

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

**WILLOWTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Brynheulog Street  
Ebbw Vale  
Gwent  
NP23 6NJ**

**SCHOOL NUMBER: 677 / 2278**

**DATE OF INSPECTION: 2 - 5 FEBRUARY 2004**

**BY**

**MR ROGER THOMAS**

**REGISTERED INSPECTOR: W260/16410**

**DATE: 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2004**

**UNDER ESTYN CONTRACT NUMBER: T/04/03P**

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## CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

	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.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE REPORT IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER :

ACCAC	-	Awdurdod Cymwysterau Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru (The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales)
AT	-	Attainment Target
CoP	-	Code of Practice
CD-ROM	-	Compact Disk Read Only Memory
EWO	-	Education Welfare Officer
GB	-	Governing Body
ICT	-	Information and Communications Technology
IEP	-	Individual Education Plan
INSET	-	In-Service Education and Training
KS	-	Key Stage
LEA	-	Local Education Authority
LSA	-	Learning Support Assistant
NAFW	-	National Assembly for Wales
NC	-	National Curriculum
PSE	-	Personal, Social Education
PTA	-	Parent-Teacher Association
SDP	-	School Development Plan
SEN	-	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	-	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
Y	-	Year

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## PART 2: THE INSPECTION SCHEDULE

### 1. CONTEXT

#### The school and its priorities

The school is situated in Ebbw Vale approximately half a mile from the town centre. Willowtown Infant and Willowtown Junior schools were amalgamated in September 1999 to become Willowtown Primary School. The building is ninety- six years old. In 1982 a unit for children with special education needs, from the surrounding area of Ebbw Vale, was established on the premises. A new purpose- built nursery was added in 1984. There are 420 pupils on roll aged from three to eleven.

Currently there are 119 pupils on the SEN Register, of these 25 have a statement of special educational needs. Thirty two (32) pupils at Key Stage 2 (KS2) are in a three class special needs unit and a further 15 pupils are in special support class at Key Stage 1 (KS1). Almost all pupils live in the immediate locality. The school's catchment is economically disadvantaged. Approximately 19% are entitled to free school meals. The majority of pupils attend the nursery on a part time basis before commencing their primary education in the school. No pupils come from Welsh speaking homes with 99% coming from English speaking homes.

The school has a mission statement and appropriate aims. The SDP contains a large number of targets for improvement, covering all subjects of the curriculum, as well as links with parents, training for governors and staff, SEN and building maintenance. Performance targets are set for individual progress through the year and for improving pupils' performance in the national tests.

Willowtown Infant School was last inspected in April 1996 and Willowtown Junior School was last inspected in March 1998.

### 2. MAIN FINDINGS

#### The main findings of the report

- The amalgamated Willowtown Primary School has made progress in important areas since the last inspection. There are many good aspects to its work and pupils make satisfactory progress overall.
- The quality of the provision for the under-fives, taken overall, is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards in the nursery and reception classes in the six areas of learning are as follows:

#### Nursery

Language, literacy and communication skills	Good
Personal and social development	Very good

Mathematical development	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Very good
Physical development	Very good
Creative development	Very good

## Reception

Language, literacy and communication skills	Good
Personal and social development	Satisfactory
Mathematical development	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Satisfactory
Physical development	Good
Creative development	Good

- Standards of achievement overall in the school are satisfactory or better in the work seen, of which about 50% is good and 4% is very good.
- Standards in the different subjects are as follows:

	KS1	KS2
English: Speaking	Satisfactory Good	Satisfactory Good
Listening	Good	Good
Reading	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Writing	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Good	Good
Welsh second language	Satisfactory	Good
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
History	Good	Good
Geography	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Art	Good	Good
Music	Good	Good
Physical education	Good	Good
Religious education	Good	Good

- In KS1 teacher assessments in 2003 pupils performed to the national average in English, mathematics and science. In English 80%, in mathematics 94% and in science 90% of pupils achieved level two or above. When compared with schools of a similar type these figures indicate that Willowtown is in the median percentile for the three core subjects.
- In NC tests for KS2 in 2003 pupils performed below the LEA and national levels in English, mathematics and science. In English 64%, in mathematics 55%, in science 82% of pupils achieved level four or above. When compared

with schools of a similar type these results indicate that in English and mathematics the school performs in the lower quartile and in science in the median quartile.

- The standards and progress in key skills achieved across the curriculum in the early years are good overall. In KS1 and KS2, standards in speaking and listening are good. In reading, writing, numeracy and information and communications technology, standards are satisfactory.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is a welcoming, caring, friendly and inclusive community, which takes pride in its good relationships and the very positive attitudes of pupils. Adults and pupils work purposefully together in an ethos of close co-operation and mutual respect.
- Pupils' understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity is developing appropriately through music, art, geography and religious education. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is promoted well across the curriculum and pupils have opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales through a range of experiences.
- Behaviour and attitudes are very good. Pupils are courteous and respectful to adults and relate well to each other. They show interest in topics being taught, work well together and are willing contributors to class discussions. They persevere at their tasks and generally can sustain concentration throughout the lesson. There are a number of pupils who have potentially challenging behaviour but these are generally supported effectively
- The school promotes good behaviour through a number of effective initiatives. It promotes anti-bullying initiatives and is quick to respond to any racial incidences. The individual and class points system, membership of the school council and the school's response to ideas from the suggestion box helps promote self esteem and shows pupils that their views and opinions are taken seriously.
- Attendance rates remain unsatisfactory; this was a key issue in the last report. The school has introduced initiatives to improve punctuality of pupils, and, although there is still some incidence of lateness, this initiative is beginning to have a positive effect.
- The quality of teaching overall in the lessons observed is around 95% satisfactory or better, of which about 45% is good and 19% very good.
- Teachers plan conscientiously and thoroughly with clear learning objectives and outcomes. The purpose of the lesson and how the objectives will be achieved are often shared with pupils. Throughout the school, teachers have a sound knowledge of the NC. They attend appropriate training courses, co-operate well together as a team and work hard in a supportive and professional environment.

- Support staff know their roles well and work efficiently and conscientiously alongside teachers; the quality of their support is very good.
- Teachers employ a range of approaches and strategies to motivate pupils and sustain interest. Resources are used effectively to enhance the lesson. While there is evidence of pupils working independently or collaboratively in small groups, it is usually on tasks framed exclusively by the teacher.
- The overall quality of assessment, recording and reporting is satisfactory. It has been identified in the school improvement plan for development and the co-ordinator has drawn up a comprehensive action plan to implement good practice in all areas. Opportunities for assessment are identified in most schemes of work and in most teachers' planning.
- Overall, the curriculum meets statutory requirements and is broad and balanced. The school does, however need to review the organisation of the school day in order to ensure that time is appropriately allocated to all subjects in order to meet the requirements of the NC. Whole school policies and schemes of work have been newly revised within the last year and are in place for all subject areas.
- The quality of support and guidance offered to pupils in the school is very good. All staff are caring towards pupils. Pupils feel secure and see the school as a welcoming and friendly place. Pupils are valued and all staff have high expectations of them. Their achievements in and out of school are recognised and celebrated. This helps motivate pupils to perform better both socially and academically.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream classes.
- The provision within the Special Needs Unit (SNU) and support class is very good and is a strength of the school. The quality of teaching in both the SNU and the support class is very good. Lessons are well planned with the content closely matched to each pupil's individual needs.
- Partnership with parents and the community, schools and other institutions is good. Parents are well informed of the life and work of the school. There is a useful prospectus, and two consultative meetings each year.
- Partnership with industry is good. The school has good links with a range of industry, businesses and cultural enterprises, which enhances the curriculum and supports the cross phase transition from KS2 to KS3.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory. There is a self-evaluation document in place, which was drawn up by the head teacher in consultation with the staff. Current priorities for development are identified, which are appropriate for the needs of the school and is linked to the School Improvement Plan.

