

INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF
SCHOOL INSPECTIONS ACT, 1996

TIRPHIL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birchgrove
Tirphil
New Tredegar, NP24 6EP

School Number: 676/2219

Date of Inspection: 8th - 10th January, 2003

MRS. EIRWEN GRIFFITHS

REGISTERED INSPECTOR: WO50/15890

4th February, 2003

UNDER ESTYN CONTRACT NUMBER: T/107/02P

© Crown Copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part except for either commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date 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.

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 the age of eighteen is intended to ease communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local education authorities and to emphasise the importance of continuity.

The term "reception" is applied to the year-group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) who attain the age of five during the academic year. "Year 1" (Y1) is applied to the year-group of pupils who attain the age of six during the academic year and so on to Y13 – the year-group who attain the age of eighteen 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; Key Stage 2 of Y3 to Y6; Key Stage 3 of Y7 to Y9; Key Stage 4 of Y10 and Y11 (which is the final year of compulsory education).

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The following five-point grading scale is used to represent the main judgments in the report:

- 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.

CONTENTS

1.	CONTEXT	page
	The School and its Priorities	1
2.	MAIN FINDINGS	
	The Main Findings of the Report	2
3.	EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	
3.1	Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning	6
3.2	Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum	7
4.	ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL	
4.1	Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development	8
4.2	Behaviour and Attitudes	9
4.3	Attendance	9
5.	QUALITY OF EDUCATION	
5.1	Teaching	10
5.2	Assessment, Recording and Reporting	11
5.3	Curriculum	12
5.4	Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare	13
5.5	Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs	14
5.6	Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions	15
5.7	Partnership with Industry	16
6.	MANAGEMENT	
6.1.	Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement	16
6.2.	Leadership and Efficiency	17
6.3	Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources	18
7.	SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING	page
	Standards Achieved by Pupils:	

	Provision for Children Under Five	19
	English	22
	Mathematics	24
	Science	25
	Welsh (as a second language)	26
	Design and Technology	27
	Information Technology	28
	History	29
	Geography	30
	Art	31
	Music	32
	Physical Education	33
	Religious Education	34
8.	SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	
8.1	Progress since the last Inspection	34
8.2	Key Issues for Action	36
	APPENDICES	
A	Basic Information about the School	38
B	School Data and Indicators	39
C	Results of National Curriculum Assessments, 2001	40
D	The Evidence Base of the Inspection	42
E	Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team	43

1. CONTEXT

The School and its Priorities

Tirphil Primary School is situated a mile or so from New Tredegar in the Rhymney Valley, close to the A469 road from Rhymney to Bargoed. It lies in the area now administered by Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Currently, the school has a total roll of eighty-eight pupils aged three to eleven years, including nine nursery children who attend on a full-time basis. Numbers have decreased somewhat over the past three years, partly as a result of closure proposals.

In general terms, the area served by the school can be described as economically disadvantaged. Free school meals are received by some 30% of pupils, whilst eighteen pupils have some form of special educational need, including two who have formal statements. The annual intake covers the full ability range, although there are relatively few higher-achieving pupils.

English is the sole or predominant home language in all cases. No pupil comes from a Welsh-speaking home. A small number come from ethnic-minority families.

The school has a comprehensive set of aims which it has expressed to parents in the following terms:

The governors and staff aim to:

- provide a secure, caring and happy school for your child(ren)
- provide the best possible education for all children to enable them to learn effectively and to achieve high standards in all aspects of work
- meet the educational needs of all children
- help your child(ren) to listen, speak, read and write effectively in English and Welsh
- provide all children with high quality teaching and learning experiences in mathematics, science and technology as the basis for them achieving good standards
- help your child(ren) to know and understand the world in which they live
- provide all children with opportunities to participate in, and enjoy, music, art and craft activities
- give many opportunities for your child(ren) to participate in, enjoy and acquire skills in a range of physical education activities

- help your child(ren) to develop an understanding of their own and other religions, and to demonstrate respect for, and tolerance of, other people's faiths
- welcome all parents into the school and encourage them to work in partnership with the teaching and support staff
- provide and maintain a warm, clean, stimulating and attractive school environment
- provide opportunities for pupils to engage in extra-curricular activities both cultural and sporting
- secure a meaningful partnership between home, school and the wider community
- provide a programme of professional training to enable staff to develop further their skills, and to gain extra knowledge in order to support their individual needs, and in turn, to improve the quality of pupils' learning.

No changes have been made to the type or age-range of the school in recent years. The present headteacher has been in post since September, 2002.

The school was last inspected in March, 1998.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The Main Findings of the Report

Educational Standards Achieved by Pupils

- * During the inspection, standards of educational achievement were satisfactory or better in approximately 91% of the lessons seen, including 37% where they were good. Standards were unsatisfactory in some 9% of lessons.
- * Provision for children under five years of age is appropriate and promotes the desirable outcomes for learning. Standards achieved in the six areas of learning are currently the following:

Area of Learning	Nursery	Reception
Language, Literacy and Communication Skills	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Personal and Social Development	Good	Good
Mathematical Development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Physical Development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Creative Development	Good	Good

* Standards achieved by pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 are shown below:

Subject	KS1	KS2
English	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Welsh (as a second language)	Good	Good
Design and Technology	Good	Good
Information Technology	Good	Good
History	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Art	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Music	Good	No judgment
Physical Education	Good	Satisfactory
Religious Education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

* No overall judgment can be given about standards in music at Key Stage 2, as only one lesson was seen in the lower half of the key stage and none at the top of the school.

* In English, standards of achievement at Key Stage 1 are satisfactory overall in speaking and listening, and unsatisfactory in reading and writing. There are also shortcomings in writing at Key Stage 2.

* National Curriculum assessment conducted by teachers last summer showed that, at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above exceeded the national average for Wales in mathematics and was similar to the national average in science. Percentages were below the average in reading, and speaking and listening, and considerably so in writing.

* Results exceeded the average for the local education authority in mathematics, were similar to the local average in science, and were significantly below the average in English.

* No pupils achieved the higher grade of Level 3 in reading, writing, speaking and listening or science. A small percentage did so in mathematics, although the figure was well below the Welsh national average.

* Girls performed slightly better than boys, an issue which the school is currently seeking to address.

* Results were also affected by several pupils who had special educational needs.

* The number of pupils who undertook National Curriculum tests last summer at Key Stage 2 was too small to enable any reliable conclusions to be drawn from the results.

* In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils achieve satisfactory standards

overall in speaking, listening, reading and number, and good standards in information and communications technology, although there are weakness in speaking and reading at Key Stage 1. Key skills in writing are currently unsatisfactory at both key stages.

Ethos of the School

- * Good provision is made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Appropriate attention is paid to religious worship. Moral values taught by the school are well reflected in pupils' conduct.
- * Pupils are becoming acquainted with the heritage and culture of Wales through work in subjects such as history, geography and Welsh, although sufficient attention is not yet given to the work of Welsh artists.
- * Studies of India are broadening pupils' knowledge of a country further afield and of differences in climate, dress, industry, goods and food, whilst work in religious education helps to develop understanding of different faiths, practices and customs.
- * Behaviour and attitudes are very good throughout the school and make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.
- * Attendance rates and punctuality are satisfactory overall.

Quality of Education

- * During the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in approximately 89% of the lessons observed, including 40% where it was good and 7% where it was very good. Teaching was less than satisfactory in some 11% of lessons, including 4% where it was poor.
- * Work in the nursery and reception class is characterised by strong team work, clearly-understood routines and sound emphasis on the development of language skills.
- * The quality of teaching at the top of the school is consistently good or better. Pupils are given suitably challenging tasks and make progress commensurate with their abilities.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils do not always make maximum progress in English and mathematics, as teaching is not sufficiently well focused on the separate needs of the two different age-groups. Emphasis is sometimes placed on the one at the expense of the other.
- * Where teaching is good or better, teachers ensure that planning is properly detailed, that tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities, and that maximum use is made of discussion to develop thought and speech. Care is taken to ensure that plenary sessions are relevant and meaningful and that every pupil is included.
- * Conversely, where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, aims are not clearly defined and methods are not properly related to curriculum objectives. Sessions are overlong and

activities are too repetitious. Pupils are not given tasks of sufficient challenge and fail to make maximum progress.

