

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

**Alaw Primary School**

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Tonypandy  
Rhondda Cynon Taff  
CF40 2UU

School Number: 674 2052

Date of Inspection:  
19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> May 2003

Registered Inspector:  
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W/180/78730

Under ESTYN contract number: T/265/02P

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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 some 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

Alaw School is a community primary school, catering for boys and girls aged three to eleven years. The school was previously inspected in May 1998. There are 190 pupils on roll, including 43 children under five (24 in the nursery and 19 in the reception class) and 16 pupils with special educational needs (SEN) who attend two specialist observation classes provided by the Local Education Authority (LEA). The school is organised in three mixed-age classes in early years and KS1, plus the two observation classes. In KS2, there are three mixed age classes. The average class size, excluding the observation classes and the nursery, is 29. There are nine full-time teachers, including the headteacher. Five teaching assistants support this provision. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was absent. The governors have appointed an acting headteacher and deputy headteacher to run the school in the headteacher's absence.

The school is situated in the small town of Trealaw in the Rhondda Valley. There is a variety of housing, including owner-occupied and rented accommodation. The school describes the area as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Twenty-five per cent of pupils access free school meals. This is above average. There is a small number of pupils from ethnic minorities and a small number come from homes where Welsh is the first language. For the majority, English is the preferred language used.

The school receives pupils from the full range of abilities. The results of baseline assessments compare well with local averages. Some children begin school with good levels of achievement. Subsequent assessments identify 24% of the pupils to have SEN. This is about average.

The school's aims are published in the prospectus. Targets for attainment at the end of KS2 are set and the school development plan (SDP) for 2002/3 identifies the following targets for improvement:

- to improve standards in the quality of teaching and learning in information and communications technology (ICT);
- to raise standards in writing in KS1 and KS2;
- to improve standards in scientific enquiry;
- to raise standards in the teaching of gymnastics;
- to improve whole-school planning for key skills;
- to develop pupils' involvement in the assessment of their own work;
- to improve pupils' motivation and attitude to learning;
- to improve the quality of teaching in science;
- to implement the new SEN Code of Practice;
- to become more aware of racial harmony and multi-cultural issues;
- to introduce a performance-management framework in line with statutory requirements;
- to develop continuing professional development;
- to develop the role of the Senior Management Team (SMT);
- to review school self evaluation;
- to develop the leadership and management of the headteacher;
- to improve the internal and external structure;
- to improve the external signs and yard markings;
- to review roles and responsibilities of the governing body (GB);
- to improve policies;
- to develop the role of the GB in relation to performance management;

- to improve the CP policy;
- to improve the parents handbook;
- to create a Friends of Alaw;
- to develop a KS2 Curriculum awareness evening.

## MAIN FINDINGS

### The main findings of the report

This is a school with particular strengths to build on.

- Children enter school with a range of attainments. Many have well developed learning skills. Children under five, in the nursery and reception class, make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes in the six areas of learning.

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

- The standards of achievement in the different subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) in Key Stages 1 and 2 are as follows:

Subject	KS1	KS2
English	Satisfactory	Good
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Good
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Welsh second language	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
History	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Art	Good	Good
Music	Insufficient evidence to judge overall standards	
Physical education	Satisfactory	Good
Religious education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

- Progress in KS1 and KS2 is satisfactory overall. The more-able pupils make too little progress when the work is insufficiently challenging and the progress of pupils with SEN is also limited when the work is not suitably adapted to their needs.
- In English and mathematics, progress improves across KS2.
- However, too few opportunities for developing research and enquiry skills, limited opportunities for using information and communications technology (ICT) in some classes, and the narrow range of work undertaken, in some subjects, limits pupils' progress. As a consequence, some of the pupils' written work does not fully reflect their good capabilities.

- The majority of pupils attending the two SEN observation classes in KS1 make good progress.
- In the 52 lessons or parts of lessons observed, standards of achievement were judged to be very good in eight per cent of lessons, good in 40% and satisfactory in 52%.
- The school's results in the NC assessments in KS1 show wide variation over time. This is sometimes due to the proportion of pupils with SEN. In 1997, 90% of pupils attained at least the expected level 2 in English, mathematics and science and in 2002 the figure fell to 60%. However, the proportion of pupils attaining level 3 in English and mathematics in 2002 was at an all time high.
- In the KS2 NC tests, the overall trend shows a very good improvement over time. In particular, the proportion of pupils attaining level 5 in mathematics and science in 2002 compares well with local and national figures.
- Analysis of the school's NC results, on the basis of gender, indicates that the girls' performance has dropped considerably in KS1. In 2002, the boys performed better than the girls in all three subjects.
- In KS2, the position is reversed. The girls consistently perform better than the boys do. This is in line with the national picture. However, inspection evidence indicates the boys and girls in Y5 and Y6 make similar progress in their class work.
- The standards achieved in the key skills of speaking and listening are good.
- Standards in reading, writing and numeracy skills and using the skills of ICT across the curriculum are satisfactory.
- Provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. This is a strong feature of the school.
- Provision for the pupils' spiritual and social development is good. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory.
- The quality of pupils' behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to learning. The school's arrangements for promoting good behaviour are very good.
- Although pupils have a good capacity to work independently, they lack sufficient opportunities to develop self-reliance and take greater responsibility for their learning.
- The overall level of attendance is satisfactory.
- The school's procedures for recording absence lack rigour and clarity. They do not comply with the requirements of the National Assembly for Wales (NafW) circular 3/99.
- The quality and impact of teaching is satisfactory. There are particular strengths in early years, physical education and ICT.
- However, most teachers seldom provide problem-solving and research activities across subjects to promote greater self-reliance and independence in learning.

- In the 52 lessons or parts of lessons observed teaching was very good in ten per cent, good in 40% and satisfactory in 50%.
- Teachers generally use a limited range of teaching approaches and organisational strategies. Lesson planning is based on appropriate schemes of work that provide progression but the content is not always fully developed through a sufficient range of work.
- The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainments, particularly through the systematic use of standardised tests. However, there are shortcomings in the use of assessment information to promote higher standards for individual pupils, classes or groups of pupils.
- Taken overall, the quality of the school's planned curricular provision is good, but there are some shortcomings in its implementation as due emphasis is not always given to the full range of work in all subjects.
- In particular, too little emphasis is given to investigative work in science and mathematics. Furthermore, topics in geography, history and religious education are seldom developed in sufficient detail.
- The school gives good attention to developing pupils' personal and social education and a good range of extra-curricular activities effectively enhances the curriculum.
- There is equality of opportunity to the curriculum provided and the school makes good efforts to ensure that its provision is socially inclusive.
- The quality of support and guidance offered to pupils and the attention given to their welfare is satisfactory overall. There are strengths in day-to-day pastoral support and guidance' but there is a lack of rigour in ensuring the consistent implementation of day-to-day procedures to assure pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Overall, the provision made to meet the learning needs of pupils identified as having SEN within the main-school classes is good.
- Overall, very good provision is made to meet the special educational needs of pupils attending the Observation Unit of two classes for of pre-school and KS1 age pupils, who come from a wide area.
- The school has good links with the community, schools and other institutions that augment pupil's learning well. Its partnership with parents is satisfactory overall.
- The school has good, constructive partnerships with local business and industry.
- The quality of the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory overall.
- The acting headteacher has successfully built upon, performance indicators and the views of staff to draw together a wide-ranging SDP. This document provides a clear basis to take the school forward and forms the basis of a continuing programme of monitoring and evaluation.

