links with the relevant agencies are good.
- The school has an appropriate health and safety policy and regular checks are made concerning the safety of the building and the equipment. All members of staff have received basic training in First Aid and two members are fully qualified.
- All pupils have equal access to all aspects of the school's curriculum and extra curricular activities.
- Pupils are supervised well throughout the day. The security of the building and the site are good.

- Although the school makes every effort to ensure the safety of its pupils, the transport of pupils across a busy road between two buildings on the site at lunchtimes presents potential hazards. There are, at present, no traffic calming measures in operation.

## **5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)**

The overall provision for pupils with SEN is good. Generally, most pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve good standards, relative to their ages and abilities.

- There are 34 pupils (17 per cent) identified as having SEN. A specialist SEN teacher supports the 17 pupils at the School Action Plus stage of the SEN Code of Practice and there is individual adult support for the two pupils with statements of SEN. The 15 pupils at the School Action Stage receive support both in class and in withdrawal groups.
- Pupils with SEN are included very well in the school's daily life. The school follows the procedures in the new SEN Code of Practice for Wales well. The SEN coordinator (SENCo) has developed her role well, and she liaises well with visiting staff, classroom teachers and support staff. She has a good level of knowledge and understanding of SEN and provides appropriate training for school staff. Arrangements for the review of statements are carried out systematically.
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are of good quality. These are useful documents which are used well by staff. Targets set are specific, measurable and related well to pupils' needs. The SENCo reviews IEPs systematically with classroom teachers, parents and pupils.
- The quality of SEN teaching in withdrawal groups provided for pupils at School Action Plus stage is good and pupils make good progress in these sessions. They benefit from the experience and expertise of the specialist teacher involved. The teacher keeps good, detailed records.
- Arrangements for the support of pupils at School Action Stage of the SEN Code of Practice are generally good.
- Overall, pupils with behaviour problems usually make good progress with the help of the good strategies used by teachers.
- At times, a few Y4 pupils with learning difficulties, at School Action Plus stage of the SEN Code of Practice, are without extra in-class support. They become overly demanding of their teacher's time, at the expense of the rest of the class.
- Pupils with SEN in upper key stage 2 have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which is generally matched well to their needs.
- A few of the pupils with SEN in lower key stage 2 are given work, which is not always matched well to their abilities. These pupils had reading books, which they found too difficult to read. Also, at times, they are unable to read their own writing, because they have copied it out without understanding its meaning.

- The governor with responsibility for SEN is well informed about SEN matters and closely involved in school life.
- Teachers provide appropriate IT software for pupils to practice their basic literacy and numeracy skills on computers.
- Relative to their age and ability pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards in numeracy and the use of IT. They make satisfactory progress in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- The modification of the curriculum for the pupils with statements of SEN is satisfactory. SEN support staff do not modify pupils' work sufficiently to match their abilities and aid their understanding.
- Pupils with SEN are assessed satisfactorily. Teachers use a range of diagnostic tests. However, the system does not give a clear overview of their progress and this information is not always used carefully in class to match the work to the pupils' needs.
- Links with the feeder infant school, the UA and other outside agencies are good. Links with the Hearing-Impaired Service and the educational psychologist are very good.

## **5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions**

The partnership with parents is good. The quality of the links with the community is very good.

- The school has sustained the quality of partnerships with parents and the community since the last inspection.
- The governors' annual report and the school prospectus are brightly produced and informative documents that convey the positive ethos of the school. Both need amending, however, to conform fully to Welsh Assembly Government regulations.
- About 40 parents of pupils in Y3 and Y4 participate weekly in the 'Share' project, which provides a good link between home and school, and helps parents to take a fuller part in their children's education. Parents can nominate pupils to receive recognition for out-of-school achievements.
- The Friends of the School raised the funds for imaginative decoration of the school library with murals representing legends of Welsh culture.
- The many community partnerships include the Urdd Welsh youth movement, BBC Music in the Community, Kids Opera, Welsh National Opera, Bargoed library, Bargoed and District Art Society, and the police. These links make a very good contribution to pupils' achievements, especially in Welsh, music and art, and to their understanding of the world around them.
- Arrangements for pupils to transfer from the adjacent, infants' school are well established and effective. Most Y6 pupils move on to Heolddu Comprehensive School, with which

links are especially strong for design technology and sport. Pupils are well prepared socially and educationally for their transition to KS3.