- * Procedures for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' work are satisfactory overall. Assessment and recording show several good features.
- * The curriculum is broad and balanced, and complies with statutory requirements. Nursery and reception children, who are taught together as a single class, generally receive a suitable range of experiences in all six areas of learning. At Key Stage 1, pupils are generally given a broad range of experiences suitably matched to their needs. Pupils at Key Stage 2 experience a broad, stimulating curriculum. Work, in the main, is suitably differentiated according to year-groups and individual need.
- * Whilst curriculum time meets statutory requirements, some sessions are too long for younger pupils, particularly in the foundation subjects.
- * All pupils have equal access to all parts of the curriculum.
- * Good provision is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils. Teachers are mindful of pupils' needs and make every effort to ensure that support is provided when needed. Appropriate attention is paid to personal, social and health education and measures to promote equal opportunities and racial harmony.
- * Due attention is given to academic guidance, with use of the "Proud to Achieve" files to monitor progress on an individual basis. Personal achievements are also included.
- * Although the issue was raised at the last inspection, no safety barriers have yet been erected to prevent pupils from running straight into the highway from the two exits on the narrow pavement in front of the school. The governors have pursued the issue with the local authority but have been told that the pavement is too narrow to allow barriers to be erected.
- * Satisfactory provision overall is made for pupils with special educational needs, although weaknesses in language support are having an adverse effect on progress.
- * Good relationships have been established with parents and organisations in the local community.
- * Information provided for parents through handbooks, newsletters, reports and meetings is generally of good quality, although the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not include all items required by statute.
- * A good partnership has been established with industry, enabling pupils to learn about the world of work.

Management

- * Good procedures are in place to enable the school to evaluate its own work and to plan

for improvement.

- * Leadership and efficiency are good overall.
- * The current headteacher, who has been in post since September, exercises efficient and effective management of the school. Under her energetic and vigorous leadership, policies have been updated and significant changes made in the school development plan to highlight more clearly the need for the improvement in subjects such as English. Steps have also been taken to establish a regular pattern of in-service training closely aligned to priorities for the next two years.
- * Regular direct observation of classroom practice is enabling the headteacher to monitor standards of teaching and learning in order to effect improvements where necessary.
- * The co-ordinators' role has been steadily developing to incorporate scrutiny of work, provision of resources and the collation of materials for assessment purposes. Some classroom monitoring has also been undertaken in the core subjects, although this aspect of work is still at an early stage of development.
- * Expenditure is closely and carefully controlled by a very conscientious governing body which involves itself in all aspects of the life and work of the school, including the school development plan.
- * Day-to-day administration is smooth and efficient. Good support is provided by a capable school secretary.
- * Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall and used appropriately by the school.

Progress since the Last Inspection

- * Good progress overall has been made in dealing with the key issues identified during the last inspection.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

During the inspection, standards of educational achievement were satisfactory or better in approximately 91% of the lessons seen, including 37% where they were good. Standards were unsatisfactory in some 9% of lessons.

- * Nursery and reception children achieve satisfactory standards in language, literacy and communication skills; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical development; and good standards in personal and social development; and creative development.

- * At Key Stage 1, standards are satisfactory overall in mathematics, science, history, geography, art and religious education, and good in Welsh, design and technology, information technology, music and physical education.
- * Standards at Key Stage 2 are satisfactory overall in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art, physical education and religious education, and good in Welsh, design and technology, and information technology.
- * No overall judgment can be given about standards in music at Key Stage 2, as only one lesson was seen in the lower half of the key stage and none at the top of the school.
- * In English, standards of achievement at Key Stage 1 are satisfactory overall in speaking and listening, and unsatisfactory in reading and writing. There are also shortcomings in writing at Key Stage 2.
- * National Curriculum assessment conducted by teachers last summer showed that, at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above exceeded the national average for Wales in mathematics and was similar to the national average in science. Percentages were below the average in reading, and speaking and listening, and considerably so in writing.
- * Results exceeded the average for the local education authority in mathematics, were similar to the local average in science, and were significantly below the average in English.
- * No pupils achieved the higher grade of Level 3 in reading, writing, speaking and listening or science. A small percentage did so in mathematics, although the figure was well below the Welsh national average.
- * Girls performed slightly better than boys, an issue which the school is currently seeking to address.
- * Results were also affected by several pupils who had special educational needs.
- * The number of pupils who undertook National Curriculum tests last summer at Key Stage 2 was too small to enable any reliable conclusions to be drawn from the results.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

In applying their key skills across the curriculum, pupils achieve satisfactory standards overall in speaking, listening, reading and number, and good standards in information and communications technology, although there are weakness in speaking and reading at Key Stage 1. Key skills in writing are currently unsatisfactory at both key stages.

- * Children under five listen well to adults and are able to communicate their wishes and feelings satisfactorily. The expression and sharing of ideas is limited amongst nursery

pupils, but greater confidence is shown by reception stage.

- * Speaking and listening skills are promoted in all subjects. However, pupils' speech is often hesitant and lacks the use of subject-specific vocabulary to express what they doing and how much they know about a particular topic. The school recognises the need to make improvements in this area and is developing suitable strategies during circle times and class discussions to promote the development of language patterns and the acquisition of relevant vocabulary. Pupils at Key Stage 1, however, do not have sufficient opportunities to interact through role-play and drama, and are not always prompted to reply to questions in extended sentences.
- * Oral work in Welsh is approached with confidence at both key stages, with a good balance of individual and paired work to promote dialogue and to provide practice in speech.
- * Reading skills, in most instances, are satisfactorily applied to obtain information and gather data for work in other subjects. Scope still exists, however, for much further improvement at Key Stage 1.
- * Standards in applying key skills in writing vary considerably. At Key Stage 1, and in the early part of Key Stage 2, opportunities are lost to encourage pupils to write across the curriculum and to develop their ideas to the full. Skills are better applied at the top of the school, although there is scope for improvement in writing overall.
- * Numerical skills are developing satisfactorily across the curriculum. In science, pupils measure growth and temperature, and estimate and predict. Mathematical skills are promoted effectively in some of the foundation subjects: for example, in geography, for reading co-ordinates and scales, and in design and technology, for indicating measurements on plans, and marking and measuring items during the construction of models.
- * Information and communications technology is well used to introduce lessons and to aid discussion in plenary sessions. Teachers and pupils have a good understanding of the interactive whiteboard and operate hardware effectively to reinforce and extend learning across the curriculum.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Overall, good provision is made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

- * The daily act of religious worship is a pleasant family occasion and complies with statutory requirements. Biblical stories and moral issues provide suitable material for exploration and discussion. Pupils demonstrate by their actions that they are absorbing

attitudes and values taught by the school.

- * Children in the early part of the school socialise well with each other and are learning to share and take turns with toys and equipment. Good attention is paid to oral activities such as circle times and puppet shows.
- * When required to do so, older pupils collaborate sensibly in groups and pairs, and show enthusiasm for tasks such as tidying the library and making books for younger children. Opportunities to undertake minor responsibilities and to develop initiative are not, however, always pursued to maximum advantage.
- * Pupils are becoming acquainted with the heritage and culture of Wales through work in subjects such as history, geography and Welsh, although sufficient attention is not yet given to the work of Welsh artists. Good use is made of visits to places such as Llancaiach Fawr, Pontypool Industrial Museum and Nash Point Lighthouse to provide pupils with a range of first-hand experiences and to extend their knowledge and understanding.
- * Studies of India are broadening pupils' knowledge of a country further afield and of differences in climate, dress, industry, goods and food, whilst work in religious education helps to develop understanding of different faiths, practices and customs.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Standards of behaviour are very good throughout the school.