- The school has made a good start in implementing the SDP but current initiatives have not had sufficient time to fully impact on the school's practice. It is too soon to judge their effectiveness.
- The overall quality of leadership and efficiency is satisfactory. The impact of leadership in the short term is very effective in refocusing the school's efforts to further raise standards and improve provision.
- The provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory overall. The learning support staff make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and the non-teaching staff conscientiously ensure the school runs smoothly.
- The outdoor play areas for the nursery and the observation classes are small, the hall in KS2 is cramped for physical education lessons, the KS1 classrooms do not have running water and since the provision of a computer suite the school no longer has an adequate library.
- There is adequate playground space, but no field for outdoor games. The school has access to a suitable park nearby.
- The provision of learning resources is satisfactory overall. The resources for children under five are appropriate.
- In both key stages, the provision of resources in mathematics, science and physical education is good and the new computer suite is having a positive impact on standards.
- However, the limited stock of books and the lack of emphasis on library and research limit pupils' study skills. There are also limited resources for Welsh, religious education and geography that impact on standards.
- The extent of improvement in relation to the key issues raised in the previous inspection is limited.
- The school has successfully raised standards in art in both key stages and maintained standards in most other subjects. However, in KS1, performance indicators show a gradual decline in standards since 1997, but in KS2 there is an overall trend of steady improvement.

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

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

Standards of achievement are satisfactory overall.

- In the 52 lessons or parts of lessons observed standards of achievement were judged to be very good in eight per cent of lessons, good in 40% and satisfactory in 52%.
- Children enter school with a range of attainments. Many have well developed learning skills. Children under five, in the nursery and reception class, make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes in the six areas of learning.

- Standards of achievement, in the nursery and reception class, are very good in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development. Standards are good in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development, and in creative development.
- Progress in KS1 and KS2 is satisfactory overall. The more-able pupils make too little progress when the work is insufficiently challenging and the progress of pupils with SEN is also limited when the work is not suitably adapted to their needs.
- In English and mathematics; progress improves across KS2. However, too few opportunities for developing research and enquiry skills, together with limited opportunities for using ICT in some classes, and the narrow range of work undertaken, especially in the non-core foundation subjects, limit pupils' progress. As a consequence, some of the written work does not fully reflect pupils' good capabilities.
- In KS1, standards of achievement are good in art. Standards are satisfactory in English, mathematics and physical education.
- In KS2, standards of achievement are good in English, mathematics, art and physical education.
- In both key stages, standards are satisfactory in science, design and technology, information technology, history, geography and religious education.
- Standards in Welsh second language are satisfactory in KS1 and unsatisfactory in KS2. There was insufficient evidence to judge overall standards in music.
- The school's results in the NC assessments in KS1 show wide variation over time. This is sometimes due to the proportion of pupils with SEN. In 1997, 90% of pupils attained at least the expected level 2 in English, mathematics and science and in 2002 the figure fell to 60%. However, the proportion of pupils attaining level 3 in English and mathematics in 2002 was at an all time high.
- In the KS2 NC tests, the overall trend shows a very good improvement over time. In particular, the proportion of pupils attaining level 5 in mathematics and science in 2002 compares well with local and national figures.
- In the 2002 KS1 NC assessments, 60% of pupils attained at least the nationally expected level 2 in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is well below the most recent national figures and well below the average for similar schools with between 25 and 32% of pupils eligible for free school meals.
- In the 2002 KS2 NC tests, 89 per cent of pupils attained at least the nationally expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science. These results compare very well with the national picture and with the performance of similar schools. The average over the last three years is 89 per cent.
- Analysis of the school's NC results, on the basis of gender, indicates that the girls' performance has dropped considerably in KS1. In 2002, the boys performed better than the girls in all three subjects.
- In KS2, the position is reversed. The girls consistently perform better than the boys do.

This is in line with the national picture. Inspection evidence indicates the boys and girls in Y5 and Y6 make similar progress in their class work.

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

The standards achieved in the key skills of speaking and listening are good. Standards in reading, writing and numeracy skills and using the skills of ICT across the curriculum are satisfactory.

- The under-fives listen well, follow instructions quickly, respond readily to questions, and offer comments and ideas eagerly. They make good progress developing early reading, writing and number skills across the curriculum. They use computers with growing confidence and independence.
- In KS1 and KS2, pupils are keen to communicate and they do so clearly when speaking in English.
- Pupils in KS2 show maturity as they discuss how to tackle problems, for example, when creating a physical education game for pupils in the KS1 observation classes. However, they lack the confidence to express themselves to a satisfactory standard in Welsh.
- In all classes, pupils are developing good habits as active listeners. They listen attentively and respectfully to adults and to each other in lessons.
- Pupils' reading and comprehension skills develop well through work in English, but too little use is made of a variety of sources, including ICT, to research work in subjects such as design and technology, geography, religious education and art.
- In KS1, pupils make a good start on developing their independent writing skills. Progress is not maintained across the key stage because the range of writing forms used is limited.
- In KS2, standards in writing in English are good. Pupils express themselves confidently and acquire a good grasp of spelling, grammar and punctuation. However, across the curriculum, writing skills are less well developed. For example, pupils seldom fully develop their own extended accounts and only rarely research and make notes before writing in several subjects. They make too little use of drafting and redrafting. In some cases, writing is restricted by the over use of worksheets that limit pupils' response.
- In general, pupils make only limited use of their numeracy skills in other subjects. An example of good work was noted in KS1 where pupils collected data about pupils' favourite chocolate bars and crisp flavours. With help, pupils modelled a block graph using the carpet tiles as a grid and recorded the graph clearly. Pupils took turns to input data on the computer and generate a graph.
- Pupils' skills in using ICT applications to support work across the curriculum are developing well from a low base. In some classes, pupils confidently use programs to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and the older pupils are gaining confidence in using CD-ROMs and the internet to research topics.

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

## 4.1 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. This is a strong feature of the school. Provision for their spiritual and social development is good. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory.

- The school is successful in meeting its stated aim to provide a stimulating and safe environment where pupils are encouraged to develop self-awareness, self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Daily assemblies, that include an appropriate act of collective worship, make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on values, beliefs and actions and to consider the impact of their actions.
- Older pupils express their future hopes and aspirations clearly, and they confidently describe their feelings in their written work. Pupils' efforts, ideas and achievements are valued and acknowledged in their 'Proud to Present' files.
- Pupils clearly know right from wrong and they respect the school and class rules, which enable the school to function as an orderly community. The school actively promotes positive attitudes and older pupils appreciate the importance of developing personal qualities such as honesty, loyalty and kindness.
- Pupils participate enthusiastically in school life and show appropriate self-discipline as they work. They respect each other, collaborate responsibly to solve problems and are courteous in their dealings with adults, including visitors to the school. Pupils know that by raising money for charities, they help those less fortunate than themselves.
- The range of activities undertaken for the school's *Eisteddfod* and through out-of-school visits enables pupils to become aware of aspects of the culture and heritage of Wales. Opportunities for them to further develop this awareness through subjects of the curriculum are not fully exploited. Pupils have limited knowledge and understanding about the diversity of other cultures and traditions.
- The pupils' responses to the way the school provides for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Parents' views, expressed in the questionnaires, confirm that the school's values and attitude have a positive effect on their children.

## 4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

The quality of pupils' behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to learning. The school's arrangements for promoting good behaviour are very good.

- Pupils behave responsibly in school and they are keen to learn. The school community is vibrant and inclusive.
- Pupils try hard and maintain concentration for appropriate extended periods. For instance, younger pupils sustain interest well when listening and responding to *Winnie the Witch* and other stories, and older pupils investigate Victorian artefacts with intense curiosity.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically when set challenging tasks, such as creating games suitable for younger children. When encouraged to do so, they hold constructive discussions in groups, reach a consensus, and act on it.

