

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10  
OF  
THE EDUCATION (SCHOOLS) ACT 1996**

**St. Elfod Junior School**

Ffordd Y Morfa  
Abergele  
Conwy  
LL22 7NU

School Number: 662/2221

Date of Inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> July 2003

Registered Inspector:

Mr. M. T. Ridout  
W/180/78730

Under ESTYN contract number: T/224/02P

## © CROWN COPYRIGHT 2003

This Report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

## 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 some shortcomings.
4. Unsatisfactory: some satisfactory work but shortcomings in important areas.
5. Poor: many shortcomings.

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. CONTEXT</b>	<b>3</b>
The School and its Priorities	3
<b>2. MAIN FINDINGS</b>	<b>4</b>
The Main Findings of the Report	4
<b>3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY THE PUPILS</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning	7
3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum	8
<b>4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development	9
4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes	10
4.3 Attendance	10
<b>5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION</b>	<b>11</b>
5.1 Teaching	11
5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting	12
5.3 Curriculum	13
5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare	14
5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs	15
5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions	16
5.7 Partnership with Industry	17
<b>6. MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY</b>	<b>18</b>
6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement	18
6.2 Leadership and Efficiency	18
6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources	19
<b>7 SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING</b>	<b>21</b>
English	21
Mathematics	22
Science	23
Welsh second language	24
Design and technology	24
Information technology	25
History	26
Geography	27
Music	27
Art	28
Physical Education	29
Religious Education	30
<b>8 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT</b>	<b>32</b>
8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection	32
8.2 Key Issues for Action	33
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>34</b>
A. Basic Information about the School	34
B. School Data and Indicators	34
C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations	35
D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection	36
E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team	36

## **1. CONTEXT**

### **The school and its priorities**

St Elfod Junior is a community school, catering for boys and girls aged seven to eleven years. There are 328 pupils on roll. The school is organised in 12 classes, three in each year group. The average class size is 27. In addition, there is a 12-place specialist class provided by the Unitary Authority (UA) catering for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. There are six pupils on roll. In total, there are 14.9 full-time equivalent teachers, including the headteacher, a full-time specialist teacher for the SEN class and two part-time teachers. Four assistants support the teaching.

The school is situated in Abergele, a coastal town in North Wales. The school serves an economically mixed urban area. The number of pupils on roll fluctuates during the year as many newcomers from outside the region are attracted to the town. Records indicate only about two-thirds of the pupils stay throughout the key stage. Twenty-four per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is about average. There is a small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. These children speak a variety of first languages and a very small number receive support in learning English. Welsh is the first language of one family. English is the predominant language.

The school receives pupils from the full range of abilities. The majority transfer from the adjacent infant school. The statutory National Curriculum (NC) assessments at age seven indicate the majority of pupils attain good overall standards. Subsequent assessments identify 27 per cent of pupils to have special educational needs (SEN). This is a little above average. Four pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The school's aims are published in the prospectus. Targets for attainment at the end of the key stage are set and the school development plan (SDP) for 2002-2003 identifies the following areas for improvement:

- complete policies and schemes of work and monitor the effectiveness of new schemes of work;
- to improve standards and the quality of teaching and learning in English; mathematics; science; design and technology; history; art; music; physical education; religious education; geography, Welsh as a second language; and information and communications technology (ICT);
- extend reading resources in order to encourage pupils to read for interest;
- to improve/update recording and assessment procedures and monitor completion of records of achievement;
- review and update SEN procedures;
- to ensure SEN pupils in unit make good progress;
- continue to develop teaching and learning in personal and social education (PSE);
- continue to develop and improve home-school links;
- continue to develop and improve community links and liaison.

The school was previously inspected in June 1997.

## MAIN FINDINGS

### The main findings of the report

This is a school that has worked hard and achieved a good measure of improvement in the quality of its educational provision, since the previous inspection in 1997.

- The school receives pupils from the full range of abilities. The statutory National Curriculum (NC) assessments at age seven indicate that most of the pupils attain good standards before they come to the school. However, records indicate only about two-thirds of pupils stay throughout the key stage. The school states this has a significant impact on the overall standards attained in the NC tests at the end of the key stage.

### Educational standards achieved

- In the 84 lessons or parts of lessons inspected, standards of achievement were judged to be very good in four per cent, good in 43 per cent, satisfactory in 49 per cent and unsatisfactory in four per cent.
- The standards of achievement in subjects of the (NC) and religious education are as follows:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>KS2</b>
English	Good
Mathematics	Good
Science	Good
Welsh second language	Good
Design and technology	Good
Information technology	Satisfactory
History	Good
Geography	Satisfactory
Music	Good
Art	Good
Physical education	Good
Religious education	Good

- The overall rate of progress across the school is satisfactory. At the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils make good progress.
- The progress of pupils taught in the small SEN class is good in relation to their difficulties.
- The majority of pupils with SEN make good progress where they receive additional support. However, progress is not always maintained in work with the whole class.
- The small number of pupils from ethnic minorities, including those learning English, makes similar progress to their peers.
- In most classes, the pupils of average ability make appropriate progress, but the more-able pupils are often disadvantaged because the work is not always sufficiently challenging.
- In the 2002 KS2 NC tests, 54 per cent of pupils attained at least the nationally expected level four in English, mathematics and science. These results are well below national

figures and those for similar schools having between 17 and 24 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.

- The three-year rolling average for the percentage of pupils attaining the core subject indicator is 57 per cent. This is well below average. Overall standards have remained at about the same level between 1999 and 2002. However, this represents a marked improvement compared with the results in 1998.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has successfully improved standards in mathematics, science, Welsh as a second language, design and technology and geography. Inspection also finds clear evidence of many pupils making rapid progress from a low starting point.
- Standards in key skills are satisfactory in speaking, reading, writing and the application of number. In ICT, standards are unsatisfactory. In listening standards are good. This is a distinctive feature.

### **The ethos of the school**

- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is a strength of the school's provision.
- The standard of behaviour is good overall. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning and to one another.
- They show interest in their work and where lessons are stimulating they sustain concentration well. There is, however, scope to provide further opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities and develop greater independence and initiative in learning.
- The level of attendance is satisfactory. Although the majority of pupils arrive punctually for school a significant minority frequently arrives late. This disrupts the start of lessons.

### **The quality of education**

- The overall quality of teaching is good. Strengths include the consistency of teaching in particular classes across the school.
- In the 84 lessons or parts of lessons observed, teaching was judged very good in eight per cent of lessons, good in 45 per cent, satisfactory in 42 per cent and unsatisfactory in five per cent. During the inspection, examples of good teaching were observed in all classes.
- Examples of very good teaching were observed in mathematics, science, Welsh second language, history, music and physical education. Such lessons reflect skilful teaching and very good subject knowledge.
- Lesson planning is suitably detailed, but insufficient attention is sometimes given to what pupils already know and need to learn next. In general, too little use is made of assessment information to ensure appropriate work is provided at different levels to match pupils' abilities.
- The school has good arrangements for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' progress. These provide a good basis for further improvement although shortcomings remain in the use of assessment to target provision and promote higher standards.

- The quality and organisation of the planned curriculum is good. It includes all the subjects of the NC and religious education. There are, however, some shortcomings in its implementation. In particular, the provision for information technology and the use of ICT is uneven across the school, but there is evidence of recent improvements.
- There are good arrangements for pupils' personal and social education including appropriate attention to issues of citizenship.
- A strong emphasis is given to the *Cwrciwllwm Cymreig* and the school provides a range of extra-curricular activities, mostly in music and sport.
- The curriculum recognises the rich cultural diversity of modern society and clearly promotes harmonious attitudes to differences of race and religion. The school is socially inclusive with all pupils strongly encouraged to play a full part in school life.
- The school makes good provision for the personal support and guidance of pupils. There is good attention to their welfare, health and safety. The provision for their educational guidance is satisfactory.
- The provision for pupils with SEN is good. This aspect has much improved since the previous inspection.
- The quality of provision in the specialist SEN class is good. The quality of teaching and support for learning is good.
- The school's partnership with the community, schools and other institutions is good. Links within the community are particularly strong. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory overall.
- The school's partnership with industry is generally satisfactory. There is little evidence of improvement in this aspect since the previous inspection.

