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**INSPECTION OF
VICTORIA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. Context

The school and its priorities

Victoria Primary School is situated in the small town of Abersychan, near Pontypool, in the County of Torfaen. It serves the local community, which is described as being neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.

The pupils represent the full range of ability and around 16% are entitled to free school meals, which is below the average of 20% for Wales and 21% for the County of Torfaen. They all come from English speaking homes. About 16% of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs (SEN) and two pupils are statemented.

The school was last inspected in the autumn term of 1996.

The school has a suitable range of aims, one of which is to provide a happy, caring, learning environment in which children are able to develop skills and concepts. The aims also state that the focus of a good school is effective learning. The school motto is “Let everything you do be a credit to yourself and the school” and its vision statement is “Commitment to Excellence”.

The school’s recent priorities feature in the current school development plan (SDP), the major targets being the development of reading and writing and encouraging a culture of self-evaluation which results in a school that regularly evaluates performance and sets targets for improvement.

2. Main findings

The main findings of the report

Victoria Primary is an improving school which has succeeded in making progress in important areas since the last inspection. It is successful in establishing a positive ethos and an environment where all children and pupils are valued and respected.

- Standards of achievement, overall, are satisfactory or better throughout the school. Standards in over half the sessions seen in key stage 1 (KS1) and key stage 2 (KS2) are very good or good, one-tenth being very good and five-tenths good. In the majority of the remainder they are satisfactory.
- The educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate and effectively promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children’s Learning. Standards achieved and progress made by children in the six areas of learning, overall, are very good.

Standards reached by children under five years of age in the six areas of learning are as follows:

Area of learning	Standard achieved
Language, literacy and communication skills	Very good
Personal and social development	Very good
Mathematical development	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Very good
Physical development	Good
Creative development	Very good

Standards of achievement in the subjects of the national curriculum (NC) and religious education in KS1 and KS2 are as follows:

Subject	Standards of achievement in KS1	Standards of achievement in KS2
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Welsh second language	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
History		Good
Geography	Good	Good
Art	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Music		
Physical education	Satisfactory	Good
Religious education	Good	Good

- There was insufficient history at KS1 and music in both key stages being taught during the inspection for judgements on standards to be made.
- 2001 NC test and task results for the school in KS1 show 77% of the pupils achieving the core indicator of level two or above in English, mathematics and science, compared to a Welsh average of 81% and a Torfaen average of 82%.
- In KS2, for 2001, 100% of the pupils achieved the core indicator of level four or above in English, mathematics and science, well above the Welsh average of 68% and a Torfaen average of 62%. Results in the three core subjects have improved every year from 1998 to 2001.
- Standards achieved in the key skills across the curriculum are satisfactory overall. They are very good in listening and good in speaking. Standards in reading, writing and numeracy are satisfactory and they are unsatisfactory in information and communications technology (ICT). Children under five make very good progress in applying their early literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social education is very good. The school has clear aims, principles and values which are reflected in a supportive and caring ethos. Relationships between pupils and adults and between pupils themselves are very good and a strength of the school. Spiritual development is good and

cultural development is satisfactory. A sense of involvement in the school community is reinforced in school assemblies in which pupils participate with enthusiasm. The school effectively promotes equal opportunities for all.

- Standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes are very good and are a major strength of the school. The headteacher and all staff create an environment where learning can flourish. All pupils are polite and courteous, work and play well together and show respect and maturity in their dealings with adults.
- Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and the large majority of pupils attend school regularly. There is a significant number of pupils whose attendance falls below the acceptable rate.
- The quality of teaching, overall, is satisfactory or better throughout the school. In both key stages, over half the lessons seen featured good or very good teaching with over one-tenth being very good and four-tenths good. Around one-tenth of teaching is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching with the under-fives is very good overall.
- Teachers have clear objectives and lessons are conducted at a lively pace. Lessons build on elements previously studied and good questioning techniques are used to further pupils' learning. Tasks are appropriately matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Where teaching is not as successful, the organisation of lessons is not appropriately balanced. Lessons lack pace, work is over-directed and not always at a suitable level.
- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is satisfactory. Assessment files are kept for all pupils and teachers record detailed formative comments on pupils' performance and attitudes. Assessment of the foundation subjects is underdeveloped. Planning does not always feature focused assessment tasks. Marking of pupils' work is undertaken conscientiously in most instances but does not always detail achievement or indicate the next steps of learning. The annual reports to parents comply with statutory requirements. The assessment and recording procedures for the under-fives are good.
- The quality, breadth and balance of the curriculum for children and pupils are good and contribute significantly to their achievement. There are whole school curriculum overviews for all subject areas and planning documentation gives teachers clear guidance. Sound curriculum maps are in place for all subjects and these support continuity and progression. Pupils with SEN have access to the full curriculum. The planning for key skills across the curriculum is at an early stage of development.
- Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular activities and the curriculum is enhanced by educational visits and visitors to the school.
- The quality of support and guidance and pupils' welfare is satisfactory with many good features. All staff know the pupils well and ensure that they feel valued. Pupils' views are given status and the equal opportunities ethos is reflected in the sensitivity shown to the needs of all members of the school community.
- There are some potential issues of health and safety which have been discussed

with the school concerning the layout of the site and the surrounding roads.

- The provision for pupils with SEN is good. The school's approach is fully inclusive and pupils make good progress. Class teachers and support assistants provide valuable help.
- The school's partnerships with parents, the community, other schools and institutions are good. From the response to the pre-inspection questionnaires and from discussion with parents, the vast majority are positive about relationships with the school. Good information is provided on a regular basis and the school complies with National Assembly for Wales (NAfW) guidelines. Partnerships with industry are good. The school has successfully established a number of effective partnerships with organisations which are utilised to develop pupils' understanding of the world of work.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good. The school makes appropriate use of internal and external assessment data to identify and set challenging targets for further improvement. In addition, the monitoring of the SDP, curriculum leaders' reports, benchmarking analysis, and parent, governor and teacher questionnaires are used to input relevant information. Pupils add their views via a school council. Issues are identified and areas for improvement are developed. The SDP clearly sets out steps to be taken and is a detailed and thorough document to suitably guide the school.
- Leadership and efficiency are good. The headteacher promotes a positive ethos and sense of purpose to the school. All staff display a strong commitment and unified approach to achieving its aims. The governing body is supportive and fulfils its roles and responsibilities conscientiously. Members show a growing understanding of the schools' progress in raising standards and in setting targets for improvement.
- Administrative routines are managed effectively and efficiently and the school operates well on a day-to-day basis.
- Curriculum responsibilities have recently been reallocated. At the time of this inspection three permanent staff were absent, including the deputy headteacher. Two subject areas were covered by supply teachers and the headteacher was covering additional subjects. English and art were not fully represented due to staff absence.
- The monitoring of subjects by curriculum leaders includes examining pupils' work, teachers' planning and auditing resources. The effective use of classroom visits is not consistent in all subjects. Portfolios of pupils' work are at an early stage of development and do not fully indicate coverage, support teacher assessment and inform self-evaluation. The full potential of the monitoring role of curriculum leaders is not yet realised and has still to impact on raising standards and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.
- The headteacher undertakes monitoring of teaching and learning and has implemented various supporting strategies when necessary.
- All staff are suitably qualified and appropriately deployed. The school secretary

and the caretaker make valuable contributions to the life of the school and to ensuring the well being of pupils. The school is well served by the canteen staff, lunchtime supervisors and cleaners.