- Although pupils have a good capacity to work independently they lack sufficient opportunities to develop self-reliance and take greater responsibility for their learning.
- The behaviour strategy, with clear sanctions and rewards, is highly effective. Teachers have rigorous expectations of pupils' behaviour and apply the rewards and sanctions policy consistently. There has not been a single exclusion in the past year.
- The older pupils become accustomed to voting, for example for house captains, and a link with the NAFW helps them to understand the importance of democratic participation.
- The great majority of pupils are polite and co-operative when at play. They are friendly and outgoing, eager to please and willing to talk about their work and interests.
- The high standards of behaviour create a climate in which successful learning is possible and often happens.
- Incidents of misconduct or bullying have only recently begun to be recorded systematically, to a format designed by the acting headteacher. Incidents involving a very small number of pupils have been identified and followed up swiftly. The school has sought and received appropriate support from parents. The new format allows for reporting of racist and sexist incidents, should any occur.
- The school has an appropriate policy to promote racial harmony.

### **4.3 Attendance**

The overall level of attendance is satisfactory.

- In the year before the inspection, attendance averaged between 92.5% and 94.9%.
- The school does not have clear targets to raise attendance.
- The great majority of pupils arrive punctually and with enthusiasm. However, during the inspection, a small number of pupils were observed arriving late.
- Too many families taking holidays in term time adversely affect the level of attendance. This interrupts pupils' progress as they miss important work done by the rest of the class. In the past school year, some pupils have taken holidays exceeding two weeks. The excess over two weeks was not marked as unauthorised absence.
- The school's procedures for recording absence lack rigour and clarity. They do not comply with the requirements of the NAFW circular 3/99. In particular, there is a lack of clarity over the distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence.
- In some cases, registers are not marked at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Furthermore, registers are kept open for too long. Pupils arriving in the first half an hour of the school day are not marked as late.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory.

- In the 52 lessons or parts of lessons observed teaching was very good in ten per cent, good in 40% and satisfactory in 50%.
- Taken overall, teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. There are particular strengths in early years, physical education and ICT for instance.
- However, most teachers seldom provide problem-solving and research activities across subjects to promote greater self-reliance and independence in learning.
- The teaching of the under-fives is effective and support staff make a positive contribution to this teaching. There is good emphasis on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills.
- Lesson planning is based on appropriate schemes of work that provide progression and continuity. However, the content is not always fully developed and topics are often not fully exploited through a sufficient range of work.
- Teachers generally use a limited range of teaching approaches and organisational strategies. They effectively teach the whole class, use clear explanations and questioning well, but seldom adapt and focus their teaching, during group work for instance, to match pupils' differing learning needs.
- All staff have high expectations of pupils' discipline and achievement. However, the slow pace of some lessons, limits pupils' achievements. A common feature of such lessons is the separate teaching content for each year group. This limits the scope of the work set, especially in written tasks.
- Although teachers' records clearly identify pupils' attainments, the use of assessments to help match work more closely to pupils' abilities is not well developed. This results in a lack of appropriate challenge in some of the work, especially for more-able pupils.
- The recently introduced marking policy has yet to impact on practice. Too little use is made of marking to improve pupils' achievement and ensure good progress is maintained.

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

The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainments, particularly through the systematic use of standardised tests. However, there are shortcomings in the use of assessment information to promote higher standards for individual pupils, classes or groups of pupils.

- Assessment procedures begin with appropriate baseline assessments for children under five. Attainment and progress in English and mathematics is regularly assessed through standardised tests, including end of key stage NC assessments in both key stages. The information gathered provides a very clear record of pupils' progress.
- The progress of individual pupils is suitably monitored over time. Where pupils are found to be making less progress than expected, appropriate steps are taken to overcome the difficulty, including action relating to pupils with SEN.

- However, attainment data is not sufficiently collated and evaluated to determine strengths or weaknesses in performance and provision or as a means to identify what elements of provision need to be improved in order to raise standards.
- Although assessment opportunities are clearly identified in some schemes of work and teachers maintain copious collections of samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics, the value of these collections is reduced because they are not always clearly assessed against NC criteria.
- There are some inconsistencies between teacher assessments and NC test results at the end of KS2.
- The school is working with other local schools to develop 'Cluster Portfolios' of exemplar work in English, for example, to help guide and improve the quality of day-to-day assessments. The provision of clearly graduated criteria to identify pupils' attainment within NC levels is a positive development in ensuring that assessments are consistent and accurate.
- Teachers' planning does not, however, make sufficient use of the assessment data available to set different learning targets that are closely matched to the range of learning needs of the pupils. The provision too often relies on pupils being able to achieve different outcomes from the same learning tasks.
- For example, more-able pupils are not asked to build on their existing good knowledge of shapes and their properties to explore symmetry and tessellation. Progress is determined by the needs of the majority of pupils in such lessons. This often impedes the progress of able pupils and sometimes creates uncertainty and a loss of confidence with less-able pupils.
- Reports to parents are generally of satisfactory quality. They provide good details of pupils' achievements in the core foundation subjects of English and mathematics, but reports on science and the non-core foundation subjects often focus on the work covered, rather than on what pupils know and can do, and need to do next.
- The school is well supported by the LEA in the analysis of performance data and the setting of whole-school targets. The school is beginning to use this information to set targets for school improvement and raise standards. For instance, a 'tracking system' is being developed to monitor pupils' progress annually so that appropriate action can be taken to ensure targets are met and overall standards are raised.

### **5.3 Curriculum**

Taken overall, the quality of the school's planned curricular provision is good, but there are some shortcomings in its implementation.

- The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- For pupils in KS1 and KS2, the planned curriculum is broad and meets statutory requirements. It includes all subjects of the NC and religious education.

- There is a good range of subject policies and detailed schemes of work that provide a suitable framework for planning the curriculum across the school. Continuity and progression in learning is planned through a two-year cycle of work in both key stages. In KS1, the subject content is taught through broad topics and in KS2, a subject specific approach is followed.
- In line with the target noted in the SDP, the school is developing its planning for the development of key skills. It is finalising changes to relevant documents to ensure a consistent approach to developing key skills across the curriculum.
- The overall effectiveness of curricular provision is satisfactory. An appropriate amount of time is allocated to teach each subject, but the implementation of planning does not ensure due emphasis is given to the full range of work in all subjects.
- Suitable emphasis is given to the *Cwricwlwm Cymraeg*.
- Across the school, too little emphasis is given to investigative work in science and mathematics. Furthermore, topics in geography, history and religious education are seldom developed in sufficient detail. Links to design and technology and ICT are at an early stage.
- There is no agreed whole-school policy for setting homework. In those classes where appropriate homework is regularly given, it has a positive impact on standards.
- The school gives good attention to developing pupils' personal and social education (PSE) and the provision is effective, although arrangements are not yet formalised. The school is currently formulating its programme of work for PSE.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities effectively enhances the curriculum. These include science and music clubs and varied sporting opportunities. Pupils also benefit from the programme of educational visits and visitors to the school, which support their curriculum work well.
- There is equality of opportunity to the curriculum provided and the school makes good efforts to ensure that its provision is socially inclusive.
- There are no pupils for whom the curriculum is modified or disapplied.

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

The quality of support and guidance offered to pupils and the attention given to their welfare is satisfactory overall. There are strengths in day-to-day pastoral support and guidance, but there is a lack of rigour in ensuring the consistent implementation of day-to-day procedures to assure pupils' welfare, health and safety.

- The staff give constructive personal guidance to pupils and have a strong commitment to helping pupils' develop both socially and intellectually. The recently introduced 'proud to present' initiatives are having a positive impact on pupils' motivation and self-esteem.
- The quality of educational guidance is variable. The 'new' marking policy has yet to be fully implemented and annual reports focus closely on pupils' personal development, but are less secure on educational progress.