### **Management and efficiency**

- The scope of the school's self-evaluation is wide ranging, but the effectiveness of its procedures to ensure the systematic evaluation of the quality of its provision is satisfactory.
- The current format of the SDP has served the school well in recent years. However, the SDP does not clearly define the way forward from now on as it does not provide sufficiently prioritised and focused targets. Links to staff training, budgetary plans and arrangements for monitoring lack sufficient clarity.
- The impact of educational leadership on standards is good. However, the efficiency of managerial systems, including the use and organisation of resources, is generally satisfactory.
- The headteacher successfully promotes an ethos of care. This is evident in the pupils' good levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Teachers are developing their contribution to educational leadership well, but the lack of a well-defined senior management structure, for example, is a handicap. There are few systematic plans to monitor, focus and support the good efforts of the staff and maximise the impact of initiatives.

- The administration of the school's finances is efficient and the quality of day-to-day administration and organisation is good.
- The provision of staff and learning resources is good. The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory. There are long-standing shortcomings in the design of the building and the use made of the space available.

### **School improvement**

- The school has made significant improvements in particular areas since the previous inspection. However, although good foundations have been laid, there is much that remains to be done to ensure that most of the issues identified in 1997 are fully resolved.

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

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

The educational standards achieved are good overall.

- In the 84 lessons or parts of lessons inspected, standards of achievement were judged to be very good in four per cent, good in 43 per cent, satisfactory in 49 per cent and unsatisfactory in four per cent.
- The school receives pupils from the full range of abilities. The vast majority transfer from the neighbouring infant school. The statutory NC assessments at age seven indicate the majority of pupils attains good or better standards in English, mathematics and science. In recent years more than 80 per cent of pupils attained at least the expected level 2 or above.
- The overall rate of progress across the school is satisfactory. There is some variation between classes, but in general consistently good progress is most evident in Y5 and Y6. At the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils makes good progress.
- The majority of pupils with SEN, who receive additional support, make good progress in reading, writing and spelling, but a similar rate of progress is not always maintained in other subjects, where the work is not always appropriately adapted to their needs.
- The small number of pupils from ethnic minorities, including those learning English, makes similar progress to their peers.
- In most classes, the pupils of average ability make appropriate progress, but the more-able pupils are often disadvantaged because the work is not always sufficiently challenging. The setting of pupils by ability for mathematics lessons in Y4, Y5 and Y6 is improving the rate of progress across the ability range.
- The progress of pupils taught in the small SEN class is good in relation to their difficulties.
- The standards of achievement are good overall in English, mathematics, science, Welsh as a second language, design and technology, history, music, art, physical education and religious education.

- Standards are satisfactory in information technology and geography.
- Since the previous inspection the school has successfully improved standards in mathematics, science, Welsh as a second language, design and technology and geography. Inspection also finds clear evidence of many pupils making rapid progress from a low starting point. However, further improvement in English is constrained by a lack of emphasis on accuracy in pupils' reading and writing, and in science, the investigative elements of the subject are not well established in all classes.
- In the 2002 KS2 NC tests, 54 per cent of pupils attained at least the nationally expected level four in English, mathematics and science. These results are well below national figures and those for similar schools having between 17 and 24 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.
- The three-year rolling average for the percentage of pupils attaining the core subject indicator is 57 per cent. This is well below average. Overall standards have remained at about the same level between 1999 and 2002. However, this represents a marked improvement compared with the results in 1998.
- The school's test results reflect the national picture with the girls outperforming the boys. The margin was significant in 1999. The school is becoming more successful in improving the performance of boys, especially in English.

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

Standards in key skills are satisfactory in speaking, reading, writing and the application of number. In ICT standards are unsatisfactory. In listening standards are good. This is a distinctive feature.

- Standards in speaking are satisfactory. Where there are opportunities for pupils to talk enthusiastically about how to plan their work, they discuss ideas purposefully.
- Pupils listen attentively to their teachers, to other adults and to each other. Good listening skills enable most pupils to gain good levels of incidental knowledge.
- Overall standards in reading are satisfactory, but although pupils satisfactorily read a range of texts in their studies they seldom make enough use of reading skills to locate information to extend their studies.
- Standards in writing are satisfactory. Pupils have good opportunities to write in different styles and for different purposes in subjects such as history and science. Spelling, punctuation and presentation vary between classes.
- Although standards in numeracy are satisfactory, pupils seldom have enough opportunities to apply their knowledge of number to activities in other subjects, such as geography, history and science.
- The achievement and progress of a significant proportion of pupils in using ICT applications and in acquiring the skills of ICT are currently below expectations for their ages and abilities. In particular, pupils' lack of competence in ICT skills hinders their progress in other subjects. For example, the independent use of publishing, research and data handling skills is at an early stage.

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

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

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

- The school successfully promotes a warm, caring, family atmosphere. There is a strong community spirit and the quality of relationships is good.
- Daily assemblies effectively celebrate pupils' success and impart information. The themes successfully reinforce moral values, promote social awareness and develop pupils' self - knowledge.
- Collective worship makes a positive contribution to school life. Music and the use of visiting speakers are used well to enhance these joyous and thoughtful occasions.
- Pupils are encouraged to have and display a good sense of right and wrong and to be honest and truthful. This is apparent in informal contact around the school and in more formally structured lessons in personal and social education and religious education.
- The caring ethos of the school positively encourages respect for self, others, and the environment. The school actively promotes positive values and attitudes. Pupils display a strong awareness of the needs of others and enjoy participating in fund-raising activities for a wide range of charities.
- Staff provide good role models and pupils are encouraged to be thoughtful and considerate towards each other. They show respect and courtesy towards adults and each other. Pupils in Y6 take appropriate responsibilities and pupils in Y5 are involved in a *playground buddies scheme* which provision contributes well to school life.
- There are appropriate opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of and to celebrate cultural differences and diversity. The curriculum successfully reflects the language, culture and heritage of Wales. A Welsh ethos is successfully promoted through displays and the use of incidental Welsh is consistent throughout the school. Suitable opportunities to learn about other people's beliefs, cultures and background are provided within religious education, history, geography, art and music.
- A range of extra-curricular activities successfully enhances pupils' social development. Older pupils make residential visits that help to promote greater independence and co-operation.
- The school has a clear equal opportunities policy that promotes racial equality through its commitment towards promoting the self-esteem of all pupils.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their response to this provision is good.

### **4.2 Behaviour and attitudes**

The standard of behaviour is good overall. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning and to one another.

- The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and has adopted clear policies and a good range of procedures to manage pupils' behaviour. These are applied in a consistent and positive fashion in most classes.
- Procedures are based on the principles of assertive discipline, with the formal recognition of pupils' helpful attitudes and positive responses. A variety of schemes, such as the award of certificates and house points, together with the use of appropriate sanctions support the management of pupils' behaviour well.
- Pupils are friendly, inquisitive and the great majority is courteous and respectful of their teachers, support staff and visitors to the school.
- In general, pupils have good attitudes to learning, and the impact of this is seen in the standards of work they achieve. The majority shows interest in the work and, where lessons are stimulating, the pupils sustain concentration well.
- There are however, a relatively small, but significant, number of pupils across the school which sometimes exhibits challenging behaviour. This tendency sometimes comes to the fore where lessons lack sufficient variety, pace or appropriate challenge to encourage pupils to work with greater independence.
- The procedures for promoting good behaviour are generally effective. The standard of behaviour and attitudes achieved has a good impact on the school as a socially inclusive community and benefits the quality of life for all pupils, irrespective of background or ethnicity.
- The measures taken to minimise bullying and any form of discrimination are robust. The school's personal and social education programme makes a positive contribution in this regard. During the inspection, no significant incidents of bullying or otherwise aggressive behaviour were noted.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school's expectations for their behaviour and conduct. They acknowledge that misbehaviour sometimes leads to bullying and are confident instances of aggressive or antagonistic behaviour are dealt with fairly.