- The school works well with other organisations. It is a partner of the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, for teacher training and trainee teachers are given very good support.

## **5.7 Partnership with industry**

The school's partnerships with industry and commerce are good and have a good impact on the quality of education pupils receive.

- Effective links with industry and commerce have been maintained well since the last inspection.
- Long-established links with a chemical plant support pupils' work in science.
- Pupils have developed further their communication skills by writing letters to a utilities company.
- The school draws on the resources of the Millennium Stadium to enrich the curriculum, especially in physical education and design technology.
- An aircraft company has donated computers to the school.
- The school values and works effectively with the local education business partnership (EBP).
- The school's emphasis on care for the environment helps pupils attain a higher understanding of aspects of geography and science.

# **6. MANAGEMENT**

## **6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement**

The quality of the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good.

- This is a thinking school, which displays a positive, self-critical culture in its work. The school has a well-structured self-evaluative, reporting system, for continual monitoring of priorities.
- It has recently produced a vigorous summary of its strengths and shortcomings. The system demonstrates clearly the progress the school makes both in addressing the issues from the last inspection and the many areas that the school aims to improve.
- The school has successfully addressed most of the key issues for improvement identified in the last inspection report. Substantial progress has been made, for instance, in overhauling the assessment system.

- The headteacher and curriculum coordinators monitor teachers' work closely. Staff development has been targeted and in-service training has been matched to the needs of individual teachers and the requirements of the school. For instance, training in subjects such as IT and mathematics has led to substantial improvement in standards in those subjects.
- The school development plan (SDP) is a detailed document and addresses a wide range of relevant issues. The governing body together with the headteacher carefully monitor expenditure and ensure that priorities are linked to raising standards.

## **6.2 Leadership and efficiency**

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The school is run efficiently and its resources are managed with care.

- The headteacher, staff and governors provide a purposeful direction for the work of the school. They have established good relationships with a range of other institutions, particularly the feeder infants' school and the receiving secondary school. Good arrangements are in place to mentor students training to be teachers.
- The headteacher has developed further a strong team of teachers since her appointment and enhanced the structure and quality of senior and middle management. Testimony to the quality of leadership in recent years lies in the evidence of improvement in standards over that time. The entire staff has contributed to this.
- The governing body provides supportive leadership. Some governors, such as the chairperson, are in school often to discuss progress with staff or take part in assemblies. The governing body acts as a critical and positive friend of the school, and provides appropriate checks and balances on its development. Governors take an active interest in pupils' work and have a good range of experience to base their guidance upon.
- The quality of subject coordination is very good and subject coordinators lead subject development well. They work hard, advising colleagues, scrutinising planning, looking at pupils' work, and observing and feeding back on the quality of teaching in some subjects. Subject coordinators have been closely involved in revising schemes of work and have developed a well-planned curriculum.
- The school budget is managed well. Decisions on expenditure are closely linked to the priorities identified in the SDP.
- The school runs smoothly. Routine administration and organisation are good. Appropriate systems are in place, and the school secretary ensures that administrative routines are efficient.

## **6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

The adequacy of staffing is good. The overall quality of accommodation is satisfactory and the quality of resources for learning are good.