- Pupils' attainment and progress is suitably monitored over time. However, there is an immediate need to review arrangements for the secure retention of the detailed records and confidential correspondence available to teachers, such as reports and assessments, concerning 'looked after' pupils and those with SEN.
- The schools' procedures to ensure Child Protection are based on guidance provided by the LEA. In general, teachers are aware of their obligations in this area. Appropriate training has been provided within the past year. The headteacher is the child protection co-ordinator and there is a suitable policy.
- Personal and social education is well integrated across the curriculum, and a scheme of work is being developed. There is not yet sufficient emphasis on healthy eating, but the school plans to introduce a policy and raise pupils' awareness.
- The school nurse assists with the teaching of sex education. Issues of citizenship are well covered through visits to places of work and by visits from the police, the fire service, the school nurse and other professionals.
- There is helpful support from social services and health professionals, especially for 'looked-after children' and pupils in the observation classes. The provision of speech therapy for pupils in the observation classes is very good, but such provision is extremely hard to secure for pupils in the main school.
- The school has an appropriate health and safety policy and regular first aid training is provided for staff. However, there is scope to tighten up and formalise day-to-day procedures to assure pupil's safety and welfare. The school is to review its procedures for the supervision of pupils, the monitoring and notification of pupils' absence and punctuality, the identification of any risks to health and safety and the recording of incidents and action taken.
- There are appropriate arrangements for inspecting the building and school equipment, including regular visits from the fire service. Fire drills are regularly held. The buildings are well provided with fire extinguishers and the external doors are controlled by a suitable security system.
- The location of the staff car park is not ideal as the movement of vehicles across the playground during break-times constitutes a potential hazard to pupils' safety.

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

The school makes good overall provision for pupils with special educational needs.

### **Provision to meet the special educational needs of pupils in mainstream classes**

Overall, the provision made to meet the learning needs of pupils identified as having SEN within the mainstream classes is good.

- Good procedures are systematically followed in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice. Where teachers have a concern about a pupil's lack of progress, discussion with the SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO) results in the class-teacher working to support the pupil's learning more individually. Parents are alerted to the situation and the pupil is included on the school's well maintained SEN register.

- For those pupils who continue to be a cause for concern the stages of provision are suitably matched to the pupil's needs and additional learning support is provided up to the stage of 'school action plus'. Good involvement of the schools' psychological service provides valuable assessment of the pupils' needs and appropriate individual education programmes (IEPs) are drawn up.
- A visiting language support teacher provides additional specialist teaching and most pupils make good progress. Part-time learning support assistants and a visiting behaviour support teacher, suitably support pupils with more significant learning difficulties, such as speech and language or behavioural difficulties.
- Class-teachers liaise well with the supporting professionals and the IEPs are effectively followed to ensure learning needs are met through suitable grouping of pupils and management of their support. However, in most lessons, teachers' planning does not include sufficient specific learning targets or different tasks to ensure that work is always well matched to the pupils' needs.
- A very small minority of pupils continue to make very little progress over several years, despite the generally good procedures being followed. These pupils require further assessment, in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice relating to 'statutory assessment,' in order to determine the nature of their specific learning difficulties so that more effective provision may be made to meet their needs. Despite the school's best efforts the undue delays in this regard are unsatisfactory.

### **Provision for pupils attending the Area Observation Unit**

Overall, very good provision is made to meet the special educational needs of pupils attending the Observation Unit of two classes for pre-school and KS1 pupils, who come from a wide area.

- All pupils are suitably assessed through the involvement of appropriate professionals before their placement in the unit is decided at a multi-disciplinary admission panel, which includes parents. Pupils are placed in the unit at the stage of 'School Action Plus' of the SEN Code of Practice. Their range of learning needs include general or specific learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties, physical or sensory difficulties, or emotional; and behavioural difficulties.
- In both classes, there is a suitably strong focus on the development of pupils' early skills in literacy and numeracy and in their language development. For pupils in KS1, the additional time given to these basic skills results in a lack of balance in relation to their entitlement to the NC with subjects such as geography, history and information technology being insecure within the integrated timetable of activities. Since no pupils have a statement of SEN to indicate curriculum modifications, this is unsatisfactory.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, being particularly good with the younger children and mainly satisfactory with the older pupils. The IEPs are good and pupils make mainly good progress through one-to-one or small group activities that are very well matched to their learning needs.
- Pupils' speech and language is very well developed during 'circle time' sessions and teaching throughout the day which draws attention to the use of key words, such as *on, in, under, more, less, first, second, round, square*, counting and the names of colours. The

learning support assistants work well in partnership with the class-teachers and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. For some older pupils however, the routine practice of skills, such as handwriting, continues for too long and these pupils are not sufficiently challenged to make progress.

- Pupils have regular support from speech and language therapists who not only have regular sessions with the pupils but also share their skills with the teachers as they discuss each pupil's programme and progress. This provision is very good.
- Pupils' progress is regularly reviewed and where progress is less than expected additional assessments are carried out and individual programmes modified. As a result, for most pupils, good progress is made and a significant proportion of the pupils are re-integrated into mainstream classes when they leave the unit at the end of KS1. Some pupils are suitably integrated into mainstream lessons as preparation for this re-integration and all pupils in the unit benefit socially from being included into the general life of the school.
- The majority of pupils with significant long-term learning difficulties make steady progress and are suitably maintained at the stage of 'school action plus' and most move on to special needs provision within their home locality at the end of KS1.
- However, a few pupils with more severe learning difficulties make very slow progress. These pupils are referred for 'statutory' assessment before leaving the unit and may stay on in the unit while awaiting a placement in a special school. Some of these pupils are in the unit for up to five years and would have benefited from a much earlier 'statutory' multi-disciplinary assessment so that their learning needs may be more clearly understood and more appropriate provision made.

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

The school has good links with the community, schools and other institutions that augment pupil's learning well. Its partnership with parents is satisfactory overall.

- The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Parents used to receive regular letters detailing forthcoming events and other school news, but earlier in this academic year information was sent out spasmodically. The acting headteacher has re-introduced letters to parents that keep them informed about school activities.
- Open evenings for parents to discuss their children's work are well attended, but the absence of a clear homework policy and sufficient guidance in written reports about improving achievement limit the extent of parental involvement in supporting their children's learning.
- The governors' annual report is adequate, but does not fully reflect pupils' achievements. The published prospectus does not contain all the required information for parents, but the school has made revisions and when printed the latest draft will comply with statutory requirements. There is an appropriate home-school agreement in place.
- The school welcomes parents and grandparents who wish to help. Parents do valuable work running the library, helping to make resources, and listening to children reading. A new 'Friends' association has raised funds for extra-curricular activities including a football tour.
- Regular links with the emergency services, Christian clergy, the Post Office and theatres

enhance pupils' understanding of the wider world. There are effective links with health, social services and a range of education professionals, particularly in support of pupils with SEN.

- There are effective links with the comprehensive school to which most pupils transfer. The transition between Y6 and Y7 is carefully planned. There is also a close link with a nearby special school, which supports particular pupils' development well.
- Students from a nearby further education college, and other centres, who attend on work experience as part of their course are well integrated into school life. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement. The school does not have a partnership with an initial teacher training institution.

## **5.7 Partnership with industry**

The school has good, constructive partnerships with local business and industry.

- The school has an appropriate policy to promote links with local commerce and industry.
- The strong co-operation with the Education Business Partnership (EBP) and valuable sponsorship from companies enable the school to provide rewards for pupils who work and behave well, and to fund additional staff development, for example, in English and drama training.
- Although no staff have benefited from training opportunities in partnership with industry in the recent past, it is planned to provide professional development opportunities through the EBP.
- Educational visits to sites such as a teddy bear factory and a power station successfully help pupils to understand how products are made and how electricity is generated.
- The school's partnerships with industry effectively help pupils to understand how their community and the wider world around them function.

## **6. MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY**

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

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

- The scope of the school's procedures to evaluate standards and the quality of its provision is good. The acting headteacher has successfully built upon performance indicators and the views of staff to draw together a wide-ranging SDP.
- This document provides a clear basis to take the school forward and forms the basis of a continuing programme of review and evaluation. Although the plan includes suitable qualitative goals it lacks sufficiently detailed quantitative targets.
- The range and nature of the objectives for improvement the school has set in the latest SDP is wholly appropriate to the school's needs. However, there is a lack of reference to progress in relation to previous targets in the school's self-evaluation.