### **4.3 Attendance**

The level of attendance is satisfactory. Although the majority of pupils arrive punctually for school a significant minority frequently arrives late. This disrupts the start of lessons.

- The overall level of attendance over the past three complete terms is 92.59 per cent. This represents a fall in attendance compared with the levels at the time of the previous inspection. The school is aware of this decline and plans to set a target for improvement.
- The overall attendance figures are adversely affected by the increasing trend of taking family holidays during term time. Such absence is appropriately authorised. The level of unauthorised absence is not excessive, ranging from 0.2 per cent to 0.8 per cent over the last year.
- The school operates an appropriate system of monitoring and logging late arrivals, but a significant level of late arrivals is still evident. This remains a problem despite the best efforts of the school to remedy the situation.

- It is clear from the records of the messages and letters received by the school, that parents, in general, assist the school well in maintaining attendance levels. In those instances where this is not so, the school makes immediate enquiries. These procedures are formalised by appropriate letters and, when the situation warrants additional intervention, the school draws on the services of the Education Social Worker (ESW).
- Morning and afternoon registration is administered correctly. The recording and categorising of absences, is fully in accord with the established policies and procedures of the school.
- The school complies with the National Assembly for Wales (NAfW) circular 3/99.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

The overall quality of teaching is good. Strengths include the consistency of teaching in particular classes across the school. Examples of very good teaching were observed in mathematics, science, Welsh as a second language, history, music and physical education. Such lessons reflect skilful teaching and very good subject knowledge.

- In the 84 lessons or parts of lessons observed teaching was judged very good in eight per cent of lessons, good in 45 per cent, satisfactory in 42 per cent and unsatisfactory in five per cent. During the inspection, examples of good teaching were observed in all classes.
- Taken overall, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. There are particular strengths in each year group team. For instance, effective use is made of teachers' expertise with the exchange of classes for some subjects.
- In most classes, there is too little emphasis on the use of ICT to reinforce pupils' IT skills and enhance learning in other subjects. As a result, pupils use only a narrow range of ICT applications and in many lessons little or no use is made of the computers available.
- Teachers in most classes are making good efforts to provide problem solving and research activities and are beginning to promote independent study skills. This is a developing feature, but teaching does not always promote the use of initiative or provide sufficient guidance and structure for pupils, many of whom have limited skills in these areas.
- Although lesson planning is based on well structured schemes of work that provide for progression and continuity, the content is not always fully developed, especially in the foundation subjects. Lesson planning is suitably detailed. The content of lessons is clear, but insufficient attention is sometimes given to what pupils already know and need to learn next.
- Taken overall, teachers use a good range of teaching approaches and organisational strategies. They effectively teach the whole class, use clear explanations and questioning, support individual or group work well and sometimes make good use of plenary sessions to consolidate learning.
- During the inspection, there was a strong emphasis on the 'three part lesson' and while this is often appropriate, there was too little variety in learning and teaching styles in some classes. However, in some of the older pupils' classes, the length, content and demands of lessons are suitably varied. This helps to maintain pupils' interest and the

teaching and lesson management is skilfully adapted to match pupils' differing learning needs.

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' discipline and attainment. They manage incidents of challenging behaviour sensitively and the majority use positive class management strategies very well. At its best teaching is crisp, lively and good humoured.
- In general, too little use is made of assessment information to ensure appropriate work is provided at different levels to match pupils' abilities. The organisation of classes into ability sets for most mathematics lessons improves this aspect, but in other lessons pupils are often set similar work and there is too little focused guidance to help them improve and achieve their best.
- Although records clearly identify achievements in pupils' knowledge and understanding in all subjects, the use of assessments to help match work more closely to pupils' abilities, as an integral element of the planning process is not well developed. This results in a lack of appropriate challenge in some of the work, especially for the more-able pupils.
- The marking of pupils' work is conscientious but lacks consistency. There is well developed practice in some classes, but in others too little use is made of marking to improve pupils' achievement and ensure good progress is maintained. The discussion of targets for improvement with pupils is not yet developed across the school.

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

The school has good arrangements for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' progress. These provide a good basis for further improvement although shortcomings remain in the use of assessment to target provision and promote higher standards.

- Procedures include the systematic use of nationally standardised or commercial test materials in English, mathematics and science.
- The teachers keep comprehensive and thorough records on pupils' academic and personal progress. Individual record of achievement files provides a positive and detailed picture of a pupil's progress across the school.
- Assessments are accurate, consistently implemented and effectively arranged. The recent development and use of subject record sheets that focus assessments against key learning objectives in every subject is a positive development.
- Information on pupils' attainments, gleaned from assessment data, is well used to organise pupils into ability sets for mathematics lessons in Y4, Y5 and Y6. The analysis of performance data has identified boys' underachievement in language and the school has responded well by introducing more suitable reading materials.
- Although assessments appropriately support the identification of pupils with SEN, the analysis of test results has not yet led to closely targeted provision for more-able pupils. The assessment co-ordinator collates test results, but there is limited evidence of the strategic use of assessments to group pupils and target provision across the school to meet their needs and thereby improve standards.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively. There are examples of good practice in the recently introduced *bubble and box* method of constructive comments to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work and to guide them on how to improve.

However, this good practice is not consistently used throughout the school to benefit all pupils.

- Pupils have not yet been involved in consulting with their teacher on formulating targets to help them move on to the next stage.
- Reports to parents at the end of the year are usefully skills based, indicating good quality information on the pupils' progress. However, there is insufficient guidance given to pupils on how to raise their achievement or to parents on how they can help their children improve. Furthermore, there is little opportunity for parents or children to make their own comments.

### 5.3 Curriculum

The quality and organisation of the planned curriculum is good. It includes all the subjects of the NC and religious education. There are, however, some shortcomings in its implementation. In particular, the provision for information technology and the use of ICT is uneven across the school, but there is evidence of recent improvements.

- The overall breadth and balance of the planned curriculum is appropriate to pupils' needs and abilities across the key stage.
- There are suitably detailed schemes of work in all subjects. These give a clear guide to what teachers should plan to teach in each subject and when it should be taught, and also help to identify the key learning objectives.
- There is no formalised planning for the development of key skills. Planning to promote key skills is in the early stages of development. Teachers identify key skills in their short-term plans, but do not include sufficient details in medium-term and long-term planning. No audit of schemes of work to identify opportunities for teaching key skills has been undertaken.
- Overall the school's curricular provision is effective in providing pupils with a broad range of learning opportunities. The provision for homework is good and most pupils work enthusiastically and purposefully at home, as well as in school.
- There are good arrangements for pupils' personal and social education including appropriate attention to issues of citizenship.
- Visitors to the school further enhance the curriculum. They extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of their community and visiting craftspeople, working alongside teachers, further broaden the curriculum and extend pupils' perceptions.
- The school provides a range of extra-curricular activities, mostly in music and sport. A significant minority of pupils reaches high standards and achieves success in local sporting and musical competitions.
- A strong emphasis is given to the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig*, including good opportunities for pupils to learn about Welsh culture and heritage and the history of the local area.
- The curriculum recognises the rich cultural diversity of modern society and clearly promotes harmonious attitudes to differences of race and religion.

- The school is socially inclusive with all pupils strongly encouraged to play a full part in school life. All pupils, including those with SEN, have equality of access to the curriculum, but opportunities for pupils to extend their learning and achieve their best are not always provided for the more-able pupils in particular.
- The provision made for pupils for whom the NC is modified is good.