- The school has sufficient well-qualified and experienced teachers. They work hard as a team to provide a positive, happy and secure environment.
- Staff attend appropriate in-service training courses.
- Classroom assistants work closely with teachers in many aspects of school life.
- All teachers have a job description and a responsibility for a range of curricular subjects and aspects. A good performance management policy has been implemented.
- Support staff, including the school secretary, the caretaker, classroom support assistants, voluntary workers, lunchtime assistants and cleaners, make a good contribution to the quality of school life.
- The adequacy of the accommodation for the number of pupils on roll is satisfactory. The school is housed in a building reputed to be more than a hundred years old and designed as a secondary school. Teachers do their very best to use the accommodation in the most suitable way for the needs of junior school pupils.
- The computer room is adapted well for ICT purposes with a good interactive whiteboard and 15 networked computers. The school library is very well equipped with a good range of books, which have been diligently catalogued by parents. An artist-in-residence has decorated the library with beautiful wall-murals based on Welsh legends. Currently, the library is under-used during the school day by teachers and learners.
- The hall is too small for physical education or drama. The school has three storeys with narrow stairways. It would encounter difficulty in catering for less mobile, disabled pupils with regard to the requirements and guidance of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- The outside accommodation has a number of disadvantages. Chiefly, there are no playing fields for team games and the playgrounds are very cramped for the number of pupils on roll. The school has, though, sufficient storage space.
- The school makes every effort to ensure pupils' safety during the day, but there are potential hazards when they have to cross the main road at lunchtimes to get to the school canteen. There are, at present, no traffic calming measures on that road and it is busy with heavy traffic at times.
- Teachers make good use of pupils' work to create a bright and colourful environment and to develop very good portfolios of pupils' work.
- The quality of learning resources is good in most subjects and in all classrooms. Generally, resources are used and managed well by teachers. Resources for learning are very good in mathematics, music and ICT. Overall, resources for pupils with SEN are underdeveloped. There is a lack of variety in the books and audiotapes used to learn Welsh.

## 7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

### Standards achieved by pupils

#### English

Standards of achievement are good.

#### Good features

- Most pupils listen respectfully to their teachers and to others. In lessons, they remain focused for a sustained time. When answering questions, most give answers, in writing and verbally, in full sentences. They are confident in discussing their ideas and opinions with their peers.
- They make satisfactory progress in speaking for different purposes and audiences and collaborate effectively in discussions.
- A majority of pupils in lower key stage 2 read aloud clearly and confidently.
- Pupils understand and use the conventions for writing letters, and many show an awareness of different degrees of formality in writing. They identify examples of alliteration in the poems they read, and suggest interesting and evocative words.
- Most are familiar with the differences between fiction and non-fiction texts. They understand terms such as contents, index and glossary and recognise that these are guides to finding information.
- Pupils build a good understanding of the differences between direct and indirect speech and use connectives in compound sentences effectively. They know what instructional text is and write it well.
- Standards in writing are good. Pupils' writing shows a good command of the characteristics of persuasive, creative and informational writing as well as good use of punctuation. Most have written creative stories of good quality.
- The written work of more-able pupils is very good, showing a good use of adjectives, neat sentence construction, good punctuation and the ability to develop a story. More able pupils in Y6 write using some memorable phraseology.
- Y6 pupils ask questions about a topic they are investigating and suggest and use appropriate sources of information. They skim the pages to find the answers to their questions and use dictionaries and thesauruses well to find the meaning of unfamiliar words. Most pupils read fluently and discuss plot and character with some insight.
- Pupils achieve high standards in the use of ICT for writing and presentation. Many pupils can operate a digital encyclopaedia to obtain information.

## **Shortcomings**

- Pupils' overall standards in speaking are satisfactory but they sometimes find difficulty in using an extended vocabulary.
- The library skills of some pupils are underdeveloped and their overall reading standards are just satisfactory.
- Pupils' ability to spell correctly is underdeveloped and standards vary from class to class.

## **Mathematics**

Standards of achievement are very good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils of all abilities have very positive attitudes towards this subject. They are developing a very good understanding of mathematics through confidently tackling mathematical problems. When conducting investigations, they work with a high level of independence.
- Pupils make very good progress in working with number; in particular, they develop very good problem solving strategies, which they use successfully in oral and written work. Y3 pupils are developing good mental strategies for multiplication and division and have a very good understanding of simple fractions.
- Pupils have a very good idea of place value to 1,000 and above, which they use confidently to solve mental and written calculations involving the four rules of number. Y3 pupils make up accurate number sentences using multiplication and division.
- Pupils have a good recall of multiplication tables and calculate large numbers well. By the end of key stage 2, pupils calculate complex, long multiplication and division problems.
- Most pupils have a very good knowledge of fractions and decimals. They understand the equivalents of decimal fractions and percentages.
- Pupils have a very good grasp of space, shape and measure. Younger pupils can name a very good range of 3D shapes and use appropriate mathematical language to describe their properties in a variety of contexts. They use appropriate language to describe a variety of triangles with good understanding. Y4 pupils make 3D models by linking faces and edges competently.
- Pupils can identify lines of symmetry within two-dimensional shapes. They demonstrate a good understanding of symmetry including rotational symmetry.
- Younger pupils know how to estimate and measure very well. They use measuring instruments accurately for length, capacity, mass and time.

