

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

***TOWYN JUNIOR SCHOOL
CONWY***

School Number: 662-2110

Date of Inspection: 28-31 October 2002

by

***Dr Eric Peagam
Registered Inspector***

Date: 16 December 2002

Under Estyn Contract Number: CT32/02P

© Crown Copyright 2002

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

CONTENTS

1. CONTEXT	1
THE SCHOOL AND ITS PRIORITIES.....	1
2. MAIN FINDINGS	1
THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REPORT.....	1
3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	3
3.1 STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING.....	3
3.2 STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN KEY SKILLS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM.....	4
4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL	5
4.1 PUPILS' SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.....	5
4.2 BEHAVIOUR.....	6
4.3 ATTENDANCE.....	6
5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION	7
5.1 QUALITY OF TEACHING.....	7
5.2 ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING.....	8
5.3 CURRICULUM.....	9
5.4 SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND PUPILS' WELFARE.....	10
5.5 PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.....	10
5.6 PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND COMMUNITY, SCHOOLS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS.....	11
5.7 PARTNERSHIP WITH INDUSTRY.....	12
6. MANAGEMENT	13
6.1 QUALITY OF SELF-EVALUATION AND PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT.....	13
6.2 LEADERSHIP AND EFFICIENCY.....	13
6.3 STAFFING, ACCOMMODATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES.....	14
7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING	15
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS.....	15
ENGLISH.....	15
MATHEMATICS.....	17
SCIENCE.....	18
WELSH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE.....	19
DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY.....	19
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY.....	20
HISTORY.....	21
GEOGRAPHY.....	21
ART.....	22
MUSIC.....	23
PHYSICAL EDUCATION.....	23
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.....	24
8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	25
8.1 PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION.....	25
8.2 KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION.....	26
E APPENDIX	27
A. BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	27
B. SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS.....	27
C. RESULTS OF NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENTS AND PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS.....	28
D. THE EVIDENCE BASE OF THE INSPECTION.....	28
E. COMPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INSPECTION TEAM.....	29

1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Towyn Junior School, which is within the boundaries of Conwy Local Education Authority (LEA) is located close to the border with Denbighshire and serves a small seaside community close to Rhyl. It provides for up to 300 boys and girls aged from 7-11, who mainly live in the immediate neighbourhood. At present there are 294 pupils. Many, but by no means all of its pupils transfer from the adjacent infant school. The area has changed from what was originally a small village inhabited by local families to a more cosmopolitan population within which many families are more English than Welsh, including a significant number of families who come for the summer season and others who do not stay long. As a result, only about 60 per cent of pupils in Y6 have been in the school for the full four years. All levels of socio-economic background are represented in the community but the school has a significant proportion of pupils from disadvantaged families, reflected in an above average number (about one-third) of pupils entitled to free school meals. However, there are no pupils being looked after by an LEA. Almost all pupils have English as their first language with no Welsh-speaking homes; almost all pupils are of white ethnicity but there are a small number of pupils receiving support in English as an additional language. About one-third of pupils are identified as having special educational needs (SEN), 22 of whom have statements of SEN, including 12 placed in a Learning Support Unit attached to the school.

The school's vision is to provide, in partnership with parents, for the all-round development of pupils, pursuing high standards within a lively but secure, well cared-for environment that enables all individuals to feel good about themselves. Its aims focus on continuity, balance, recognition of the individual and on providing a good variety of experiences, skills, attitudes, concepts and knowledge to promote the academic, creative and personal development of pupils. The priorities for development have a consistent focus on aiming towards improvements in standards. Governors are very aware of the challenges facing the school and are organising to meet them. In particular, they identify the school's role in promoting a sense of community, which they recognise as being a significant lack in the area generally as there is no real sense of history or identity about the community at large.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Towyn Junior School was previously inspected in October 1997 when it was found to have significant shortcomings in standards, quality of education provided and management, including the management of behaviour. Since then it has made good overall improvement, both in addressing the specific issues raised and in improving the overall ethos of the school. Consequently, it now offers satisfactory and improving value for money.

- Pupils' standards of achievement in the different subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) are as follows:

Subject	Standard of achievement
English	Good
Mathematics	Good
Science	Satisfactory
Welsh as a second language	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Good
Information technology	Unsatisfactory
History	Satisfactory
Geography	Satisfactory
Art	Satisfactory
Music	Good
Physical education	Good

- The percentage of pupils attaining at the expected standard (NC level 4) or higher in national tests in English, mathematics and science in 2001, which is the last year for which national comparative data is available, was above the average for Wales as a whole. However, in 2002, results were significantly lower.
- Comparisons with schools with similar pupil populations, based on the number of pupils entitled to free school meals, show that achievement was significantly above average in 2001. Although year-on-year comparisons may be unreliable as they are affected by the numbers of pupils with SEN in Y6 as well as the level of mobility in the school population, over the five years since the previous inspection, standards have risen at or exceeding the rate of improvement in Wales as a whole.
- Pupils achieved good standards in the great majority of lessons observed; including some in which very good standards were achieved. Standards were never unsatisfactory. Good standards were seen in lessons in every class and every subject, but they were particularly good in music and physical education, including lessons where skills were being developed for competitive games. These skills are very effectively deployed in competition with other schools where the school achieves very well.
- Pupils acquire good knowledge and show confident understanding in most subjects, but their enquiry skills are underdeveloped, particularly in terms of their ability to take responsibility for constructing and conducting independent investigations.
- Standards in the use of the key skills of literacy and numeracy in other subjects are satisfactory overall. Listening and reading skills are developed and deployed well, but there are limitations to the effective use of extended speaking and writing skills. Standards in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) are unsatisfactory, reflecting not only the level of pupils' skills but also the absence of any structure to co-ordinate and monitor their use.
- There has been considerable improvement in the school's provision to support pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development all of which are now good. This effect of this provision is further enhanced by the great success the school has had in improving pupils' behaviour which is now very good overall. Most pupils attend well and arrive punctually, but the impact of a transient section of the school population, the seasonal nature of much local employment and pupils leaving without warning or proper transfer arrangements results in overall unsatisfactory attendance in spite of the satisfactory efforts of the school to address it.
- Teaching, which is good overall, is a considerable strength in the school contributing significantly to the attainment and progress of pupils. It is at least good in two-thirds of lessons, very good in one lesson in eight and rarely unsatisfactory. This pattern is seen with all classes and in all subjects. Where there are shortcomings these consist of insufficient promotion of pupils' responsibility for their own learning and the overuse of worksheets that limit opportunities for extended writing. The school provides a good curriculum that meets statutory requirements and is considerably enhanced by extra-curricular activities. It is particularly effective where detailed, whole-school schemes of work are in place as they are in design and technology. At times, however, the planned timetable is not fully followed and there is insufficient monitoring to ensure that the planned balance is achieved. Assessment, recording and reporting are good in English and mathematics, where effective pupil-tracking arrangements are now in place, but, in some foundation subjects arrangements to track progress are unsatisfactory. The school has identified the need to improve aspects of assessment, and plans to address this in the near future. Pupils are well looked after and there are good arrangements to ensure that they receive the support and guidance that they need. This is particularly effective for pupils for whom English is a second language. The school makes very

good arrangements for the support of pupils with SEN who make consistently good progress and achieve good standards as a result. There are good links with parents and other schools, including the infants' school from which a majority of pupils transfer. However, curriculum links with the secondary schools are underdeveloped. Links with the wider community, especially through the Town Council are very good. There are good aspects to otherwise satisfactory links with local industry that are well used to support pupils' achievement.