- The quality and quantity of resources are generally satisfactory and displays around the school enrich and extend pupils' learning.
- There is no suitably designated and resourced outdoor play area for children under five. The absence of markings, seating areas and the provision of play equipment in the school playgrounds inhibits purposeful activities at breaks and lunchtimes for all pupils.
- The present headteacher was appointed in the year following the last inspection. As a result of identifying appropriate priorities and deploying effective strategies the school has made many improvements in addressing the previous key issues. A whole school approach has been introduced for planning schemes of work, curriculum maps and a curriculum overview. Teaching and learning objectives feature clearly in the schemes of work and short term planning. These aspects of planning have improved and are now comprehensive and thorough. Standards in Welsh and spelling have risen from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. Standards in geography and handwriting have risen from unsatisfactory to good. Teaching has improved overall with over half the sessions featuring very good and good teaching. There is now no poor teaching but there is a small element of unsatisfactory teaching. The role of curriculum leaders has improved and they now monitor teachers' planning, pupils' work, audit resources and conduct some lesson observations. Their role is still not sufficiently developed for them to assess standards and gain an informed understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of assessment has improved since the last inspection. The individual learning needs of pupils are now met through suitably differentiated work and additional adult support. Marking and planning for assessment are still to be fully developed.
- In addition, standards in both key stages in English, mathematics and religious education have risen from satisfactory to good. In KS2, standards in history have risen from satisfactory to good. In the last inspection, children under five made good progress in the six areas of learning; they now make very good progress overall. Pupils' social and moral development has improved from good to very good and their cultural development from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. Standards of behaviour and attitudes were good and are now very good.

3. Educational standards achieved by pupils

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Standards of achievement, overall, are satisfactory or better throughout the school. Standards in over half the sessions seen in KS1 and KS2 are very good or good, with one-tenth being very good and five-tenths good. In the majority of the remainder they are satisfactory with a very small proportion of unsatisfactory standards.

- The educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate and effectively

promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards achieved and progress made by children in the six areas of learning, overall, are very good.

Standards reached by children under five years of age in the six areas of learning are as follows:

Area of learning	Standard achieved
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Physical development	Good
Creative development	Very good

Standards of achievement in the subjects of the NC and religious education in KS1 and KS2 are as follows:

Subject	Standards of achievement in KS1	Standards of achievement in KS2
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Welsh second language	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
History		Good
Geography	Good	Good
Art	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Music		
Physical education	Satisfactory	Good
Religious education	Good	Good

- There was insufficient history at KS1 and music in both key stages taught during the inspection for judgements on standards to be made.
- Pupils achieve mainly very good and good standards in early years, lower KS1, younger groups in KS2 and upper KS2. Standards with other age groups vary between very good and unsatisfactory.
- 2001 NC test and task results for the school in KS1 show 77% of the pupils achieving the core indicator of level two or above in English, mathematics and science, compared to a Welsh average of 81% and a Torfaen average of 82%.
- In KS2, for 2001, 100% of the pupils achieved the core indicator of level four or above in English, mathematics and science, well above the Welsh average of 68% and a Torfaen average of 62%. Results in the three core subjects have improved every year from 1998 to 2001.
- Children's results in a baseline assessment, conducted when they start school, are comparable to those of Torfaen in oracy and are above in number and personal

and social development. They are below in reading and writing. The children make very good progress in their first year in school and achieve very good standards in four of the six areas of learning. They achieve good standards in the other two areas of learning.

- The school sets year group and end of key stage targets for all pupils in each of the core subjects. In most instances these are acceptably accurate.
- Teacher assessment, as compared to NC test and task results, is accurate in KS1. There is some underestimation of pupil achievement in KS2.
- Pupils with SEN achieve good standards commensurate with their abilities and needs.

3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum

Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum are satisfactory overall. They are good in speaking and very good in listening. In reading, writing and numeracy, standards are satisfactory and in the use of ICT across the curriculum, standards are unsatisfactory.

- The under-fives make very good progress in applying their early literacy and numeracy skills within and across the six areas of learning.
- KS1 and KS2 pupils are attentive in whole class and small group situations and display very good listening skills. Throughout the school, in their lessons and other activities, the way in which pupils collaborate and take notice of each other's comments and opinions, makes a significant contribution to the good quality of learning.
- In both key stages, most pupils express themselves clearly and confidently. They relate suitable comments to the topics they are addressing and use appropriate vocabulary connected with their studies.
- Pupils read a range of written material across the curriculum. They read for pleasure and draw out required facts or concepts from non-fiction when directed by their teachers. Independent research and information retrieval skills are underdeveloped.
- The majority of pupils, according to age and ability, write satisfactorily as directed for a variety of purposes and in different formats to express opinions, describe experiences or record facts in history, geography and religious education. In science and design and technology, work is limited with some groups of pupils by the over use of worksheets.
- Pupils in both key stages satisfactorily use their numeracy skills to collect, represent and analyse data within science and geography. A significant minority are not always able to apply these skills to address problems they encounter. Numeracy is underused in design and technology.
- Standards in the use of ICT across the curriculum are unsatisfactory. In science,

ICT is well used for the purpose of graphical representation and other recording of work. In geography and history, only limited use of ICT in handling, classifying and presenting data is evident. In English, the use of ICT for drafting and editing is underdeveloped. Pupils do not readily use ICT skills in a sufficiently wide range of contexts and, in both key stages, limited progress is made in applying these skills to support problem-solving activities.

- Planning for key skills identifies opportunities where they may be applied in various subjects. They do not detail activities or allow for appropriate progression in key skills and there is sometimes confusion between key skills and the common requirements of the NC.

4. Ethos of the school

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The quality of pupils' social and moral development is very good. Their spiritual development is good and cultural development is satisfactory.

This shows improvement since the last inspection when moral and social development were good and cultural development was unsatisfactory.