- Older pupils calculate perimeter, area and volume with increasing accuracy. They have a very good knowledge of angles and the properties of irregular shapes. They name and measure a variety of angles with confidence. Pupils understand and use the language associated with angles including acute, obtuse and reflex.
- They collect and represent data using graphs and diagrams and interpret their findings and use ICT to illustrate them.
- Pupils' recording of work is of a high standard. Pupils present their work neatly and logically with a clear methodology shown.
- When undertaking practical investigations, pupils collaborate very well and the quality of discussion is often good.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no major shortcomings.

### **Science**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils throughout the school conduct a range of experiments competently and systematically, considering the evidence carefully. They have a good understanding of the key processes in science, including the need for careful observation, recording and predicting. They understand very well that if hypotheses are to be reliably proven, then tests or experiments must be fairly based.
- Pupils of all abilities demonstrate a high level of independence in their practical work. They maintain accurate records using diagrams, text, tables and graphs and draw realistic conclusions from their evidence.
- Many pupils have a good body of knowledge about materials and their properties, life processes and living things, and physical properties. Generally, pupils use scientific vocabulary well to describe features of their investigations.
- Pupils in Y3 can construct electrical circuits and know why metals are good conductors of electricity and other materials such as plastic are not. Pupils of all abilities know that switches can be used to control an electrical device and that a battery is needed for a current to flow. They know, draw and use the symbols for bulb, buzzer, wire and switch.
- Y4 pupils have a good understanding of physical processes. They know that forces act in a particular direction and have learned much about types of forces. They know that the earth is a magnet and that forces act in a particular direction. They know the relative positions of the Sun and the Earth and can discuss periodic changes knowledgeably.

- Pupils in Y5 understand the concept of change and most know that whilst some changes in the properties of materials, such as the freezing of water, are reversible, other changes, such as the burning of wood, are not. They can choose the equipment necessary to set up an experiment well and measure using different scales accurately.
- Pupils in Y6 know that gravity is a force that attracts objects towards the centre of the earth. They know that air resistance slows down the free fall of objects. They know how to use a Newton meter to measure force. The more able discuss Galileo's theory in relation to their own experiments well.
- Pupils know about the characteristics of living things. Older pupils know the names of the main organs of the body and their main functions. They have a good awareness of the influence of exercise and healthy eating on their bodies.
- Pupils make good use of ICT in science. They also make very good use of their mathematical skills to support their work. Pupils' work is also enhanced by clear annotated drawings, which demonstrate their understanding of the experiments undertaken.

### **Shortcomings**

- At times pupils' ability to express their views orally or recall and explain previous work is limited.

### **Welsh second language**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils listen attentively. They listen carefully to questions, concentrating on known sentence patterns and respond confidently, showing an understanding of the vocabulary. They work well with each other in paired activities. They have a good recall of a range of songs, hymns and prayers.
- Pupils' familiarity with spoken Welsh is good. They understand a range of everyday vocabulary and sentence patterns and respond well to simple commands and greetings both in class and around the school. Pupils speak with good pronunciation and intonation. In formal situations, they speak clearly, confidently and with expression.
- Pupils read clearly and with good pronunciation in informal situations. When they read from prepared texts, the standard of reading of the most able is often very good. They read with fluency and good diction. Y6 pupils read their poems on "Sbwriel" with good expression.
- Pupils' understanding is generally good. For instance, when reading and writing about their visit to the Canolfan Hamdden, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the vocabulary used.