- * From the outset, nursery pupils learn to work and play amicably with each other.
- * Courtesy and consideration for others characterise life throughout the school.
- * All members of staff serve as good role-models for children. Learning takes place in a calm, suitably quiet environment.
- * Meal times are pleasurable, civilised, family occasions. Separate arrangements for nursery children provide good opportunities for conversation with adults and develop the social aspects of learning.
- * Suitable strategies are in place to encourage and praise good behaviour.
- * No pupils have been excluded from attendance over the past two years.
- * Pupils of all ages listen attentively during lessons and work sensibly with each other when given opportunities to do so.
- * Attitudes and high standards of behaviour make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and considerably enhance the quality of life within the school.

4.3 Attendance

Satisfactory rates are achieved for attendance.

- * Average attendance over the past twelve months was 90.8% for pupils of compulsory school age. The figure is slightly higher than the level reported during the last inspection.
- * The average for the last school term rose to 94.5%
- * Registration procedures conform with the requirements of Circular 3/99 of the National Assembly for Wales.
- * Punctuality is satisfactory at the start of the school day.
- * The school operates a "Proud to Present" scheme, whereby pupils receive a certificate for a full term's attendance and a small prize for a complete year.
- * Good contact is maintained with the education welfare officer, who visits the school at least once a term and more frequently when necessary.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

During the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in approximately 89% of the lessons observed, including 40% where it was good and 7% where it was very good. Teaching was less than satisfactory in some 11% of lessons, including 4% where it was poor.

- * Work in the nursery and reception class is characterised by strong team work, clearly-understood routines and sound emphasis on the development of language skills.
- * Effective liaison takes place between the nursery nurse and the two teachers who share responsibility for the class. The nursery nurse makes a very good contribution to the quality of learning.
- * Relationships between pupils and teachers are good throughout the school. Pupils are confident about asking questions and seeking help when required.
- * Good discipline and high expectations about behaviour enable learning to take place in a calm, orderly environment.
- * Teachers, in the main, display sound knowledge of the various subjects they teach.
- * At the top of the school, the quality of teaching is consistently good or better. Pupils are given suitably challenging tasks and make progress commensurate with their abilities.

- * Teachers' long and medium-term planning provides suitable guidance and ensures coverage of National Curriculum requirements. Short-term planning generally contains appropriate detail, although sufficient emphasis is not always placed on the full development of key skills. Detail is sometimes lacking in the early part of Key Stage 2.
- * Instructions and explanations to pupils are generally clear and concise. Appropriate time is allocated for discussion.
- * Suitable strategies are generally employed for the teaching of mixed-aged classes. Use is also made of an appropriate range of resources.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils do not always make maximum progress in English and mathematics, as teaching is not sufficiently well focused on the separate needs of the two different age-groups. Emphasis is sometimes placed on the one at the expense of the other.
- * Valuable assistance is received from a number of parent helpers who provide reading support on a regular basis.
- * Parents listen to their children read at home, particularly at Key Stage 1, and maintain liaison with the school through a home-school reading diary. The school is currently preparing more information to enable maximum benefit to be gained from the process.
- * Where the quality of teaching is good or better, teachers ensure that planning is properly detailed, that tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities, and that maximum use is made of discussion to develop thought and speech. Care is taken to ensure that plenary sessions are relevant and meaningful and that every pupil is included.
- * Conversely, where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, aims are not clearly defined and methods are not properly related to curriculum objectives. Sessions are overlong and activities are too repetitious. Pupils are not given tasks of sufficient challenge and fail to make maximum progress.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Overall, satisfactory procedures are in place for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' work. Assessment and recording show several good features.

- * The school has a suitably detailed policy and guidelines for assessment, recording and reporting.
- * Children's prior attainments are assessed on entry to the nursery to ensure that work is properly planned and matched to their needs.
- * In the reception class, good use is made of the local education authority's baseline profile to assess the progress children have made and to draw up a new baseline for the planning of work.

- * Teachers analyse the results of National Curriculum standard assessment tests and make use of regular optional year-based assessment to raise standards in English and mathematics.
- * Staff have worked with other teachers in the area cluster of schools to select samples of moderated, annotated work to guide teachers in their assessment of standards in English. The portfolio for mathematics is currently incomplete and, as yet, there is no portfolio for science.
- * Effective use is made of assessment to set targets for groups of pupils. Targets are discussed with individual pupils before being adopted as a suitable means for improvement.
- * Assessment in design and technology, history, art and religious education makes good use of materials produced by the local education authority and the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales.
- * At the time of the inspection, the newly introduced electronic system for tracking the progress of individual pupils had not been in operation long enough to judge its effectiveness.
- * The school has recently introduced "Proud to Present" files for each pupil as records of individual progress in the various aspects of school life.
- * Marking varies in quality across the school, but is mainly helpful and constructive. Pupils benefit most when work is marked in their presence.
- * Plenary sessions are used very effectively in most classes to assess the benefits pupils have gained from lessons.
- * Special educational needs are assessed from the nursery stage onwards. Procedures follow the recommendations in the new national Code of Practice.
- * Parents are invited to school during the autumn and spring terms to discuss their children's progress with teachers. An annual report is sent home during the summer.

5.3 Curriculum

Overall, the school provides pupils with a broad, balanced curriculum which accords with statutory requirements.

- * Nursery and reception children, who are taught together in a single class, generally receive a suitable range of experiences in all six areas of learning.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils are generally given a broad range of experiences suitably matched to their needs.

- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 experience a broad, stimulating curriculum. Work, in the main, is suitably differentiated according to year-groups and individual need.
- * Long, medium and short-term planning is good overall.
- * The school has developed, and is implementing, a sound programme for personal and social education, which complies with statutory requirements and is supported by parents.
- * Regular use is now made of homework to support work in the curriculum, especially in areas such as spelling where pupils are currently experiencing difficulties. Parents and pupils are working successfully together in this newly introduced initiative. Steady progress is being made.
- * Whilst curriculum time meets statutory requirements, some sessions are too long for younger pupils, particularly in the foundation subjects.
- * Insufficient time is given to the key skills of reading and extended writing across the curriculum. The school has not yet fully implemented planning procedures to ensure the maximum development of skills in these areas.
- * Extracurricular activities and visits to places of interest enhance pupils' learning in science, sports, music and gardening.
- * All pupils have equal access to all parts of the curriculum.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

Good provision is made for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils.

- * The school provides a safe, happy, secure environment.
- * Pupils have good relationships with all members of staff, and work and play amicably with each other.
- * Teachers are mindful of pupils' needs and make every effort to ensure that support is provided when needed.
- * A sound policy has been drawn up on child protection. Staff show appropriate knowledge of the procedures to be followed.
- * Good policies are in place to promote pupils' health and welfare.
- * Appropriate attention is paid to personal, social and health education and measures to promote equal opportunities and racial harmony.
- * As part of a monitor system, older pupils are given opportunities to exercise

responsibilities such as helping with door and passageway supervision, assisting at assemblies and supporting younger children, particularly during wet breaks and play times.

- * A merit reward system, involving the award of stars, badges and stickers, encourages pupils to work hard, behave well and be helpful to others. Parents and pupils both value the system.
- * Due attention is given to academic guidance, with use of the "Proud to Achieve" files to monitor progress on an individual basis. Personal achievements are also included.
- * Pupils are aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire. Drills are held each term and properly recorded. Emergency doors operate satisfactorily. Fire extinguishers are within their specified period for testing.
- * All members of staff have recently undertaken first-aid training at the school.
- * Although the issue was raised at the last inspection, no safety barriers have yet been erected to prevent pupils from running straight into the highway from the two exits on the narrow pavement in front of the school. The governors have pursued the issue with the local authority but have been told that the pavement is too narrow to allow barriers to be erected.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, although weaknesses in language support are having an adverse effect on progress.