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

The school makes good provision for the personal support and guidance of pupils. There is good attention to their welfare, health and safety. The provision for their educational guidance is satisfactory.

- Pupils generally relate well to each other and to the adults working in the school. Parents report that their children feel secure and valued in the school. When interviewed, pupils describe their school as happy and a place where they can discuss their problems openly.
- The provision made for the educational guidance of pupils is appropriate. However, pupils have not been involved in setting targets or discussing the way forward. The quality of the constructive marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and, as a result, pupils are not sufficiently aware of what they need to do to achieve a better standard of work.
- Child protection procedures are carried out conscientiously by all concerned. There is positive liaison with supporting agencies. The needs of children looked after by the UA are carefully monitored.
- There is careful supervision during playtimes and in the school dining room.
- Most teachers hold appropriate First Aid qualifications. Health and safety, risk assessment and equipment and fire checks are carried out regularly. There is an accident book to monitor any injuries and pupils are well cared for if they are ill or hurt.
- There is a good personal and social education policy (PSE). The provision includes appropriate emphasis on citizenship, personal development (including sex education) and education in substance misuse. This programme is beginning to permeate the whole curriculum and is evident in collective worship and *circle time* for example.
- Some concerns relating to health and safety were discussed with the school. These are the poor state of the fencing adjacent to the A55 expressway, the head-height openings of some windows and the concrete slab seats and other features in the playing areas.
- While the problem of traffic congestion around the four local schools continues to present hazards to the safety of pedestrians in particular, the governors' response to this issue is satisfactory, even though the situation is far from the ideal. A number of parents continue to ignore the parking restrictions in place.

#### **5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs**

The provision for pupils with SEN is good. This aspect has much improved since the previous inspection.

- Pupils with SEN have full access to a broad and generally balanced curriculum, including all subjects of the NC, religious education and PSE.

- There are 90 pupils listed on the school's SEN register. Four pupils have a Statement of SEN. Twenty-two pupils receive extra support at school action plus and 64 pupils are on the school action list.
- The SEN Code of Practice is being carefully implemented by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) in consultation with all staff.
- Pupils who are withdrawn regularly for extra support in literacy make at least satisfactory progress. Progress is often good, particularly in Y5 and Y6.
- In the classrooms, pupils with SEN make steady progress. Most teachers make satisfactory provision by matching tasks to pupils' needs and abilities. However, the quality of modifying a task to suit the pupils is not consistently high across the school. This limits overall progress.
- The SENCo is recently appointed to the post. She is bringing sound experience and good ideas to the role. Procedures for the identification and monitoring of pupils with SEN are systematic and efficiently implemented. Records are very useful and up to date.
- The format of individual education plans (IEPs) is clear, and learning targets are precise, constructive and regularly reviewed. There is, however, little evidence that the IEPs are making a sufficient impact on lesson planning in all classes.
- The resources for individualised learning programmes are limited in quantity, for example there is a limited range of computer software, and the limitations reduce the use pupils with SEN make of them.
- Working relationships with external supporting agencies within the UA are satisfactorily productive.

### **Provision in the class for pupils with moderate learning difficulties**

The quality of provision in the specialist SEN class is good.

- The school includes provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Pupils from other schools in the area attend this class, which is financed by the UA. These pupils rejoin their local school for afternoon lessons.
- The specialist class has a capacity for 12 pupils to attend morning only. At the time of the inspection, six pupils from other schools attended. The teacher visits these pupils in their 'home' school in the afternoons. This expensive provision, that includes a full-time qualified teacher and a part-time qualified teaching assistant, is currently an under-used resource.
- The SEN class provides a happy and stimulating learning area. It is clear from the pupils' responses that they are happy and purposeful in their work. They make slow but discernible progress in English and mathematics. The pupils undertake work in other subjects in their 'home' school.
- Pupils communicate openly and are keen to talk about their work and successes. Relationships are positive and all pupils benefit from the integration of several pupils from mainstream classes for some lessons. This represents the creative use of an otherwise under-utilised resource.

- The quality of teaching and support for learning is good.
- The focus of teaching is on numeracy and literacy and pupils participate in many learning and reinforcing activities, including the use of IT. Scrutiny of the pupils' work indicates that most are working well and at a pace commensurate with their difficulties. They are developing satisfactory speaking, listening, reading, writing and number skills.
- The teacher in charge of the class writes practical, precise IEPs which accurately reflect the nature of the provision pupils receive.
- Pupils integrate well with the other pupils during break times and in some whole-school occasions, such as assemblies and collective worship.

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

The school's partnership with the community, schools and other institutions is good. Links within the community are particularly strong. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory overall.

- The majority of parents value the school and the efforts it makes on behalf of their children. However, through the pre-inspection parents' meeting and in response to a questionnaire, a significant number expressed concerns about the effectiveness of the school's communication about the curriculum, their children's progress and the details of school events.
- The inspection found the quality and extent of information provided for parents to be satisfactory. The provision of a calendar of events, newsletters, a written report about each child's progress and two formal meetings with class-teachers during the school year is appropriate.
- There is evidence to show that some letters giving details of particular events do not give parents sufficient advance warning. Furthermore, there is scope to improve the extent of information provided about the curriculum so that parents can assist and encourage their children's learning more effectively.
- The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are useful and informative documents and these comply with statutory requirements.
- There is an appropriate home-school agreement that has been signed by the majority of parents.
- A small number of parents and other adults assist in the classroom and during school visits. The children's extended families are very supportive of the many social and celebratory events held by the school during the year.
- The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is an active body. It raises significant sums for the school funds, and also acts as a valuable focus for the further involvement of the parents in social events.
- The school's relationship with civic institutions, such as the Mayor and Town Council is strong, as are links with local clergy, who make a valuable contribution towards the life of the school.

- The pupils reciprocate the interest shown in them by the community, in their contributions, not only to the elderly, but during the many concerts, festivals, open days, fairs, church services, and events such as various festivals. All these are very popular with the families as well as the wider community.
- The *St. Elfod Gossip*, the school newspaper, is widely read by members of the community.
- Pupils develop awareness of wider community responsibilities through making significant contributions to a range of charities. Furthermore, preparatory work has been completed for their involvement with the Comenius Project for European Schools.
- The quality of liaison arrangements with the neighbouring infant, primary and secondary schools is good. This includes developing cross-phase curricular arrangements as well as good provision for pupils' pastoral support at the point of transfer between schools.
- The UA and its officers work in a supportive partnership with the school. Furthermore, agencies such as the Police, Fire Brigade, British Transport Police and health professionals make a valuable contribution to school life.
- The school provides opportunities for work experience for students from the local secondary school and a further education college. The school has a mutually beneficial partnership with an initial teacher training institution. The school regularly mentors trainee teachers. These arrangements have a positive impact on the curriculum and the standards pupils achieve.

## **5.7 Partnership with industry**

The school's partnership with industry is generally satisfactory. There is little evidence of improvement in this aspect since the previous inspection.

- While there is no policy for promoting partnership with industry, there is limited evidence of opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of the world of work, such as through visits, within the curriculum. However, strategies to enrich the educational experiences of the pupils are not yet formalised or fully developed.
- Visits by pupils to a range of commercial sites, include a quarry to study the use of building materials, local shops, the market, and the Snowdonia National Park. These activities raise pupils' awareness of the pricing and marketing of goods and the importance of tourism.
- No member of staff has benefited from professional training opportunities in collaboration with industry.
- The school also has established contacts with Education Learning Wales (ELWa), and was recently granted the *Investors in People* accreditation. Several members of the public have addressed the pupils about their occupations.
- The school benefits from a significant level of sponsorship from local businesses, amounting to approximately £5,000.