- The standard of pupils' writing is good. Pupils write for a range of purposes including poems, letters and commentaries. Their independent writing shows good progress in using a range of sentence patterns. They have a good grasp of vocabulary, and use dictionaries well in their writing. Their handwriting is of a good standard.
- Pupils show a very good awareness and knowledge of aspects of Welsh culture through their involvement in a range of activities. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their second language.

### **Shortcomings**

- At times, pupils' skills in initiating dialogue are limited and they are sometimes limited in their responses.
- When pupils read unprepared text, they read accurately but often lack fluency.

## **Design and technology**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Y3 pupils have designed and made purses or money pockets. They work in groups and confidently choose appropriately from a range of materials. They evaluate their success and consider how their work could be improved. The more able pupils label their drawings and make realistic designs.
- Y5 pupils investigate the strength of different paper beams they have made. They are accurate in predicting results and have a very good understanding of the mathematical terms for 3D shapes, such as cuboid or tubular. They also participate wholeheartedly and show much curiosity about whether the results of tests will prove or disprove their predictions.
- In Y6, pupils are investigating, designing and making a range of eco-friendly board games. They suggest changes they might make in the light of experience. They critically look at different designs and consider the advantages and disadvantages of each type. In small groups, they discuss their designs, considering the appearance, function and safety aspects. They choose appropriate materials.
- When asked about CFCs, they quickly discover, by using the Internet, that CFCs are chlorofluorocarbons, that they are harmful to the ozone layer around the world, and that they are found in refrigerators and aerosol cans.
- Pupils work well collaboratively in pairs and groups.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no major shortcomings.

## **Information technology**

Standards of achievement are very good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils learn to use ICT to communicate and handle information, to a very good degree, in a range of subjects. They have occasionally used a digital camera well to record their work.
- They have developed a number of basic skills such as executing program commands, saving their work, using the mouse and pointer, and operating a number of facilities on the tool bar such as the airbrush, the spray and the pen.
- They have drawn themselves using electronic imaging software, replicating images in patterns to good effect. Pupils have also developed very good skills in word-processing, creating and printing simple sentences.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress in literacy and numeracy by using appropriate computer programs.
- Pupils have had some experience in conducting Internet research, for example, for scientific experiments, historical research, or about geographical conditions in a given area. Most pupils can access appropriate sites on the Internet.
- Pupils can find appropriate files on a hard disk, and can open and use them. Pupils are encouraged to use computers to support their research, for example, by using digital encyclopaedias on multimedia compact discs.
- Pupils have improved their ICT capability in their word processed writing, for example, by using a range of fonts and styles of text in poetry and letters. Some pupils use simple electronic mail programs effectively to send and receive information.
- Younger pupils have used musical composition applications to compose tunes on a computer. They enjoyed this work so much they applauded when the computer played back their compositions.
- They have used computers very well to combine text and images.
- Pupils can explain the meaning and purpose of different file commands such as edit and print.
- Pupils have written for different audiences using WordArt. They have also explored, collected and presented information and modelled effects on screen.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to use spreadsheets. They know, for example, how to format cells in a spreadsheet and how to use cell addresses in formulae to automate the addition of a column of figures.

- Y6 pupils have used the Internet very effectively to research and gather information about living conditions for Victorian children. They use and compare a small range of search engines, such as "Google", for fitness for purpose. They have good standards in writing LOGO programs.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no major shortcomings.

### **History**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Y3 pupils are enjoying developing some good enquiry skills in their study of the Roman period. They use appropriate vocabulary with good understanding. They have detailed knowledge about many aspects of the period, such as housing, entertainment and warfare. The most able can compare the Roman period with earlier periods.
- Because of their visit to the Tudor Mansion at Llancaiach Fawr, Y4 pupils have a sound knowledge of the daily life of a variety of people in Tudor times. They know much about the difference between wealthy and poor people and the medical treatments of the time. They compose questions to discover more information from photographs well. They know about William Morgan and the Welsh Bible.
- In Y5, pupils know about Queen Victoria and the different lifestyles of rich and poor. They have a sound local knowledge. They know what life was like for children working in coal mines in the locality during the period. They make good use of their ICT and numeracy skills to research data about the Senghenydd mining disaster and communicate their findings effectively and with great empathy.
- More able pupils have a good knowledge and chronological awareness of the Victorian period.
- Pupils' understanding of aspects of Welsh and European history is well developed. Y6 pupils have a good recall of events in World War 2 and how they affected life locally. In particular, they understand about the lives of evacuees to the area from their investigations.
- Their research is very good in comparing the experiences of children in Wales with those in Russia and Holland. They speak with sympathy about the experiences of children such as Anne Frank. They make good use of higher-order reading and ICT skills to find out much detailed information.