- * The school's percentage of pupils with special educational needs is similar to the national average. Two pupils are currently the subjects of statements.
- * Procedures fully accord with the new national Code of Practice.
- * The majority of pupils are at the stage of "school action plus" and fully integrated into their classes alongside pupils of their own age.
- * Effective measures are taken by the co-ordinator to cater for the individual needs of each pupil. Weaknesses identified in this section lie outside her areas of responsibility.
- * Good use is made of information technology to compile suitably detailed individual educational plans.
- * Every effort is made to involve pupils and parents in setting targets for improvement.
- * Work, in the main, is purposefully and effectively differentiated in most classes. Pupils are given appropriate tasks and make suitable progress in lessons.

- * Good support is provided by a special assistant appointed to help one of the two pupils who is the subject of a statement. Close liaison with the class teacher results in the effective planning of work.
- * Steady progress is made by the other pupil with a statement. Tuition is generally well related to needs.
- * Insufficient benefit is received from timetabled lessons provided by the County Language-Support Service. Too little progress results from additional teaching in this area. Most pupils are hesitant readers and cannot cope adequately with texts in class.
- * Provision specified in one statement of special educational needs is somewhat questionable, as it does not fully describe the needs of the pupil. The parents and school are aware of the situation and intend to rectify the matter at the next annual review.
- * In common with several other areas in Wales, requests for assistance from the educational psychology service generally receive a slow response. Good support is received from other outside agencies.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

Good relationships have been established with parents and organisations in the local community.

- * Completed questionnaires were returned by one-sixth or so of parents, with the vast majority expressing strong support for the school. Discussions at the pre-inspection meeting, and during the course of the inspection, produced very similar views.
- * All parents have responded positively to the home/school agreement.
- * Information provided for parents through handbooks, newsletters, reports and meetings is generally of good quality, although the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not include all items required by statute.
- * An active friends' group meets each week to organise events which raise significant funds for the school. Recent donations have included two laptop computers and monies for residential visits.
- * Three parents and other adults provide regular help in the classroom by hearing pupils read and by providing support in subjects such as art, and design and technology. Eight parents attend a weekly computer course.
- * Good links have been forged with the nearby parish church, whose vicar leads an assembly each term and talks to pupils in support of the curriculum. Valuable support is also received from the Salvation Army, a retired headteacher, and a local lay preacher who is a governor of the school. Pupils visit the church at times of the main Christian festivals.

- * Regular visits are received from the fire service and the police liaison officer, who advises pupils about matters such as personal safety and possible danger from strangers. Pupils also attend the "Crucial Crew" courses, which the police organise to raise awareness of crime and to stress the importance of self-responsibility.
- * An effective partnership has been built up with the local education authority and other schools in the area. Pupils in Year 6 visit the local comprehensive school, both for "taster" days and sporting and social events. Teachers exchange visits and good-quality curricular information to ensure that transfer to secondary education takes place as smoothly as possible.
- * Students from the comprehensive school regularly visit the school to gain work experience or to participate in presentations such as the "Wings to Fly" drama linked to the police drugs-awareness programme.
- * Links have also been established with the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, and with Ystrad Mynach College of Further Education.
- * Pupils entertain residents at a local home each Christmas. Some residents also attend functions at the school.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

The school has established a good partnership with local companies, which enables pupils to learn about the world of work.

- * Twelve local shops and businesses support the school through the donation of money or materials. Significant help has been given by a local builder's merchant and a nearby business resource centre.
- * The local branch of the Groundwork Trust has involved pupils in developing the school grounds and adjacent river area as part of an environmental project. Bulbs have also been planted in Deri Park.
- * Staff from some local organisations have talked to pupils about their jobs. These include student opticians from a nearby training college, a fireman and a postman. Five employees from a local art group have also worked two days at the school helping pupils to construct model lanterns from willow.
- * Pupils have visited the local post office, some shops, a nearby housing development and a pottery to support work in various areas of the curriculum. Much useful learning has come from these visits.
- * The Education Business Partnership has sponsored the school's "Proud to Present" scheme and provided funds for a teacher to attend the National Museum of Wales to develop resources for pupils on a subsequent visit.

- * No written policy has yet been produced on further developing links with industry.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

Good procedures are now in place to enable the school to evaluate its own work and to plan for improvement.

- * On appointment to her post, the headteacher conducted an evaluation exercise embracing all aspects of the life and work of the school. As a result, action has been taken to revise and update the school development plan and to identify targets for early improvement. The plan is now a clear, comprehensive working document.
- * Strong emphasis is placed on the professional development of staff. All members of staff undertake regular in-service training which is linked to the needs of the school and targets in the school development plan.
- * Curriculum co-ordinators have clearly-defined roles which are being developed satisfactorily. Much effort is now being made to build up portfolios of work, although sufficient information is not yet included in relation to the foundation subjects.
- * The headteacher keeps the curriculum under review and has undertaken some classroom monitoring. Scope, however, still exists for further development in this area, particularly on the part of subject co-ordinators.
- * Careful analysis is made of National Curriculum assessment and other test results to set specific targets for improvement. Particular attention is being paid to the need to raise pupils' reading ages, to improve writing skills and to address gender issues related to the lower performance of boys.
- * Governors are kept regularly and properly informed of changes and improvements, and are actively involved in initiatives and planning.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

Leadership and efficiency are good overall.

- * The current headteacher, who has been in post since September, exercises efficient and effective management of the school.
- * Under her energetic and vigorous leadership, policies have been updated and significant changes made in the school development plan to highlight more clearly the need for the improvement in subjects such as English. Steps have also been taken to establish a regular pattern of in-service training closely aligned to priorities for the next two years.

- * Regular direct observation of classroom practice is enabling the headteacher to monitor standards of teaching and learning in order to effect improvements where necessary.
- * Following the last inspection, the local education authority and school governors responded to the first key issue by appointing a permanent headteacher so that the school could achieve some stability. Evidence indicates that much sound work was undertaken during that period to deal with the shortcomings identified and to try to raise standards across the curriculum. Schemes of work were drawn up for all subjects and are now used to ensure continuity and progression and to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- * The co-ordinators' role has been steadily developing to incorporate scrutiny of work, provision of resources and the collation of materials for assessment purposes. Some classroom monitoring has also been undertaken in the core subjects, although this aspect of work is still at an early stage of development.
- * Expenditure is closely and carefully controlled by a very conscientious governing body which involves itself in all aspects of the life and work of the school, including the school development plan.
- * Day-to-day administration is smooth and efficient. Good support is provided by a capable school secretary.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall and used appropriately by the school.

- * The school is adequately staffed with appropriately qualified teachers.
- * Staff are sensibly deployed.
- * Good support is received from the school secretary, caretaker, midday supervisors and cleaners. Duties are discharged efficiently and effectively.
- * The classroom for nursery and reception children is large and cheerful. Classrooms in the rest of the school are relatively small, especially for pupils at Key Stage 2.
- * Good efforts have been made to improve the quality of display and to provide an attractive, stimulating environment for learning.
- * The school library is well stocked and has a classification system that pupils understand and can easily use to find books for research.
- * Good use is made of a wall-mounted interactive whiteboard with accompanying hardware which has been fitted into the library to help maximise space and to promote

dual use of the room. Teachers write and record their own material to use in conjunction with the equipment.

- * Secure outdoor play areas enable pupils to play and develop imaginative games and to run about freely. The school has access to a nearby sports hall, within easy walking distance, for some indoor games and skill-training sessions.
- * Learning resources are generally sufficient in all subjects, although the school finds it necessary to borrow equipment such as programmable toys from other schools to deliver some aspects of the National Curriculum. This is because of budget reductions related to falling pupil numbers and the scheduled closure of the school.
- * Each classroom has an ample supply of computers which are well used to reinforce and extend pupils' learning.
- * Monies have been set aside to purchase more reading books in Welsh.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards Achieved by Pupils

Provision for Children under Five

Nine nursery children attend on a full-time basis and are taught alongside eight reception children. The headteacher has charge of the class for 60% of the time, and another teacher for the remainder. Close liaison and planning ensure that children receive a suitable range of experiences. A full-time nursery nurse makes a very good contribution to the team and to children's learning and progress.