- This is a well-led and effectively managed school, operating under some difficult constraints, that provides a good standard of education for its pupils. The headteacher has a clear educational vision and has clearly secured the confidence and trust of parents and staff. The governors are alert to their responsibilities and have set up appropriate structures to carry out and monitor them. Most statutory requirements are met, but some policies are missing and some prescribed practices are inconsistently followed. There are sound structures in place for evaluating the school's work and planning for future development is securely based on clearly identified priorities. Good use is made of the LEA for this, but there is limited involvement of parents, pupils and community in any formal way. The role of curriculum co-ordinators has been developed and their contribution is now satisfactory overall with plans in place to enhance this further. However, the school lacks any structure for overall curriculum co-ordination so that subjects are developed in isolation from one another and cross-curricular links are insufficiently co-ordinated. The administration and day-to-day management of the school's business is very good. Accommodation is satisfactory overall but limitations imposed by the size of some classrooms inhibit opportunities for collaborative learning, and the situation of the isolated mobile classroom is unsatisfactory. Resources are generally satisfactory and good use is made of loan collections to augment the school's own resources. However, shortages in some subjects, particularly in ICT support for other subjects have an adverse impact on learning.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Standards achieved are good overall. They were good or better in the great majority of the lessons observed, including some in which they were very good. They were never unsatisfactory. These standards were consistently reflected in pupils' written and other work over the year.

- In 2001, which is the last year for which national comparative data is available, there were 73 pupils in Y6. Taking the core subjects of English, mathematics and science together, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard (NC level 4) or higher in all subjects was above the average for Wales as a whole. However, results in 2002 were significantly lower than these.
- Comparisons with schools with similar pupil populations, based on the number of pupils entitled to free school meals, shows that achievement was significantly above the median (that is, the mid-point when schools are ranked in order) in 2001.
- The actual figures in any one year are significantly affected by the number of SEN pupils (34 per cent in 2002) taking the national tests, especially those statemented pupils in the Unit who happen to be in Y6. In addition, the high level of mobility, with, for example, only 63 per cent of Y6 pupils in 2002 having been in the school for the full four years has the effect of depressing the school's scores. These factors result in significant fluctuations from year to year, which makes comparison unreliable. For example, the school's results in 2002 show a dip since the previous year.
- However, over the five years since the previous inspection, standards have risen at or exceeding the rate of improvement in Wales as a whole. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment was below that nationally and now is above it. In the 2001 national tests the proportion of

pupils attaining level 4 or higher in English had improved from 48 per cent to 70 per cent, in mathematics, from 43 per cent to 72 per cent and in science, from 57 per cent to 82 per cent.

- Taking 2002 figures, and comparing these with those for similar schools in 2001, the results place the school on the median in English and above it in science, but below it in mathematics. In 2001, it was comfortably above the median in English, and within the top 30 per cent in mathematics and science.
- Differences in performance between girls and boys fluctuate from year to year and from subject to subject so that there is no clear pattern overall. However, girls outperform boys more often than the reverse.
- In lessons, pupils are seen working at levels commensurate with the test results so that, overall, standards of achievement are good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in science. In design and technology, physical education, personal and social education and music they are good and very good at times.
- In other subjects, progress is variable; overall achievement is satisfactory in history and geography where pupils' knowledge is broadly in line with expectations at the end of the key stage, although their subject skills are less well developed. In Welsh as a second language, standards are also satisfactory, taking into consideration that a significant number of pupils previously attended schools where Welsh is not taught. In art, although some good standards were seen in lessons and in pupils' work, overall standards are satisfactory, as they are in religious education.
- In a number of subjects, pupils develop satisfactory research skills in directed investigations or collating facts from a range of sources. However, they do not sufficiently develop enquiry skills to explore questions such as 'why' or 'what if'.
- Progress is unsatisfactory in information technology, where pupils have insufficient regular opportunities to develop and practise the skills they need.
- In most subjects, pupils with SEN, of whom there are a considerable number, make good progress in relation to the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs), whether in separate classes, withdrawn from class for individual work, or integrated into mainstream classes.
- Pupils who receive support in English as an additional language achieve very well, often being in the top set for English and mathematics by the time they are in Y6.
- When the improvement made by individual pupils during their time in the school is aggregated, their progress is good overall and, for many pupils in the special needs class, it is very good.
- The school has set appropriate individual targets for performance in the NC assessments as part of its pupil-tracking programme. These are evaluated from Y5 onwards and pupils achieve well in relation to these targets.

3.2 Standards achieved in Key Skills across the curriculum

Standards achieved in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, numeracy and ICT in other subjects are satisfactory overall, but with significant imbalance between elements. In reading, listening and numeracy, pupils are achieving well. There is satisfactory progress made in speaking and writing. Standards in ICT across the curriculum are unsatisfactory.

- Pupils speak with confidence but there are too few opportunities for them to speak at length or to a wider audience, such as in drama, debate, presentations of research findings or poetry recitations. Pupils use language well, informally, with peers and adults both in and out of the classroom.

- Pupils listen carefully and purposefully in lessons, assemblies and in and out of school. They carry out instructions well and respond quickly and quietly to commands and directions. The use of circle time in some lessons has enhanced their listening skills and appreciation of others' opinions. Their contributions in class shows that they have listened attentively.
- The progress made by all pupils in using reading skills in other subjects is good. They show particular skill in comprehension. Their careful reading and analysis of questions produces accurate answers. Most pupils enjoy reading for information and pleasure.
- Older pupils show good use of reading when researching for topics in religious education or dealing with information from the Internet. The lack of a library has been compensated for by the involvement of the school's library service. A wide range of books in each classroom is well used and supplemented by additional material, produced in school, based on popular novels such as 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' by Roald Dahl.
- Pupils are developing satisfactory writing skills but there are too few opportunities for pupils to extend their writing across the range of subjects as they are too often asked to complete worksheets rather than produce their own accounts.
- Pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects including science, design and technology and geography. They collect and represent data using block graphs, read scales with different calibrations and use a range of measures of mass, length and volume. In physical education, they number steps and sequences, counting and ordering them as they go.
- Standards in the use of ICT are unsatisfactory. Pupils are not using ICT appropriately to extend their learning across the range of subjects. There are some opportunities for pupils to record information in graphs and pictorially in art and religious education. However, they lack the skills to use ICT effectively in supporting and enriching their learning.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now good. Pupils respond well to the caring, positive ethos within the school.

- There is time for pupils to reflect on the themes in assemblies and extend their thoughts to the world beyond them. There are daily opportunities for collective worship. These contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. Lessons in religious education provide further opportunities for pupils to consider their place in the world. They can reflect upon their experiences and compare and contrast their views through quiet contemplation.
- Pupils have a strong view of right and wrong. They show pride in their school and celebrate their achievements. They know that they are valued and show good evidence of self-worth and respect for each other. Their attention to detail, kindness and concern for whole-school issues is evident throughout the school day. Rewards are given appropriately and this fosters a moral code amongst all pupils.
- Throughout their school day and in their extra-curricular activities, pupils show good social attitudes and behaviour. Teachers are good role models and their example sets the tone for the pupils' social awareness and diversity. The school promotes racial harmony and there are opportunities provided in circle time, during lessons and out of the classroom for pupils to resolve issues of social tension positively.
- Pupils celebrate the culture of Wales and are involved in a range of cultural activities such as the Urdd and eisteddfod. Local legends and traditions are often the themes for assemblies and

topics. More work on local industries, musicians and crafts would enhance this provision further.

- Some opportunities for multi-cultural awareness are provided through religious education, visits to the local Mosque and lessons on other cultural foods and traditions. Residential visits to Welsh centres offering sport, language exchange and opportunities to learn new skills are undertaken fairly regularly.
- Pupils are now involved in the Comenius project and are excited at the prospect of cultural exchanges with a lingua assistant from Finland based at the school in the near future. Support from the governing body's involvement with the British Council has also helped to widen pupils' cultural awareness.

4.2 Behaviour

Behaviour and attitudes are very good throughout the school.