### **Shortcomings**

- A number of pupils' understanding of chronology is underdeveloped.

## **Geography**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils use a good range of geographical terms appropriately.
- Pupils develop good mapwork skills in many classes. They are familiar with the use of coordinates, scale, and map features. Y4 pupils transfer map features using different scales well. Pupils have very good understanding of direction and points of the compass. They apply their mapwork skills to real maps well.
- In their study of a developing country, Y4 pupils acquire a satisfactory understanding of place. The more able have good knowledge of the characteristics of St Lucia. They know about general characteristics of life on a Caribbean island, in particular the climate, and can compare them with the climate of Wales.
- In Y5, pupils are knowledgeable about the characteristics of their locality. Y5 pupils discuss confidently the effects of new development in Cardiff Bay and compare that area with Bargoed. In their investigation of environmental change and land use in the area, they offer explanations for and recognise many features of the Bay.
- Y6 pupils make good use of their well-developed observational skills to note changes in the environment. They use appropriate vocabulary to discuss how to manage environmental change. They have a very good understanding of environmental and global issues and suggest how to plan for sustainable development in the future.
- In their work on environmental issues both in the locality and around the world, Y6 pupils discuss knowledgeably the global effect of local pollution. Their personal fieldwork and involvement in local recycling and rubbish cleaning initiatives enhances further their very good understanding of global and local problems.

### **Shortcomings**

- Younger pupils have a superficial understanding of the characteristics of life in other countries.

## **Art**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils confidently use a range of materials, tools and techniques, including use of ICT, to make images and artefacts. They make progress in developing the skills of drawing, painting and modelling.
- After using a variety of reference materials to investigate natural materials, pupils develop their own ideas for collages and sketches. They sketch representations

proportionately, chalking, colouring, gluing, painting and experimenting practically and imaginatively with various forms of decoration. They review work in progress, which is sometimes well proportioned and lively, modifying it as their ideas develop.

- Pupils explore the visual qualities of a range of patterns observed in leaves. They apply their understanding to their own pencil drawings, and represent the shapes, patterns and textures they have observed and discussed in some detail when making print blocks. These are being used to create very good wallpaper patterns in the style of William Morris.
- Pupils use sketchbooks regularly to record information and develop ideas. They also use a range of techniques and materials, and create images from observation, memory and imagination.
- Pupils know the difference between warm and cool colours and mix them carefully to make different shades and colour mixes. They discuss work in progress using appropriate vocabulary. They pay particular attention to line, shape and colour and ensure that their drawings are in proportion.
- Pupils, throughout the school, have gained an understanding about artists working in Wales, such as Gwen John and Ivor Roberts Jones. They are learning well how to use different media with different techniques to good effect. Their landscapes show a sensitivity to the natural world.
- Many pupils in Y6 achieve good standards in painting, with colourful, imaginative, sensitive and proportionate work. They have improved their awareness of other cultures a little when they have made Indian batik creations or have painted in the style of the Australian Aborigine.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils have a limited appreciation of the work of a range of world-famous artists.

### **Music**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils' standards are good in singing. They enjoy exploring ways of creating sounds with their voices and with instruments. Most understand the difference between beat and rhythm.
- Pupils in Y3 compose pieces with the help of software applications on a computer and an interactive whiteboard. Their work is multilayered, combining two or more instruments in a tune of four bars. The more able pupils use different instruments for each bar, one for the melody and one providing backbeat. They understand terms such as beat, drone, pace, pulse and rhythm. They enjoy their composing so much that they applaud the computer spontaneously when it plays back their work.