- A formal mechanism for monitoring the effectiveness of the school's self evaluation and planning for improvement is in its infancy; however, the newly appointed head teacher has a clear vision for the future.
- The school improvement plan identifies the need for certain priorities following amalgamation and, although the staff has made efforts to liaise and form a cohesive unit, there are still areas where further development is needed in order for the school to have a true primary ethos.
- Good use is made of staffing and learning resources. The school has an adequate complement of teachers for the number of pupils on roll. Teachers provide the school with a good range of skills and experience. The quality of the staffing and the management of resources is satisfactory. The impact of induction, appraisal and continuing professional development and the adequacy of the accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- Daily routines operate efficiently.
- The GB is well informed and led very effectively by its chairperson. Overall, the school benefits from strong support from the GB, which has a positive impact on the school's development. Available resources are managed efficiently by the GB and the head.
- Leadership and efficiency are satisfactory overall. The head, who is newly appointed, is ably supported by the deputy head teacher and has a clear vision for the future of the school.
- The school has made good progress in addressing the majority of key issues from the last inspection.
- The school gives good value for money.

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

#### **3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning**

Standards of achievement overall in the school are satisfactory or better and of this, 63% is good and 7% very good.

- In the nursery, standards achieved are very good in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Standards are good in language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development.
- In reception, standards achieved are good in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development, physical development and

creative development. They are satisfactory in personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

- In both key stages standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics are satisfactory; in science they are good.
- In the foundation subjects, standards in KS1 in history, art, music, physical education and religious education are good. In Welsh second language, design and technology, information technology, and geography they are satisfactory.
- In KS2 standards are good in Welsh second language, history, art, music, physical education and religious education. In design technology, information technology and geography, standards are satisfactory.

### **3.2 Standards achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum**

The standards and progress in key skills achieved across the curriculum in the early years are good overall. In KS1 and KS2, standards in speaking and listening are good. In reading, writing, numeracy and information and communications technology, standards are satisfactory.

- Children in the early years make good progress in applying and improving their developing skills in early literacy and numeracy across the six areas of learning. Many children use ICT confidently and make good progress in its application. They use listening centres independently to development early reading skills.
- Relating to their stage of development, pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in both key stages make good progress in the key skills. The inclusive policy promoted by the school ensures that pupils experience a range of purposeful experiences to support their learning across the curriculum.
- In KS1, pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. They are attentive during class and school presentations, answer questions sensibly and respond appropriately to instructions. Pupils are able to take turns when sharing information in paired and group situations. In their investigations on sound, pupils in Y1/2 collaborate constructively in groups before reaching conclusions.
- In KS2, pupils make good progress in being able to reflect on the intentions of other speakers. They listen with attention and concentration in class, groups and whole school situations. They show developing confidence in their presentational skills in different contexts. In considering elements of African art pupils in Y6 use appropriate subject vocabulary when evaluating their own work; while in history, pupils in Y3/4 ask and answer questions relating to the plague and confidently report their findings to peers. Pupils develop their speaking skills during circle time and through such initiatives as the School Council.

- Pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress in their reading skills across the curriculum. Pupils in KS1 read their own work with understanding and many can discuss the content of information books. In KS2, pupils are able to explain how to access information from other sources to support their work in other subjects. However, pupils' reading skills, especially their higher order reading skills using textual information to develop a further understanding of their subjects needs to be further developed in both key stages.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing across the curriculum. In KS1, pupils retell stories, compile lists in history, label drawings and complete evaluations of their design and technology tasks. Older pupils in KS2 record findings in science, complete questionnaires in geography and label maps and diagrams. This aspect, however, could be further developed in the foundation subjects with pupils being enabled to record personal responses at length and to analyse and reflect in depth on the conclusions and findings of investigations and research.
- Pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress in the development of numeracy skills across the curriculum. There is evidence of the use of time lines, compilation of surveys, the development of graphical representations, counting in music and recognition of shape in art. The use of numeracy to support work across the curriculum, however, needs to be further developed.
- In both key stages, pupils make satisfactory progress in their use of ICT across the curriculum. There is evidence of word processing, the independent use of listening centres and utilising the interactive white board. However, the current difficulties in accessing IT equipment inhibits the use of information and communications technology in supporting pupils' understanding and in reinforcing their work across the curriculum.
- Although there is a recognition of key skills in schemes of work, there is variability in teachers' short term planning in identifying and clarifying specific strategies for key skill delivery. Whole school planning for the delivery of key skills needs to ensure that pupils develop skills systematically and thoroughly through a wide and varied range of related experiences. The school recognises the need to consider further appropriate strategies for key skill delivery and development.

## 4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

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

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

- The school is a welcoming, caring, friendly and inclusive community, which takes pride in its good relationships and the very positive attitudes of pupils. Adults and pupils work purposefully together in an ethos of close co-operation and mutual respect.

- Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for them to work collaboratively in class. They undertake responsibility readily and assist younger pupils, staff and visitors in a mature and sensible manner. Members of the School Council take their duties seriously and are proud of their achievements.
- Throughout the school pupils demonstrate a well-developed sense of fairness and justice: their understanding of right and wrong is reinforced positively through class discussion and circle-time.
- Acts of collective worship are very pleasant and enjoyable occasions, which, in the main, provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to reflect on the messages being conveyed.
- Pupils are encouraged and enabled to appreciate their own cultural traditions and to respect the diversity and richness of others. The school actively promotes racial harmony. Pupils' understanding of other peoples' lives, beliefs and traditions is well developed across the curriculum and effectively reinforced through school initiatives.
- Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is promoted well across the curriculum and pupils have opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales through a range of experiences.

#### **4.2 Behaviour and attitudes**

Behaviour and attitudes is very good.

- Pupils are very friendly to visitors and are enthusiastic to chat about their life and work in the school. They are courteous and respectful to adults and relate well to each other.
- They show good interest in topics being taught, work well together and are willing contributors to class discussions. They persevere at their tasks and generally sustain concentration throughout the lesson.
- The school promotes good behaviour through a number of effective initiatives. It promotes anti-bullying initiatives and is quick to respond to any racial incidences. The individual and class points system, membership of the School Council and the schools response to ideas from the suggestion box helps promote self esteem and show pupils that their views and opinions are taken seriously.
- The expectations of good behaviour and respect for their environment are established effectively in the nursery and this is maintained throughout the school.

- There are a number of pupils who present potentially challenging behaviour but these are generally supported.

### 4.3 Attendance

Overall attendance is satisfactory.

- The average attendance for the three full terms prior to the inspection was 92%
- The school operates a first day response system and monitoring is supported by computer systems. There is positive support from the Education Welfare Officer who visits the school regularly.
- Registration is carried out promptly and absences are in the main codified according to LEA guidelines. However there are some inconsistencies, in all classes, in the codification of some absences.
- The school has recently introduced initiatives to improve punctuality of pupils, and, although there are still some incidence of lateness this initiative is beginning to have a positive effect.

## 5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### 5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching overall in the lessons observed is around 95% satisfactory or better, of which about 45% is good and 19% very good.

- Teachers plan conscientiously and thoroughly with clear learning objectives and outcomes. The purpose of the lesson and how the objectives will be achieved are often shared with pupils.
- Throughout the school, teachers have a sound knowledge of the NC. They attend appropriate training courses, co-operate well together as a team and work hard in a supportive and professional environment.
- Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly and resources are ready and available for pupils to use so that sessions begin promptly.
- Teachers employ a range of approaches and strategies to motivate pupils and sustain interest. Resources are used effectively to enhance the lesson. While there is evidence of pupils working independently or collaboratively in small groups, it is usually on tasks framed exclusively by the teacher.
- Lessons are well structured with appropriate whole class introductions: direct teaching is generally focused and well paced. However, in some classes too

much time is spent on whole class, teacher-directed activities, resulting in pupils losing concentration.