- Pupils are keen to come to school, they enjoy school life and are eager to play a full part, including participating in extra-curriculum activities.
- Most pupils respond well in lessons and are generally confident and motivated learners. They listen attentively to their teachers and respond with enthusiasm.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and regularly praise effort and achievement.
- Behaviour is impeccable in many cases and makes a considerable contribution to standards of achievement and the quality of learning in all classes. This is a vast improvement since the findings of the last inspection.
- Teachers have used a successful range of strategies including the 'behaviour modification group-work programme' to promote and achieve the current high standards of behaviour. Any instance of misbehaviour is quickly checked to ensure that learning is not adversely affected. Strong emphasis is placed on praise and encouragement.
- Pupils conduct themselves in an orderly manner in class and around school. They behave responsibly, showing courtesy and respect for each other and adults alike, and display a high degree of self-discipline.
- During lunchtime, conversations with pupils of all ages resulted in lengthy and interesting discussions about their interests and the community and those spoken to were noticeably friendly and forthright in their opinions.
- No pupils have been permanently excluded from the school.

4.3 Attendance

The level of whole-school attendance is unsatisfactory.

- Attendance is consistently below 92 per cent, a number of classes regularly fail to achieve 90 per cent and unauthorised absence is well above the national average. However attendance has shown a marginal improvement for the third consecutive year.
- The school have made stringent efforts to improve attendance and receive effective support from the local authority and education social worker who has a planned programme of regular visits to the school.
- Most pupils attend well and arrive punctually, but the impact of a transient section of the school population, the seasonal nature of much local employment and pupils leaving without warning or proper transfer arrangements, significantly hinders the school's efforts to improve attendance.

- The school's policy on attendance is clearly set out in a document, which has been agreed by the governors. Parents have a sound knowledge of its requirements and, with the exception of a minority, they have been very supportive in ensuring that its objectives are met.
- The school complies with the statutory requirements for registration and the recording of class and school attendance detailed in the National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99.
- Registers are maintained in the classroom during the day and details of attendance are computerised on a weekly basis. Collated data is regularly monitored to assess individual and group trends of absence. The headteacher is immediately notified of any specific points of concern.
- Arrival time for individual lessons is good and ensures maximum teaching time and consequently is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Quality of teaching

Teaching, which is good overall, is a significant strength in the school contributing well to the attainment and progress of pupils. It is at least good in two-thirds of lessons, very good in one lesson in eight and rarely unsatisfactory.

- Good teaching is seen in all subjects and with all classes. It is marked by the effective and consistent use of the behaviour management structure adopted by the school, which has, by now, become so embedded in most classes that its use is unobtrusive and instinctive. Lessons are conducted with a good pace and a sense of urgency is promoted by setting deadlines for pupils to finish tasks. Where pupils complete a set task in less than the expected time, teachers are ready with extension work or alternative tasks so that the momentum of learning is maintained.
- Teaching is good overall in the three core subjects, where teachers display secure subject knowledge and skills when following a consistent programme. It is also good overall in design and technology as well as in personal and social education, music and physical education, where it is very good at times. In the Learning Support Unit, it is always at least good and usually very good.
- Good and very good teaching is seen when lessons are securely planned to achieve specified learning objectives that are shared with pupils. There is a good balance of whole-class teaching and individual and group work with teachers making good use of plenary sessions at the end of lessons to review their learning objectives.
- The best teaching combines very good class management skills with the ability to create a learning environment within which all pupils have the confidence to take part with great enjoyment. This was seen, for example in a physical education lesson where the personal and social skills developed in circle time, were then immediately used to support good learning in gymnastics.
- At other times, very good subject skills and very high expectations enable pupils to achieve very good standards in music, whether in very well managed singing activities or class lessons in which there is a very good range and balance of activities including composition.
- Expositions and explanations are well structured, confident, clear and informative. They set the tempo for lessons and ensure that a good pace is established. Where the lesson consists of practical activity, or learning is supported within lessons by practical activity, this is highly purposeful.

-
- When pupils are working individually or in groups, teachers monitor their work closely, assessing their learning and intervening in a timely and helpful manner to keep them on track. Pupils with SEN are well supported and teachers show good awareness of their needs and any special requirements. At times, however, the physical organisation of the classroom makes it difficult for pupils to work collaboratively and this is insufficiently addressed by the teacher.
 - A significant contribution to the overall quality of teaching is made in individual or small group work where a classroom assistant, working very well in conjunction with the teacher, provides excellent stimulation and support for lower attaining pupils and those with SEN. Good attention is also paid to providing for the needs of higher attaining pupils through the use of groups that provide opportunities for extension work. Awareness of the stage reached by each pupil enables a close match to be made between their needs and the work offered.
 - The importance of presentation and accuracy are underlined by the high standards teachers achieve in their own presentation of work and resource materials. Use of resources is well planned, with a good balance between teacher direction of their use and the opportunities for pupils to select for themselves. Worksheets are generally well constructed, particularly when providing a method of recording and evaluating tasks and outcomes as in science or design and technology.
 - In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they are doing, and to review and improve their work. Teachers provide a range of contexts for pupils to acquire, consolidate and test their knowledge, so that, for example, knowledge gained in science is used in design and technology when pupils consider healthy eating issues when designing a sandwich. They are very successful in providing realistic contexts for pupils to engage in problem solving.
 - Overall, however, while teachers provide good support for listening and reading skills by encouraging their use in other subjects, there are insufficient opportunities for discussion or debate and the extensive use of worksheets limits pupils' opportunities for extended writing. There is insufficient planning for the use of ICT in lessons.
 - Teachers provide a range of opportunities for pupils to conduct research and experiments under controlled conditions, but there is insufficient emphasis on pupils taking responsibility for constructing their own investigations or asking 'why' or 'what if'.
 - Good use is made of homework at an appropriate level, mainly in core subjects, to reinforce classroom learning and to provide opportunities for extended and open-ended investigations.
 - On the rare occasions when the teaching was unsatisfactory (in lessons in Welsh) it resulted from over anxiety about pupils' response. On these occasions, in spite of shortcomings in the teaching, pupils demonstrated satisfactory standards, indicating that they were accustomed to receiving higher quality teaching.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The quality of the school's assessment, recording and reporting on pupils' progress is satisfactory overall.

- There are agreed procedures for assessment and recording pupils' progress throughout the school. Formal tests are carried out about halfway through the school year in written English, and work in pupils' mathematics books is scrutinised to assess standards in the programmes of study for Key Stage 2 (KS2). In science, all the year groups carry out a specific investigation. Assessment in English and mathematics is good and helps to inform planning.
- Assessment for pupils with SEN is good and progress against targets in their IEPs is well monitored.

-
- At the end of the school year, formal testing takes place in mathematics, spelling, oracy, and reading. The Y5 results form the basis for formal targeting of outcomes in future standard assessment tests (SATs).
 - The results are moderated by the year group team of teachers and the information is used to set targets for improvement for individual pupils and to inform planning for the year groups. Year 5 and Y6 pupils are set according to ability for mathematics and English.
 - Assessment opportunities in foundation subjects are linked to the subject planning which in turn reflects the topics and themes studied from NC requirements in each subject. The only recording of assessment in these subjects is in the written reports to parents. There is no structure for recording of continuous progress in basic subject skills across the key stage and this is unsatisfactory.
 - The quality of the comments on written reports to parents is satisfactory overall. The comments are positive and reflect pupils' overall progress but the next step for progression is not clearly identified and noted within the subject comments. In some foundation subjects the comments are too general and are not sufficiently focused on the specific skills, concepts, knowledge and understanding for the particular school year.
 - As from the beginning of the current term, class teachers have set up useful systems for tracking the progress of each individual pupil in order to identify any emerging significant variance in a pupils' development over time.
 - Work is marked regularly in accordance with the school's marking policy. The shared marking of homework in some classes is good practice and the self-assessment opportunities this provides contribute effectively to the pupils' learning.
 - The school makes good use of the information on the written reports on transfer from the feeder infant schools.

5.3 Curriculum

The school curriculum is good and includes all subjects of the NC and religious education. The school provides good extra-curricular experiences for the pupils, including attending residential courses and a weekly pony club.