- Pupils clap a steady beat in time to the music. Most of them recognise and perform changes in pitch and dynamics. They speak in rhythm with clarity. They listen carefully to instructions and this pays dividends in their ensuing performances. Their timing is good. Some have developed a musical vocabulary.
- Pupils recognise and control differences in pace and dynamics in response to the teacher's signals. They sing tunefully in Welsh with good attention to pitch and diction. They compose imaginative percussion pieces with actions, working well together in groups. They use evaluation techniques well.
- Peripatetic music specialists help pupils to appreciate and learn a broad range of music, including the work of composers from Wales.
- Pupils sing hymns and prayers well in regularly held school assemblies as well as in services in church.
- Standards in general are assisted by the school's very good musical resources, which are well-organised and well-used by teachers and pupils.

### **Shortcomings**

- A few pupils are confused by the meaning of terms such as dynamics, texture, and syncopated rhythm.

### **Physical education**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- All pupils understand the importance of warming up and cooling down, before and after physical exercise.
- In dance, Y3 pupils listen very well to the music and carry out instructions immediately. They make good use of space and work in a controlled but creative way. They make very good progress in their ability to balance and in building sequences. They work systematically and blend movements together very well. The most able move very lightly and with good poise.
- In dance, Y5 pupils respond very imaginatively to stimuli when creating a series of six movements. They perform balanced and mirrored movements with flair and imagination.
- In games, Y5 pupils practice different ways of sending and receiving the ball. They move with good control and with due attention to safety in a confined space. They receive, gain possession, control and travel with the ball well. They use hockey sticks competently.

- In their rugby lessons, Y6 pupils are very agile when developing various skills. They are accurate, particularly in their passing and throwing, and understand their roles as team members.
- Y4 pupils have good orienteering skills.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the purpose of exercise and its effects on the body.
- The school reports that the majority of pupils reach the appropriate standard in swimming by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils' ability to evaluate their work and that of others in order to improve is very good.

### **Shortcomings**

- At times, pupils' performances are limited by the lack of space indoors and outdoors.

### **Religious education**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils understand the importance of caring and respecting others. They realise the significance of rules in school life. Pupils recognise and identify people who help us through their jobs.
- Pupils are aware of the principles of the Christian faith. They recognise the Bible in its English and Welsh versions and use "hot-seating" to explore the depth of faith that Mari Jones felt to obtain her Bible. Pupils participate in singing prayers, in making up their own prayers and in saying the Lord's Prayer in collective worship. They gain a better understanding of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig through studies in religious education.
- Pupils visit local places of faith, such as St Gwladys's Church and the headquarters of the Salvation Army, to study artefacts and meet people of faith, at first hand. Meetings with representatives of the Christian faith enrich pupils' religious understanding.
- Y3 pupils have a good understanding of the furniture and layout of a Church, drawing and labelling features such as the pulpit, the lectern, the altar, the font, the chalice and patens, and the pews.
- Y5 pupils have a good understanding of the differences between a range of Holy books. They have a good recall of the story of Moses, using vocabulary such as the Pharaoh and the Plague relevantly.
- Pupils explore other world faiths such as Islam from time to time. They have a good knowledge of the special places, festivals and traditions of this faith and research the pilgrimages made by Muslims, such as the Hajj. They have a good, working knowledge

of the rites and practices of Islam. They know that the story of Abraham and Ishmael involves the same person as is mentioned in the Old Testament of the Christian Bible.

- Their role plays are thoughtful and inventive. They make good responses in evaluating the performances of fellow pupils. Some could say that Allah is the Muslim equivalent of God.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils have a limited understanding of other World faiths, and some do not know the names of other places of faith apart from those used by Christians.
- Although some in Y4 have a good knowledge of the events leading up to Easter, they do not know that Jesus Christ rose again to Heaven on the third day after his crucifixion.

## **8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **8.1 Progress since the last inspection**

Overall, the school has made good progress in improving its provision since the time of the last inspection. Standards of achievement have been raised in five subjects and maintained in all others. It has addressed all the issues raised in the last inspection report as follows:

#### **Develop the whole school monitoring strategy in order to raise standards further**

A comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation is now in place. Very good progress made.