- The school has clear aims, principles and values which are reflected in a supportive and caring ethos. School and class rules are displayed throughout the school. Pupils contribute to these rules and are familiar with them.
- Relationships between pupils and adults and between pupils themselves are very good. Pupils have a keen awareness of the difference between right and wrong, are supportive of each other and treat each other with respect.
- A school council, comprised of elected representatives from each year group, meets regularly and is a successful vehicle for pupils' representation, encouraging participation about decisions in school life and developing qualities of citizenship. This, together with a prefect system, ensures pupils take due responsibility and exercise initiative.
- Property is given appropriate respect and older pupils set an example for younger ones and are caring towards them. Pupils contribute regularly to charity appeals and their social skills are developed through involvement in community projects and during various educational visits.
- Opportunities for enhancing pupils' self esteem and acknowledging achievement are given high priority. Positive behaviour strategies and reward systems are used effectively and culminate in "Pupil of the Week" and other achievements being celebrated throughout the school. These activities have a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and work.
- A sense of involvement in the school community is reinforced in school assemblies in which pupils participate with enthusiasm. On these occasions, the spiritual dimension of pupils' development is emphasised and visiting clergy and

other representatives of local churches provide a significant contribution. Assemblies meet statutory requirements.

- Pupils' cultural understanding is developed by participation in music and dance activities and through many features of the curriculum. Pupils participate in Cwricwlwm Cymreig and have awareness of other cultures and beliefs, although this knowledge is not well developed.
- The school effectively promotes equal opportunities for all.

4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

Standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes are very good and are a major strength of the school.

- The school has successfully built on the good standards of behaviour identified in the last inspection report.
- This is an orderly, caring community, with a positive ethos where pupils feel safe, secure and valued. Relationships throughout the school are very good and the headteacher and all staff create an environment where learning can flourish.
- All pupils are polite and courteous. They work and play well together and show respect and maturity in their discussions with adults.
- In classroom activities, pupils demonstrate enthusiasm, interest in their studies and remain on task, even when the pace of teaching and strategies deployed are inappropriate. These attitudes to learning make a very good contribution to standards of achievement.
- Considerable thought and energy, including parental input and local education authority (LEA) support, is devoted to a new behaviour policy of good quality. The policy sets out behavioural expectations and provides each class with a positive, safe and orderly classroom environment.
- All lunchtime supervisors are involved in the new policy and undertake their duties in a caring and efficient manner.
- School staff are consistent in behaviour management and praise is used effectively to promote good attitudes and an understanding of what is right and wrong.
- Where necessary, the school makes contact with home regarding behavioural issues and sensible, sensitive records are kept of incidents of misbehaviour.

4.3 Attendance

The school achieves satisfactory levels of attendance.

- The whole school level of attendance is consistently above 91.5%, and averages 93% over the last three terms.

- Unauthorised absence is low, and the correct categorisation of absence is helped by the good links that exist between home and school.
- The large majority of pupils attend school regularly. There is a significant number of pupils (over a quarter) whose attendance is below 90%. This impedes learning, and implies that not all parents are fulfilling their legal obligations regarding pupils' attendance.
- Management of attendance is efficiently undertaken by the school secretary who produces meaningful and timely reports highlighting patterns of absence. These are discussed with class teachers and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).
- The school has a good attendance policy providing clear guidelines for staff. The completion of registers comply with the requirements of the NAFW requirements.
- Pupils' punctuality at the start of the school day is good.
- The school does not set targets for further improvement of attendance.

5. Quality of education

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching, overall, is satisfactory or better throughout the school. Over half of the lessons seen feature very good or good teaching, with over one-tenth being very good and four-tenths good. In the majority of the remainder of the lessons it is satisfactory. Around one-tenth of the teaching is unsatisfactory.

From a total of eight class teachers, three permanent members, including the deputy headteacher, were absent at the time of the inspection. Their classes were ably taught by supply teachers.

- The quality of teaching with the under-fives is very good overall. Both key stages feature examples of very good and good teaching and unsatisfactory teaching occurs only in a small number of classes.
- Where teaching is very good and good, teachers have clear objectives for teaching and learning, which they share with their pupils. Lessons are well resourced and conducted at a lively pace. High expectations by the teachers are evident and teachers have a secure knowledge of their subjects. Lessons build on elements previously studied and good questioning techniques are used to further pupils' learning.
- Teachers give clear explanations and instructions and lessons cater well for the learning of all pupils. Tasks are appropriately matched to pupils' needs and abilities.
- Teachers' short term planning clearly identifies objectives and activities and is suitably detailed to support practice. The link with assessment and the

progressive development of key skills is not always suitably identified.

- Where teaching is not as successful, the organisation of lessons is inappropriately balanced between the introduction, activities and follow up. Lessons lack pace and activities lack challenge. Work and resources are over directed and content is not always at a suitable level. Objectives are not shared with pupils and there is no consolidation of learning.
- In both key stages, teachers provide insufficient opportunities for pupils' independent learning to be fully developed.
- In the majority of classes, teachers make good use of individual pupil white boards to support teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy.
- The quality of teaching throughout the school is greatly enhanced by the very good relationships that exist between teachers, adult helpers and pupils and the very good behaviour of the pupils.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is satisfactory.

- In the under-fives, baseline assessments are used effectively to assess progress and inform planning. Regular monitoring of children's progress and achievements contribute to promoting high standards and assessment and recording procedures are good.
- Assessment files are kept for all pupils and these are passed on from year to year. They contain examples of pupils' work, standardised tests and annotated assessments indicating NC levels in English, mathematics and science.
- The assessment of pupils' progress and achievement in the foundation subjects is under-developed.
- Teachers record on individual comment sheets detailed formative comments every term concerning pupils' performance and attitudes towards their work. There are detailed records of pupils' reading in both key stages which contain useful comments. These have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Assessment is not regularly identified in schemes of work or teachers' short term planning. Planned and suitably focused assessment activities are not used effectively to support and enhance learning. In some instances, teachers' evaluations of their short term planning do not inform further developments.
- Portfolios of examples of assessed work for the core and foundation subjects are in the very early stages of development. Regular moderation of standards is not yet in place.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and comments are made. The comments are not always consistent and do not identify achievement or indicate the next steps of learning. Oral feedback is generally positive and encouraging.

- Appropriate arrangements are made for reviewing the progress of pupils with SEN.
- The school uses a broad range of standardised tests in both key stages. These, together with NC assessment results, are analysed and strategies for improvement are developed.
- The annual reports to parents comply with statutory requirements but do not always include individual targets for improvement. They are mainly of good quality and contain useful detailed remarks concerning pupils' achievement. Parents are invited to consultation meetings held twice a year in the autumn and spring terms to discuss their children's progress.

5.3 Curriculum

The quality, breadth and balance of the curriculum are good.

- The curriculum provided for the under-fives is carefully planned and ensures very good progress towards the desirable outcomes for children's learning.
- There are whole school curriculum overviews for all subject areas and planning documentation gives teachers clear guidance. Sound curriculum maps are in place for all subjects and these support continuity and progression. When appropriate, teachers suitably liaise with one another in their planning. Short term planning does not adequately reflect the good differentiation of work that occurs in practice.
- The planning for key skills in subject areas is at an early stage of development. Key skills are identified in teachers' planning, but details of how these skills will be taught are not always indicated.
- There is a homework policy in place and home-school tasks are evident. There is no consistency in the practice of setting homework tasks in order to impact on standards.
- Extra-curricular activities in sport, dance, textiles, music and ICT have a beneficial effect on pupils' learning experiences. Opportunities are offered to all pupils but the tendency is for the majority of participants to be girls.
- The curriculum is enhanced by educational visits and the contribution of visitors to the school.
- The school has effective arrangements for pupils' personal and social education. Pupils with SEN have access to the full curriculum.