- The schemes of work in English, mathematics and design and technology provide well for progression in learning. Schemes of work in other subjects reflect an appropriate syllabus, based on the NC requirements, for each year group. In some subjects, there is not sufficient guidance and planning for progression in subject skills and concepts over the key stage, and breadth and depth are lacking, particularly where similar study areas are repeated over a two-year period.
- Planning to support the development of key skills is satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory in terms of the use of ICT.
- At times, the planned time table is not fully adhered to and this, together with a lack of overall monitoring of the full curricular provision and organisation leads to imbalance in the subject provision.
- The homework set promotes and consolidates the learning and contributes significantly to the standards achieved particularly in spelling and reading.
- Provision for the pupils' personal and social development is very good throughout the school and there is a pleasant and positive atmosphere in the school that promotes learning well. Health education is integrated well into aspects of the curriculum and further strengthened in circle time.

-
- Arrangements for social inclusion are good and pupils with SEN follow a good and supportive programme of learning. The provision in the withdrawal class is very good and the attention within mainstream classes enables these pupils to achieve well in all the class activities. The school makes good provision for pupils for whom English is a second language.
 - There is some exchange of classes where teachers have special subject expertise, such as in music, and this effectively promotes higher standards of achievement.
 - The school's provision promotes the pupils' understanding of Wales and of the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* well. The turnover of pupils, many to and from England, is a factor recognised by the school and the extra-curricular provision of residential visits to Glanllyn and Llangrannog are effective in expanding the pupils' experience of Welsh youth culture, and of meeting with pupils from other parts of Wales.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

The provision by the governors and staff for these aspects of the life of the school is good overall.

- There is regular assessment of any risk factors on the school campus and buildings and a member of the teaching staff has responsibility for health and safety factors at the school.
- The staff and governors have worked successfully to develop and maintain good behavioural standards amongst the pupils and there is a positive and caring atmosphere within the school where all the pupils feel appreciated and safe. The pupils show a pleasing standard of courtesy towards visitors to the school and appropriate respect towards their peers and adults at the school.
- There are clear procedures for addressing child protection issues and these are understood by all members of staff.
- The school's policies on health and safety education, including sex education and drug awareness, are good. There are appropriate lessons to promote the safety of the pupils in and outside the school and a healthy life style is promoted through various areas of the curriculum.
- The pupils' personal and social development is also integrated into the curriculum subject areas and it is particularly well promoted in the circle time periods. Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils and work hard to ensure that all have equal access to what the school offers.
- The lack of drinking water and toilet facilities in the distantly placed mobile classroom is unsatisfactory, as is the need to travel an unacceptable distance in all weathers in order to carry out the activities of a school day, including dinner and play times, morning collective worship as a whole school and making use of the hall for physical education and of a range of resources for learning.
- There is no policy on procedures and supervision when pupils visit the facilities at the nearby leisure centre.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Provision for pupils with SEN is very good. Pupils with a variety of special needs are supported very well in a range of contexts and make good progress as a result. Parents of pupils with SEN speak highly of the provision and the way it is managed.

- The school is committed to a policy of maximum inclusion. There is a clear policy for SEN, recently revised to reflect the new Code of Practice structures, which is well understood and effectively implemented across the school. An appropriate SEN register is in place. This is made available to staff and regularly updated.

-
- There is a specialist Learning Support Unit, resourced by the LEA that provides very good support to up to twelve pupils with statements of SEN. The teacher in charge of the Centre is also the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school. In addition to the specialist teaching they receive in the Centre, these pupils are integrated into mainstream classes for most afternoons where they are well supported by the SENCO, NNEB and the learning support assistants.
 - Provision is good in mainstream classes where the great majority of pupils with SEN are educated. This is effectively provided across the school through in-class support with additional withdrawal support for some pupils in Y4 and Y5. This support is provided by a part-time special needs support teacher (SENST) and by teachers provided by the LEA's curriculum support service. The school makes effective use of the expertise available as a result of having the LEA unit.
 - No pupils are disapplied from the full NC entitlement; all pupils follow the NC with support and work carefully matched to their needs and ability.
 - Individual Education Plans (IEPs) have been improved so that they are now well constructed with appropriate, specific and measurable targets. They are regularly reviewed and updated.
 - Governors have an effective structure for monitoring SEN provision. One governor has responsibility for the Learning Support Unit as well as special needs in mainstream classes. He visits frequently to talk to staff, and meet with the SENCO to discuss how best to meet pupils' needs. Any issues are discussed with the headteacher and then brought to the governing body. Other governors always visit the Centre when they are in the school. The governors' annual report includes an appropriate report on the working of the SEN policy. Governors are confident about progress as they see noticeable improvement in pupils' performance.
 - There are effective structures to ensure that the needs of gifted and talented pupils are met. Any such pupils are identified and additional arrangement in place. Pupils' achievements are monitored to see if more structured approach is required. There have been cases of pupils advancing through the school and moving on early with parental agreement.
 - Where pupils are all-round high achievers, the school consults with parents about the possibility of advancement through the school with early transfer to secondary school and has done so on three recent occasions. However, staff are aware of the need to consider the emotional and social implications of such a move.
 - Within the school, special support is provided for those pupils who have talents in particular areas. Staff constantly monitor during lessons and extra-curricular activities for talents in music, drama, art and physical education, for example, and several pupils have gone on to achieve success in these areas.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

Overall, a good partnership has been established with parents, the community, and other schools and institutions.

- A high regard for this partnership was expressed in the pre-inspection meeting and also in the responses to the questionnaire. Parents in return are clearly respected by the school and made to feel welcome and valued.
- The school keeps parents well informed and sends out regular newsletters, which are informative and appreciated. They deal with a variety of matters, including forthcoming events and updates of progress relating to the school's development plans (SDP). There is an appropriate home-school agreement in place.

-
- Appropriate arrangements are made for parents to visit the school and to see and discuss the range of activities undertaken by each age group. Schemes of work are available for scrutiny to enable parents to be aware of what their child is learning.
 - Individual parents are encouraged to assist with school activities and many have acted as supervisors on trips to the theatre and Quarry Bank Mill. Some provide valuable help in the classroom by listening to children read, whilst others offer support in information technology. A list of further volunteers offering their assistance has been compiled and they now await the newly required security clearance before they can commence.
 - The Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) organise regular fund raising events and provide good support for the school. Monies raised have assisted various aspects of the curriculum by purchasing library books, information technology equipment, a computer for mainstream SEN support and a music trolley.
 - The school prospectus meets statutory requirements, whilst the governors' annual report to parents provides a comprehensive review of the work of the school and lists areas for further improvement.
 - Policies for all aspects of school life are implemented by effective liaison between the governors and parents. Ownership requires clarification and should include review dates. The overall results do however demonstrate the quality and usefulness of these arrangements.
 - Strong links have been established with the local community. Pupils are encouraged to participate in community projects and show concern for the environment. Members of the local clergy and charities attend assemblies whilst ex-servicemen have talked to the children about their wartime experiences.
 - Liaison arrangements with the infant school are good and induction meetings for parents of children transferring are well attended. Transfer arrangements to the secondary school are generally satisfactory but there is a lack of structured information provided between the curriculum coordinators.
 - A good partnership has been made with Bangor University. Students undertake regular placements at the school. Effective liaison takes place to ensure that best practice is achieved.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

Overall the partnership with industry is satisfactory with some good aspects.

- No formal policy or strategy has been produced for fostering school-industry links. Nevertheless the school have formed a number of successful practical arrangements with local companies, which benefit areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils have visited a large supermarket to research the costing, source and types of fruit sold. A visit to a garden centre was linked to science in KS2 where pupils learned about the conditions required for plant growth. All pupils visit the Wylfa Power Station where they undertake curriculum studies in science at the Education Centre.
- There is evidence in the classroom that the links achieved to date have increased pupils' economic and industrial awareness. Experience gained will be used to good effect when they transfer to the secondary school.
- The Training and Enterprise Council supported and part funded the school to achieve the status of Investors in People. Since obtaining the award one of the initiatives has been to introduce a quality documentation system to further improve the management structure.
- No links have been forged with the education business partnership.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory with good features. There are good structures in place for evaluating the school's work but the effect of these is somewhat inhibited by weaknesses in assessment procedures. Good use is made of LEA support but there is limited evidence of involvement of parents, pupils and community in any formal way.