## **6. MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY**

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

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

- The scope of the school's self-evaluation is wide ranging, but the effectiveness of procedures to ensure the systematic evaluation of the quality of its provision is satisfactory.
- The current format of the SDP has served the school well. The wide range and nature of the objectives for improvement the school has set itself is generally appropriate and is a compilation of objectives identified through discussions with staff.
- The headteacher has conscientiously formulated the very wide-ranging SDP using a locally devised format. However, this does not provide a clear enough basis to take the school forward from now on. There is little indication of relative priorities and the plan is not linked to a systematic programme of monitoring, review and evaluation.
- Although the SDP includes some indication of action planning, such as in ICT, it does not generally identify success criteria or set suitable qualitative goals and quantitative targets where appropriate. There are few details of budgetary plans and staff training for instance.
- The teachers are becoming more closely involved in the evaluation of provision and standards in their role as subject co-ordinators. Their work is becoming more effective in identifying strengths and shortcomings across the school.
- The school is working hard to implement its current objectives. Progress is most evident in the provision of policies and schemes of work and the initial findings of monitoring in English and science, for example. However, the impact of monitoring and evaluation is limited, in part due to the sheer number of initiatives undertaken. This reduces the impact of improvements because there is little assurance of consistency across the school, even though some year-group teams are working very effectively.

## **6.2 Leadership and efficiency**

The impact of educational leadership is good. However, the efficiency of managerial systems, including the use and organisation of resources, is generally satisfactory.

- The headteacher successfully promotes an ethos of care. This is evident in the pupils' good levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. He is well supported by an enthusiastic staff in setting the direction for the school's work.
- There is a strong emphasis on raising standards and improving the quality of provision. In particular, the leadership of some Year-Group Team Leaders and the work of subject co-ordinators are developing a clear sense of educational direction.
- The school has explicit aims and values and a strong commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Teachers are developing their contribution to educational leadership well, such as by contributing to the review of provision and outcomes across the school in their roles as subject co-ordinators.
- The lack of a well defined senior management structure is a handicap to further improvement. There is little evidence of systematic plans over the medium term to

monitor, focus and support the good efforts of the staff and to maximise the impact of initiatives.

- The governing body (GB) is appropriately organised and appropriately fulfils its statutory obligations. Individual governors are very supportive of the school and links, such as with the SEN governor and the Vicar, help to promote a useful dialogue with the school.
- In general, staff and learning resources are effectively deployed. However, although there are good examples of the use of support staff, this is sometimes inefficient when they are not fully involved in the lesson.
- The allocation of time to subjects and the use of lesson time lack consistency. This is reflected in the limited extent of pupils' productivity and effort in some lessons.
- The GB has a prudent approach to budget setting and manages this aspect well. It is careful to ensure an adequate level of staffing and the pattern of expenditure matches the school's educational needs. The governors conscientiously monitor income and expenditure, but are not formally involved in evaluating the impact of spending decisions.
- The administration of the school's finances is efficient. The quality of financial control was judged to be good in the most recent auditor's report. There is good attention to best value in making purchases and agreeing service level contracts.
- The quality of day-to-day administration and organisation is good. The office staff supports the needs of the school well.

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

The provision of staff and learning resources are good. The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory. There are long-standing shortcomings in the design of the building and the use made of the space available.

- There is a good number of well-qualified and experienced teachers to match the needs of the curriculum and the age range taught. In the main, teachers are well deployed.
- Taken overall, teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects of the NC, religious education and personal and social education. However, several teachers lack sufficient expertise and confidence in teaching information technology and using ICT applications to enhance pupils' learning.
- There are suitable arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school. The arrangements for continuing professional development are appropriate, but these are not always closely enough targeted and linked to the institutional needs identified in the SDP or to teachers' individual professional needs.
- The arrangements to implement performance management are in line with current national guidance. The procedures for setting targets for senior staff are well established.
- The school is clean and tidy and provides an attractive environment for learning. The current number on roll is above the designated figure of 322 pupils for the accommodation. The provision of a large hall, a library and a computer suite are positive features. While the total space available is adequate, several teaching areas, such as work areas alongside classrooms and the rooms used some of the time to teach pupils with SEN, are not fully and efficiently used.

- The open-plan design of the building does not fully match the demands of the current NC. Although some minor re-planning of the teaching space has been undertaken and the extensions to the original building provide good quality classrooms, some of the teaching areas, particularly in Y4, are inadequate. This has a detrimental impact on the range of work undertaken and limits pupils' overall progress.
- Improvements to the toilets have been made since the last inspection, but the lack of adequate ventilation remains a significant problem during hot weather.
- The outdoor, hard-play surface is inadequate for the number of pupils on roll. The field is spacious, but the site is prone to surface water and this makes the playground muddy in wet weather. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting raised this issue with inspectors.
- The provision of learning resources is good in most subjects. The school has identified the need to enhance, renew and update resources in subjects such as geography and religious education, but valuable resources such as the library and some computers are not yet fully exploited. This limits progress and achievement in aspects of English and ICT.

## 7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

### English

The standards of achievement in English are good overall. This judgement reflects improving rates of progress by the older pupils.

#### Good features

- Many pupils are eager to participate in role-play. They confidently and humorously act out scenes they have read in books or stories they have heard. The older pupils construct arguments and debate persuasively. For instance, they take on the role of characters in *Goodnight Mister Tom* during question and answer sessions.
- Pupils listen astutely when their attention is engaged in a well taught lesson. They respond promptly to instructions and many have good recall of facts.
- Pupils generally understand the sequence, characters and events of a story. They interpret pictures using appropriate vocabulary and by using their imagination they predict outcomes sensibly.
- The level of boys' standards and interest levels in reading are improving steadily as a result of the school's emphasis on raising reading skills. Pupils encounter a wide range of reading materials and experiences.
- The more-able pupils are developing good comprehension skills. They analyse myths and legends intelligently. They identify the problem and the resolution, and their growing understanding of how writing is structured is reflected in the quality of their own writing.
- Most of the pupils have satisfactory basic research and library skills, with many demonstrating some knowledge of the conventions of books.
- Many pupils, whatever their ability, write openly and confidently. They write imaginatively and naturally in a range of styles, including poetry. Most of the pupils are developing an awareness of audience such as when composing persuasive posters. Many draw effectively on a growing vocabulary. In particular, they use adjectives and connectives, well.
- Some pupils are making steady progress in improving their handwriting.
- The small number of pupils learning English as a second language makes rapid progress in using the language and quickly gains in confidence and understanding.

#### Shortcomings

- Few pupils take sufficient notice of punctuation cues when reading aloud. This results in limited accuracy and expression in their reading.
- Too many pupils are repeating glaring errors in punctuation; they do not give sufficient attention to re-drafting their work and the presentation of handwriting is variable.