- The staff are becoming more closely involved in the evaluation of the standards achieved, such as through the scrutiny of pupils' work to identify strengths and shortcomings in pupils' achievements in particular subjects across the school. Subject co-ordinators are developing suitable action plans.
- The school has made a good start in implementing the SDP. This is most evident in the provision of policies and the review of progress and standards in English, mathematics and science. However, these initiatives have not had sufficient time to fully impact on the school's practice. It is too soon to judge their effectiveness.

## **6.2 Leadership and efficiency**

The overall quality of leadership and efficiency is satisfactory. The impact of leadership in the short term is very effective in refocusing the school's efforts to further raise standards and improve provision.

- The recently appointed acting headteacher is well supported by the staff and governing body (GB). He is making a significant impact in planning the way forward for the school and making good the omissions in policies and procedures.
- Leadership is beginning to ensure a clear sense of educational direction with positive plans being formulated to raise standards and improve provision in key areas. Recent improvements include the provision of key policies and the constructive use of staff training days.
- The school has well defined aims and values. These aims are evident in the school's positive ethos that values pupils' achievements and their contribution to school life. There is a positive commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.
- Teachers are developing their contribution to educational leadership well by developing subject action plans and reviewing provision in their roles as subject co-ordinators.
- The GB is appropriately organised and fulfils nearly all of its statutory obligations. Individual governors take a strong interest in particular aspects of the school's work, such as SEN. This helps to promote useful links with the school.
- In general, staff and learning resources are appropriately deployed. However, the use of support staff is inefficient where they are not fully involved in the lesson and the size of the nursery class reduces efficiency because of the number of children admitted.
- There are further inefficiencies in the organisation of teaching and learning in most mixed-age classes due to the over emphasis on teaching subjects separately to the two age groups in the class. This is reflected in the limited extent of pupils' productivity and effort in some lessons.
- The school budget is well managed. Income and expenditure are systematically monitored and the pattern of expenditure suitably matches the school's educational priorities.
- There is good attention to best value in making purchases and agreeing contracts. Although expenditure priorities are carefully planned there is little evidence of clear procedures to evaluate the impact of major spending.

- Day-to-day administration and organisation are effective. The acting headteacher effectively ensures that the school continues to run smoothly.

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

The provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory overall.

- There are sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. During the headteacher's absence governors have appointed an acting headteacher and deputy headteacher and employed a 'temporary' teacher.
- Teachers are appropriately deployed and all undertake duties as subject co-ordinators. Good use is made of particular teachers' expertise such as in Welsh, music and physical education. However, most staff lack sufficient confidence in promoting pupils' independent investigative and research skills and teaching aspects of Welsh, information technology and music.
- There are appropriate arrangements for teachers' continuing professional development. The need for further training in Welsh for example has been identified but, as yet, courses are not linked tightly enough to the priorities in the SDP.
- There is a suitable policy for performance management. The arrangements made are in line with current guidance.
- There is an adequate number of learning support staff overall. They make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and social development. However, the organisation of classes in the early years means the school is unable to maintain the required provision of one adult to twelve children in the nursery class.
- The school clerk provides efficient administrative support to the school and maintains an important link between school and parents.
- The school buildings are of adequate size for the number of pupils on roll. However, there are serious maintenance problems, such as loose ridge tiles, missing gutters, broken windows, peeling walls, water stains and evidence of damp.
- The caretaker shows great initiative with day-to-day maintenance to make the building as safe and secure as possible. Much of the interior has been re-decorated and provides a bright and clean environment for learning.
- The outdoor play areas for the nursery and the observation classes are small, the hall in KS2 is cramped for physical education lessons, the KS1 classrooms do not have running water and since the provision of a computer suite the school no longer has an adequate library.
- There is adequate playground space but no field for outdoor games. The school has access to a suitable park nearby.
- The provision of learning resources is satisfactory overall. The resources for children under five are appropriate. In both key stages, provision in mathematics, science and physical education is good, but the limited stock of books and the lack of emphasis on the library and research limits pupils' study skills.

- There are particular limitations in the use and availability of resources for reading, listening and speaking in Welsh and the range of resources is limited in religious education and geography. These shortcomings limit standards.

## **7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM**

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

#### **Provision for the under fives**

The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

- Children enter school with a range of attainments. Many have well developed learning skills. The results of baseline assessments compare well with local averages.
- The standards achieved by children of both nursery and reception age are very good in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in physical development.
- Children of both age groups achieve good standards in language, literacy and communication skills, in mathematical development and in creative development.
- Children make good progress in developing key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- The staff effectively nurtures the foundations of good behaviour and positive attitudes. The support provided by the teaching assistants contributes significantly to the children's development and to the standards they achieve.

#### **Good features**

#### **Language, Literacy and Communication Skills**

- The under-fives listen well in whole-group sessions and respond with interest to stories shared with them. Children of nursery age retell familiar stories enthusiastically, and they browse through books independently. They readily identify the sounds of some initial letters.
- Children of reception age follow simple texts as they use the listening stations. They increase their knowledge of phonics and read familiar words confidently. The children talk willingly about what they are doing and make good progress in developing 'emergent' writing skills.
- The under-fives respond positively to the experience of learning Welsh. They name colours and use familiar sentence patterns and phrases confidently.

#### **Personal and Social Development**

- Children of nursery age are confident and secure with known routines and they relate positively to the adults who work with them. They play contentedly alongside and with each other and know how to take turns. At snack time and dinnertime, they demonstrate good social skills and they manage their personal hygiene with a good degree of independence.

- Children of reception age join older pupils confidently for assemblies. They concentrate and sustain their interest well in their activities, show appropriate self-discipline and share responsibly in the task of tidying up. They understand that their African snails need regular care and attention. The children make good efforts with dressing and undressing independently.

### **Mathematical Development**

- Children of nursery age make a sound start in beginning to understand mathematical concepts through a good variety of suitable activities. They count to six reliably, and develop confidence in counting and ordering to nine. They name some two-dimensional shapes accurately and learn the language to describe size, weight and position.
- Children of reception age handle simple addition with numbers up to six and, by using a suitable computer programme, some complete additions up to ten confidently. They count up to 20 using 1p coins. They learn to form numerals, create patterns and recognise a good range of two-dimensional shapes. Children extend their understanding of the concepts of weight and length.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

- The under-fives gain knowledge and understanding of the world around them through participating in stimulating out-of-school visits, for example to Roath Park and the Museum of Welsh Life, St. Fagans as well as through their class-based experiences.
- Nursery children talk about their homes and families, and begin to appreciate the idea of time passing when they celebrate birthdays. They are aware of the life cycle of frogs and chicks, and of the changes that take place when jelly or cakes are made. They understand the kind of material needed to make Teddy's cape waterproof, and confidently use suitable computer programmes independently.
- Reception children observe features of the weather regularly, and their knowledge of the changing seasons is good. They know that living creatures need food and water. Class visitors help them understand about the work of local miners in the past and hairdressers in the present. Children investigate, for example, things that turn and experiment with building kits and different materials to make models.

### **Physical Development**

- Nursery-age children show good co-ordination as they march, jump and skip around the hall in response to musical sounds. They use the slide confidently in the classroom and in the outdoor area, they control the wheeled toys well within the limited space available.
- Reception-age children move confidently in the soft play equipment area. In the hall, they demonstrate increasing control and co-ordination as they make imaginative shapes and movements depicting scenes in the garden. They know that energetic activities make their hearts beat faster.
- The many opportunities provided for the under-fives enable them to gain mastery of manipulative actions and develop their hand-eye co-ordination successfully. They handle small objects such as jigsaws and construction toys, and tools such as pencils, crayons and scissors with increasing dexterity.