5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

Standards and arrangements for support, guidance and pupils' welfare in the school are satisfactory overall with some good features.

- All staff work very effectively to create a safe and secure learning environment for their pupils. They know them well and ensure that they feel valued.
- Pupils' views are given status and the equal opportunities ethos is reflected in the sensitivity shown to the needs of all members of the school community.
- There is a suitable policy for sex education and this, together with other aspects of health education, is delivered effectively within the curriculum.
- There is a co-ordinator for personal and social education. A weekly programme of circle time encourages pupils to express and explore their feelings in a supportive atmosphere. Specifically focused activities, for example the planning of an anti-smoking campaign, are successfully conducted.
- Assessment and target setting procedures are not yet sufficiently structured or formalised to maximise the impact of educational guidance.
- Child protection procedures are well managed by the headteacher and meet the NAFW guidelines. Members of the school staff are aware of their responsibilities and good contact is made with the relevant support agencies.
- Appropriate arrangements are in place for the storing and issuing of medication when required by individual pupils. Two members of the non-teaching staff are qualified in first aid and update their training regularly. First aid kits are located at strategic points on the site and there are procedures to address the needs of pupils who suffer illness or injury whilst in school. Audits of health and safety issues are carried out and problems addressed. Fire precautions are observed and associated logbooks are properly maintained.
- At breaks, when arriving, leaving and moving around during the school day teachers, pupils and ancillary staff maximise safety by very carefully observing agreed procedures. However, the layout of the main building and annexes, combined with traffic movement on surrounding roads, constitute a potential safety risk. The additional vehicles and personnel associated with building development adjacent to the school adds to the hazard.

5.5 Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Provision for pupils with SEN is good.

- The school's policy for SEN is appropriate and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice (CoP) that was in effect until 31st March 2002. Using this system the school identifies 36 pupils on stages 1-5 of the CoP which is about 16% of the pupils in the school. Two pupils have statements of SEN.
- All pupils with SEN receive good regular help from additional adults in class, who are, on the whole, effectively deployed. This system is funded both by the LEA and the school. It creates a good level of support for the statemented pupils and others on the SEN register.

- Individual education plans (IEPs) are in place for all pupils on the CoP. These are detailed and include sufficiently small steps to support learning. The plans are reviewed and updated regularly and the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) and class teachers are aware of the targets and teaching and learning approaches identified. In some instances, learning outcomes and actual progress made by individuals are not sufficiently focused. Further staff training is already planned to address this issue.
- The SENCO regularly attends LEA training programmes and there is good liaison with outside agencies and other schools. The SENCO reviews IEPs on a regular basis and meets and consults with staff. In addition, the SENCO is released when necessary to observe pupils in class and help make assessments of their needs. There is a designated governor with responsibility for SEN.
- SEN assessment and screening processes are satisfactory and draw on baseline, standardised tests and teacher assessments. ICT is under-utilised to support learning for pupils with SEN.
- Pupils with SEN have access to the whole curriculum, make good progress commensurate with their age and ability and develop out of the SEN system whenever possible. Pupil withdrawals are directed by the class teacher within the context of lessons rather than by rigid timetabling. This approach is effectively inclusive.

5.6 Partnerships with parents and community, schools and other institutions

The school's partnerships with parents, the community, other schools and institutions are good.

- Both in the pre-inspection meeting and in questionnaires, parents, with very few exceptions, are positive about relationships with the school. A Home/School Agreement is in operation.
- Parents are made welcome in the school and are encouraged to support day-to-day activities. Those who help in classrooms and in the family numeracy and literacy projects, make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. The parent and teachers association (PTA) raises valuable funds for the school.
- Good information is provided for parents on a regular basis keeping them aware of school and curriculum issues. They are advised about pupils' progress through reports and during parents' evenings. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents comply with NAFW requirements.
- The school has many contacts with the local community and these are successfully used to enhance pupils' education through visitors to the school and a wide range of external visits. These links bring curriculum benefits in English, history, geography, science and religious education, as well as promoting an understanding of environmental issues.
- Good links are in place with the nursery school, ensuring a caring progression into

full time education. Transition into secondary education is well managed with the school working effectively within the cluster group. These activities make for an effective move into secondary education; however, curriculum links are not yet fully developed.

- There is a good working agreement with a local initial teacher training college and students undertake work placements in the school. This is a well-managed and monitored programme and students gain good teacher training experience, whilst at the same time bringing new skills and interests which enrich the pupils' education. NNEB students from a local college train in the school and also students from the local comprehensive schools engage in work experience.
- The school has a good relationship with the LEA.

5.7 Partnership with industry

Partnership with industry is good.

- The school has successfully established a number of effective partnerships with organisations, which are efficiently utilised to develop pupils' understanding of the world of work.
- These links include a good relationship with the Educational Business Partnership providing opportunities for pupils to set up a small business, successfully participate in developing a maths game and engage in science activities with “Brainstormer”.
- A local college provides pupils with knowledge and experience of the construction industry. Pupils participate, at first hand, in the skills of carpentry, brickwork and plastering.
- The school has made a commitment towards the achievement of the Investors in People (IIP) award.
- Work placements for staff do not form part of the staff development programme. Three existing staff members worked in industry prior to moving to a teaching career.

6. Management

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good.

- The school has a good range of procedures in place for self-analysis. It makes appropriate use of internal and external assessment data to identify and set challenging targets for further improvement. In addition, the monitoring of the SDP, curriculum leaders' reports, benchmarking analysis, and parent, governor and teacher questionnaires are used to input relevant information. The school

council also provides a source for gathering pupils' views. Issues are identified and areas for improvement are developed.

- The headteacher has a good understanding of the needs of the school and the way forward. The governing body is kept well informed and has an appropriate understanding of the educational provision and achievement of the school. The progress of the current SDP is discussed regularly at governing body meetings and at staff meetings.
- The SDP clearly sets out steps to be taken to effect further improvements. The targets identified are manageable and relevant to the school's needs. The document is detailed and thorough and suitably guides the development of the school. It gives appropriate attention to time scales and criteria for success.
- Many innovative strategies have been initiated in recent times to further progress including "Family Literacy", "Family Numeracy", developing a school garden, the school council, IIP and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The quality of leadership and efficiency is good.