- The school has clear and appropriate aims, which were drawn up at the time the school was opened. These aims are published in the prospectus and are reviewed regularly and used as the basis for self-evaluation.
- The school has established an effective structure for self-evaluation with clear objectives and identification of the sources of the data to be used. Evaluation draws heavily on the professional expertise of the staff but also makes effective use of hard data in core subjects from testing and developments within the school. There is a very clear focus on measures of pupil progress as indicators of the value the school adds. Governors have good grasp of the process of self-evaluation used.
- Most statutory requirements are met, but some policies, for example those for key skills and partnership with industry, are missing and some prescribed practices are inconsistently followed.
- The SDP is well constructed and has an effective three-year rolling focus that covers all aspects of the school's work with appropriate prioritisation. It includes a clear statement of the targets to be aimed at, the tasks to be undertaken and timescales and structures for action, monitoring and review. The planning identifies the staff involved together with the resources required both directly and in relation to any staff training need. However, planning for subject development is less secure.
- The SDP is clearly linked to the structure for teachers' continuing professional development through in-service training (INSET). A specific budget is identified for this purpose together with clearly stated intended outcomes for training to meet school and staff needs.
- There is an appropriate programme of observation to monitor teaching and learning. All teachers are observed twice-yearly using a common format for reporting. Subject co-ordinators monitor planning and standards in their subjects and ensure that these are consistent across year groups. The school has plans to extend this monitoring to include subject co-ordinators carrying out observation of teaching and working alongside teachers to help them to develop enhanced skills.
- The governing body has determined that the school requires a strong focus on its pastoral work. In support of this it has set up a very active pastoral committee that, in addition to overseeing individual concerns, monitors and reports to the whole governing body on progress on discipline and pupils' overall personal development. It has had a high level of involvement in setting rules for the physical use of the building (including safety) as well as in supporting and guiding behaviour management.
- Very strong links with the community and parents ensure effective informal feedback on how the school is perceived in general, but there is no formal structure to establish the views of parents or community on specific issues.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

Leadership and efficiency are good overall.

-
- The headteacher provides very clear direction and has a good grasp of the issues facing the school, which he deploys very effectively in identifying the focus for targets in the SDP.
 - He is very well supported by the governors, who are committed and engaged, sharing a vision for the school, which they actively promote. They meet most of their responsibilities well, but there is, as yet, no policy for key skills.
 - Arrangements for the co-ordination and management of subjects are satisfactory. Curriculum responsibilities are fairly and appropriately distributed among staff, who have the necessary expertise to manage their subjects. However, individual subjects are managed in isolation, there is no structure for the overall co-ordination and monitoring of the balance within and between subjects. This also results in insufficient emphasis on cross-curricular use of ICT and aspects of key skills, for which there is no clear responsibility.
 - The budget is well managed with an appropriate balance carried forward. The school benefits significantly from fundraising by parents and other resources that it successfully accesses. There is a clear link between development planning and the structure of expenditure. Financial management rules are tight and correctly followed.
 - Governors support the school and staff through visits and discussions to focus on aims and objectives. Individual governors are encouraged to pursue their special interests within the school. They have established systems of committees to oversee the curriculum and manage the school's finances. In addition, there is a pastoral committee to meet school-specific needs and ensure that individual pupils get the support they need.
 - The governing body discusses expenditure and chooses generally to prioritise expenditure on teachers, particularly to reduce class sizes and in providing support staff. The target setting process includes costing and its outcomes are evaluated in terms of pupils' progress.
 - There is some use of specific targets as criteria for cost-effectiveness of expenditure and this is being further developed. As an example of this, a decision to employ additional staff is linked to the headteacher's forecast of benefits in terms of measurable progress and these outcomes are being evaluated.
 - The school has received external confirmation of the effectiveness of its structures through being awarded Investors in People status.
 - Routine administration and organisation are very good. The school office is very efficiently managed.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

The school is adequately staffed for the number of pupils on roll and the teachers are appropriately qualified to teach the pupils in their care. The staff attend INSET courses for their own professional development and in line with the school's priorities as defined in the SDP.

- There are 13 full time teachers including the headteacher who does not have responsibility for a class, and a 0.8 part-time teacher with combined duties as SEN teacher and to release the deputy headteacher to carry out her managerial role.
- There is support for SEN pupils both in the withdrawal class and in mainstream classes and this effectively promotes the continuity of provision for these pupils.
- The two part-time secretaries have specific and complementary job descriptions and both are aware of the details of each job and can provide continuity in the case of absence. This is a valuable asset to the smooth and effective running of the school's administrative responsibilities.

- The caretaker and ancillary staff ensure that the standard of cleanliness at the school is good and this contributes significantly to the overall atmosphere at the school. The purchase of thick curtains in the school hall through the money raising efforts of the PTA and a substantial donation from the Town Council, adds to the well cared for look of the school as well as enabling regular use of audio-visual aid materials. The parents also contribute to the ongoing decorating programme of the school by painting attractive displays in suitable areas of the school building.
- Overall accommodation at the school is satisfactory, but some classrooms are too small for the number of pupils and restrict investigative and practical activities. The fabric of the building is suffering from weather damage in some study areas, and the location of a class in a mobile classroom on the far side of the playground of an adjacent infant school, with the inherent problems in this situation is unsatisfactory. The recently acquired classroom and the resources for pupils with SEN during withdrawal sessions are of good quality.
- Resources for learning are adequate on a basic level but there is not a sufficient range of artefacts and of equipment for practical investigation in science and foundation subjects generally, and of ICT hardware and software, to enrich and fully support the learning across the curriculum. What is available is often in need of repair and pupils therefore have fewer opportunities to record their work and achievements. The lack of updated and serviceable computers also impacts on all pupils having consistent access to computers in the classroom. The widespread use of worksheets for providing information as well as for recording work across the classes is excessive, restrictive and takes up a disproportionate amount of the school's financial resources.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards Achieved by Pupils

English

Standards of achievement in English are good. They are particularly good in listening and reading.

Good features

- Pupils speak confidently and express their ideas articulately. They engage in conversations willingly and show a good understanding of vocabulary. Most pupils speak with good expression.
- More able pupils use a wide range of vocabulary and speech patterns when talking for specific purposes. All pupils concentrate well in lessons and during other school activities.
- Throughout the school, pupils are developing good reading strategies. Most pupils read fluently and expressively. All pupils use a range of reading strategies to improve their skills. The majority enjoy reading and choose from a range of books for information and pleasure. They all value reading and have confidence in the ability to improve, whatever their individual reading levels.
- Standards of handwriting are good. Pupils are formally and consistently taught from a good quality published scheme. Most write in neat, legible script and older pupils use ink and have developed good cursive styles.
- Spelling standards have also improved and all pupils enjoy learning new words, which are carefully copied out, learned and rewritten independently on a regular basis. Pupils' work is presented well throughout the school.

-
- In writing, all pupils show an understanding of grammar and punctuation. They make progress that is appropriate to their ability. Older pupils plan well, using the conventions of grammar appropriately and some learn adverbs more readily through role-play.
 - Pupils with SEN are developing very good language and literacy skills. Individual work and very good levels of support combine to show very good progress in speech development, reading and writing.
 - The good standards seen in literacy help pupils to read, understand and write about a wide range of other subjects in lessons such as history and religious education. All pupils enjoy writing poetry and show their pleasure and enthusiasm when listening to stories and legends.
 - At the end of Y6, the number of pupils attaining the national standard is usually close to the national average, although the number of pupils attaining above this standard is below the national average. Standards in 2002 are below those usually achieved in the school. When compared with similar schools, the standards achieved are usually above the average.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not achieve their full potential in extended and creative writing as they have insufficient opportunities to show their writing skills through a wider range of activities.
- Pupils insufficiently develop their creativity and enthusiasm for performance as a result of having too few role-play and drama activities.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement in mathematics are good.