## **Creative Development**

- The under-fives enjoy their music making. Children of nursery age sing songs and action rhymes with gusto and use un-tuned percussion instruments to make suitable sound effects. Children of reception age create effective sound pictures with voices and percussion instruments to accompany a story.
- The under-fives in both classes talk about the work of particular artists and imitate their styles in their own paintings and collages. They experience working with a good range of materials as they draw, print, and make models with malleable and junk materials. Children of reception age enjoy purposeful role play in the hairdressers with appropriate adult support.

## **Shortcomings**

- No significant shortcomings were observed.

## **English**

The standards of achievement in English are satisfactory overall in KS1 and good in KS2.

## **Good features**

- In KS1, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and know how to take turns when they speak. They offer comments and opinions eagerly, for example when a story is discussed. Pupils' oracy skills develop well as they ask and answer imaginative questions in activities such as 'hot-seating'.
- Most pupils make good progress in reading. They know about the features of books and talk with interest about the storyline and their favourite characters in books they have read. They use phonic skills successfully to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their independent writing skills. By discussing the structure of stories and following a given framework, pupils are learning to use appropriate, interesting vocabulary and phrases when they write.
- Common words are generally spelt accurately and pupils use suitable punctuation marks. In Y2, some pupils are beginning to organise their story writing well.
- In KS2, pupils are attentive listeners. They speak confidently and clearly in class discussions and respond readily to questions from visitors. Pupils make reasoned, evaluative comments when working together in groups. For example, following a visit to the NAFW, pupils in Y4 and Y5 successfully develop their oracy skills by presenting information in mock party manifestos and justifying their opinions.
- Most pupils read independently at levels appropriate to their age and ability. Shared reading activities enable pupils to develop accuracy and fluency as they read aloud.
- The older pupils show a good understanding of the texts they read and express firm preferences for particular genres and authors. They develop their comprehension skills well as they search texts closely for relevant information.
- Pupils are engaged in an appropriate range of writing. The more able produce work of a

good standard when writing reviews, letters, descriptions, drama scripts and stories. Of particular note is the confident way pupils explore imagery to express thoughts and feelings effectively in poetic structures.

- Throughout the key stage, pupils' work reflects a growing awareness of the need to use the conventions of grammar and punctuation accurately. Pupils use word books, dictionaries and thesauruses purposefully. Work is generally presented neatly and, by the end of the key stage, pupils' handwriting skills are good.

### **Shortcomings**

- In KS1, pupils use only a limited range of forms to sustain the development of their writing skills.
- In both key stages, pupils do not sufficiently extend their reading skills through using ICT-based reference materials.

### **Mathematics**

The standards of achievement in mathematics are satisfactory overall in KS1 and good in KS2.

### **Good features**

- In KS1, pupils develop a suitable mathematical vocabulary and their grasp of number bonds and of regular numerical patterns is generally appropriate for their age.
- They have a satisfactory understanding of addition and subtraction of single digit numbers. They confidently count in tens to 100 and in fives to 50. They use a variety of terms, such as add, plus, take away and subtract and use the appropriate mathematical symbols when recording sums.
- Most pupils know the value of coins and confidently add amounts of money up to £1.00 and some confidently record larger amounts showing clear knowledge of place value.
- They have a basic knowledge of symmetry and the properties of shapes. They identify two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and are beginning to describe their properties.
- In lower KS2, pupils consolidate number facts to 20. They use their knowledge of the four operations well to solve mathematical problems and further their knowledge of fractions and decimals; investigate symmetry and consolidate their knowledge of the properties of two-dimensional shapes.
- In upper KS2, pupils develop competence in completing more complex calculations using the four operations in number and learn strategies to check their calculations. They have an appropriate knowledge of number patterns.
- The majority confidently round, sequence and partition numbers and are beginning to understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages.
- They have a good knowledge of regular shapes and are becoming familiar with the vocabulary used to denote their properties. They identify different types of angles and

know how to calculate area and perimeter.

- They collect and present information in a variety of tables and graphs well.
- Pupils make good progress in KS2 and attain well in the end of key stage NC tests.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils in KS1 lack sufficient competence in using number patterns and relationships. They carry out only a limited range of practical investigations and the more able seldom tackle sufficiently challenging number calculations.
- Pupils do not consistently use and explore mathematics through practical investigations involving the use of graphs and charts to record their findings.
- In KS2, many pupils do not readily explain their methods of calculation and some are slow to recognise alternative strategies.

### **Science**

The standards of achievement in science are satisfactory in both key stages.

### **Good Features**

- In KS1, pupils know how to make a basic electrical circuit and identify the uses of electricity in their homes. They identify light sources, investigate shadows, know a battery is a power source and are aware of the dangers of mains electricity.
- They have a satisfactory knowledge of animals and plants; they group foods appropriately and investigate the effect of 'push' and 'pull' forces on the movement of toys and other objects appropriately.
- Pupils know that objects are made of different materials and are beginning to distinguish between magnetic and non-magnetic materials.
- In lower KS2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of living things and the conditions for germination and growth. They confidently name the parts of a plant and describe methods of seed dispersal.
- Pupils understand the importance of oral hygiene, name the different teeth and their purpose and further their knowledge of electrical circuits and symbols.
- In upper KS2 pupils have an appropriate knowledge of the requirements of a healthy diet, they investigate forces and have a sound knowledge of life cycles.
- They know that some changes in materials are reversible and others are not. They understand terms such as solution and dissolving and know the effect of adding an extra bulb to a simple circuit. When conducting investigations pupils generally follow directions and draw appropriate conclusions.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils in KS1 do not sufficiently develop the skills of planning, investigation and

prediction. They undertake a narrow range of work.

- During investigations in KS2, pupils rarely make sufficient use of first hand experience to set up their own fair test and suggest suitable methods of recording information.
- Across the school, pupils use only a limited range of scientific language and seldom write sufficiently detailed accounts that include their prediction, method and results.

### **Welsh Second Language**

The standards achieved in Welsh second language are satisfactory in KS1 and unsatisfactory in KS2.

#### **Good features**

- In KS1, pupils listen and respond with understanding to instructions and questions. They use familiar sentence patterns confidently, for example to describe the weather and their feelings.
- They acquire vocabulary to name colours, clothes and modes of transport, and write appropriate labels on drawings. They follow the text of simple stories in books and read sentences from flashcards.
- In lower KS2, pupils expand their vocabulary and respond readily to a range of familiar question forms in oral activities. With encouragement, they extend their answers to include both positive and negative statements.
- Pupils enjoy playing a number game. Their pronunciation and intonation are good. They write simple dialogues, give personal details, and express opinions about, for example, likes and dislikes in school subjects and leisure activities.
- Older pupils write short basic sentences independently, with reasonable accuracy, and they transfer the punctuation skills learnt in English to their work in Welsh.

#### **Shortcomings**

- Throughout the school, pupils make too little use of incidental Welsh on a regular daily basis to extend and reinforce their oracy skills.
- In KS1, the range of pupils' writing is very restricted.
- In KS2, pupils use only a limited range of reading materials.
- By the end of KS2, pupils' oracy skills are not sufficiently developed to enable them to talk confidently about familiar experiences.

### **Design and technology**

Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' previous work and teachers' planning. Standards of achievement in design technology are satisfactory overall in both key stages.

## **Good features**

- Pupils make an appropriate range of products as they progress through the school. For example, in KS1 they learn to use scissors, saws and glue-guns for cutting and fixing when making picture frames, and they use a range of ‘junk’ materials to make imaginative model robots.
- In lower KS2, pupils work satisfactorily with a range of fabrics and materials to make attractive wall hangings and model buildings.
- In Y4 and Y5, pupils learn a range of skills in making models including fish and monster insects. They effectively design and make hand puppets, incorporating lever and hinge mechanisms to make movement.
- In upper KS2, pupils successfully design and make a lighthouse incorporating an electrical circuit and develop an appropriate understanding of structures when making a bridge. They know that by folding or rolling paper or card they can make a platform from thin sheet materials to carry the weight of a brick.
- In another project, pupils clearly recorded the main characteristics of boxes for Pizzas. They investigated the different designs effectively and understood the importance of accurate measurement and scale drawings.
- Pupils have satisfactory skills in making, cutting, fixing, and scoring card to make a neat fold. They are familiar with evaluating their work and make sensible suggestions for improving their product.
- By the end of Y6, pupils develop a good understanding of the processes of research and investigation, and the purpose of evaluating the outcomes of their work. They benefit in their work on three-dimensional structures from working with a visiting specialist teacher.