- Many lessons commence with a recapitulation of earlier work to assess knowledge and create a foundation for the current lesson. Questioning techniques are well developed and in the best examples extend pupils' responses, encouraging them to think for themselves. Most teachers reinforce concepts and subject specific vocabulary effectively. Lessons conclude with a plenary session that allows a sharing of achievements and an understanding of what has been learned.
- Where teaching is consistently good and often very good, there is a lively pace, which keeps all pupils alert and involved. The conduct of lessons is well structured and clearly focused and signal high, but attainable, expectations.
- The quality of teaching in the Special Needs Unit is consistently good or very good. Work is characterised by a clear sense of purpose and is carefully planned to match each pupils' needs, relating very well to their IEPs.
- Class routines are well established and teachers have very good relationships with pupils. They provide individual support and offer frequent praise and encouragement. Class management is generally good.
- Support staff know their roles well and work efficiently and conscientiously alongside teachers; the quality of their support is very good.

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

The overall quality of assessment, recording and reporting is satisfactory. It has been identified in the school improvement plan for development and the co-ordinator has drawn up a comprehensive action plan to implement good practice in all areas. In the last inspection standards were satisfactory.

- On entry to the school, children are assessed during their first term by using a baseline assessment test. Assessment information, together with the ongoing recording of pupils' progress and development is used to good effect in planning pupils' work in the early years.
- In KS1 and KS2 in mainstream classes, records are kept in teachers' mark books and assessment files and a start has been made to compile subject leaders' files. Individual pupils' progress can be tracked throughout the school as test marks are recorded in their raw state without evaluation, and whilst added value can be recognised, this lack of evaluation insufficiently informs the planning of work to be done in the classroom.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in the unit are regularly assessed and this information, together with the evaluative comments, is used effectively to identify progressive learning targets for the pupils. Support staff intervene effectively to assist pupils to progress with their learning.

- Pupils' work is generally marked regularly and accurately. Only in the best examples of good practice does the marking identify the way forward for pupils to understand what they have to do next to improve their learning.
- Subject leaders are beginning to compile levelled samples of pupils' work in the core and some of the foundation subjects. This practice is not sufficiently developed for staff, particularly at the end of KS1, to have confidence in assessing pupils' work accurately.
- In some classes, short and medium term targets are set for groups and individual targets, but this good practice is not embedded throughout the whole school. Where the pupils are aware of their targets, particularly in the SEN unit, they help them to focus in their learning on specific and achievable objectives. Pupils rarely become involved in their own assessment and evaluation, and do not contribute towards the setting of their own targets as a means of taking responsibility for their own learning.
- There are two formal opportunities in the school year for parents to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher. Through an open door policy, parents are able to visit the school at any reasonable time to discuss aspects of their child's progress or development.
- Annual reports to parents are often too descriptive and lack evaluation. All reports contain advice for parents and pupils, but this is usually too brief and lacks sufficient detail.

### 5.3 Curriculum

Overall, the curriculum meets statutory requirements and is broad and balanced. The school does, however need to review the organisation of the school day in order to ensure that time is appropriately allocated to all subjects in order to meet the requirements of the NC.

- The curriculum for children in the nursery is well planned to ensure continuity and progression in all six areas of learning and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcome for Children's Learning. Children experience a balanced programme of activities, which are appropriately matched to their stage of development and particular learning needs. Good use is made of areas both inside and outside the school to extend children's knowledge, skills and understanding.
- In order to ensure that children in reception experience continuity and progression in their learning after their time in nursery, the curriculum for reception has recently been reviewed. Opportunities to reinforce pupils' development in language and mathematical concepts so that the early years curriculum can run over both nursery and reception classes are in the process of being developed.

- Whole school policies and schemes of work have been revised within the last year and are in place for all subject areas. These are based on LEA and published materials and provide guidance for staff to ensure continuity in pupils' learning. Whole school subject leaders are in place for the core subjects and this is an aspect being further considered by the school to include foundation subjects.
- Medium term plans in the form of schemes of work form the basis for short term weekly plans. Short term plans are evaluated by the deputy headteacher and concerns discussed with the senior management team and staff as appropriate. The school has identified the need to develop a whole school approach to planning.
- In some subject areas limited resources adversely affects curriculum delivery.
- The school has a policy in place for the development of key skills. However, planning for the key skills is at an early stage; it is not yet sufficiently detailed in short term planning.
- Homework supports curriculum delivery and includes opportunities for pupils to consolidate work and research material linked to class topics. Home-school reading activities enables parents to become partners in learning. The school recognises the need to review its homework policy in order to provide a structured approach.
- A range of extra-curricular activities, including sport and musical activities, adds a valuable dimension to pupils' cultural and sporting experiences. These are enthusiastically supported by pupils. This aspect is a strength of the school.
- Visits to place of interest, appropriate use of visitors and specialist teaching in music broadens pupils' learning and contributes to educational standards achieved.
- The school policy for the delivery of personal and social development is in accordance with the ACCAC framework 2000 and is taught thoughtfully through a cross-curricular programme of activities. Circle time, which is in the process of being developed, also has a positive impact on pupils' development and reinforces their awareness of good citizenship.
- Pupils' understanding of global citizenship and sustainable development is beginning to be evident in discussions and is developing through aspects of science, geography and religious education.
- Pupils' understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity is developing appropriately through music, art, geography and religious education. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is promoted well across the curriculum and pupils have opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales through a range of experiences.

- The curriculum for pupils with SEN and those in the SNU is very well co-ordinated, provides a good level of support and enables these pupils to make good progress in their learning. The needs of all pupils are sensitively addressed and the school is fully aware of the importance of ensuring equality of opportunity for all its pupils. This commitment is a strength and is evident in the school's practice.

#### 5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils Welfare

The arrangements for the support and guidance of pupils and provision for their welfare is very good.

- All staff are caring towards the pupils. Pupils feel secure and see the school as a welcoming and friendly place. Pupils are valued and all staff have high expectations of them. Their achievements in and out of school are recognised and celebrated. This helps motivate pupils to perform better both socially and academically.
- The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) works very effectively with all staff, governors and outside agencies to provide very good support for all pupils with SEN.
- The school has a policy for child protection, which follows the LEA guidelines. The child protection co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the responsibilities involved and staff are aware of what action to take in the event of a concern.
- Provision for ensuring the health and safety of pupils is very good. Procedures are in place to check the safety of electrical apparatus, P E equipment and fire extinguishers. Fire drills are held on a regular basis and clear guidelines outlining evacuation procedures are on display throughout the school.
- Arrangements for lunchtime supervision are good. Supervisory assistants play an important role in helping maintain a calm orderly environment in which pupils feel safe and secure.
- The programme for pupil's personal and social education is well established and contains policies on sex education and drug and alcohol abuse. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of topics such as personal care, hygiene and healthy eating.
- Appropriate measures are taken to ensure the security of the school building and the school site. The safety of the pupils and staff is enhanced by the installation of a controlled access system on all entrances to the school building.