Good features

- The youngest pupils understand and apply number bonds to 10, count on in tens to 100, and recognise coins which they use to make up specified amounts or to operate 'change machines' when they show how many two pence pieces would replace a twenty pence piece. Many use mental recall of facts, while others use concrete strategies, counting on and counting back to perform addition and subtraction.
- Year 5 pupils show good understanding of aspects of shape when they explore lines of symmetry in regular figures including recognising that, for the circle, every diameter provides an axis of reflective symmetry.
- They examine number sequences and predict the next number in the series. When reinforcing their understanding of tables they investigate simple rules, for example that for all numbers divisible by three, the digits add up to three, six or nine, or that for numbers divisible by nine, the digits always total nine.
- By Y6, pupils have a secure grasp of place value, identifying the number represented by each digit in a large number and demonstrating understanding of the effect of multiplying or dividing by 10 or 100.
- They understand the structure of fractions, recognising equivalent fractions and explaining the process of cancelling by which they reduce them to their simplest form.
- They work confidently with positive and negative numbers, relating these to realistic contexts such as temperature or the depth reached by a diver.
- Pupils successfully use a range of written and mental methods of computation. They show understanding of number patterns and use this knowledge in problem solving.
- Pupils make good progress across the whole range of mathematics. In lessons, progress is usually good, with visible increase in skills and knowledge, and this clearly reflects the pattern over time.
- Good investigative skills develop as a result of undertaking regular projects in which pupils use their existing knowledge well to explore relationships for example those between the perimeter and area of various shapes. They establish which shapes give the greatest area for a given perimeter and vice versa.
- Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in response to a high level of support and attention to individual needs. Pupils in the Learning Support Unit, for example, confidently identify the characteristics of a range of two and three-dimensional shapes. They match three-dimensional shapes to their two-dimensional footprints.
- The progress of all pupils, and particularly higher attaining pupils, is significantly assisted by the practice of setting Y5 and Y6 in attainment groups based on attainment and aptitude.
- At the end of Y6, the number of pupils attaining the national standard is usually in line with the national average, although the number of pupils attaining above this standard is below the

national average. Standards in 2002 are below those usually achieved in the school. When compared with similar schools, the standards achieved are usually above the average.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings identified.

Science

Standards of achievement in science are satisfactory overall. Pupils acquire good knowledge and understanding of science, but investigative skills are less well developed.

Good features

- The youngest pupils have a broad knowledge of science. They understand that materials have uses according to their differing properties. They carry out simple experiments and draw conclusions from the results as when Y3 pupils test materials to see which would be most suitable for making a rain hat.
- Year 4 pupils have a good understanding of the relationship of the earth to other bodies in space. They know that the sun is the nearest star and that the earth and other planets revolve about it. They know that the earth revolves on its axis every 24 hours and orbits the sun every year.
- They know that sound can be produced in a variety of ways and by different materials. They identify types of sound and classify them either by the means used to make them or by pitch or volume. They examine the effects of light and conduct an experiment to establish how the shadow of a stick moves during the day.
- Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of basic electrical circuits, which they create by following diagrams and record using standard notation. They know that a circuit must be complete for a bulb to light and that a switch is a planned break in the circuit. They understand that circuits can be wired in parallel or in series and make observations about the effect of the type of circuit on the brightness of a bulb.
- They understand the basic life processes and classify creatures into vertebrate and invertebrates, using a flow chart system to enable them to identify particular species by identifying specific characteristics. They know that most living organisms form part of a food chain; either as producer or predator and that there is usually a balance in nature. They extend their understanding of the natural environment through visits, for example to Bodnant Gardens.
- They have good understanding of how the humans circulation system works, explaining the role of the heart and lungs and differentiating between different types of blood vessel. They discover and record the effect on the pulse rate of exercise and rest.
- By the age of 11, pupils have studied all aspects of the KS2 science NC, in increasing depth, and they have had some experience of conducting experiments under conditions of fair testing with structured guidance from teachers. They progressively build understanding and knowledge, using what they have previously learned as a sound basis for acquiring new knowledge.
- Attainment in knowledge and understanding in science is usually above the national average at the end of KS2. In 2001, more pupils attained both the expected standard (NC level 4) and the higher level than in Wales as a whole. Standards in 2002 are below those usually achieved in the school. When compared with similar schools, attainment in this school is usually well above average.

Shortcomings

- While the youngest pupils show satisfactory investigative skills, these are insufficiently built on, particularly by the oldest pupils for whom the emphasis is too much on knowledge and understanding at the expense of developing scientific skills.

Welsh as a second language.

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in Welsh as a second language and the pupils demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning a second language.

Good features

- The pupils show increasing confidence in their use of incidental Welsh during the course of the school day, such as in classroom prayers, hymn singing and responding to their name during registration, as well as when teachers employ it in the management of the class.
- The quality of pronunciation is good with pupils responding well to the high standards set by the majority of the teachers, many of whom are themselves Welsh learners.
- The pupils listen carefully in lessons and understand the theme or topic study area well and with direction and guidance by the teacher, and by the use of flash cards and vocabulary visual aids, they ask and answer questions, varying parts of their answer.
- Within the lesson, the pupils read and follow instructions in workbooks, or on work sheets, and give appropriate, selected answers. They successfully undertake activities such as a word search puzzle, and conduct a class survey on favourite pets, sports and other topics.
- The pupils' written work is completed competently within the workbook framework, and standards of presentation, handwriting and spelling are good.

Shortcomings.

- Many pupils arrive during the key stage with little or no experience of the subject, having previously attended schools where Welsh was not taught. This has the effect of depressing standards.
- As the pupils move up the school from year to year they make insufficient progress in accordance with their age and ability in speaking and role-playing skills. They do not sufficiently practice learnt sentence patterns through regular use in incidental situations.

Design and technology

Only one lesson was seen during the inspection but, from examination of examples of pupils' work and other available evidence, standards of achievement in design and technology are good.

Good features

- Pupils develop good skills using a good range of materials. They apply these skills to design and create artefacts and products, covering all strands of the subject.
- Year 3 pupils apply their developing design skills in food technology when they design a sandwich, using criteria such as personal preferences and healthy eating considerations. They use pneumatics to control the moving parts of 'monsters' that they make from junk materials.
- Year 4 pupils examine how electric lights are constructed and record their findings. They apply their understanding of electricity to design and build torches and models that light up. They examine how levers and hinges work and use them in making good quality pop-up books.

-
- Year 5 pupils develop an awareness of product design when they evaluate biscuits according to a specified range of characteristics and consider how well they would fit a specified purpose. They then use what they have learned to design and make their own biscuits.
 - They show good understanding of the nature and purpose of structures and reinforcement, when they design, model and evaluate a range of shelters relating to their work on 'Children of Winter'. They combine their knowledge of resistant materials with understanding of sounds gained in science to make working versions of simple musical instruments.
 - In Y6, pupils apply their design skills to textiles and other compliant materials when they make slippers to their own design. They research the structure of shoes and the process involved in making them. They cut, shape and join different materials which they decorate and then evaluate their results. They show good skills and imagination in food technology when they make fruit-based cocktail drinks. They successfully combine understanding of structures and mechanisms when they examine how fairground rides work and make working models of them.
 - Throughout the school, pupils become increasingly confident in their use of structured planning and evaluation sheets so that they acquire good understanding of the principles of designing for a purpose and reviewing the extent to which the purpose is met. They compare the results with their intentions and reflect on changes that they have made. In the process, they consider how they could have been more successful. They are aware that good design combines functionality with attractive appearance, and apply a range of finishes to their work.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings identified.