### Mathematics

The standards of achievement in mathematics are good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils in Y3 develop secure strategies for doubling numbers to 50. Most pupils confidently use a written method (with carrying) to add or subtract two-digit numbers. They work out division of two-digit numbers divided by a one-digit number and work out the remainder when dividing a two-digit number by ten.
- Pupils make good estimates of different lengths in centimetres and metres and different weights in grams and kilograms. They correctly identify right angles and use a right angle measurer to establish whether angles are more or less than a right angle. They use the terms clockwise and anti-clockwise correctly.
- In Y4, the more-able pupils work out the perimeter and area of rectangles and irregular shapes correctly. For example, they calculate the area of glass needed and the perimeter of wood required for making picture frames. Pupils recognise parallel and perpendicular lines and properties of rectangles.
- Most pupils order a set of four-digit numbers and write in figures numbers like four thousand and thirty one. They confidently round three-digit numbers to the nearest ten or 100. When adding or subtracting three-digit numbers they know how to check the answer by approximating. They accurately multiply two-digit or three-digit numbers by ten and divide hundreds by ten mentally.
- Most pupils successfully measure the perimeter of polygons in centimetres and convert the answer into millimetres. They add any pair of two-digit numbers up to 100 mentally. Less-able pupils in the year group are making good progress and use their mathematics vocabulary confidently.
- In Y5, the more-able pupils round decimals with one or two decimal places to the nearest tenth. They successfully solve problems by extracting and interpreting information presented in tables, graphs and charts. They recognise decimals and percentages and find 10%, 25%, 50% or 75% of a sum of money. They read numbers from scales, and work out the quantity between two points on the scale.
- Most pupils in Y5 explain the value of a digit in a five-digit number and write in figures numbers like fifty six thousand and nine. They round whole numbers to the nearest 1000, and a decimal with one or two decimal places to the nearest whole number. They confidently order a set of decimals with the same number of decimal places.
- Most pupils change analogue to digital time and vice versa. They use practical situations to solve problems using words and numbers and use mathematical vocabulary well. A few pupils calculate the length of time between two given times on a video recorder for instance. Less-able pupils in the year group distinguish between 12 and 24 hour clock times and successfully change 24 hour times into 12 hour digital clock times.
- The more-able pupils in Y6 simplify fractions by drawing chains to show the steps taken and confidently complete links in decimal chains. They convert decimal fractions into tenths and hundredths and explain the value of each digit from thousands to hundredths.
- Most pupils in Y6 have good strategies for calculating decimals and fractions. They use a calculator appropriately and make good use of functions such as the percentage key. They know the rough metric equivalents of imperial units still in daily use and convert from one

unit to another. They successfully find the mean of a set of data. They use a protractor to measure acute and obtuse angles to the nearest degree and investigate the sum of angles in squares and triangles. They read and plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants accurately.

- Standards in investigative work are good throughout the key stage. Good opportunities for pupils to use their mental skills well are a regular feature in all classes.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Science**

The standards of achievement in science are good overall. This judgement reflects the increasing emphasis in investigations with the older pupils.

### **Good features**

- In Y3, pupils know the requirements for a healthy diet and they successfully group different types of food. They investigate push and pull forces and identify the properties of a range of materials. They systematically test the absorbency of paper and have a good knowledge of the conditions plants need to grow. Pupils develop an appropriate scientific vocabulary and begin to use terms such as opaque and transparent.
- Pupils in Y4 further their knowledge of forces such as friction, and distinguish between conductors and insulators. They begin to understand how heat travels and are aware of the uses and dangers of electricity. Pupils know the skeleton is a structure and the function of muscles. They consider different habitats. Pupils know that some substances change by heating and understand that some changes are reversible and others are not.
- In Y5, pupils consider aspects of healthy living. They understand the functions of major organs such as the ear and heart. They are aware of the impact of physical exertion on pulse rate and know that sound is transmitted through the air by vibrations. Pupils name the major planets and know the movement of the earth and moon, relative to the sun, influences seasonal changes. Pupils successfully further their knowledge of materials and substances changing states and understand processes such as evaporation.
- Pupils in Y6 consolidate their knowledge of topics including light, forces, materials and life processes. They investigate rates of dissolving sugar for example. Pupils understand terms such as soluble and insoluble and know that some mixtures can be separated. They are made aware of the potential hazards, such as burning materials during an experiment.

### **Shortcomings**

- Most pupils do not sufficiently develop the skills of planning, investigating and predicting. During investigations, pupils in most classes rarely make sufficient use of first-hand experience to set up their own fair test and suggest suitable methods of recording information to include their prediction, method and results.

### **Welsh second language**

The standards of achievement in Welsh as a second language are good overall. Pupils in Y3 and Y6 achieve particularly well.

### **Good features**

- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning Welsh. They have very good opportunities to use the language incidentally during the day in all classes. When teachers speak Welsh, they provide good role models of the language. Pupils listen well, both to their teachers and to each other.
- Pupils in Y3 confidently ask and answer questions using sentence patterns previously learned. They have good pronunciation and acquire new vocabulary quickly. They write simple dialogues and act out a story that they have read using meaningful expression. They use a word processing package to create posters and poems in Welsh.
- In Y4, pupils express their likes and dislikes clearly and extend their writing skills by sending an e-mail in Welsh to a school in Patagonia.
- In Y5, pupils follow a short story in Welsh and in groups read a short section. They write some simple Welsh songs. They tell the time using half-past and quarter-to and quarter-past the hour. They study poems by a selection of Welsh authors.
- Pupils in Y6 write their own dialogues based on a writing frame. They successfully read what they have written, engage in role-play activities and generally understand what they read.
- By the end of the key stage, most pupils understand a wide range of sentences in Welsh. They use the affirmative and the negative and the present, past and future tenses well.

### **Shortcomings**

- In Y3, Y4, and Y5, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to read fiction and non-fiction texts in Welsh. This slows pupils' progress in reading and comprehension.

### **Design and technology**

No lessons were observed in design and technology, as the subject was not on the timetable during the week of inspection. Evidence is based on the scrutiny of pupils' previous work, discussions with a representative group of pupils, discussion with the subject co-ordinator and an analysis of teachers' records.

The standards of achievement in design and technology are good overall.

### **Good features**

- Pupils make good progress in planning, making and evaluating a product. As they move up the school, they develop more advanced designing skills as they carefully work with food, textiles, structures, control and mechanisms.
- Pupils are careful in marking out, cutting, joining and assembling a range of materials. They are aware of safety when making products such as money containers and moving toys and are also aware of the need for hygiene when making sandwiches.

- Pupils successfully design and make monsters with pneumatic driven jaws, moving vehicles with axles and wheels, computer controlled fairground models and quizzes including an electric circuit. Many pupils apply their mathematical, ICT, artistic and scientific knowledge and skills well in such projects.
- Younger pupils eagerly and fully describe the processes they used in making a model monster with a moving mouth.
- Pupils record their work in written and graphic forms and label their diagrams clearly.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils do not gather sufficient information by researching a range of sources, including ICT, to support and fully develop their design ideas, for example by making a prototype.
- Pupils seldom investigate the design and construction of products through deconstructing packaging for instance, in order to plan a method of construction.
- Although pupils make evaluations of their products they seldom take sufficient account of the needs of the user or use their findings to improve the making process.

### **Information technology**

The standards of achievement in information technology are satisfactory overall.

### **Good features**

- Pupils in Y3 successfully use a messaging service program to write to a school in another part of the United Kingdom. They use upper-case and lower-case letters where appropriate, use some punctuation keys and use the mouse to edit their text. They save their work with help.
- Most pupils in Y4 satisfactorily enter simple instructions to control a screen turtle. They move the turtle forward and turn it through ninety degrees. A few pupils use the *Pen Up* and *Pen Down* function to write a simple procedure.
- Most pupils in Y5 manipulate a simulation program to solve problems. For example, they draw a sequence of diagrams for other pupils to use the program. A few pupils successfully use a computer control program with a control box and tower to control a model fairground. They write a simple program to enable the model to turn forwards and backwards.
- Most pupils follow instructions to carry out an internet search to find information about the National Botanical Gardens, for example.
- A few pupils in Y6 exercise an appropriate degree of autonomy in their use of ICT, such as in their work in history, where they successfully use a search engine to find pictures of evacuees. They also use a multimedia package and develop skills to add and manipulate text, sound and special effects to produce an interesting presentation.
- Previous work shows pupils in Y3 have changed fonts and used simulation software and in Y4 pupils have word processed stories and used cut and paste to add clip art images to

their writing. They have also used a branching database and produced bar and line graphs based on a litter survey.

- In Y5 pupils have created a database and asked more complex questions using *less than* and *more than* and in Y6 pupils have created questionnaires in their work on market research.