## 5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The quantity of provision for pupils with SEN is very good.

- Currently there are 119 pupils on the SEN Register, of these 25 have a statement of special educational needs. Thirty two (32) pupils at Key Stage 2 are in a 3 class special needs unit and a further 15 pupils are in special support class at Key Stage 1.
- The arrangements for identifying pupils with SEN are very good. The schools policy and documentation on SEN is clear and informative and is in line with the recommendations of the code of practice.
- All pupils with SEN have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which are devised jointly by the SENCO class teachers and support staff. The IEPs are of very good quality and good use is made of them by teachers when planning their work. IEPs are updated and reviewed on a regular basis.
- The arrangements for managing the annual review and statementing procedures are well managed by the SENCO and senior staff. The procedures followed comply with the recommendations of the SEN Code of Practice.
- The parents of pupils with SEN are regularly informed of their child's progress. Teachers share the targets set out in the IEPs with parents who are closely involved in the ongoing review process.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress. Differentiation is used effectively to support pupils' learning. Very good use is made of support staff and classroom provision is well organised to meet individual pupil's needs.
- The school has developed good links with educational welfare officers, specialist teachers, social services, speech therapy services and the county educational psychology service. The frequency of support from the county psychological service is unsatisfactory. Pupils with SEN often have to wait for lengthy periods before being seen by an educational psychologist.

### Special Needs Unit (SNU) and Support Class

- The provision within the SNU and support class is very good and is a strength of the school.
- The quality of teaching in both the SNU and the support class is very good. Lessons are well planned with the content closely matched to each pupil's individual needs.
- The senior teacher in the SNU provides very good leadership. She has established very good procedures for effective planning, diagnostic assessment and ongoing monitoring of the pupil's needs.

- The SNU and the support class are well staffed by appropriately qualified and experienced personnel. The teachers and support staff work effectively as a team to provide a consistent approach which focuses on the needs of each pupil.
- Links with parents are very good and parents are encouraged to become closely involved in their child's education.
- The pupils' IEPs are very good. They are detailed, build on pupils' strengths and set clear targets for improvement. The IEPs are reviewed regularly and parents are kept fully informed of their child's progress.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils in the SNU and support class are very good. The pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to their work, they are confident and show a keen sense of humour. They make good progress, take direction well and strive to improve.
- The specialist support assistants employed in the SNU and support class are deployed effectively to support individual and small groups of pupils. They are highly skilled and the specialist support they provide contributes significantly to the standards pupils achieve. Their work is valued by all members of the school staff.
- Staff in the school are committed to integration and inclusion and pupils from the SNU and support class are encouraged to take part in all of the activities of the school.

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

Partnership with parents and the community, schools and other institutions is good.

- Parents are well informed of the life and work of the school. There is a useful prospectus, and two consultative meetings each year.
- The questionnaire and comments made during the pre inspection meeting indicated parents were supportive of the school and were happy with progress being made.
- Parents have always given much valued support through fund raising and social events, and have also routinely support the life and work of the class room, including listening to pupils read and assisting in class activities.
- A recent initiative has been the formation of a Parent Group which hopes to obtain funding for the training of parents to run a wrap around project and for the running of literacy and numeracy workshops for parents to support their children's learning.

- There are very close links with the community. Many associations make use of the school premises. Pupils gain an insight to the world of work and people who help us by regular visits from representatives from the community. They also gain an understanding of the wider world through their support of local and national charities. The school's twinning with a school in Grenada also enhance pupils' awareness and understanding of racial harmony.
- Pupils regularly take part in community services and the school choir often entertains at the local hospital. There are close links with local churches, and ministers from various denomination frequently take assemblies and assist in RE lessons.
- The close partnership with the comprehensive school to which most pupils transfer is continuously being developed with many joint Y6 and Y7 projects and visits which enhances the cross-phase transition. There is a formal partnership with the local college of higher education.

## 5.7 Partnership with industry

Partnership with industry is good.

- The school has good links with a range of industry, businesses and cultural enterprises which enhances the curriculum and supports many of the cross phase transition from KS2 to KS3. An out of School Hours Project for Y6 pupils has been funded by Business in the Community.
- Links with Partnership with Education Business Partnership has funded visits by pupils and staff placement in management experience.
- Local businesses give valuable support to individual school events such as French breakfast at the breakfast club.

## 6. MANAGEMENT

### 6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory

- There is a self-evaluation document in place, which was drawn up by the head teacher in consultation with the staff. Current priorities for development are identified, which are appropriate to the needs of the school and are linked to the School Improvement Plan.
- A formal mechanism for monitoring the effectiveness of the school's self evaluation and planning for improvement is in its infancy; however, the newly appointed head teacher has a clear vision for the future.

- The school improvement plan identifies the need for certain priorities following amalgamation and, although the staff have made efforts to liaise and form a cohesive unit, there are still areas where further development is needed in order for the school to have a true primary ethos.
- Although some direct monitoring of teaching in the classroom has taken place, this is at an early stage of development. Subject leaders have insufficient non-contact time to monitor their subjects effectively.
- A School Council has recently been formed which meets regularly to discuss aspects of school life, problems and how improvements can be made. This is a positive move which gives the pupils a real sense of being able to have a say in the school's development.

## 6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

Leadership and efficiency are satisfactory overall.

- The head, who is newly appointed, is ably supported by the deputy head and has a clear vision for the future of the school.
- The head and governing body (GB) have developed an appropriate mission statement for the school with specific aims and broad objectives. There is a very positive community ethos in the school based on sound values which is conducive to effective teaching.
- The role of the senior management team (SMT) is underdeveloped; meetings are infrequent and are not always minuted. In order to effect a clear primary ethos, the SMT need a clear overview of the whole school.
- Subject co-ordinators are in place for each subject, however, there are still both KS1 and KS2 coordinators in many subjects. This is not the most effective use of manpower and does not help to create a cohesive primary unit.
- The GB is well informed and actively involved in the life of the school. They are kept up to date about the school's performance and the quality of education provided. Members are supportive and clear in their determination to effect improvements. It is very well led by its chairperson.
- Day to day routines operate effectively; the head is ably supported by efficient secretarial staff.
- The current budget is well managed and controlled by the head and approved through the GB. The school gives good value for money.

### 6.3. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

The quality of the staffing and the management of resources is satisfactory. The impact of induction, appraisal and continuing professional development and the adequacy of the accommodation is unsatisfactory.

- The school has an adequate complement of qualified teaching staff for the number of pupils on roll including a number of effective support staff. All staff work well together to meet the daily needs of the school. Peripatetic teachers, for example in music, make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and the life of the school.
- The impact of continuing professional development is unsatisfactory. In service training (INSET) does not always meet the needs of the school improvement plan or prepare teachers adequately for teaching different year groups outside their normal professional experience. Further work is needed to ensure that there is a whole school approach to the dissemination of training and to ensure that it has a positive impact on good practice in the classroom.
- The caretaker and cleaning staff work hard to keep the school clean and tidy. The ten lunchtime supervisors are effective and serve the school well. One full time and two part time secretaries have responsibility for school administration and routines and these are efficiently managed. The school buildings have an adequate security system.
- Overall, the accommodation is unsatisfactory. The main school building was built at the end of the nineteenth century and the SEN unit, dining hall and early years annexe are situated some distance away. There is no covered walkway and pupils regularly cross between the buildings in all weathers.
- Much has been done by the staff to alleviate the severity of the interior of the building by displaying children's work in an interesting and colourful fashion. Some of these efforts have been nullified and books, resources and equipment destroyed by the ingress of damp, which is prevalent in many parts of the building.
- The quality of learning resources is generally satisfactory. The school has an adequate number of computers and a room has been converted into a computer suite. The large amount of IT equipment out of order, however, restricts the opportunities for learning across the curriculum.
- The school makes good use of the local and wider environment and older pupils participate in residential visits, sometimes overseas. Visitors to the school speak on a broad range of subjects to enhance pupils' learning, particularly in the foundation subjects, are limited and insufficient.

## 7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

### Provision for the under-fives

The educational provision for the under-fives, taken overall, is appropriate and promotes the desirable outcomes for children's learning.