Information and communications technology

No lessons were seen in the subject but from other (limited) evidence available during the inspection, standards of achievement are unsatisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils are now given some opportunities to use computers to record their work and use folders and disks to store samples. There is a range of work completed in some classes by pupils using the computer, including an Islamic prayer, slogans and personal profiles. This evidence shows that a small number are beginning to create a portfolio of work to a satisfactory standard.
- Some pupils make satisfactory use of opportunities to use CD-ROM to access and store information. They enter data into the computer and produce bar graphs to record their findings.
- Older pupils also use graphics at a satisfactory level to illustrate their ideas. They capture and manipulate images on screen when using programs designed to support learning in other subjects.
- Pupils with SEN in the Learning Centre are familiar with the use of ICT and regularly access electronic mail from the Internet. In this setting, pupils are achieving in line with expectations.
- Some pupils use switches to access different forms of technology such as video and tape recorders and also record their work in different styles, including using picture packages and simple programming (Logo) at a satisfactory level.

Shortcomings

- Overall, pupils' skills in the use of ICT are unsatisfactory because they are insufficiently taught or provided with opportunities to share ideas and become competent at interpreting and researching information.

-
- Pupils do not develop a coherent set of skills as they mainly work in isolation on aspects of ICT. This limits their progress in using ICT across the range of subjects.
 - They do not regularly explore and solve problems across a variety of subjects, which limits their progress in using ICT in a wider context.
 - There is little evidence to show that all pupils can use electronic mail at a more sophisticated level, such as attaching various files to mailings.
 - Pupils' progress is significantly impeded by the limited availability of, good quality hardware available for their regular use.

History

Standards of achievement in history are satisfactory across the key stage.

Good features

- Across the key stage, the pupils are increasing their knowledge and understanding of the past and how events affected the lives of people of the period studied.
- They understand that in many periods there is a significant contrast between the lives of rich and poor and how this affected children's daily lives. They gather information from contrasting printed pictures of life in homes during Victorian Britain and can list the features found in each picture.
- The pupils gain considerably in their understanding of life in a past time through visiting historical sites and places of historical interest, and particularly through taking part in role-play in historical settings. Handling and studying artefacts from the past also supports their understanding of changes over a period of time.
- From the information provided in the form of published work packs, and other material printed on work sheets, the pupils' reading and comprehension skills are developed well in their history lessons, with more able pupils accessing a wider range of knowledge by this means. The pupils empathise with children in the past, such as the evacuees of World War II, and use the information in the text to compose letters and diaries reflecting the living conditions of the period well.
- In some studies, such as the Romans and the Second World War, the pupils make good use of maps to extend their understanding of the scale of some events in the past. They are developing an understanding of chronology through short time lines that cover their particular study area.

Shortcomings

- The pupils do not sufficiently develop research skills through the use of a wide range of sources of information. They do not sufficiently discuss how events in the past affect our lives today, share ideas, discuss opinions and select their own method of presenting their findings.
- Pupils' work shows limited breadth and depth in some areas of study and they do not sufficiently link the various periods studied to their knowledge of local or Welsh history.

Geography

Standards of achievement in geography are satisfactory.

Good features

- In the younger classes, the pupils are developing their understanding of simple plans and maps in their study of the school campus. They study the materials of buildings and are developing well in their skills of observation.

-
- Older pupils make use of a variety of maps to locate particular man made or natural features, such as marking the Snowdon mountain railway stations on a printed contour map, or locating Snowdonia on a map of Wales. They are able to use simple coordinates as reference points and can identify countries in Europe on a map of the world. They understand the purpose of a key when map reading. They recognise the symbols used in an Ordnance Survey map and in forecasting weather conditions. They are able to find information from aerial photographs and to use this for identifying buildings on outline plans.
 - They are developing knowledge and understanding of the course of a river and use the correct vocabulary to describe the various sections and features. They study and list the main features of a nearby seaside town and are able to describe the main buildings in Conway.
 - The pupils search for information on a computer and are able to answer a series of questions on what they have found using appropriate vocabulary.
 - Through their study of the Snowdonia National Park, the older pupils are becoming aware of environmental changes brought about by humans and have a growing understanding of the relevance of geography to environmental, social, economic and political issues.

Shortcomings

- Pupils show insufficient progression in the development of investigative skills and in the depth and breadth of their studies. Their studies reflect too much reliance on reading the source material provided on worksheets for information in order to answer questions.

Art

Standards of achievement, which were previously unsatisfactory, are now satisfactory. Two lessons were seen during the inspection and the additional scrutiny of work throughout the school shows pupils are achieving in line with expectations.

Good features

- Pupils' observational drawings show satisfactory standards of line and shade. They interpret well how emotions can affect line representation. Some use of sketchbooks enables them to use a variety of methods as they interpret moods to create sketches. They follow advice carefully from an artist, captured on video, and show pride in their accomplishments, which are then put on display.
- Older pupils begin to understand colour theory as they experiment with mixing primary colours to form secondary colours. Well-prepared resources enable all pupils to mix and recognise emerging colours. Higher ability pupils produce a good range of shades of brown during this lesson.
- Pupils learn to produce imaginative pictures, patterns and designs. They extend their interest during after school clubs, where they learn a range of modelling techniques as well as using pastels and other materials to produce drawings on a set theme.
- They develop satisfactory skills in three-dimensional art as when Year 6 use imagination and ingenuity to make containers for 'wishes' from recycled materials, where the design reflects the wish being made.
- A range of art work is displayed around the school, showing satisfactory, and sometimes good, standards of achievement from pupils. Examples of pupils' quality work are found elsewhere in the community, including a mural at the leisure centre.
- Pupils show that they have made good use of the opportunity to study Welsh artists and hear stories about a great artist in assembly. Their interest in art can be witnessed in discussion as

they show examples of completed work to visitors. Pupils are developing satisfactory standards in terms of understanding artwork in their portfolios.

Shortcomings

- Pupils have insufficient knowledge of works by great artists. This is evident from the monitoring that is developing in the subject.
- The use of sketchbooks is limited. Some pupils do not recognise the importance of selecting and recording their observations by making a series of studies in their sketchbooks.

Music

Standards of achievement in music are good overall. At times and in some aspects of the subject they are very good.

Good features

- The youngest pupils identify families of percussion instruments and classify them according to sound and other characteristics. They join patterns made using body percussion to form a sequence. They show good awareness of the importance of variety in composition, including the role of silence for emphasis within a piece as well as at the beginning and end.
- They listen to and appraise a range of music including classical pieces such as the ‘Carnival of the Animals’ and ‘Rap’ compositions like ‘Please Mr Noah’, focusing on rhythmic patterns and the use of musical elements when discussing them.
- They listen carefully to the sound of instruments heard on a recording and recognise and name a variety of wind, percussion and stringed instruments.
- As they move through the school, pupils increase their appraisal skills as they evaluate songs from around the world for pace, choice of instrument and nature of accompaniment, expressing and justifying a preference.
- They understand the difference between pulse and rhythm and apply this when producing a range of ostinati to accompany songs which they then discuss using appropriate vocabulary.
- The standard of singing, whether in music lessons or in whole-school hymn practice is good. Pupils progressively develop skills and confidence and progress is evident as they move through the school. Pupils sing with a pleasant, unforced tone, showing appropriate attention to phrasing and dynamics. They increase volume without loss of quality of tone or pitch and sing familiar hymns with gusto.
- Pupils’ standards in singing are significantly enhanced by the opportunity to sing in the school choir and a significant number do so. They learn a range of songs that they perform both in the school and elsewhere, including visits to local retirement homes at Christmas.
- Pupils who receive group or individual tuition, for example on the violin or guitar make good progress and achieve standards which are above average when playing together either in unison or in harmony. They achieve good tone, listen well to each other and take turns well when fitting parts together. They make perceptive judgements about their own performance and work hard to improve.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings identified.

Physical education

Standards of achievement are good overall, with some very good performances seen in gymnastic activities.