### **Shortcomings**

- A significant number of pupils lack appropriate levels of competence to use more than a limited range of simple IT applications. They are unable to work with sufficient independence.
- Pupils do not progressively develop their skills in all aspects of the subject. The systematic acquisition and use of skills is limited throughout the key stage.
- For example, in Y4, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to control devices, such as a programmable toy, in order to learn simple programming instructions and to explain what they are doing, before using the screen turtle. In Y5, pupils follow instructions without previous experience of the language of *Logo* and they have insufficient understanding of the purpose of the task.
- A significant number of pupils lacks confidence in navigating an internet site and only log on, open up and close down with support from the teacher.
- A significant number of pupils in Y6 is unable to change the appearance of the text and do not understand how to crop or manipulate images.

### **History**

The standards of achievement in history are good overall.

### **Good features**

- In Y3, pupils have a developing knowledge of life in Celtic and Roman times. For instance, they know about Hadrian's Wall and further their knowledge of day-to-day life in Roman times by enthusiastically enacting a story.
- Pupils in Y4 study the Tudor period. They carefully compare present-day and Tudor homes and the lives of rich and poor families. Pupils gain knowledge of key events such as Henry's journey to Bosworth, the Spanish Armada and the work of Bishop William Morgan.
- In Y5, pupils study the Victorian period. They know about the growth of towns and industry and understand that working conditions were often harsh. They compare housing for rich and poor and find out about life in Victorian Wales.
- Pupils in Y6 have a good knowledge of local history and a good understanding of life in the Second World War. They study artefacts such as identity cards and gas masks and research topics such as food in the 1940s.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils show insufficient awareness that historical events can be interpreted in different ways. They find it difficult to distinguish between primary and secondary sources of evidence and they seldom use a sufficient range of artefacts and information sources, including ICT, census data and historical maps for example.

## **Geography**

The standards of achievement in geography are satisfactory overall.

### **Good features**

- In Y3, pupils identify countries and important places on a map of the British Isles and develop appropriate map-work skills through drawing plans of the classroom and identifying features in Abergele on a street map. They identify features of rainforest environments and begin to make comparisons with their own locality.
- Pupils in Y4 have a developing knowledge of environmental issues. They consider the impact of the A55 expressway on Abergele and the North Wales coastline, study aerial photographs to identify features in the landscape and improve map-work skills through drawing plans. They identify environmental improvements both in the school and the town.
- In Y5, pupils learn about the water cycle, water sources and the uses of water. They know about the water treatment works and consider the problems of sewage disposal. Pupils further their map-work skills through using and interpreting maps of differing scales. For instance, they raise geographical questions from maps in their study of Llanarthne.
- In Y6, pupils study life in Kenya and begin to understand the links between climate and physical features on human development. They study differing environments such as Snowdonia and know the importance of tourism to the local economy.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils do not have a sufficiently wide range of geographical knowledge and skills such as those linked to the use of maps, aerial photographs and local studies. This limits their ability to raise geographical questions and make links between location and human activity.
- Across the school, pupils do not consistently and progressively develop map-work skills and they use a limited range of geographical terms. In some classes, pupils have a limited understanding of the links between physical features and human activity.

## **Music**

The standards of achievement in music are good overall.

### **Good features**

- Pupils sing a wide range of songs both in lessons and in collective worship. The choir is well attended, has a wide repertoire and presents itself well.

- Pupils respond well when given challenging and rigorous work. They sing clearly in the round, keeping good time, mood and posture. They respond correctly to hand signals in tonic sol-fah singing.
- Pupils listen carefully, keep a steady beat and repeat basic rhythms accurately. They know and identify a number of musical elements, mainly tempo, pitch and dynamics, in their own and in recorded music.
- They interpret a simple graphic score of weather symbols and compose their own music to represent the conditions using voice, body sounds and a variety of untuned percussion.
- Older pupils compose a well structured sound picture of the Blitz to support their study of the Second World War in history lessons.
- Pupils collaborate well in groups when discussing the suitability of various instruments and they perform confidently in small ensembles. They conscientiously practise their work to improve the quality of their performance.
- Pupils thoughtfully appraise their own responses and other pupils' performances with appropriate maturity and understanding.
- Pupils are offered tuition in guitar, wind, brass and string instruments. A satisfactory number of pupils capitalise on this opportunity. Their achievements are evident in the performances of a substantial and successful school orchestra.
- Pupils encounter a rich range of multi-cultural songs and dance rhythms, which they thoroughly enjoy. This enhances their overall achievement and appreciation of musical styles.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils' singing is lacklustre in some classes, and during hymn singing and collective worship.
- They do not adopt the correct posture or sufficiently control their breathing in order to vary the dynamics and convey expression. Pupils' voices are often strained on the higher notes.

### **Art**

The standards of achievement in art are good.

### **Good features**

- Throughout the key stage, pupils use the skills and techniques of drawing and sketching well. Good use is made of sketchbooks.
- Pupils work confidently using a range of different media including, paint, charcoal, pencil and crayon. They have a good understanding of colour mixing and how to develop tone and texture in their work.
- Across the school, pupils are given good opportunities to respond to the work of Welsh artists. They discuss the feelings and emotions present in the pictures and develop their own imaginative artwork based on these ideas.

- A selection of pupils from each year group worked with a visiting artist to produce a clay mural based on the landscape and buildings around Abergele. Such activities enable pupils to achieve well.
- In Y3, pupils discuss the colour and shapes used in the work of Matisse. They draw and cut shapes to create an abstract collage. They use the work of the artist as inspiration and carefully select the colours they use.
- Pupils appreciate the link between art and designing for a purpose, for example when they look at the shape and colour of a commercial bottle. They skilfully sketch the bottle using chalk pastels and discuss the technique of pointillism. They create their own pictures in this style well.
- In Y4, pupils produce their own paintings in the style of Monet. They use their knowledge of colour mixing to achieve many different tones of colour. They effectively consider the brush strokes used and the effect of tone, line and composition.
- For instance, they illustrate a story on glass in colour and design and paint a stained glass window to illustrate a parable. They study the work of a famous Tudor portrait artist, Hans Holbein, and successfully produce their own Tudor style portraits. They create their own pieces of abstract art while listening to music
- In Y5, pupils study landscape paintings by Kyffin Williams. They investigate and record from observation and draw on their experience and imagination well. They experiment with methods used by other artists. For example, they look at a selection of William Morris's work and recreate a print design, carefully selecting the colours. They also produce paintings in the style of Cézanne.
- In Y6, pupils study non-European art and enjoy designing African masks that are of a good standard. They look at the work of Van Gogh and produce paintings and drawings using mixed media well. They also work in clay using the artist's *Sunflower* painting as a stimulus.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings.

### **Physical education**

The standards of achievement in physical education are good.

### **Good features**

- Most pupils are appropriately dressed for physical education lessons and understand the importance of warming-up and cooling-down exercises. Pupils are sensible in relation to their health and safety.
- In dance, the standards of achievement are good. Pupils respond with maturity to the mood of the music by creating a sequence of imaginative and well structured figures. They perform confidently and without inhibition when the teaching is assured, sensitive and skilful. In such lessons, achievement is very good.
- Younger pupils perform dances with increasing intricacy.

- They show assured development in the skills of gymnastics, for example in leaping and straddling. Pupils are aware of the space around them and, at best, use it very positively. For instance, they carefully mirror their partner's movements in symmetrical shapes.
- Overall, pupils are enthusiastic about dance and gymnastics. They demonstrate concentration and a willingness to practice in order to improve.
- Many pupils have good body control in games and they work effectively as individuals, in pairs and in teams.
- All pupils participate in swimming lessons and the vast majority make good progress.
- The more-able pupils often achieve very good standards in swimming, football and athletics.

### **Shortcomings**

- In some classes, pupils show little pride in presenting their best efforts. They merely repeat basic responses to the same rhythm or theme.

### **Religious Education**

The standards of achievement in religious education are good overall.