Provision overall is appropriate and promotes the desirable outcomes for learning.

i. Language, Literacy and Communication Skills

Satisfactory standards overall are achieved in language, literacy and communication skills.

Good Features

- * Many children enter the school with limited language skills. Role-play and circle times ensure that appropriate opportunities are provided for the development of speech. Slow but steady progress is made.
- * All children listen carefully during whole-class sessions and respond well to routines.
- * Pre-reading skills are fostered through well-known stories, action songs and rhymes, to

which nursery children are particularly responsive.

- * Reception children are beginning to recognise the initial sounds of words and the names of characters from early reading books. They use picture clues to relate their favourite stories and take care when handling books.
- * A range of suitable mark-making activities helps to develop hand-eye co-ordination. Items on display around the classroom show use of a variety of media. Nursery children make suitable progress in holding and controlling implements.
- * The majority of reception pupils are able to write their names and hold pencils correctly. A range of tracing, colouring and pre-writing exercises helps to support the process.

Shortcomings

- * Too little use is made of listening stations to encourage children to enjoy stories, rhymes and songs.
- * Role-play and puppet activities do not always have sufficient adult support to enable children to develop appropriate language patterns.

ii. Mathematical Development

Mathematical development is satisfactory overall.

Good Features

- * Nursery children are able to sort and match objects according to shape, colour and size. Sound understanding is shown of the concept of numbers up to five.
- * Reception children can count to six and, in some cases, to ten or beyond. They can recognise the properties of simple two-dimensional shapes and show a basic understanding of the concept of size.

Shortcomings

- * Some of the tasks given to reception children are not sufficiently well focused to enable them to make maximum progress.

iii. Personal and Social Development

Personal and social development is good.

Good Features

- * Nursery children settle well into school and benefit from working and playing alongside

older children.

- * Most children in both age-groups are willing to share and take turns, particularly during role-play in the home corner.
- * Snack times provide good opportunities for discussion and social interaction.
- * Appropriate attention is given to personal hygiene, with children washing their hands following toilet visits and activities such as painting.

Shortcomings

- * No significant shortcomings were observed in this area of learning.

iv. Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Knowledge and understanding of the world are satisfactory overall, with good standards in some aspects of work.

Good Features

- * Discussions about homes and families, the weather and birthdays help to extend children's knowledge of the world around them.
- * A particularly good feature is the widening of horizons through "Teddy's globe-trotting visits". Children see and track on a map of the world places visited by staff and other pupils.
- * Confident use is made of equipment. Good progress is made in operating the computer and solving simple problems.

Shortcomings

- * Few interest tables have been created to encourage scientific interest and investigation.

v. Creative Development

Creative development is good.

Good Features

- * All children in the class enjoy mixing colours and painting.
- * Numerous opportunities are provided for cutting, sticking and pasting. Activities are

undertaken with confidence. Reception children make good progress in scissor work.

- * In music, much enthusiasm is shown for experimenting with percussion instruments. Considerable enjoyment is gained from activities. Children demonstrate the ability to play in time with the teacher's directions and to sing birthday greetings in both English and Welsh.

Shortcomings

- * On occasions, musical activities are rather slow in pace.

vi. Physical Development

Owing to inclement weather, no outdoor play was seen. Other aspects in this area of learning are satisfactory overall.

Good Features

- * Fine motor skills are fostered through frequent sand play and a range of jigsaws, puzzles and board games.
- * Reception children show the ability to manipulate building equipment successfully.

Shortcomings

- * When undertaking tabletop activities such as jigsaws and matching games, children often have too many pieces to choose from and become muddled and confused. Performance is less successful on such occasions.

English

Standards of achievement in English are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1, and satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2 apart from shortcomings in writing.

i. Speaking and Listening

Standards in speaking and listening are generally satisfactory at both key stages.

Good Features

- * At Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively in class, with the majority being able to follow instructions and to answer simple questions satisfactorily.
- * Circle times and class discussions provide opportunities for younger pupils to improve their oral skills. Steady progress is made, with pupils beginning to use extended

sentences and a wider range of vocabulary to express their thoughts and ideas.

- * By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils speak about their work with a fair degree of confidence, and, when collaborating in groups, make sensible contributions to discussions. Satisfactory use is made of assemblies as a forum for speaking activities.
- * Attentiveness during lessons contributes to a proper understanding of what is required.

Shortcomings

- * In discussions with younger pupils, much prompting and support are needed to elicit extended responses.
- * At Key Stage 1, too little use is made of role-play, puppetry and drama to further the development of skills.

ii. Reading

Standards in reading are unsatisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2.

Good Features

- * Reading is taught through a suitably-structured, commercially-produced scheme supplemented by other material.
- * At Key Stage 1, most pupils can use picture clues to aid their understanding of simple text and can generally discuss current stories satisfactorily.
- * By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read a wide range of books and are able to express views about what they have read as well as preferences for different authors.
- * Older pupils are acquainted with the reference sections of the school library and make satisfactory use of books and information technology to develop their research and study skills.
- * Staff hear pupils read on a regular basis. Valuable support is also received from a small number of parents and other volunteers, who hear individuals or small groups of readers and help to promote interest and understanding.

Shortcomings

- * Although due attention is given to phonics, pupils at Key Stage 1 have difficulty in applying what they have learned to tackle new vocabulary. Some are not secure in their recognition of basic, simple words, and although there are a few satisfactory readers,

two-thirds are making slow progress.

- * Methods and organisational strategies at Key Stage 1 are not always appropriate to ensure that both age-groups receive sufficient support with tasks.

iii. Writing

Standards in writing are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1 and broadly satisfactory at Key Stage 2 in spite of some shortcomings.

Good Features

- * Pupils at Key Stage 1 copy simple words and sentences, and are encouraged to write as soon as they are able.
- * At Key Stage 2, pupils are able to write in an appropriate variety of forms for different purposes and occasions.
- * Due attention is paid to grammar and punctuation at the top of the school. Work at this level is generally neat and well presented. Marking encourages constant improvement.

Shortcomings

- * Although handwriting exercises help pupils to form letters correctly, skills are not consistently applied to written work. Standards of presentation at Key Stage 1 and in the first half of Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory.
- * Spelling shows a number of weaknesses, with insufficient use of dictionaries in the lower part of Key Stage 2. Skills in this area are inadequately developed.
- * Creative and imaginative writing is limited in both scope and quality, and is not pursued on a sufficiently regular basis. At Key Stage 1, too heavy a reliance is sometimes placed on worksheets at the expense of extended writing.

Mathematics

Overall, standards in mathematics are satisfactory at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Pupils throughout the school are developing calculation strategies appropriate to their age and ability, and making sound progress in the understanding of number. Accurate calculations are made in most cases.
- * At both key stages, pupils display a knowledge of symmetry commensurate with the relevant level of the National Curriculum.

- * Pupils at Key Stage 1 can name two-dimensional shapes, fold paper to indicate halves and quarters, and weigh objects using non-standard measures. They can also recognise the time in hours and halves.
- * By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can recognise the sequences of numbers and use number squares and lines to find numbers between two points. Sound knowledge is shown of seasonal rotation.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 continue to make steady progress in number work and have an increasingly secure understanding of place value. They can multiply and divide whole numbers by 10 and 100, and add and subtract to two-decimal places. Higher-achieving pupils are able to multiply a four-digit number by any two-digit number.
- * Older pupils recognise the equivalence of fractions, decimals and percentages and can apply their knowledge to solve simple problems. Good standards are sometimes achieved in this area.
- * Pupils at this level can recognise angles as a measure of turn and describe the properties of different triangles in appropriate mathematical language. They can use multiplication to calculate the areas of both regular and composite shapes, and show a sound understanding of co-ordinates in the first quadrant.
- * At both key stages, pupils compile graphs to record simple classroom surveys, both in mathematics and other subjects, and make use of tally marks and tables to record data. Satisfactory use is made of Venn diagrams to record the results of other investigative studies.