#### Nursery

##### Good features

- The very effective planning, organisation and management of an appropriate range of meaningful and stimulating activities contributes substantially to the quality of children's learning and the standards they achieve.
- Play and other practical experiences are planned and organised to ensure that children's curiosity is aroused by what they see around them.
- Adults talk constantly to the children: their achievements are carefully noted so that activities are well matched to individual needs.
- Thoughtful and good quality intervention by adults moves children's learning forward at an appropriate pace.

##### Children's language, literacy and communication development is good.

- During their group and circle-time activities, children listen well and share their experiences readily: they take turns when speaking, make observations and offer simple explanations.
- They enjoy story time and make every attempt to follow the text and join in with familiar words or lines.
- Children enjoy looking at books and understand how they work: they use their emerging writing and drawing skills purposefully during role-play.

##### Children's mathematical development is good.

- Children have a good understanding of early mathematical language, which is developed through a range of activities. Most count confidently to 5 or 10 and can apply this during the serving of snacks. They compare, sort and match objects and can identify 2D shapes in a variety of classroom contexts.

##### Personal and social development is very good.

- Children are well settled, confident, happy and independent: routines are very well established and a calm and welcoming atmosphere prevails. Activities are pursued with purpose and enthusiasm: children take turns willingly, play together happily and help each other to overcome problems.
- They involve adults readily in their work and are eager to share their finished projects. Children understand the importance of caring for and looking after others and are thoughtful and polite during their social time.

### **Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is very good.**

- Children investigate independently and talk about their discoveries. They explore, select and handle materials confidently and imaginatively when, for example, attempting to create the sound of raindrops. When constructing a vehicle with large blocks, they demonstrate very good handling skills and a high level of co-operative endeavour.
- Children use their listening centre purposefully to enhance their enjoyment of stories and borrow books from the class library to 'read' to one another in small groups.
- By observing and discussing daily weather conditions children are becoming familiar with seasonal change: they recognise similarities and differences and share their observations readily.

### **Children's physical development is very good.**

- During outdoor play and movement sessions, children move with increasing control, co-ordination and an awareness of space and each other. They use a variety of small and large equipment with increasing skill.
- When constructing models with re-cycled materials, children select, manipulate, paste and join with confidence: they handle tools safely and sensibly and apply finishing techniques with care.

### **Creative development is very good.**

- Children take great pleasure in their singing and recall the words of action songs and rhymes well. A high degree of independence is demonstrated when colour mixing to create shades of orange: children concentrate well and are beginning to use relevant vocabulary to discuss and describe processes and results.
- During their imaginative play, children organise themselves very well. They take on familiar roles in the 'hospital', conduct dialogues, make appointments and are eager to help others.

## Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

## Reception

### Good features

#### **Children's language, literacy and communication development is good.**

- During class discussion and group activities, many children listen appropriately, observe carefully and talk enthusiastically about their experiences.
- They handle books well, understand how they are organised and value them as a source of enjoyment. Children enjoy writing their own booklets and having them appreciated by adults.
- A positive start is made to learning Welsh: children respond confidently to greetings and commands.

#### **Children's mathematical development is good.**

- Many children have a sound early mathematical vocabulary, which is developed through a variety of practical experiences shared with adults. During their number line activities, children are able to count on and back accurately from 10 or more: some show a good practical awareness of number operations such as simple addition and subtraction and are able to record their results on a white board. They have a good understanding of more and less and, during role-play, apply relevant vocabulary such as before and after, later and earlier, in a meaningful manner.

#### **Children's personal and social development is satisfactory overall.**

- Children readily establish relationships with adults and each other. Many approach tasks with enthusiasm and confidence and, when interacting with adults in small group situations, progress well. They work purposefully together, for example, when interpreting sounds for a story or when designing a meal for dinner.
- **Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory overall.**
- Children know the days of the week, can talk with confidence about the weather and are aware of seasonal variations. Many use computer

programmes independently to support their mathematical and creative development: their mouse control is good.

- Children apply their skills in cutting, joining and folding in a variety of contexts: they paste and colour with increasing precision.

#### **Children's physical development is good.**

- During their physical education lessons, most children listen carefully to instructions and respond well to signals. They demonstrate good spatial awareness, work together well and create some imaginative movements when, for example, interpreting the story of Goldilocks and the three bears.
- Many children are independent in their dressing skills and are aware of the effect of exercise on their bodies. They handle small equipment and tools sensibly and effectively.

#### **Children's creative development is good.**

- During small group activities, children work imaginatively with colour, shape and texture. They mould with confidence when creating bears from clay and apply finishing techniques with care.
- Children clearly enjoy their music making and can identify and handle percussion instruments appropriately. They have a good repertoire of action songs and rhymes and recall the words well when singing together.

#### **Shortcomings**

- In reception, planning for weekly activities lacks clear achievable learning outcomes and takes insufficient account of children's previous learning experiences or of the need for children to have some opportunities to initiate activities and take responsibility.
- Outside play is not yet fully integrated into daily routines.
- During whole class activities, a significant minority of children find difficulty listening and responding appropriately and in sustaining their involvement in the tasks being provided. Children's turn-taking strategies in this context need further reinforcement.
- When undertaking some planned investigations, children's problem solving and decision making skills are inadequately developed.

## English

In both key stages pupils make good progress and achieve good standards in speaking and listening. Standards in reading and writing are satisfactory. In both key stages standards in English are satisfactory overall.

### Good features

- Pupils make good progress in the development of their listening skills in both key stages. They demonstrate that they can listen with attention and reflect with concentration on the intention of other speakers in different contexts. In KS1, pupils listen to and are responsive to adults questioning, they interpret instructions well and make good progress in listening to each other. By the end of KS2, pupils listen purposefully to others and demonstrate more sustained and concentrated listening during whole class and collaborative group discussions.
- Pupils in both key stages develop good speaking skills. In KS1, pupils express themselves clearly with confidence. They share their observations with visitors and give accurate descriptions of their tasks. In Y1/2, pupils re-tell stories and begin to utilise subject specific vocabulary when engaged in evaluating their own compositions in music.
- Pupils in KS2 participate sensibly and constructively in class and peer discussions. Pupils in Y6 show an increasing ability to sustain discussion in groups. They make good progress in utilising talk to elaborate and shape their ideas when putting forward their points of view and presenting balanced arguments on current issues.
- Standards in reading are satisfactory with some pupils achieving good standards by the end of KS2. In KS1, pupils make good progress in selecting appropriate strategies to help them identify unfamiliar words. During shared reading sessions using big books, they develop good skills in reading with appropriate expression and can make sensible observations about aspects of text. They are enthusiastic in reading their own written work to visitors.
- Pupils in KS2 make good progress with their reading skills. Many can recall favourite books and give reasons for their preferences. Pupils know how to read for research purposes and retrieve information from different sources, although this was limited during the inspection.
- Pupils' independent writing is progressing satisfactorily in both key stages. Pupils in KS1 understand the significance of sentence structure, can identify speech in text and begin to apply punctuation in a meaningful way
- In KS2, pupils are developing their writing skills progressively. Many are able to organise initial ideas, plan their work sequentially and reflect on what they have written. They show an understanding of story structure and begin to incorporate description and dialogue into their independent writing. Some pupils use dictionaries and thesauri to support their written work.

## Shortcomings

- Pupils' ability to record their written responses in depth and detail and extend their independent writing in a range of contexts across the curriculum is not fully developed.
- Pupils' handwriting skills and presentation in books is variable. There is currently an inappropriate use of pencil for recording purposes, particularly in KS2.
- Reading for research and retrieving information from a range of different sources in order to further develop higher order skills needs to be further developed. The use of IT in planning and drafting written work is not fully developed.