Good features

- All pupils respond well to physical education lessons. They show good control of their body movements and make good use of space in the hall and leisure centre. When they follow different pathways using hopping, skipping and stepping actions, they show very good physical strength and balance.
- Pupils listen well. They follow instructions and regard health and safety issues as they move around, collaborating well in pairs and groups. They take good account of their own and each other's assessments of their performance and work well to improve.
- Younger pupils show great enthusiasm for team games and support and encourage each other as they compete. Older pupils also show this level of sportsmanship in football practice, extending their performances to follow through instructions in ball control, dribbling and passing.
- Pupils take responsibility for setting up equipment in gymnastics. They build on skills previously practised to show good standards in travelling, balancing, rolling and performing sequences on large and small apparatus.
- In dance activities, pupils respond well to the music, matching their movements to the rhythm and keeping time well. When making free interpretation of music, they move well, albeit with a tendency to copy one another.
- In swimming, pupils achieve well across a range of water confidence and swimming skills. They make good progress through the levels of the scheme being followed and most become competent swimmers by the time they leave.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Religious education

Standards of achievement in religious education are satisfactory and the pupils' studies are based on the Agreed Syllabus of the local authority.

Good features

- Pupils are familiar with stories from the Old and New Testaments in the Bible and are aware of the moral message implicit in the stories that reflect how humans feel in different circumstances. They discuss right and wrong responses to life's events.
- The pupils are familiar with the main Christian festivals, know of places of worship in their locality and understand the place of religion in the major steps of the life of a Christian such as christening, marriage and a burial service. They understand that Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that his stories as recorded in the New Testament section of the Bible have meanings for our lives today.
- The pupils show a growing knowledge and understanding of faiths other than Christianity and know that some faiths have more rules for the day-to-day activities of their followers than others. The pupils learn of some of the symbols and celebrations of other faiths.
- The pupils' comprehension skills are well developed as they gather information from a worksheet to answer questions. The older pupils' understanding and knowledge were supported well through their visit to a local mosque and to the local church when the school celebrated the Queen's Jubilee.

Shortcomings

- The pupils have not established a clear conceptual framework within which to understand all the facts they learn from story telling or from information and illustrations on worksheets. They

are not developing enquiry skills nor are they using a wide variety of written and oral forms to discuss and record their studies and ideas.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

The school was last inspected in the autumn of 1997 and the inspection report identified a number of serious concerns, which resulted in a judgement that the school did not give value for money. A third of teaching was unsatisfactory; standards were unsatisfactory in five subjects, including mathematics and there was unsatisfactory provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There were weaknesses in leadership and management in that appraisal requirements were not being met; there was a lack of development planning to improve standards and no systematic monitoring of teaching and learning. Financial management was insecure and there were no mechanisms to establish cost-effectiveness. The partnership with parents and the community was good but all other aspects were, at best, satisfactory and in the case of attendance, barely so. A number of key issues for action were identified, covering the need to:

- improve standards in mathematics, information technology, art, music and religious education;
- actively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- reduce the level of unsatisfactory behaviour in the school by ensuring that all staff adopt and consistently enforce the agreed policy for behaviour management;
- improve the quality of teaching in some classes and subjects;
- improve the quality of learning where it is unsatisfactory;
- Devise and implement a monitoring programme which will enable the governing body, headteacher and co-ordinators to have an informed overview of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

In addition, there were a number of shortcomings identified in otherwise satisfactory subjects, including lack of resources in some. The use of ICT across the curriculum was unsatisfactory and there were shortcomings in the use of writing in other subjects.

Since the last inspection the school has made good improvement.

Many of the Key Issues have been successfully addressed:

- Standards and quality in mathematics, art, music and religious education have all improved, in some cases markedly. However there has been insufficient progress in regard to information technology and standards and provision remain unsatisfactory.
- There are now good structures to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Unsatisfactory behaviour has virtually disappeared through staff effectively operating a consistent structured approach to behaviour management.
- Weaknesses in teaching and learning have been effectively addressed and both are now good overall.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is established and governors make effective use of an appropriate range of information to monitor the overall work of the school.

In addition, other shortcomings identified in the report have been addressed:

-
- The range of assessment information used to monitor pupils' progress and development has been improved and further improvements have been identified.
 - There is a clear link between appraisal structures and the continuing professional development programme.
 - Resources are now improved and are generally sufficient to support the curriculum on offer, although there are specific shortages in some subjects, particularly for ICT support.
 - During this period, a good model for self-review has been adopted.
 - Target setting has been developed and the school makes use of the analysis of SATs including gender data.

Other issues that have received attention resulting in overall improvement include:

- homework;
- the organisation of break and lunchtime, including supervision arrangements;
- the quality of information for parents, including revising the format for reports;
- establishing consistency and relevance in school and class rules.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order further to enhance the quality of education and to continue to raise the educational standards achieved there is a need to:

- improve standards in ICT and ensure that skills are promoted and improved through work in other subjects;
- establish a structure for overall co-ordination and monitoring of the curriculum, including cross-curricular elements;
- improve attendance;
- increase the range of opportunities for pupils to develop independent investigative skills and the scope for extended writing across the curriculum;
- improve the resources for those subjects where there are deficiencies and establish planning to ensure that there are appropriate resources for the curriculum it is intended to follow in each subject;
- ensure that assessment in all subjects enables secure planning for continuity and progression and enables teachers to report on pupils' achievements and the next steps in their learning;
- ensure all statutory policies are in place and that required practices are consistently followed;
- address shortcomings identified in subjects and aspects that are otherwise satisfactory or good.

E APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Towyn Junior School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	7-11
Address of school	Morfa Avenue Foryd Rhyl
Post-Code	LL18 5LE
Telephone Number	01745 353721

Headteacher	Hywel Jones
Date of appointment	January 1994
Chair of Governors	Gareth Parry
Registered Inspector	Dr Eric Peagam
Dates of inspection	28-31 October 2002

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>					
Year group	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	63	73	75	83	294

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	13	1	13.8

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	23:1
Average teaching group size	26
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.1:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>		
Term	% attendance	% unauthorised absence
Spring 2002	91.5	1.9
Summer 2001	90.6	1.9
Autumn 2001	91.8	1.3

<i>Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.</i>	5
--	---

C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2002 (Wales 2001)			Number of pupils in Y6: 79										
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	3		0	0	19	29	32	18	0
		National (2001)	0	3	6		0	1	6	19	48	25	0
	Test/Task	School	0	1	5	0			5	23	41	25	
		National (2001)	0	2	2	0			4	14	47	31	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	1		0	0	11	29	47	11	0
		National (2001)	0	0	1		0	0	4	19	47	28	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	1	0			10	34	38	17	
		National (2001)	0	2	1	1			4	18	42	32	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	5	23	43	29	0
		National (2001)	0	0	1		0	1	3	15	52	29	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0			5	19	42	34	
		National (2001)	0	2	0	1			2	13	51	31	

- 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
N 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

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:	46	In the school:	51 (56 in mainstream)
In Wales: (2001)	68	In Wales: (2001)	68

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors over a period of four days, and the report was based on evidence from:

- pre-inspection meetings held with the headteacher, staff and the governing body;
- the analysis of 58 returned parents' questionnaires and a meeting attended by five parents;
- the observation of 61 lessons or part lessons, including sessions of instrumental tuition in music, with work in each class being observed by at least three inspectors;
- accompanying pupils to lessons at other locations;
- a scrutiny of pupils' work and hearing pupils read;
- an examination of assessment records and reports to parents;
- observation of registration procedures;
- the scrutiny of school documentation, teachers' plans and assessment records;
- observation of pupils' behaviour in and around the school at break-times, lunch-times and before and after school;

- attendance at assemblies;
- discussions with the headteacher and other staff;
- discussions with staff from other agencies visiting the school;
- post-inspection meetings with senior management and governing body.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Dr E Peagam	RgI	Standards of achievement Quality of teaching Special educational needs Self-evaluation and planning for improvement Leadership and efficiency	mathematics science design and technology music
Mr S Roberts	Lay	Behaviour Attendance Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions Partnership with industry	
Mrs E Hughes	Team	Curriculum Assessment, recording and reporting Support, guidance and pupils' welfare	Welsh geography history religious education
Mrs C Gribble	Team	Key Skills Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Resources	English art information technology physical education

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