Shortcomings

- * Pupils at both key stages employ too narrow a range of different methods in their work.
- * Many experience difficulty in explaining their thinking and methods of calculation as a result of insufficient emphasis on these aspects during lesson introductions and plenary sessions.
- * In the upper part of Key Stage 2, pupils generally display an insecure recall of previous learning in some areas, such as long multiplication, the properties of different triangles and the calculation of averages, and often need to be reminded of strategies before they can solve simple problems appropriate to their age.

Science

Standards in science are satisfactory overall at both key stages.

Good Features

- * At Key Stage 1, pupils are able to name the parts of a plant and to describe their basic functions. During the inspection, they investigated a living, flowering plant and drew a fully-labelled diagram from memory.
- * Secure knowledge is displayed of the basic features of healthy living. Appropriate links are made with other subjects. During a physical-education lesson, for example, pupils demonstrated a sound understanding of the importance of warming up muscles before exercise and the reasons why breathing increases with vigorous activity.
- * Satisfactory knowledge is shown of the concept of forces. Pupils can explain what happens when a car goes down a ramp and identify forces which change the shape of an object.
- * Following a study of sound, using a variety of instruments they had made for themselves, most pupils showed appropriate understanding of vibration and could offer satisfactory explanations of their findings. Satisfactory use was made of diagrams and text to record the results of the investigation.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 understand the concept of fair testing and plan appropriately for investigations. They make predictions, observe what happens, record their work and draw conclusions from their findings. Appropriate use is made of tables, diagrams and graphs.
- * Studies of electrical circuits have helped pupils to understand what makes a light bulb glow more brightly or dimly.
- * Sound knowledge is shown, at this level, of dietary requirements for healthy living. Pupils are able to classify foods into carbohydrates, fats, proteins and vitamins. Most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the human life process.
- * Pupils display sound knowledge of magnetism and can list materials through which magnetism is effective.
- * The presentation of work is generally satisfactory in the upper part of the school.
- * Work covers all aspects of the National Curriculum.

Shortcomings

- * Pupils do not readily recall previous work and apply knowledge to explain what they have studied. Learning is not always secure.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils do not appreciate why a test needs to be fair and do not record simple information which would help them to understand the concept.
- * The presentation of work at Key Stage 1 and in the lower half of Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory. Writing is often illegible and work in some cases would have been very difficult to read without the benefit of comments from teachers.

Welsh

Overall, standards of achievement in Welsh are good at both key stages.

Good Features

- * An early start at nursery level provides a sound foundation for future learning in the subject.
- * Pronunciation is clear and intelligible.
- * Pupils respond positively to the language and show interest and enthusiasm during lessons.
- * Incidental use of the language throughout the school day helps pupils to become acquainted with simple commands and greetings.
- * Confidence, enthusiasm and enjoyment on the part of staff, particularly at Key Stage 1 and in the upper part of Key Stage 2, help to promote and encourage use of the language.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound grasp of greetings and can answer questions on topics such as colours, parts of the body and the weather. All can count confidently to ten or beyond.
- * Pupils at this level show a good facility for reading new text. Vocabulary already learnt is quickly recognised and repeated alongside new words in books such as *Dillad Tedi Twt*.
- * Use is made of appropriate worksheets to reinforce absorption of new words and phrases. Although untidily presented in many cases, written work shows that pupils understand and can apply an appropriate range of vocabulary.
- * By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to use a wide range of words relating to clothing, food and personal details such as age, address, family, hobbies and interests and to tell the time in the language. Most employ correct sentence patterns when responding individually to questions.
- * Good use is made of wall displays and word lists to support oral responses and written tasks.
- * Writing is progressing well and covers a satisfactory range of exercises and dialogue.
- * Pupils at the top of the school can read with fluency and expression, and confidently read back what they have written.

Shortcomings

- * Some of the work undertaken in the early part of Key Stage 2 lacks appropriate challenge

and simply repeats learning already mastered at Key Stage 1 without suitable development or progression. The pace of work at this level is slower than in the other classes.

- * Too few reading books are currently available at Key Stage 2, a fact which is recognised and being remedied by the school.

Design and Technology

Standards in design and technology are good at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Pupils in all classes are encouraged to draw plans of the models they wish to make and, in most classes, to write a descriptive passage about the processes they intend to use. Good use is made of design briefs at Key Stage 1.
- * Tasks grow in complexity as pupils move upward through the school. In this way, pupils acquire the skills needed for joining, construction, testing and evaluation, and learn how to design products fit for a particular purpose. Good standards are often achieved in this area.
- * Pupils throughout the school are given a wide range of interesting and purposeful experiences in creating objects from different materials. Younger pupils make teddy bears, with split pins to move the arms and legs, and levers to operate the eyes, whilst older pupils design and make playground toys involving the use and understanding of gears. Products are generally well finished.
- * Good cross-curricular links are made with science. Pupils at Key Stage 1 design and make pneumatic toys from recyclable materials and balloons, and are able to explain their work clearly.
- * Effective use is made of construction kits to enable pupils to investigate, design and make moving models.
- * When making models, pupils evaluate their work and amend the design, where necessary, to incorporate improvements. This is a particularly good feature of work in the subject.
- * Appropriate emphasis is placed on research and obtaining information to be used in designs. Good use is made of information technology to record and present the results.
- * Pupils make good use of technical vocabulary and are encouraged to collaborate sensibly with each other in their work.
- * Appropriate skills are being acquired with tools, with pupils measuring and joining correctly. Due attention is paid to safety and hygiene.

Shortcomings

- * No significant shortcomings were observed in the subject.

Information Technology

Overall, standards in information technology are good at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Pupils from the nursery stage onwards can operate a computer confidently and effectively to a level commensurate with their age. All receive an appropriate range of experiences to help them develop good keyboard skills and effective mouse control. The school has at least two computers per classroom.
- * Good use is made of listening centres, simulation programmes and CD-ROMs to enhance pupils' learning and to develop their research skills in most areas of the curriculum.
- * Pupils at both key stages follow individual programmes to support and develop learning in English, mathematics and science, and make steady progress in the various areas studied in each subject. Younger pupils enjoy educational games. Satisfactory skills are shown in opening and closing programmes to work independently. Pupils in all classes are able to enter, retrieve, edit and print their own work.
- * Effective use is made of the interactive whiteboard during lesson introductions and plenary sessions, with pupils operating a range of programmes to write, draw and move text on the board, as they would on a personal computer.
- * Older pupils write their own programmes for the whiteboard and have used it to make presentations about information technology to their parents.
- * Pupils at the top of the school can insert graphics, tables and charts into text and are familiar with the wide range of programmes available to them.
- * By the end of each key stage, pupils have relevant experiences for their age and make good progress in all strands of the subject.

Shortcomings

- * No significant shortcomings were observed.

History

No history lessons were observed during the inspection, as the subject is taught in alternate terms

with geography. Evidence from teachers' planning, scrutiny of books and discussions with pupils indicates that standards in the subject are satisfactory overall.

Good Features

- * At Key Stage 1, pupils discuss aspects of their own lives and compare them with those of children in Victorian times. Satisfactory knowledge is shown of houses, schools, toys and playthings of the period.
- * Pupils at this level enjoy looking at pictures in history books and are able to discuss differences and similarities between the past and the present.
- * Evidence indicates that pupils have opportunities to handle and talk about artefacts such as household irons and toasting forks and, after some prompting, can explain their properties and use.
- * At Key Stage 2, pupils show an awareness that the past can be divided into different periods. They are generally able to discuss their studies of the Victorian period and the Second World War, and can describe the main events and everyday life of the times, comparing and contrasting them with their own experiences.
- * Satisfactory use is made of time-lines to develop a sense of chronology.
- * Pupils at this level show the ability to extrapolate information from books and computers, and produce a satisfactory range of writing in a variety of forms.
- * Visits to places of historical interest such as Llancaiach Fawr, and participation in the toy workshop at Pontypool Museum, help to engender interest and increase knowledge and understanding.