## **Shortcomings**

- Some pupils lack the confidence to select materials and use tools with sufficient independence.
- Pupils do not develop appropriate skills in the use of control technology.
- In too many cases, pupils’ products are similar and lack sufficient originality because the work is too teacher directed.

## **Information technology**

The standards achieved in information technology are satisfactory in both key stages. Progress is often very good during lessons in the ‘new’ computer suite.

## **Good features**

- Pupils in KS1 are becoming confident in the basic use of computer programs to support their learning, such as artwork programs, word processing, and programs to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

- They successfully key in commands to send a controllable robot forwards, backwards, and to the right or left, in order to follow a track a given distance.
- Pupils achieve good skills in using a graphics program. For example, they log on, choose shapes and colours from a menu and use the mouse to draw outlines to create a picture of a scarecrow.
- In Y3 and Y4, pupils continue to use basic skills programs to support learning in English and mathematics. They log on and off independently and confidently access files in their own folders.
- Pupils know how to change fonts when typing text, and, when designing a book cover, they successfully position text, import selected pictures and demonstrate good control with the mouse.
- In Y4 and Y5, pupils quickly extend their word processing skills as they gain confidence in using editing functions such as *cut and paste*, and *undo*, with increasing mouse control and keyboard skills.
- Pupils in Y5 and Y6, enthusiastically use a graphics program to draw a range of shapes to create their own plan of the school grounds. They quickly learn to use functions to drag and place features and text, to enlarge or reduce, to select and use colours, to print and save work in their own folders.
- Pupils' work shows good use of fonts, borders, columns and combinations of pictures and text in word-processed work linked to art and history. By the end of Y6, most pupils are competent in word processing, basic data handling skills and are becoming confident in researching information using the internet.

### **Shortcomings**

- Overall, pupils do not sufficiently use and apply their information technology skills in other subjects. As a consequence, pupils are often uncertain in operating programs independently.
- In KS2, pupils' skills and experience in using simulation programs, control applications, data handling and the use of control and sensing is limited.

### **History**

Standards of achievement in history are satisfactory in both key stages.

### **Good features**

- In KS1, pupils describe the characteristics of household objects from the Victorian period. They compare the artefacts used a long time ago for washing in the home with those used in their own homes today.
- Pupils develop a sense of change over time by sequencing changes in lighting and pictures of different modes of transport. They learn about the achievements of the Mongolfier Brothers and the Wright Brothers and begin to understand how past events have paved the way for modern-day flight.

- Across KS2, pupils study aspects of the Victorian period. The younger pupils consider aspects of home and working life and compare them with the present day. They know that the lives of working children were harsh and that wealthy families employed servants.
- Pupils consider the advantages and disadvantages of the railways and are aware of the differences in life style for rich and poor.
- The older pupils sequence important events of the Victorian period. They learn about the growth of mining and study an 1851 census return to gain insights into working and social conditions.
- Pupils study the development of transport and know that the railways helped make the seaside holiday possible as well as transporting coal to the factories and docks.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils do not develop a sufficient awareness of chronology by progressively developing their knowledge of historical figures, periods and events.
- In general, pupils in KS2 use only a limited range of historical sources and seldom develop the skills of historical enquiry in order to study topics in sufficient depth.

### **Geography**

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

### **Good features**

- Pupils in KS1 develop their knowledge of features in the locality. They name physical features such as mountains, and distinguish between attractive and less attractive features in the environment.
- They draw simple maps of their journey to school. Pupils use suitable symbols to represent key features and they identify the countries of the United Kingdom on a map.
- In early KS2, pupils further their knowledge of the locality. They confidently name different types of houses, identify local shops on a map and learn about the development of rivers.
- In the middle of KS2, pupils observe and record the weather, suggest improvements to the school environment and begin to understand the impact of local regeneration projects on the community and landscape.
- The older pupils satisfactorily identify physical and human features when using maps and aerial photographs. They study aspects of the weather and identify differences between temperate, polar and equatorial regions. They use their numeracy skills well to present data.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils do not develop a sufficiently wide range of geographical knowledge and skills such as those linked to the use of maps and aerial photographs.

- The younger pupils do not sufficiently develop the skills of geographical enquiry. They use a limited range of geographical terms and have a limited understanding of the links between physical features and human activity.

## **Music**

There was insufficient evidence available to support secure judgements about standards in music.

### **Good features**

- In assemblies, pupils perform a repertoire of appropriate songs rhythmically and in tune.
- In KS1, the youngest pupils compose an effective sound picture to accompany the teacher's narration of their jungle story.
- Pupils explore a range of sounds and then choose suitable un-tuned percussion instruments, body percussion and vocal effects to perform their work enthusiastically. They talk about pace and simple dynamics as they compose.
- In KS2, pupils collaborate responsibly to create group compositions. They use their own writing as a stimulus to arrange sounds that evoke the atmosphere of the rainforest.
- Pupils make effective choices from the good range of musical resources available. They listen attentively to the group performances and evaluate aspects of the recorded pieces constructively.
- In the limited written evidence available, pupils in Y4 and Y5 demonstrate appropriate understanding of some musical elements as they respond to hearing music by Schumann.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils do not listen to or appraise a sufficient range of music and rarely record their thoughts.
- Pupils do not focus sufficiently on the musical elements when composing and appraising. They seldom write their compositions, such as in a graphic score, or show how they have adapted their work to improve its effect.

## **Art**

The standards achieved in art are good in both key stages. Few lessons in art were observed. This judgement of standards takes account of pupils' previous work.

### **Good features**

- In KS1, pupils show enjoyment and exuberance in their use of paint in pictures that reflect their thematic work. They mix colours effectively to explore tone and make links between their own work and that of an artist they have studied.
- They use their developing observational skills purposefully, for example as they draw fruits and look closely at the detail on cars.

- Pupils explore working with different materials and produce lively collages. They are learning to use a range of media including oil pastels and fabric paints, and develop simple weaving and printing techniques. Their awareness of shape and form develops as they create models using plasticine and salt dough.
- In KS2, there is good continuity and progression in pupils' observational drawing and painting work. Pupils respond to the work of some famous artists and talk knowledgeably about the styles and techniques that then influence their own work. They use colour confidently to produce effective images.
- Pupils use a range of media and materials with growing competence. They successfully capture the atmosphere of Victorian street sellers in drawings using pastel and charcoal. They explore textures in their woven wall hangings. Some of the three-dimensional work, such as the striking masks and large-scale fish, is finished to a very good standard.
- Pupils are beginning to experiment with appropriate programmes to produce computer-generated artwork. This makes good links with work in mathematics.

### **Shortcomings**

- No significant shortcomings were identified.

### **Physical education**

The standards of achievement in physical education are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.