- The headteacher promotes a positive ethos and a sense of purpose in the school. He has a clear view for the development of the school, which is shared by the acting deputy headteacher, staff and governors.
- The school successfully provides a caring and happy environment where all children and pupils are valued and respected. All staff, including the temporary appointments, display a strong commitment and unified approach to achieving its aims. The staff work well as a team and this collaborative approach extends to encompass adult helpers, ancillary staff and the caretaker. This contributes significantly to the quality of education provided.
- Curriculum responsibilities have been recently reallocated and two areas were covered by supply teachers during this inspection. The headteacher was also covering additional subjects and English and art were not fully represented due to staff absence. In addition, there was an acting deputy headteacher at the time of the inspection.
- The monitoring of subjects by curriculum leaders includes examining pupils' work, checking teachers' planning and auditing resources. The effective use of classroom observations is not consistent in all subjects. Portfolios of pupils' work are at an early stage of development and do not fully indicate coverage, support teacher assessment and inform self-evaluation. The full potential of the monitoring role of curriculum leaders is not yet realised and has still to impact on raising standards and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.
- The headteacher undertakes monitoring of teaching and learning and has implemented various supporting strategies when necessary.
- A senior management team meets on a regular basis and discusses recent

initiatives and issues for the SDP.

- The governing body is supportive and fulfils its roles and responsibilities conscientiously. Members show a growing understanding of the school's progress in raising standards and in setting targets for improvement.
- There are suitable sub-committees. The finance committee monitors the expenditure of the school and assesses the benefits of spending and initiatives. Costs itemised in the SDP are properly accounted for in the school's budget.
- Administrative routines are managed effectively and efficiently and the school operates well on a day-to-day basis, the headteacher being ably supported by the school secretary.
- The school complies with statutory requirements and NAFW guidelines.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

The overall quality of staffing, accommodation and resources is good.

- All staff are suitably qualified and appropriately deployed. Teachers' aides and NNEB assistants work effectively with class teachers to support pupils' learning.
- The school secretary and the caretaker make valuable contributions to the life of the school and to ensuring the well being of pupils. The school is well served by the canteen staff, lunchtime supervisors and cleaners.
- The school has arrangements in place for identifying the training needs of staff. The in-service training programme supports their continuing professional development and is linked to targets in the SDP.
- There are two central school libraries for KS1 and KS2 pupils. The KS2 library is housed in the same room as the computer suite. The number of computers throughout the school is good. The library is under-used by pupils for independent research.
- The quality and quantity of teaching and learning resources are generally satisfactory. In English, mathematics and art they are good. There are some shortcomings in design and technology in textiles, construction kits and mechanical components for older pupils and, in religious education, the range of artefacts and texts associated with other faiths. The resources are not always organised to best effect or readily accessible to staff and pupils. Expenditure on resources is closely linked to the SDP.
- Displays enrich and extend pupils' learning in all curriculum areas and teachers work hard to create an attractive learning environment.
- Accommodation, in the main, is in good condition and well decorated. It is adequate for the numbers of pupils on roll and for the effective delivery of the curriculum.

- Classrooms are of sufficient size for the range of activities undertaken and teaching strategies deployed. Lack of space inhibits the use of large structural apparatus and outdoor play activities in a suitably designated area for children under five. The absence of markings, seating areas and the provision of play equipment in the school playgrounds inhibits purposeful activities for all pupils at breaks and lunchtimes.
- The buildings are generally well maintained, and the quality of caretaking is good. Some issues raised in the monthly building report are still to be addressed.
- The split school site, with two classrooms and the canteen across a road, is problematical for pupils' safety; however, this is well monitored by staff. Similarly the congestion both before and after school in the side road is a potential hazard. A few parents who park, or drop pupils off, in prohibited areas exacerbate this situation.

7. Subjects and areas of learning

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

Provision for children under five in the reception class successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. A stimulating educational programme encourages good and very good progress in all areas of work. Standards in language, literacy and communication skills, personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development are very good. Standards in mathematical development and physical development are good.

Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were judged to be good.

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills

Good features

- Children talk about books with confidence and are able to identify the title, author and illustrator. They are rapidly acquiring a growing knowledge of the sounds of letters and can recognise simple punctuation. The majority of children have a good sight vocabulary of words associated with their reading and class topic. More able children are reading competently to a very good standard.
- Children engage in conversation readily and speak confidently in discussions. They listen attentively to their teacher and other adults. Early writing skills are developing well. Children are beginning to form letters correctly and many make good progress in independent writing.
- They are successfully developing an increasing vocabulary of Welsh words and phrases, which they use with growing confidence.

Personal and Social Development

Good features

- Children share resources effectively, take turns and organise themselves well. They understand the meaning of right and wrong, recognise different feelings and appreciate the difference between happy and sad. They show concern and care for one another.
- Children develop a growing independence, select tasks sensibly and tidy apparatus after activities. They demonstrate a good level of self-control, independence and maturity as demonstrated in their handling of individual white boards.

Mathematical Development

Good features

- Children's understanding of number develops well. They can recognise and write numbers between 1 and 20 with varying degrees of success. Many can accurately compute simple sums and count on from a number. They successfully identify two-dimensional shapes.
- Through practical experiences the children are developing a sound understanding of full and empty, heavy and light and large and small. They are beginning to realise that a clock tells the time and can associate times with events in the day. They understand the purpose of money and can recognise and name coins.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Good features

- Children talk confidently about their homes and recognise some of the differences between them and homes of long ago. They develop the need to care for things in their work on plants. Through role-play, they learn about different jobs such as mending the TV and also about celebrations in the Christian faith.
- Children are developing an understanding of different animals and recognise the sounds they make. They use computers and listening centres well to support their learning and many independently access and save their work with growing confidence.

Physical Development

Good features

- Children use scissors and other tools with increasing confidence in a good range of activities. When working with malleable materials they use rollers and cutters

sensibly and safely. They make increasingly complex models using a variety of construction kits. Children move confidently and with co-ordination both indoors and outdoors. In sessions in the hall, they capably participate in partner work and learn to throw and catch. Many are independent in their dressing skills.

Shortcomings

- Lack of a separate and suitably resourced play area for reception children limits their opportunity to use outdoor equipment and fully develop their physical skills.

Creative Development

Good features

- Children know and perform a good range of songs and rhymes associated with other areas of their learning. They keep good time and perform suitable actions to accompany many of the songs which they sing enthusiastically. They colour, paint, stick and cut in a variety of contexts and produce pleasing pictures.

English

Standards are good in both key stages. This is an improvement from the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils speak confidently, listen and respond well to their teachers. They contribute positively to class discussions and ask appropriately for further information when required.
- KS2 pupils listen attentively in lessons and speak with understanding in response to the teachers' questioning. The majority demonstrate assured use of standard English and can appropriately adjust their speech code to suit different audiences.
- Lower KS2 pupils comment constructively on points raised by the teacher. Many are able to work collaboratively in groups, using their oral skills to respond to each other, to develop their thoughts and present findings to the class. Upper KS2 pupils have a developing vocabulary and utilise new words they encounter in their lessons and reading. Throughout KS2, pupils have a developing ability to use talk to increase their understanding as well as to communicate views to others.
- Pupils in both key stages are good readers. They experience a suitable variety of fiction, poetry and non-fiction texts. Throughout KS1 pupils read from their books with confidence and fluency. They use phonic and other strategies to tackle unfamiliar words and sensibly comment about characters and details they encounter. The majority read their own work satisfactorily and explain about what they have written.