## Mathematics

### Good features

Standards of achievement in mathematics are satisfactory in both key stages. In the last inspection, standards were unsatisfactory in KS1 and satisfactory overall in KS2.

- By the end of KS1, pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of basic mathematical concepts and the more able recall key facts quickly and accurately. The majority tell the time to the hour and are able to give a half of a number up to twelve accurately.
- In Y1, pupils recognise simple 2 and 3 dimensional shapes and describe some of their properties. The majority know their number bonds to ten and the more able recognise odd and even numbers to ten. They use non-standard units to measure length and count confidently to twenty and back.
- In Y2, pupils estimate in standard and non-standard measures and classify lengths as more or less than a metre. They count in tens up to a hundred and the more able add three single digit numbers together and subtract single digit numbers from twenty accurately.
- Pupils construct a pictogram to show their favourite fruit and draw a tally chart to show how they come to school. They recognise and describe the properties of 2D and 3D shapes including rectangles, circles, hexagons and octagons.
- Y3 pupils round two digit numbers up to a hundred to the nearest ten, count on and back in twos to a hundred, recognise and use simple fractions such as a half, third and three-quarters and begin to use decimal notation in metres and centimetres.
- In Y4, pupils use the four operations with capacity, measure up to a kilometre and work with numbers up to a thousand. They begin to solve mathematical

problems in real life, use fractions and recognise number sequences and patterns.

- Y5 pupils read and write numbers up to a million, choose appropriate number operations to solve problems and understand more complex number sequences and patterns, including negative numbers. They find factors of numbers up to a hundred, work out one quarter, half and third of numbers up to a hundred and understand the use of brackets in number calculations. The majority know their tables up to ten, the more able having good recall.
- By the end of KS2, more able Y6 pupils use decimal notation for tenths and hundredths and know their fraction equivalents. They use the four operations to solve problems and use language associated with probability to discuss events. Y6 pupils calculate the perimeter of simple compound shapes, use Napier rods confidently, estimate their answers, work them out and check their working with calculators.

### Shortcomings

- In both key stages, pupils do not undertake sufficiently challenging investigative tasks.
- Pupils do not extend their mathematical skills through the regular use of IT.
- Pupil's skills in graphical representation, data handling and interpretation are underdeveloped.

### Science

Standards are good in both key stages.

### Good Features

- Pupils have a good background knowledge across the different attainment targets of the NC.
- In scientific enquiry across both key stages, pupils work well with a partner or in small group situations; they observe test protocols properly and are aware of the scientific processes of prediction and evaluation. They generally undertake scientific investigations with care, giving appropriate importance to completing their work.
- In KS1 pupils are able to understand how we hear sounds differently as we move away from them. They take part enthusiastically in practical activities relating to sound and are able to draw their own conclusions based on their investigations.

- KS1 pupils begin to understand what constitutes a fair test, for example the need for demarcated distances in order to test sound levels.
- Lower KS2 pupils show an increasing understanding of forces and were able to describe ways in which certain objects could be moved.
- KS2 pupils have a good understanding of the properties of materials. They are able to explain and justify their choice of materials using appropriate scientific language. They are able to make accurate predictions of outcomes and record their findings accurately.
- Upper KS 2 pupils are able to discuss the properties of light in terms of speed, reflection and heat. The pupils were further able to distinguish between transparent, opaque and translucent light.

### Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

## Welsh Second Language

Standards in Welsh as a second language are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.

### Good features

- Pupils in both key stages respond positively to a varied programme of reading, writing and oral activities. They participate in role play, collaborate in groups on reading and written tasks, reinforce vocabulary through language games and work together on ICT related activities.
- Pupils can recall basic vocabulary and expressions and are able to understand and follow simple instructions and commands. They respond correctly during registration and some older pupils are learning to extend their responses to include personal preferences. At the start of sessions they greet visitors, teachers and each other appropriately.
- Pupils in Y1/2 respond to questions regarding their well being and make good progress in reinforcing related vocabulary through participation in board games. In Y2, pupils recall target words relating to clothing. They develop their writing skills by correctly inserting a given pattern into sentences.
- In Y5, pupils make good progress in participating in dialogue relating to favourite hobbies; they develop their skills by asking as well as answering questions. Effective use is made of the interactive whiteboard to consolidate pupils' learning and to generate interest.
- At the end of KS2, pupils begin to vary their questioning and responses in a range of topics. They make good progress in developing independence in their

writing skills through recording interviews, describing famous personalities and through empathetic letter writing relating to Syr Harri Morgan.

- Attractively laminated class books based on pupils' own written responses assist in reinforcing pupils' oral skills.
- Displayed vocabulary and target phrases in classes, cross-curricular activities in art and music, Welsh assemblies, the singing of Welsh songs and rhymes and extra-curricular participation in annual celebrations stimulate oracy and written activities and contribute significantly towards creating a Welsh ethos in the school.
- The assistance of the athrawes fro in supporting and encouraging teachers in the delivery and organisation of the subject programme impacts positively on pupils' progress.

### Shortcomings

- There is need to further consolidate the good practice evident in some classes of utilising specific language patterns and target phrases during registration and in other subject areas throughout the day, to further encourage pupils' extended responses and confidence in initiating dialogue.
- Lessons are currently inappropriately long.

## Design & Technology

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in both key stages.

### Good features

- In KS1 pupils develop an understanding of how things move by using simple sliders and levers when making greetings cards. They explore different joining techniques and simple mechanisms and make sensible choices when assembling and joining components.
- Pupils in KS2 extend their design and make skills using a range of materials. Y3 pupils demonstrate their knowledge of electrical circuits when making a simple torch. Pupils in Y4 investigate the properties of materials when making, designing and constructing money containers. Y5 pupils design and make pizzas.
- In both key stages pupils use suitable finishing techniques and evaluate their work.
- Cross-curricular links are developed with science, music and mathematics. Y2 pupils select appropriate materials when making musical instruments. Y6 pupils investigate the use of triangular shapes to strengthen a structure.

- In both key stages pupils are taught how to use tools and equipment safely and to consider the hazards and risks in their activities.

### Shortcomings

- In both key stages pupils have exposure to a limited range of materials and tools.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop problem-solving skills are underdeveloped as many of the design and make tasks are over- prescriptive.

### Information technology

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS1 and KS2. Many of the computer workstations are out of order and this significantly impacts on the standards that pupils achieve.

### Good features

- In both key stages, pupils develop confidence when using a range of information technology (IT) including computers, listening stations and voice recorders.
- In KS1, pupils recognise that computer programs use sounds, text and pictures to convey information and they make satisfactory progress with basic keyboard skills. The majority use a mouse effectively.
- Pupils use a paint program to draw flowers and houses and write explanatory phrases and sentences using a word processor. They use the mouse to create patterns, change the background colour, rub out and add visual effects.
- The majority of pupils, in KS1, use a word processor to write about their news. The more able write thank you letters; for example, in Y2 pupils write to a visitor thanking him for offering to help them make a bird feeder.
- Y2 pupils construct a block graph to show the favourite fruit that they enjoy at breaktime.
- In KS2, the majority of pupils use the computer confidently when typing in their work. Older pupils save their work to disk and retrieve information as necessary.
- Younger KS2 pupils use a word processor confidently to write their stories and poems. They use a database to examine the effect of exercise on the pulse rate and list the amount of fruit sold in a week in the tuck shop.
- Older KS2 pupils write book reviews and about their visit to St. Fagan's museum, describing their feelings when taking part in a Victorian lesson. In

the best practice, more able pupils use a presentation package for their presentation on their visit to France.