#### **Raise standards in religious education**

Standards of achievement were satisfactory. They are now good. Good progress made.

#### **Improve standards in spelling**

Standards in spelling are still just satisfactory. Unsatisfactory progress made.

#### **Improve pupils' numeracy skills**

Standards in mathematics were satisfactory. They are now very good. Very good progress made.

#### **Develop strategies for assessment, recording and reporting**

The overall quality of assessment is now good although the quality of reports is satisfactory. Good overall progress made.

#### **Address the health and safety issues identified in the report**

The school has done its best to make sure its accommodation is safe and secure for all pupils. Good progress made.

## 8.2 Key issues for action

The governors, headteacher and staff now need to:

1. raise standards in speaking, spelling and reading;
2. improve the achievements of pupils with SEN;
3. maintain the quality of teaching where it is good or very good, and improve teaching where it is only satisfactory;
4. improve attendance and punctuality;
5. ensure that the school library is used more fully by pupils during the school day\*; and
6. ensure that the following documents fully meet the requirements of the Welsh Assembly Government:
  - the school prospectus
  - the annual report of the governors to parents, and
  - class registers.

\* The school has developed the resources of the library in recent months and now intends to increase usage during the day in a planned way.

### *Acknowledgement*

*The registered inspector and team wish to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy before and during the inspection.*

## APPENDIX

### A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	St Gwladys Junior
School type	Community Junior School
Age -range of pupils	7-11
Address of school	Church Place Bargoed Caerphilly
Post-Code	CF81 8RN
Telephone Number	01443 875523
Headteacher	Mrs K Evans
Date of appointment	January 2002
Chair of Governors	Dr E D G Williams
Registered Inspector	Mr Robert Alun Isaac
Dates of inspection	8 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2004

### B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>					
Year group	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	53	50	48	46	197

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	9	2	10

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	22 : 1
Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	N/A
Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.25 : 1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>		
	KS2	Whole School
Spring Term 2003	89	89
Summer Term 2003	89	89
Autumn Term 2003	95	95

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	17
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

### C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results:2003			No. of pupils in Y6: 74									
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	4+
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	3	0	0	0	3	14	50	33	83
		National	0	0	1	0	1	5	16	45	29	74
	Test/Task	School	0	3	0	0	0	1	11	43	42	85
		National	0	2	0	1	0	4	12	41	38	79
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	6	19	47	28	75
		National	0	0	0	0	1	4	19	46	27	73
	Test/Task	School	0	1	0	0	0	6	7	36	50	86
		National	0	2		0	0	4	19	43	30	73
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	42	50	92
		National	0	0		0	0	2	13	49	33	81
	Test/Task	School	0	3	0	0	0	0	6	24	71	95
		National	0	3		0	0	1	10	47	38	86

#### CORE SUBJECT INDICATOR: Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and English

By Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	76	In the school:	78
In Wales:	70	In Wales:	68

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

## D. Evidence base of the inspection

The inspection team of three inspectors, including the lay inspector, was at the school for a total of 11 inspector days.

- During this time, all teachers were visited and all classes were seen. A total of 65 sessions, part sessions or interactions were observed and a wide range of pupils' work was scrutinised. Inspectors talked to pupils about their work and life in the school, and listened to them reading their own work and extracts from class reading books.
- The full range of documentation made available by the school was scrutinised. Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors, teachers, classroom assistants, other staff and pupils. Pre- and post-inspection meetings were held with governors and staff, and 11 parents attended a pre-inspection meeting with inspectors. Questionnaires completed by 55 parents were also analysed.

## E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

{PRIVATE }Team member	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Rob Isaac Registered Inspector	English Design Technology Information Technology Music Art Religious Education	Context Main findings Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning Quality of Teaching The Curriculum Leadership and efficiency Staffing, resources and accommodation Progress since the last inspection Key issues for action
Mrs Pat Dodd-Racher Lay Inspector		Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Behaviour and attitudes Attendance Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions Partnership with industry
Mrs Delyth Parris Team Inspector	Welsh Second Language Mathematics Science History Geography Physical Education	Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum Assessment, recording and reporting Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Provision for pupils with SEN Self-evaluation