- KS2 pupils read with increasing accuracy and expression. They read fiction competently in groups and discuss and share with each other ideas from their books. A significant number comment about books they have read and their own preferences in reading. Upper KS2 pupils accurately locate specific details from non-fiction extracts given to them, distinguish fact from opinion and express personal views. They make relevant comments about the descriptive language in poems.
- By the end of KS1, the majority of pupils write and join their letters competently. In both key stages, classes are given regular handwriting practice and the standard of handwriting and presentation of work is good throughout the school.
- The majority of pupils in KS1 are making good progress in writing and write for a variety of purposes. They understand terms such as illustrator, author and publisher and can design and label their own book covers including short descriptive passages. Younger pupils have learnt simple planning skills for writing and older ones are beginning to write at length. They develop a satisfactory understanding of punctuation and spelling.
- KS2 pupils write for an increasing variety of purposes and audiences, these include stories, fables, poems, letters, newspaper articles and playscripts. Upper KS2 pupils write making good use of descriptive vocabulary and phrases. Skills of punctuation and paragraphing are satisfactorily developed in the work of older and more able pupils. The majority of KS2 pupils successfully complete punctuation exercises and use aids such as writing frames to prompt and structure their thinking.

Shortcomings

- As pupils progress to extended writing in KS1, the content of their writing is underdeveloped.
- In KS2, punctuation and spelling skills are developed in exercises and drills but are not fully consolidated and, consequently, errors occur in pupils' writing.

Mathematics

Standards in mathematics are good in both key stages with some very good features at the end of KS2. They have improved since the last inspection when they were satisfactory.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils have a good understanding of place value. They accurately name simple fractions and halve whole numbers. They recognise patterns in number, understand the difference between odd and even numbers, know one more and one less and count forwards and backwards in steps of different sizes with growing confidence.
- Pupils demonstrate an understanding of the operations of addition and subtraction and readily apply them to solve problems with numbers and money. They have a

sound knowledge of the names of two-dimensional shapes and describe some of their properties. They have a developing understanding of simple measures.

- In KS2, pupils achieve good standards in the four rules of number. They have a secure understanding of place value to four digits and successfully work with larger numbers. The more able pupils present their results clearly and explain the processes by which they arrive at answers using appropriate mathematical vocabulary.
- They successfully devise mental strategies to solve problems and the more able are particularly agile in mental calculations. Older pupils recognise the equivalence between fractions and percentages and their understanding of this is good.
- KS2 pupils use co-ordinates to specify location with increasing confidence. They know the properties of triangles and accurately identify the different angles. They have a suitable understanding of measures, select appropriate measuring instruments and make sensible estimates. At the end of the key stage, pupils correctly describe how to calculate areas and perimeters.
- Older pupils effectively sort and group data and use appropriate graphs to present their findings.

Shortcomings

- ICT is insufficiently used to support and develop pupils' learning.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to apply their skills in numeracy across the curriculum.

Science

Standards achieved in science are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages understand the need for a fair test when conducting investigations and can explain reasons for changing variables. Their use of scientific vocabulary is good.
- They study a good range of topics and have reasonable recall when prompted.
- In KS1, pupils learn about plants and animals. They accurately name the parts of a plant and know what is needed to make plants grow. They recognise the difference between living and non-living things.
- They classify materials correctly using criteria such as rough and smooth and magnetic and non-magnetic. Younger pupils record their observations of minibeasts paying due regard to detail.
- In KS2, pupils build on the work from KS1 in their study of plants. Younger

pupils develop knowledge of the functions of different parts of the plant and older pupils examine this appropriately in more detail.

- Other groups of pupils experience work associated with food chains and consider environmental factors and present suitable hypotheses to support their views. Both younger and older groups in KS2 differentiate accurately between producer and consumer.
- In their work on materials, pupils in lower KS2 suitably record their findings in a graphical format using ICT.
- Visits to places of interest and in the locality effectively broaden the scientific knowledge of pupils.

Shortcomings

- In both key stages, pupils' independent investigative skills are limited. Many pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to plan their work using their own ideas and methods of recording.
- In KS2, some groups of pupils are restricted in their learning by an over-dependence on work sheets.
- Pupils' study of all elements of each NC programme of study on a yearly basis inhibits in-depth knowledge and development.

Welsh second language

Standards in Welsh in both key stages are satisfactory. Good progress has been made since the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory.

Good features

- In all classes, good use is made of incidental Welsh and displays and labelling help to reinforce the language.
- In KS1, pupils understand simple greetings and questions and are able to respond correctly. They express their feelings and talk about the weather and themselves with growing fluency. They successfully develop an elementary vocabulary related to their immediate world and respond appropriately to comments about their written work.
- Pupils read a familiar, shared book with enthusiasm. They write basic descriptions about personal experiences, which emphasise a particular sentence structure. They use the language effectively to conduct a school survey and subsequently record the results in graphical format.
- In KS2, pupils' listening skills are appropriately developed and they readily respond to questions about the weather and details about themselves. They engage enthusiastically in dialogues in order to reinforce their use of language. Older pupils ask simple questions of one another. They have a satisfactory

understanding of a growing range of sentence structures.

- Pupils read a shared text with acceptable pronunciation and respond appropriately to questioning about the content. In their written work, they make comparisons about the weather, write lists, state their likes and dislikes and formulate questions and answers competently.

Shortcomings

- Some groups of pupils do not show an appropriate level of understanding when responding to questions about meaning and content.
- Pupils' pronunciation and intonation is not always accurate.
- In both key stages, pupils engage in work within a limited range of experiences in their written work.

Design and technology

From the few lessons seen during the inspection and from discussions with pupils and teachers, scrutiny of teacher's planning and examination of pupils' work, standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- In both key stages, pupils learn to design and improve on their original ideas. They plan their work carefully using sketches and drawings.
- They appropriately research their ideas at an early stage of planning. They carefully decide on materials to be used and the order in which tasks will be undertaken.
- Pupils suitably decorate and complete finished products. KS2 pupils use a good range of information sources to provide ideas when designing games.
- KS2 pupils suitably devise, test, modify and store instructions to control events using logo to move a screen turtle.

Shortcomings

- Pupils use only a limited range of tools and materials and textile technology is underdeveloped.
- Pupils' skills in making are limited.
- Design sketches and planning show insufficient progression through the key stages.

Information technology

Standards in information technology are satisfactory in KS1 and KS2. This is a developing subject and is a major target in the current SDP.