Shortcomings

- * Recall of previous work is slow at Key Stage 1, with much prompting needed to stimulate discussion.
- * At Key Stage 1, too few opportunities are provided for recording work and developing writing skills in the subject. Written work is relatively limited and mainly restricted to worksheets.
- * Work at Key Stage 2 is often untidily presented and is difficult to read in the early part of the key stage.
- * Pupils generally have insufficient knowledge of famous characters in Welsh history.

Geography

Standards of achievement in geography are satisfactory at both key stages.

Good Features

- * At Key Stage 1, pupils can describe the main landmarks in the area and express their feelings about their homes and community in simple sentences.
- * Younger pupils demonstrate a satisfactory awareness and understanding of their own locality.
- * Appropriate arrangements are made at this level for field work and simple recording.
- * At Key Stage 2, mapping skills are developing satisfactorily. Good use is made of maps and aerial photographs in Years 3 and 4 to enable pupils to identify landmarks and trace the course of a local river.
- * Older pupils show a sound understanding of the use and purpose of co-ordinates.
- * Pupils at the top of the school are developing a satisfactory understanding of the economic, industrial and climatic features of a developing country, although studies in this area are still at a comparatively early stage.

Shortcomings

- * Use of geographical vocabulary is underdeveloped. Younger pupils are hesitant and require prompting in discussion. Recall of previously-learnt vocabulary is slow at Key Stage 2.
- * Pupils at Key Stage 2 display limited awareness and knowledge of other areas of Wales.

Art

Standards in art are satisfactory at both key stages, with some examples of good work in areas such as printing.

Good Features

- * Pupils are given opportunities to experiment with colour, pattern, texture and shape, and to use an appropriate range of techniques and materials.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate sound colouring, cutting and sticking skills in collage work.
- * When working with dough, pupils create models such as teddy bears which show good shape and form. Pencilled drawings are first produced as a guide on which to base their work.
- * Observational drawing shows progressive development of skills. Good standards are reached in some cases by the end of Key Stage 2.

- * Printing is undertaken throughout the school, beginning with simple hand prints and progressing to tile and pattern work by Year 6. A range of attractively-displayed work in the school hall provides evidence of the progressive development of skills.
- * Appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to study the work of artists such as Monet, Van Gogh and Lowry. During the inspection, for example, pupils at Key Stage 1 were studying and discussing colourful posters produced by famous masters.
- * A useful subject portfolio shows the range and quality of work undertaken, including collage and weaving.
- * Work is successfully linked to other subjects — for example, the painting of portraits to illustrate figures from the Tudor period.

Shortcomings

- * During the inspection, pupils at Key Stage 1 were not seen to undertake any work in painting, and few imaginative and creative pictures were on display. Evidence suggests that younger pupils have too few opportunities to paint on a regular basis.
- * Insufficient attention has been paid to the work of Welsh artists — a fact which is recognised by the school.
- * Too few pictures, posters and art books are on display to promote interest and discussion.

Music

Standards of achievement in music are good at Key Stage 1.

No overall judgment can be given about standards at Key Stage 2, as only one lesson was seen in the lower half of the key stage and none at the top of the school. The one lesson observed showed relatively little progress and many unsatisfactory features.

Good Features

- * Teachers' planning indicates that pupils receive a range of experiences covering composition, performance and appraisal.
- * At Key Stage 1, pupils approach tasks with enthusiasm and collaborate sensibly with each other.
- * Pupils at this level can identify rhythms, echo sound patterns, and clap or tap out a steady beat. They can name and identify percussion instruments, choose a particular instrument to match a natural sound, and are beginning to develop good appraisal skills.
- * Careful listening contributes to effective learning. Pupils respond to hand signals and have opportunities to take turns at conducting.

- * Effective use is made of poetry as a stimulus for the creation of music.
- * At Key Stage 2, pupils listened attentively during the lesson observed and were able to recognise a repeating melody. All showed tolerance and patience while waiting to play their instruments. Very good behaviour was a strong feature of the session.
- * Visiting musicians provide pupils with opportunities to hear different styles of music. Pupils enjoy the occasions and benefit from the experiences.
- * Eight pupils receive violin tuition from a peripatetic tutor. Pupils at Key Stage 2 also have opportunities to learn to play the recorder.

Shortcomings

Shortcomings, in the main, relate to the work observed at Key Stage 2.

- * Too little emphasis is placed on individual experimentation, practice and the refinement of skills. Pupils fail to reach their full potential in the subject. Outcomes are unsatisfactory.
- * Teacher discourse takes up too large a part of the lesson. Time is wasted whilst the whole class listens to and applauds each pupil individually, at the expense of properly planned and structured group activities and practice.
- * Limited knowledge is shown of the work of famous composers. Insufficient use is made of recorded music before, during and after assemblies.
- * The venue for the lesson observed was unsuitable, with restricted space and hot conditions, particularly during the first twenty minutes when pupils experienced difficulties in choosing instruments for themselves.
- * No time has yet been allocated to the co-ordinator to monitor and assess the delivery of the subject in classes throughout the school.

Physical Education

Standards in physical education are good in gymnastics at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in games at Key Stage 2. No other aspects of work were observed.

Good Features

- * During gymnastic lessons, pupils at Key Stage 1 make good use of space and respond swiftly to instructions. They show a developing awareness of their bodies and understand the beneficial effects of exercise.
- * Good body control is shown in running, galloping, hopping and jumping in different

directions around the hall.

- * Pupils collaborate sensibly with each other and work profitably together in pairs.
- * All pupils at this level enjoy demonstrating their work and make sensible evaluations of their own and each other's performances. Good efforts are made at improvement.
- * At Key Stage 2, collaborative work in team games is good. Pupils concentrate well on the activity and strive hard to develop their ball-passing skills. Most show correct control of the ball in passing and receiving.
- * Pupils display a good sense of fair play and follow the rules of a team game correctly.
- * Considerable enjoyment is gained from the extracurricular activity, *Dragon Sports*, which makes a significant contribution to the development of skills in games, both for girls and for boys.
- * Pupils at both key stages sensibly follow instructions for warm-up sessions and realise the importance of cooling down after vigorous exercise.

Shortcomings

- * At Key Stage 2, pupils' evaluation of performance lacks sufficient clarity to enable them to make significant improvements to their work.

Religious Education

Overall, standards in religious education are satisfactory at both key stages.

Good Features

- * Pupils learn about major world religions and have an understanding of the rites of passage from a Christian perspective. They appreciate that all religions have similar customs, such as festivals of light, to celebrate a particular event in the calendar.
- * Younger pupils understand how and why people celebrate events such as birthdays and the arrival of a new baby, and so learn about the importance of annual festivals.
- * Pupils at both key stages appreciate that people live, dress and worship in different ways according to their customs, cultures and beliefs. They talk knowledgeably about ceremonies and celebrations, especially those in the Christian faith.
- * Recognition is shown of the fact that Christianity, Judaism and Islam have special calendars. Most pupils can name the sacred books of different religions, whilst older pupils understand the concept of divine inspiration, particularly in the writing of the

Koran.

- * Acts of collective worship help to foster awareness of moral issues such as justice and social codes. Older pupils express their opinions on these matters with understanding appropriate to their age.
- * Pupils show a good understanding of how the Bible is a sacred text for Christianity and relate stories to everyday life, both at school and at home.

Shortcomings

- * Pupils' recall of facts and patterns of worship in Christianity and Judaism often lacks depth and understanding. Many display insufficient knowledge of religious buildings and cannot describe the inside of a Christian church, in spite of visits to one in the area.
- * The presentation of work is generally unsatisfactory in the lower part of the school.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the Last Inspection

Overall, good progress has been made in dealing with the key issues identified during the last inspection.