- Y5 and Y6 pupils use the digital camera to record their visit to St. Woolos cathedral and more able pupils use spreadsheets to manage the accounts for the tuck shop. Pupils produce bar graphs and pie charts to show their favourite breakfast cereals.

### Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of data handling are limited.
- Pupils do not use e-mail and they rarely access the internet to find information and extend their knowledge about topics they study.
- Pupils' ability to use their problem solving skills through IT is underdeveloped. Pupils do not use IT as an integral tool for learning across the curriculum.

### History

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

- Pupils develop an awareness of chronology and understand what is meant by the present and the past. Timelines are used to good effect in most classes.
- Pupils are able to compare and contrast their own lives with those of people who lived in earlier times. They develop a good knowledge of stories from the past, including those from Welsh history. For example, KS1 pupils know the story of Mary Jones and her experience of school and the difference compared to their own.
- Pupils are encouraged to talk to older people such as grandparents and local inhabitants to further their knowledge of what life was like in earlier times.
- Pupils in KS2 understand the use of primary and secondary sources to study the past.
- Lower KS2 pupils have a good understanding of the Plague of 1665, its causes and the effects it caused among the population.
- Upper KS2 pupils are able to discuss Ebbw Vale, pre- industrial revolution. Pupils are beginning to appreciate that there are often several interpretations of events from the past.
- A range of educational visits, are undertaken to enhance pupils' learning in historical topics.

## Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings but pupils' independent research skills are underdeveloped.

## Geography

Only two lessons of geography were seen during the inspection, however, evidence shows that standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

### Good features

- The study of the locality is a good feature of the work in both key stages.
- In KS1 pupils are developing a good range of geographical vocabulary.
- KS1 pupils are able to collect and record information and communicate ideas through pictures, speaking and writing.
- KS2 pupils have adequate knowledge of the immediate locality and have a satisfactory awareness of the effect of environmental change.
- Upper KS2 pupils study the St. Cast le Guilds area and compare and contrast it with Ebbw Vale.
- Good use is made of visits and fieldwork to provide first hand experiences to enhance learning.

### Shortcomings

- The use of ICT and a variety of media to access information about places, is underdeveloped.
- A good scheme of work in KS2 is now in place. However, it needs to be embedded into teacher's planning and support will be needed to deliver it.
- There are resource issues regarding geography in both key stages and this needs to be addressed.

## Art

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

### Good features

- In both key stages pupils use a range of materials to make paintings, drawings, models and collages of generally good and sometimes very good standard.

- Pupils in KS 1 make good progress in developing an appreciation of shape, texture and colour. In Y1 pupils produce well co-ordinated line drawing of flowers. They demonstrate a developing awareness of shape and can evaluate their work using appropriate vocabulary.
- Pupils in KS2 are introduced to the work of famous artists and imitate some of their styles effectively. The opportunity to consider and appreciate the work of Welsh artists enriches pupils' experiences and extends their skills.
- Y5 and Y6 pupils have developed good observational skills and examples of their work in sculpture and African mask making highlight their good attention to detail, shape and colour.
- Pupils in both key stages make good progress in drawing skills and sketchbooks are used to good effect to support this skill.
- Pupils' respect for the work of other artists in a variety of differing media is reflected in the attractive displays of artwork throughout the school.

### Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

### Music

Standards achieved in music are good in both key stages.

### Good features

- In both key stages, pupils respond with obvious enthusiasm in their music lessons through an appropriately integrated programme of activities in performing, composing and appraising. They recognise musical elements as they occur.
- Pupils in both key stages demonstrate good vocal skills through an increasing repertoire of songs representing different styles, cultures and traditions. They sing in tune and make good progress in varying pitch and rhythm appropriately. They perform confidently with appropriate expression and obviously enjoy the experience of singing together.
- In Y1/2, in response to story stimuli, pupils arrange and perform their own musical compositions. They identify symbols on scores and select instruments for specific purposes. They achieve good standards in performing in groups. Others in Y1/2 make purposeful use of instruments created through their design and technology tasks to categorise sounds and perform an instrumental improvisation based on poetry. They handle instruments with increasing control and accuracy and can name a selection of instruments correctly.
- In Y3/4, pupils can maintain a steady beat when clapping rhythms and make good progress in singing to an accompanying ostinato.

- Working in groups, pupils in Y5 listen attentively to their own and others music when emulating African drumming rhythms in their compositions. They respond well to instructions and recognise the effectiveness of 'silence' in their music making. They perform confidently, apply their listening skills appropriately when appraising others' work and begin to use correct musical terminology in their evaluations.
- Extra-curricular instrumental tuition has a positive effect in pupils' standards in music and contributes to their musical development. Independent research by pupils on a regular basis into lives of famous composers, music workshops, opportunities for pupils to perform in school events and participate in the school choir as witnessed during the inspection provide enriching experiences and consolidate the development of skills and musical appreciation.

### Shortcomings

- There is need to consolidate the newly introduced scheme of work in KS1 in order to enable pupils to make progress in their skills and understanding of music.
- Some lengthy music sessions result in pupils' losing concentration.

### Physical education

Standards achieved in physical education are good overall.

During the inspection, lessons were observed in gymnastics in both key stages and in dance in KS1. No games lessons were observed.

### Good features

- In KS1 pupils use space effectively and travel confidently when performing sequences that involve change of direction. They work co-operatively and plan and organise themselves well.
- In KS1 pupils demonstrate good body tension and co-ordination when balancing on different parts of the body and are eager to share their performance with their peers.
- In their dance session in KS1 pupils control and operate movements well; they interpret music sensitively and work hard to vary their use of speed, shape and direction and to link simple sequences of movement.
- During gymnastic activities in KS2 younger pupils work with increasing confidence and successfully link and transfer more complex movement sequences onto apparatus.
- In Y4, Y5 and Y6 pupils' sequences involving rolls, balances and jumps are of a good quality. They work competently and demonstrate a good level of co-

operation when working together in groups. The high level of direct involvement of staff contributes substantially to pupils' enthusiasm and the standards achieved.

- In the majority of lessons, particularly KS2, good opportunities are provided for pupils to evaluate their performance and to suggest targets for improvement. Pupils throughout KS2 are developing sound evaluative skills.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities contributes successfully to pupils' performances. The school has a good record of success in a variety of competitions, which aids pupils' development in games, athletics and cross-country running.
- Pupils in KS2 make good progress in their swimming skills and understanding of water safety: they achieve well in local competitions.

### **Shortcomings**

- In KS1, pupils' evaluative skills are less well developed. During some lessons pupils have insufficient time to reflect on their performance and that of others and to make suggestions for improvement.

## **Religious education**

Standards of achievement in religious education are good overall.

### **Good features**

- In both key stages pupils have a good understanding of significant stories from the Bible: they are able to recall these well both orally and in writing.
- Throughout the school, pupils are aware of the importance of rules and of the need for their lives in and outside school to be governed by a code of conduct.
- Younger pupils clearly understand the need to give thanks: they write meaningful prayers to share with the class.
- Pupils in KS1 and KS2 are able to discuss feelings and explore issues through some focused lessons and topics chosen for collective worship. Younger pupils reflect on the importance of friendship and older pupils have a good awareness of the importance of working together and respecting the views of others.
- In KS1, pupils have a good understanding of how Christian and Jewish festivals are celebrated: they apply relevant vocabulary when sharing experiences and their oral responses are good.
- As they progress through KS2, pupils continue to make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of differing beliefs and practices. They talk

confidently about the significance of architectural features, artefacts, clothing and customs and make simple comparisons based on their visits to local churches, the cathedral and synagogue.

- Through their exploration of key questions, older pupils in KS2 make good progress in their ability to consider specific aspects of religion and human experience: some good standards are achieved.