Good features

- From the earliest age pupils are confident in using the keyboard and mouse. They use computers for word processing and operate a range of programmes with developing expertise. They recognise many screen icons and are learning to save and print their work.
- Younger KS1 pupils make good use of a modelling programme connected with celebrations to explore aspects of real and imaginary situations. Other groups successfully present information on eyes and favourite foods in a graphical format.
- KS2 pupils are competent in combining pictures and texts. Younger pupils accurately change size and style of print in their word processing. Older pupils draw and rotate two-dimensional shapes and display confidence in creating and labelling files.
- Good use is made of peer expertise and additional adult voluntary help.

Shortcomings

- The use of CD-ROMs to support and locate information across the curriculum is underdeveloped, as is the use of equipment and software to organise, reorganise and analyse ideas and information.
- Pupils make limited use of a database to organise, classify and present their work.
- Pupils have little experience of the Internet or e-mail. Recent additions to resources should improve this.

History

No judgment can be made on standards in KS1; history was not taught in the three days of the inspection. Pupils' work was examined and discussions were held with pupils and teachers.

Standards are good in KS2. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages make effective use of visits to local places of historical interest to inform their work.
- KS1 pupils' written work shows a developing awareness of the differences between the present and the past in their own and other people's lives. They effectively use charts to indicate changes between features of their grandparents' and parents' childhood and their own lives. They use sequences of pictures

appropriately to record details of topics studied.

- In lower KS2, pupils increasingly understand that historical statements must be justified by evidence. They have a developing sense of chronology and use time lines effectively to sequence events of periods studied.
- In upper KS2, pupils engage well in a class dialogue when watching a film dramatisation of events from history and make valid comparisons with modern day situations. In their written work, they record facts accurately and write with empathy about difficulties faced by people living in different times.
- Pupils in upper KS2, when presented with pictures, artefacts, written evidence such as historical maps or census extracts, draw appropriate conclusions and pose relevant historical questions.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' ability to conduct individual historical investigations or to use ICT as a learning strategy for their work in history is underdeveloped.

Geography

Standards in geography are good in both key stages. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 accurately describe their local area and name common geographical features, such as buildings, roads and amenities in the vicinity. They effectively observe and record their findings using illustrations and plans to communicate information about their journey to school. They display a progressive understanding of maps and co-ordinates and accurately identify places on maps in class activities.
- In both key stages, pupils successfully use a range of approaches to observe and record geographical features.
- Lower KS2 pupils record information from fieldwork and use their findings very well to inform classroom discussion, propose change and consider how their proposals might have different values for differing groups of people. They use geographical terminology sensibly and relate their fieldwork to plans used in class.
- In upper KS2, older pupils investigate maps of different scales to examine aspects of the same location. The majority use written information effectively to consider and present physical or social characteristics of countries studied.
- When presented with secondary sources, such as photographs of life in St.Lucia, pupils in KS2 recognise how the key activities illustrated relate to climate. They raise appropriate questions and make logical comparisons with life in their own country.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not make effective use of ICT to handle geographical investigations.

Art

Standards in art are satisfactory in KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages show good progression in their skills of portraiture using a range of media.
- Younger pupils in KS1 paint flowers from life using appropriate colours and images. They study the work of Van Gogh and make perceptive comments on the style of his work. Older pupils successfully design interesting patterns based on letters.
- KS1 pupils use ICT effectively to draw and print pictures.
- Younger KS2 pupils successfully make three-dimensional models of insects linked to their work in literature. Following a visit to Caerleon, other groups produce pleasing mosaic patterns.
- Older KS2 pupils sketch and draw during an educational visit. They subsequently refine and present their results using appropriate tone and colour. Other groups prepare flower pictures for a wall hanging exploring and selecting suitable materials from a good range of resources.

Shortcomings

- The study of art associated with Wales and with other cultures is limited.
- Pupils' experience of using a wide range of materials such as clay and fabric, working in two- and three-dimensions and on a variety of scales is underdeveloped. KS2 pupils use paint in a small range of contexts.
- The acquisition of skills in exploring the visual elements of line, tone, colour and texture, show insufficient progression.

Music

No overall judgment can be made as only a limited number of lessons was seen during the inspection. Evidence from pupils' work and teachers' planning was scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils and teachers.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils sing songs and use body percussion with varying degrees of competence to clap in time with the music. They explore a suitable range of sound sources. Pupils successfully compose pieces of music using the computer.
- In KS2, pupils have a growing understanding of the concepts of rhythm. They internalise and compose in response to a range of stimuli. They develop appropriate appraisal skills, listen very attentively and suggest ways in which compositions can be improved.
- In both key stages, the quality of singing is satisfactory and music is used appropriately to enhance school assemblies.
- Some pupils extend their learning through peripatetic tuition in woodwind and percussion and participate in an extra-curricular recorder club.

Shortcomings

- Pupils show a limited understanding of dynamics.
- The balance between performing, appraising and composing is not consistently evident.

Physical education

Standards are satisfactory in KS1 with some good features and are good in KS2.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils dance well in response to music, displaying a good sense of rhythmic awareness and good body control. They communicate different moods in their movements and have good spatial awareness.
- Pupils are confident in working in small groups and display developing skills in catching, throwing and striking. They achieve a reasonable degree of accuracy over short distances.
- In KS2, pupils competently perform a range of physical activities with sustained participation. They show a developing understanding of the importance of running at different speeds and respond safely to challenging tasks. They demonstrate an appreciation of pace and timing when practising the relay changeover.
- In games, they display a suitable range of sending and receiving skills with an increasing level of control. They display clarity of body shape and control when performing their movements in gymnastics. They plan sequences independently and develop their actions appropriately.
- Pupils in both key stages understand the purpose of warm up and cool down activities and of health related issues.
- Standards are enhanced in one class by a visiting coach who teaches lacrosse.

KS2 pupils are successfully involved in team sports competitions with other local schools.

Shortcomings

- In KS1, pupils' basic sending and retrieving skills are underdeveloped.
- Pupils in both key stages do not make sufficient use of evaluating their work in order to enhance achievement and raise standards.

Religious education

Standards are good in both key stages, which is an improvement from the last inspection when they were satisfactory.

Good features

- In both key stages, pupils accurately retell the main events in Bible stories and have a satisfactory understanding of their content. They compose and write prayers with sensitivity.
- All pupils demonstrate a developing understanding of right and wrong. They know the importance of rules such as the ten commandments and those of their school and consider the rules and ways of life followed by other faiths.
- In KS1, pupils suitably recognise Christian festivals and celebrations and identify their special features.
- In KS2, pupils appreciate that different faiths have sacred books and appropriately identify symbols and features of key festivals and practices in world religions.
- In upper KS2, pupils consider concepts such as temptation and charity and express perceptive views as to how these are encountered in daily life. In their written work, pupils demonstrate a maturing awareness of religions and issues which are associated with them.

Shortcomings

- Pupils have an insecure knowledge of work previously covered, especially in religions other than Christianity.