### **Good features**

- Pupils in Y3 have a developing understanding of religious festivals including the Christian celebration of Easter and the Hindu festival Holi. They know about Biblical characters such as Moses, Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar, and events such as the plagues and the birth of Jesus.
- In Y4, pupils further their knowledge of Hindu stories and beliefs. They identify religious symbols and compare the festivals of Christmas and Diwali. Pupils learn about the life of Jesus and consider the meaning of stories such as the Good Samaritan.
- In Y5, pupils reflect on the themes of caring, sharing, forgiveness and making decisions. They consider the work of aid agencies and the symbolism of Harvest Festival. Pupils further their knowledge of worship and prayer through comparing Christian churches with a Mosque and they consider statements of belief such as The Creed.
- Pupils in Y6 find out about the different types of writing in the Bible and learn about the symbols and events of Advent and Easter. They thoughtfully discuss issues of growing up and taking responsibilities. They consider rights of passage such as baptism and weddings and draw on their own experiences when comparing customs in the Muslim and Christian traditions.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils do not consistently use a sufficient range of artefacts and information sources to fully develop their knowledge of different religious figures and traditions. They seldom use research skills to further their understanding of religious observance for children and their families from different faiths.



## 8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### 8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The school has made significant improvements in particular areas since the previous inspection. However, although there are good foundations, there is much that remains to be done to ensure most of the issues, shown in bold type below, are fully resolved.

- **Raise standards from satisfactory to good in mathematics, science, design and technology, information technology, and Welsh second language and raise geography from an unsatisfactory standard.**

Standards have improved in mathematics, science, Welsh second language, design and technology and geography. In information technology, there is recent improvement, but standards remain relatively low.

- **Ensure ways of monitoring the effectiveness of the new schemes of work in raising standards.**

Good overall progress has been made in reviewing and updating schemes of work, but the development of rigorous monitoring arrangements to help identify ways of raising standards further is still at an early stage.

- **Reconsider the long term style of leadership provided in the school and establish procedures for using the financial resources to the full for the benefit of the present pupils.**

A collegiate style of leadership is promoted, but the managerial systems to enable staff to carry out their duties efficiently and effectively and to ensure clear communication at all levels within the school still lack sufficient clarity.

- **Reconsider the present school development plan, the new whole school policies, INSET needs and homework requirements in the light of pupils' current needs.**

The current format for the SDP has served the school well in developing policies and schemes of work and in raising standards. However, the current SDP does not define the way forward for the school with sufficient clarity.

- **Urgently improve the additional SEN provision for all registered pupils on stages 2 and 3 of the SEN code of practice, but especially for pupils in Y5 and Y6.**

The school has taken effective action to resolve this issue. The current provision supports pupils' needs well.

- **Reconsider its present approach to the curriculum in order to vary the presentation and content of lessons by providing more pertinent practical work and using pupils' relevant first hand experiences.**

The school's present curricular framework provides a good basis for planning lessons, but the school acknowledges that the provision of investigative work in science, for example, is not well established in all classes.

- **Re-examine the school's excessive use of published schemes which determine the content of some subject studies.**

Although schemes of work have a clearer focus on the knowledge and skills to be taught, there is still a tendency to rely too much on textbooks and worksheets in some subjects. This sometimes results in a weak match of tasks to pupils' needs and capabilities.

- **Review its registration arrangements, address the unsatisfactory level of pupils' punctuality and explore ways in which partnership with parents and with industry can be developed for the benefit of pupils.**

There are secure arrangements for registration, but punctuality remains an issue. Positive steps have been taken to strengthen partnerships with parents, but there is little evidence of a stronger partnership with local industry.

- **Ensure there is a suitable flow of fresh air through the open-plan area and reconsider the adequacy of the toilet provision.**

The inadequate flow of fresh air through the teaching areas during hot weather remains unresolved. However, the toilets have been satisfactorily refurbished.

## **8.2 Key issues for action**

In order to raise standards and improve further the quality of education, the school and the governing body, with the support of appropriate agencies, should build on existing good practice in order to:

- raise further the pupils' standards of achievement in those subjects where shortcomings are identified;
- develop and consistently implement whole-school planning to promote higher levels of achievement in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology;
- improve progress, especially for the more-able pupils and slower learners;
- promote greater independence and initiative in learning for all pupils;
- share good practice and strengthen lesson planning through the effective use of assessments to provide pupils with appropriately challenging work;
- strengthen managerial procedures to improve strategic planning and thereby systematically support the good efforts of the staff and maximise the impact of initiatives across the school;
- recast the school development plan, identify and prioritise key objectives, systematically support action planning, and assure consistent progress towards the school's goals through rigorously focused monitoring and evaluation.

## APPENDIX

### A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	St Elfod Junior School
School type	Community
Age -range of pupils	7–11 years
Address of school	Ffordd Y Morfa Abergele Conwy
Post-Code	LL22 7NU
Telephone Number	01745 832007

Head teacher	Mr K Williams
Date of appointment	November 1997
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mr G P Davies
Registered Inspector	Mr M T Ridout
Dates of inspection	7 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> July 2003

### B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	-	-	-	-	77	85	89	77	328
<i>Total number of teachers</i>									
	Full-time		Part-time		Full-time equivalent (fte)				
Number of teachers	14		2		14.9				
<i>Staffing information</i>									
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)									23.6:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes									N/A
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes									3:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes									27
Teacher (fte) : class ratio									1.15:1
<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>									
	Nursery	Reception	KS1	KS2	Whole school				
Summer 2002	-	-	-	92.52	92.52				
Autumn 2002	-	-	-	92.87	92.87				
Spring 2003	-	-	-	92.38	92.38				

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.	4
---	---

### C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results: in the school 2002 and nationally 2001								Number of pupils in Y6: 79				
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	2	18	11	41	28
		National	0	0	0	-	1	1	6	19	48	25
	Test/Task	School	0	0	1	0	0	0	19	4	43	33
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	5	14	47	30
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	34	36	25
		National	0	0	0	-	0	1	4	20	47	28
	Test/Task	School	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	34	32	29
		National	0	2	1	1	-	0	4	18	42	32
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	14	40	37
		National	1	0	0	-	0	0	3	15	52	29
	Test/Task	School	0	4	0	0	0	0	6	13	38	39
		National	0	2	0	1	0	0	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:	53%	In the school:	54%
In Wales:	68%	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  
 B Pupils not entered for the tests because they are working outside the set levels of the tests.  
 W Pupils who are working towards level 1

## D Record of the evidence base of the inspection

- The inspection team consisted of four inspectors who worked for fifteen inspector days gathering first-hand evidence. In total, 84 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Inspectors observed classes and evaluated the children's work.
- Inspectors visited registration sessions and school assemblies and observed break times. All teachers were observed teaching several times. Discussions were held with members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, representatives of the governing body, parents and others, both during the inspection and the initial inspection visits.
- All the available work and records of a representative sample of at least two pupils from each class, and the work of a sample of pupils with SEN was scrutinised. A representative number of pupils were heard to read formally in Y3 and Y6 and others informally across the school.
- A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection.
- No lessons in design and technology took place during the inspection.
- The registered inspector held a meeting attended by nine parents before the inspection and considered 97 parents' responses to a questionnaire.
- The inspection took place over four days. The registered inspector reported the main findings to the senior staff at the end of the inspection and held post-inspection meetings with the staff and governors.

## E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Mr M T Ridout	Rgl	The school and its priorities; educational standards; teaching; quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement; leadership and efficiency; staffing, accommodation and learning resources; progress since the last inspection.	Science; geography; history; religious education.
Mrs M Meredith-Jones	Team	Assessment recording and reporting; provision for pupils with SEN; support, guidance and pupils' welfare.	English; design and technology; music; physical education.
Mrs H Wynne-Smith	Team	Standards in key skills; pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development curriculum.	Welsh as a second language; mathematics; information technology; art.
Mr W Owen	Lay	Behaviour and attitudes; attendance; partnership with parents, the community, schools and other institutions; partnership with industry.	

*The inspectors wish to thank the governing body, staff, parents and pupils of the school for their co-operation, assistance and courtesy before and during the inspection.*