### Shortcomings

- In KS2 there would be further benefit in extending opportunities for pupils to record their written responses in greater depth.
- The use made of ICT to support pupils' work in religious education is variable: pupils have little opportunity to research information for themselves.

## .8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### 8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

Willowtown was last inspected as two separate infant and junior school in December 1997 and February 1999 respectively. The key issues for each school were as follows:

#### Infant School

- There is a need to raise standards immediately throughout the school in mathematics and information technology.
- Greater opportunities should be provided for children in the nursery and reception classes to develop and practice skills of investigation, observation and discussion, particularly in science and language activities.
- The heateacher and senior management team of the school need to place greater emphasis on the monitoring of standards in order to achieve greater consistency in the quality of teaching and more pace and challenge in pupil's work.
- Action needs to be taken to improve organisation, planning and the quality of teaching in some classes.
- The role of the subject coordinators needs to be further improved and provision made for more regular and rigorous in-service training within the school;
- Support staff need to be more effectively managed and deployed to ensure that their services are used to maximum advantage.
- A review should be made of the monies presently available to the school and steps taken to improve the allocation of resources to several curriculum areas.

## Safety issues

- Effective action should be taken to resolve the long standing safety problems on the road immediately facing the front entrance to the school.
- The practice of allowing nursery children to enter a kitchen area without adequate safety precautions should be carefully reviewed.

## Junior School

The school needs to improve:

- Aspects of work in mathematics, science and geography.
- Progression in work from Y3 to Y4 and Y5 to Y6.
- Lesson planning to clarify learning objectives and the evaluation of pupils' learning/achievement.
- Monitoring by curriculum coordinators.
- Reports to parents.
- The use made of available resources of expertise in SEN throughout the school.
- Strategies for the social and curricular integration of selected older pupils in the SNU.
- Access to the school field.
- The accommodation available in the canteen.

The newly formed Willowtown Primary School has made good progress since the last inspection as two separate schools in many of the key issues. The school, however, has been severely hampered in its development through instability, having had five headteachers in a period of two years.

## Early Years and KS1

- Standards in mathematics and in information technology were seen to be unsatisfactory in the last inspection and are now satisfactory.
- Opportunities have been provided for children in the nursery and reception classes to develop and practice skills of investigation, observation and discussion, particularly in science and language activities. These areas are now good.

- The quality of teaching has improved greatly as has lesson pace and challenge, all of which are now good. There is, however, still work to be done in monitoring standards through direct and indirect monitoring.
- The quality of teaching overall is now good.
- The role of the subject leader needs further development.
- Support staff are very good and make a positive impact on learning managed well by the teaching staff.
- Resources remain an issue, however, there has been an improvement since the last inspection.
- The safety issues contained within the report have been addressed.

## KS2

- Although there is evidence of improvement, mathematics and geography remain satisfactory, whilst science is now good.
- Much work has been done on schemes of work and this has improved progression between all KS2 classes.
- Medium term plans in the form of schemes of work form the basis for short term weekly plans. Short term plans are evaluated and concerns discussed with the senior management team and staff as appropriate. Learning objectives are now an integral part of the planning process.
- Monitoring by subject leaders remains a key issue, although there is evidence of improvement from the previous report.
- Annual reports to parents have improved since the last inspection. However, they are often too descriptive and lack evaluation. All reports contain advice for parents and pupils, but this is usually too brief and lacks sufficient detail.
- SEN expertise remains a strong feature within the school and much use has been made of this throughout the whole school.
- Staff in the school are committed to integration and inclusion and pupils from the SNU and the support class are encouraged to take part in all of the activities of the school.
- The accommodation in the canteen, and in the school in general, remains a key issue.

## 8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order to build upon the progress it has made since the last inspection, the school needs to:

- raise standards in the reception class in the areas of learning judged to be satisfactory and in those subjects in KS1 and KS2 similarly judged to be satisfactory;
- raise standards in the key skills of reading, writing, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum in both key stages;
- structure and empower the SMT to build the school into a cohesive primary unit in order to effect positive change ensuring a comprehensive continuing and professional development programme (CPD) linked to the needs of the school;
- develop the role of the subject leaders in order that they directly and indirectly monitor standards thus assuring continuity and progression in all NC subjects;
- to review the organisation of the school day in order to ensure that time allocation for subjects is appropriately balanced;
- improve the quality of resources for Early Years, KS1 and KS2 in all curriculum areas;
- improve the quality of accommodation in order to further impact on the education provided.

**The inspectors wish to express their thanks to the governing body, head, staff, parents and pupils of Willowtown Primary School for their co-operation and assistance before and during the inspection.**

## APPENDIX

### A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Willowtown Primary School
School type	Primary
Age -range of pupils	3 - 11 years
Address of school	Brynheulog Street Ebbw Vale Gwent
Post-Code	NP23 6NJ
Telephone Number	01495 302436

Headteacher	Mr R Gardner
Date of appointment	January 1 <sup>st</sup> 2004
Chair of Governors	Mr G Foxwell
Registered Inspector	Mr R Thomas
Dates of inspection	2 - 5 February 2004

### 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	27	44	40	42	48	45	51	55	352

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	18	1	18.5

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	29:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	10:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	6:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	29
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	0.92:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>					
	N	R	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Term 1	81	89	91	94	92.7
Term 2	80	91	93	91	91.9
Term 3	83	90	91	91	91.3

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.	0
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## C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

### NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2003			Number of pupils in Y2: 51						
Percentage of pupils at each level			D	A	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	6	14	53	27	0
		National	0	0	4	14	63	20	0
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	2	16	49	33	0
		National	0	0	4	14	55	27	0
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	9	14	75	2	0
		National	0	0	5	14	69	11	0
EN: Speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	8	10	55	27	0
		National	0	0	3	12	63	22	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	8	18	39	55	0
		National	0	0	2	11	63	24	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	6	4	51	39	0
		National	0	0	2	10	66	22	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:	68.6%	In Wales:	80%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under sections 364 and 365 of the Education Act 1996 or, in the case of the Task/Test were absent.
- A Pupils who have failed to register a level due to absence
- W Pupils who are working towards level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for level 1.

# NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2003										Number of pupils in Y6: 28			
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	32	38	19	0
		National	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	16	45	31	0
	Test/Task	School	0	1	1	0	0	0	6	29	46	17	0
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	5	13	38	40	n
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	29	45	13	0
		National	0	0	1	n/a	0	0	4	19	46	30	0
	Test/Task	School	0	1	1	0	0	0	7	36	42	13	0
		National	0	2	1	0	0	0	4	18	42	33	n
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	19	56	22	0
		National	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	3	13	49	35	0
	Test/Task	School	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	15	59	23	0
		National	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	9	48	39	n

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:	50%	In the school:	51.5%
In Wales:	70%	In Wales:	69%

- D Pupils who are excepted 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 tests because they are working outside the levels of the tests.
- W Pupils who are working towards level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for level 1
- n tests do not cover these levels.
- n/a not applicable.

## **D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection**

Before the inspection, meetings were held with the staff, the governing body and the parents of pupils registered at the school. Fourteen parents were present at the pre-inspection parents' meeting. Documents supplied by the school were scrutinised and questionnaires returned by parents were analysed. A team of four gave 14 inspector days to the inspection, in the course of which formal observations were made of lessons or part lessons. In addition, formal notes were made of aspects of pupils' work and provision. Discussions with pupils from all age groups and abilities were undertaken, both inside and outside the classroom. A representative sample of pupils' work from all classes and for the whole academic year was scrutinised. Teachers' plans and records were examined. Inspectors considered the site, fabric and resources of the school. Discussions were held with the Head and with teachers, particularly about their subject management roles. Still within the context of the inspection, reporting back meetings took place with the Head, the staff and the governing body.

## E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

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