- * The last inspection report, published on 18th May, 1998, identified six key areas for action. In order to effect improvements, the school was advised that it needed to take urgent action to:
 - i. create as much stability as possible in the staffing and management of the school in order to ensure coherence, continuity and progression in pupils' learning;
 - ii. raise standards of achievement in all subjects in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and particularly those identified as being unsatisfactory;
 - iii. introduce a broader and more balanced curriculum to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum and religious education;
 - iv. complete effective schemes of work in all statutory subjects and establish a more consistent and rigorous approach to curriculum planning;
 - v. develop the role and subject expertise of the curriculum co-ordinator to ensure that standards, teaching and learning are effectively monitored in all subjects across the school;

vi. guarantee that all statutory requirements are fully met.

* Progress since that time has been the following.

Key Issue 1

With the exception of one member of staff appointed in 2001, all teachers have now been in post for four years or more. After the last inspection, action was taken to appoint a permanent headteacher, who remained in post until May, 2002. During that time, an action plan was prepared which addressed many of the weaknesses identified in the inspection. The school has since seen a period of relative stability in staffing which has enabled improvements to be made. Much greater attention is now given to securing coherence, continuity and progression in learning.

Key Issue 2

Standards have improved significantly in a number of subjects, particularly information technology, geography, art and physical education, all of which were previously deemed to be unsatisfactory at both key stages.

At Key Stage 1, standards in science and religious education have risen from unsatisfactory to satisfactory, and in design and technology, from unsatisfactory to good.

In music, there are still indications of several unsatisfactory features at Key Stage 2, although no definite judgment could be reached about overall standards, as only work in lower half of the key stage was seen.

The school acknowledges that, at both key stages, further improvements are still required in some areas, particularly English.

Key Issue 3

Children under five are given a suitable range of experiences which fulfil the desirable outcomes for learning and provide a sound basis for progression to the National Curriculum. Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 now receive a broad, balanced curriculum, which takes due account of statutory requirements. Appropriate attention has also been paid to religious education, with good use of supplementary materials to raise levels of awareness and to stimulate interest in the subject.

Key Issue 4

Over the past four years, staff have drawn up new schemes of work and benefited from advice and support from the local education authority. Regular attendance at courses and school-based in-service training have helped to promote discussion and enhanced the planning of work and materials. Policies have been updated since the appointment of the new headteacher, and suitable schemes of work introduced to guide teaching and

learning in all subjects

Key Issue 5

Unlike the situation during the last inspection, when responsibilities had just been allocated for some subjects and co-ordinators were unsure of their duties, staff are now well acquainted with their subject responsibilities and generally confident about their roles. Regular in-service training sessions have helped considerably to improve the situation and to enable information gained from courses to be disseminated throughout the school. Co-ordinators now scrutinise work in their subjects and have begun producing subject portfolios.

Monitoring by co-ordinators is still at a relatively early stage of development.

Key Issue 6

General policies have now been produced by the governing body, covering all aspects of the life of the school. Statutory requirements are now met in most areas, although there are still omissions from the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order to effect further improvements, the school now needs to:

- * raise standards of achievement in English at Key Stage 1 and in writing across the school;
- * strengthen planning for the development of key skills across the curriculum;
- * review the provision of language support for children with special educational needs;
- * ensure that all statutory requirements are met regarding information to be provided for parents;
- * address the other shortcomings identified in the report.

The school has already identified most of these issues as areas for further improvement.

The inspection team would like to thank the headteacher, staff, governors, parents and pupils of the school for their courtesy, co-operation and assistance throughout the inspection.

APPENDIX A

Basic Information about the School

Name of School	Tirphil Primary School
School Type	Community
Age-Range of Pupils	3 – 11 years
Address of School	Birchgrove Terrace Tirphil New Tredegar
Post Code	NP24 6EP
Telephone Number	01443 875527

Headteacher	Mrs. J. Protheroe
Date of Appointment	1st September, 2002
Chairman of Governors	Mrs. T. Macarthur
Registered Inspector	Mrs. Eirwen Griffiths
Dates of Inspection	8th – 10th January, 2003

APPENDIX 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	9	8	8	11	14	14	11	13	88

<i>Total Number of Teachers</i>			
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time Equivalent (fte)
Number of Teachers	4	1	4.4

<i>Staffing Information</i>	
Pupil : Teacher (fte) Ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	18 : 1
Pupil : Adult Ratio in Nursery Class	-
Average Class Size (excluding nursery)	19.8
Teacher (fte) : Class Ratio	1.1 : 1

<i>Percentage Attendance for Three Complete Terms Prior to the Inspection</i>					
	N	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School (excluding nursery)
Term 1	85	85	92	93	90.9
Term 2	89	86	86	88	87.1
Term 3	91.6	87.2	91.8	95.6	94.5

Number of Pupils Excluded during Twelve Months prior to Inspection	0
--	---

APPENDIX C

Results of National Curriculum Assessments

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2002			Number of Pupils in Y2: 15						
Percentage of Pupils at Each Level									
			D	A	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	13	13	73	0	0
		National	0	0	4	13	62	21	0
ENGLISH: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	13	13	73	0	0
		National	0	0	4	13	54	29	0
ENGLISH: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	13	33	53	0	0
		National	0	0	5	13	70	12	0
ENGLISH: Speaking and Listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	7	13	80	0	0
		National	0	0	3	11	63	23	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	7	0	87	7	0
		National	0	0	2	9	60	29	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	13	87	0	0
		National	0	0	2	10	67	21	0

Percentage of Pupils Attaining at least Level 2 in Mathematics, Science and English (or Welsh as a First Language) according to Teacher Assessment			
In the School:	73%	In Wales:	81%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements
- A Pupils who were absent from the tests/tasks
- W Pupils who are working towards Level 1

National figures relate to 2001, as results for 2002 are not yet available.

The majority of seven-year-old pupils are expected to attain Level 2.

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2002	Number of pupils in Y6: 9
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 was greater than four but fewer than ten, overall performance indicators only are included	

Percentage of Pupils Attaining at least Level 4 in Mathematics, Science and English (or Welsh as a First Language)			
By Teacher Assessment		By Test	
In the School:	56%	In the School:	56%
In Wales:	68%	In Wales:	68%

National figures relate to 2001, as results for 2002 are not yet available.

The majority of eleven-year-old pupils are expected to attain Level 4.

APPENDIX D

The Evidence Base of Inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors over a period of 2½ days.

- Pre-inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and governing body.
- Seven parents attended a meeting with two members of the inspection team.
- Eleven questionnaires were returned, analysed and summarised.
- All documentation submitted by the school was analysed and discussed, including the school development plan, policy and curriculum documents and teachers' planning files.
- Pupils were observed as they arrived and departed from school and during the midday and other breaks.
- At various times during the day, inspectors took the opportunity to talk to pupils and to discuss their work.
- Thirty lessons or part-lessons were observed.
- Pupils were heard reading and were examined in their knowledge and understanding of English, mathematics, science and other subjects.
- A wide range of pupils' written and other work was examined in each class.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' work with class teachers and examined assessment records.
- Discussions were also held with the headteacher, curriculum co-ordinators and other staff.
- The work of pupils with special educational needs was examined.
- Minutes of meetings and documents relating to the financial management of the school were discussed.
- Budget figures were examined and discussed with the headteacher.
- Attendance and pupil records were inspected.
- Inspectors attended acts of collective worship.

APPENDIX E

Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Team Member	Subject Responsibilities	Aspect Responsibilities
Mrs. E. Griffiths	Areas of Learning for Children under Five English Welsh (as a second language) History Geography Art Music	The School and its Priorities Main Findings Standards of Achievement in Subjects and Areas of Learning Standards of Achievement in Key Skills across the Curriculum Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Behaviour and Attitudes Teaching Leadership & Efficiency Progress since the Last Inspection Key Issues for Action
Mrs. V. Howells	Mathematics Science Design and Technology Information Technology Physical Education Religious Education	Main Findings Assessment, Recording and Reporting Curriculum Special Educational Needs Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources Key Issues for Action
Mr. S. J. R. Page		Main Findings Attendance Support and Guidance Partnership with Parents, the Community, Schools and Other Institutions Partnership with Industry Key Issues for Action