8. School improvement

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The school was last inspected in October 1996, when the report identified the following key issues for action:

- develop a more consistent approach to planning schemes of work which identify

clear expectations and learning outcomes in order to ensure pupils make maximum progress;

- raise standards in Welsh as a second language with particular reference to developing the use of incidental Welsh throughout the school and the promotion of a Cwricwlwm Cymreig. Similarly, raise standards in both key stages in handwriting, spelling and geography;
- develop mechanisms to reduce the variability in the quality of teaching across KS2 in order to raise overall standards;
- enhance the role of curriculum co-ordinators, enabling them to evaluate provision and expectations throughout the school in order to raise standards;
- improve the effective use of pupil assessment by teachers in order to inform the planning of new work and ensure that the individual learning needs of pupils are met.

Since the last inspection:

The current headteacher was appointed in the year following the last inspection. As a result of identifying appropriate priorities and deploying effective strategies, the school has made many improvements in addressing the key issues.

At the time of this inspection, three out of the eight KS1 and KS2 class teachers were absent, including the deputy headteacher.

- A whole school approach has been implemented for planning schemes of work and curriculum maps for all subjects. Teachers also complete weekly planning for literacy and numeracy and fortnightly planning for the foundation subjects. Teaching and learning objectives feature clearly in the schemes of work and short term planning. These aspects of planning have improved and are now comprehensive and thorough.
- Standards in Welsh have risen from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. The use of incidental Welsh and the development of Cwricwlwm Cymreig have also improved. Standards in geography have made a significant improvement from unsatisfactory to good. Standards in handwriting have also improved significantly from unsatisfactory to good. Standards in spelling are now satisfactory.
- Teaching has improved overall. With the under-fives, it has improved from satisfactory to very good. Teaching in KS1 was satisfactory in the last inspection. In this inspection it has also improved and in over half of the sessions observed the quality of teaching was very good or good. Teaching in KS2 was variable in the last inspection and ranged from very good to poor. There is now no poor teaching. Standards are now very good or good in over half the sessions observed during this inspection. There is still a small element of unsatisfactory teaching in the school. This will be included in the key issues for this inspection.
- The roles of curriculum leaders have improved since the last inspection and they now monitor teachers' planning, examine pupils' work, audit resources and conduct some lesson observations. The role is still not sufficiently developed to

impact fully on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. It is featured as a key issue of this inspection.

- The quality of assessment overall has improved since the last inspection. Planning for assessment and its link in informing curriculum planning is still unclear. Marking is undertaken conscientiously but does not always identify achievement and indicate the next steps of learning. The individual learning needs of pupils are now met. Teachers include suitably differentiated work and provide additional adult support to achieve this.
- In addition, standards in both key stages in English, mathematics and religious education have risen from satisfactory to good. In KS2, standards in history have risen from satisfactory to good. In the last inspection, children under five made good progress in the six areas of learning; they now make very good progress overall. Pupils' social and moral development has improved from good to very good and their cultural development from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. Standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes have improved from good to very good.

8.2 Key issues for action

In order to build on the good progress and improvements already made, the school and its governing body should:

- raise standards in aspects and subjects judged satisfactory;
- further develop the role of the curriculum leaders so that they are able to reliably assess standards of achievement and gain an informed understanding of teaching and learning in their subjects;
- continue to address the quality of teaching and share the very good and good practice that already exists in the school;
- address matters of health and safety as discussed with the school.

Some aspects of the second key issue feature in the current SDP and continue in the priorities projected for 2002/2003.

The inspection team wishes to thank the pupils, staff, governors and parents of the school for their courtesy and co-operation during the course of this inspection.

Appendix

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Victoria Primary School
School type	County
Age -range of pupils	4 - 11
Address of school	Lower Harpers Road Abersychan Torfaen
Post-Code	NP4 8PW
Telephone Number	01495 772637

Headteacher	Mr W W Jones
Date of appointment	September 1997
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mr C Bloomfield/ Torfaen County Borough Council
Registered Inspector	Mrs A Jennifer Thomas W164/78282
Dates of inspection	22nd –24th April 2002

B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils		26	27	32	22	25	46	39	217

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	9	0	9

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	24 :1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	27
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.1 :1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Term 1	91.4	91.7	93.3	92.5
Term 2	91.7	93.9	94.8	93.5
Term 3	92.9	90.5	92.6	92.0

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.	0
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NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS
END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2001

C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2001		Number of pupils in Y2: 23						
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	18	64	18	0
		National	0	4	13	62	21	0
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	18	59	23	0
		National	0	4	13	54	29	0
	Task/Test	School	0	0	14	50	36	0
		National	1	3	13	53	30	0
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	5	9	86	0	0
		National	0	5	13	70	12	0
	Task/Test	School	0	5	5	91	0	0
		National	0	5	10	75	9	0
EN: Speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	14	68	18	0
		National	0	3	11	63	23	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	9	50	41	0
		National	0	2	9	60	29	0
	Task/Test	School	0	5	5	55	36	0
		National	0	2	6	56	36	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	18	82	0	0
		National	0	2	10	67	21	0

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

In the school:	77	In Wales:	81
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- D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS
END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2001

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2001							Number of pupils in Y6: 31					
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	40	30	0
		National	0	0	1	0	1	6	19	48	25	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	60	0
		National	0	2	2	0	0	4	14	47	31	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	40	35	0
		National	0	0	1	0	1	4	19	47	28	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	90	0
		National	0	2	1	0	0	4	18	42	32	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	40	0
		National	0	0	1	0	0	3	15	52	29	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	80	0
		National	0	2	0	0	0	2	13	51	31	0

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:	70	In the school:	100
In Wales:	68	In Wales:	68

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

D. The evidence base of the inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors, including one lay inspector, who between them spent 11 days in the school.

Prior to the inspection:

- questionnaires were distributed to all parents and 51 forms were completed (or partially completed) and analysed;
- meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, governors and parents and ten parents attended the parents' meeting;
- school documentation was examined.

During the inspection:

- sixty-five lessons or part lessons were observed
- the work of pupils was examined;
- discussions were held with the headteacher, teaching and non-teaching staff and pupils;
- inspectors attended assemblies and extra-curricular activities.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

NAME	ASPECTS	SUBJECTS
A Jennifer Thomas Registered Inspector	1 The school and its priorities 2 Main findings 3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning 5.1 Quality of teaching 6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement 6.2 Leadership and efficiency 8.1 Progress since last inspection 8.2 Key issues for action	Early years Science Design and technology Information technology Art
Mrs S Davies Team Inspector	5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting 5.3 Curriculum 6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Welsh as a second language Mathematics Music Physical education
Mr G Owens Team Inspector	3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 5.5 Provision for pupils with SEN	English History Geography Religious education
Mr R Pexton Lay Inspector	4.2 Behaviour and attitudes 4.3 Attendance 5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions 5.7 Partnership with industry	