### **Good features**

- Pupils warm up and cool down effectively before and after physical exercise. They learn about the effects of exercise on the body, as exemplified by one young pupil who said 'My heart is going faster'. Pupils are encouraged to think about their movements and to improve the quality of their performance.
- Most pupils respond promptly to instructions, learn from each other, work enthusiastically together in pairs and small teams, have an appropriate awareness of safety and gain a good sense of achievement. Physical education makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal and social development.
- In KS1, pupils make steady progress in gymnastics, dance, and games. For example, younger pupils develop good control when performing a sequence of expressive movements. They change direction and move from high to low positions as they combine movements to express growing 'like a plant', flying 'like a butterfly', slow 'like a snail' or fast 'like a bee'.
- They successfully improve the flow of their movements. The majority demonstrate their movements confidently to the class and effectively discuss how to further improve their performance.
- The older pupils run with increasing co-ordination and balance. They satisfactorily catch and kick a ball as they develop their sending and receiving skills in games lessons.
- In KS2, pupils confidently explain the effects of exercise. They use scientific terms such

as pulse rate and muscles needing more oxygen. The majority understand the reasons for the demanding and effective warm up before physical activity.

- In Y4 and Y5, pupils have a good grasp of tactics in games and devise their own games using small apparatus. They discuss their ideas sensibly and work well together in small groups, applying their knowledge to problem solving.
- Pupils in Y5 and Y6 participate enthusiastically in athletics.
- They make good progress in improving their techniques and performance in the long jump and the triple jump for example. Pupils' benefit from using their athletics skills in competition on the school's sports day. More-able pupils represent the school at local and regional sports events.
- Pupils in KS2 have half-termly blocks of swimming lessons. By the time they leave school, the vast majority are competent swimmers and achieve swimming awards for strokes and distance.
- After-school clubs contribute substantially to the progress and attainments of many pupils, including a range of seasonal activities covered by the PE Club. The Football Club is well attended and pupils benefit from regular coaching by qualified volunteers and staff and this culminates each year in school teams performing very successfully in a residential, regional tournament and several pupils being members of county teams.

### **Shortcomings**

- In some lessons, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to evaluate their own performance or learn from appraising each other.
- Pupils do not build sufficiently on their learning in other subjects, such as mathematics and science, to apply their knowledge to physical education.

### **Religious Education**

The standards of achievement in religious education are satisfactory in both key stages.

### **Good features**

- In KS1, pupils develop an appropriate awareness of religious celebrations. They know the church is a special place and that prayers and singing are features of worship.
- Pupils think about making choices and they are encouraged to consider other people's feelings. Through hearing the story of Mary Jones, for example, they begin to understand the importance of the Bible for Christians.
- In early KS2, pupils write thoughtful thank-you prayers and compare Hindu and Christian forms of prayer. They know Solomon and Daniel are characters from the Old Testament and learn about Saint Bernard and Saint Christopher.
- In the middle of KS2, pupils study appropriate aspects of Hindu and Muslim teachings and religious rituals. They are encouraged to consider suitable rules for living and to identify who is *their* neighbour.

- The older pupils consider how to deal with peer pressure and successfully learn about prejudice and discrimination through studying the lives of figures such as Martin Luther King.
- Pupils gain insights to the story of Mohammed, know prayer is a feature of religious worship and begin to understand that holy books such as the Bible and Qu'ran provide guidance for believers.

### **Shortcomings**

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

## **8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **8.1 Progress since the last inspection**

The extent of improvement in relation to the key issues raised in the previous inspection is limited.

The school has successfully raised standards in art in both key stages and maintained standards in most other subjects. In KS1, performance indicators show a gradual decline in standards since 1997, but in KS2 there is an overall trend of steady improvement.

Arising from the previous inspection the school was expected to improve standards by:

- **Evaluating the newly implemented schemes of work to ensure that there is clearly defined progression in pupils' learning as they move through the school;**

Although lesson planning is well supported by detailed schemes of work and an overall curriculum framework provides a suitable basis for progression in pupils' learning, shortcomings remain in implementing schemes of work and ensuring pupils always make sufficient progress in the mixed-age classes.

- **Further developing the monitoring role of the subject co-ordinators so that good practice is recognised and shared;**

This remains an area for development. There is clear evidence of subject monitoring since the previous inspection and subject co-ordinators have recently prepared outline action plans for their subjects. However, the school has yet to identify successful practice and ensure that it is shared and built upon.

- **Ensuring that work in the core subjects is appropriately differentiated to fully meet the needs of pupils of all abilities;**

The school has taken steps to provide differentiated text books and other learning materials for the different age groups in each class, but there is only limited evidence of day-to-day differentiation based on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. As a consequence, work is not always closely enough matched to pupils needs and abilities and this limits

achievement.

## **8.2 Key issues for action**

In order to raise standards and further improve the quality of education, the school and the GB, with the support of appropriate agencies, should build on the SDP in order to:

- raise standards in Welsh second language in KS2, address shortcomings across both key stages in subjects where standards are satisfactory and improve achievement in using the key skills of numeracy, writing and ICT across subjects;
- improve overall progress and achievement, especially for the more-able pupils;
- promote greater self-reliance in learning through opportunities for research and investigation and thereby ensure sufficient depth and breadth in pupils' studies;
- develop the range of teaching and organisational strategies used;
- strengthen lesson planning to incorporate assessment opportunities and use assessment information effectively to provide appropriately challenging work;
- systematically prioritise the whole-school initiatives identified in the SDP and assure their effective implementation through rigorous monitoring and evaluation;
- ensure statutory requirements are met for the recording of absence and review, update and formalise procedures relating to pupils' welfare.

## APPENDIX

### A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Alaw Primary School
School type	Community
Age -range of pupils	3 – 11 years
Address of school	Egypt Street Trealaw Tonypandy Rhondda Cynon Taff
Post-Code	CF40 2UU
Telephone Number	01443 432350

Head teacher	Mr J Hobbs
Date of appointment	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2002
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mr S Carnell
Registered Inspector	Mr M T Ridout
Dates of inspection	19 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2003

### B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	12	19	24	20	21	17	26	23	178
<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)								21.42 : 1	
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes								1 : 12	
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes								1 : 4	
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes								29	
Teacher (fte) : class ratio								1.125 1	
<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>									
	Nursery	Reception	KS1	KS2	Whole school				
Summer 2002	88.6	91.6	91.8	94.2	92.5				
Autumn 2002	89.9	93.7	91.8	93.3	92.9				
Spring 2003	92.3	94.1	95.3	95.2	94.9				
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.									0

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

### National Curriculum Assessment Results - End Of KS1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: in the school 2002 and nationally 2001			Number of pupils in Y2: 25						
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	A	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	12	20	32	36	0
		National	0	0	4	13	62	21	0
EN: Reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	12	20	32	36	0
		National	0	0	4	13	54	29	0
EN: Writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	16	16	44	24	0
		National	0	0	5	13	70	12	0
EN: Speaking & listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	12	20	20	48	0
		National	0	0	3	11	63	23	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	20	12	36	32	0
		National	0	0	2	9	60	29	0
SCIENCE	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	8	28	64	0	0
		National	0	0	2	10	67	21	0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school:	60%	In Wales:	81%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements  
 A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence  
 W Pupils who are working towards level 1

## National Curriculum Assessment Results - End Of KS2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results: in the school 2002 and nationally 2001								Number of pupils in Y6: 18				
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	61	22
		National	0	0	0	-	1	1	6	19	48	25
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	67	22
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	5	14	47	30
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	61
		National	0	0	0	-	0	1	4	20	47	28
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	72
		National	0	2	1	1	-	0	4	18	42	32
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	44	50
		National	1	0	0	-	0	0	3	15	52	29
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	56	44
		National	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	13	51	31

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	83%	In the school:	89%
In Wales:	68%	In Wales:	68%

- D Pupils who are exempted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum  
 A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence  
 F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence  
 B Pupils not entered for the tests because they are working outside the set levels of the tests.  
 W Pupils who are working towards level 1

## D Record of the evidence base of the inspection

- The inspection team consisted of four inspectors who worked for ten inspector days gathering first-hand evidence. In total, 52 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Inspectors observed classes and evaluated the children's work.
- Inspectors visited registration sessions and school assemblies and observed break times. All teachers were observed teaching several times. Discussions were held with members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, representatives of the governing body, parents and others both during the inspection and the initial inspection visits.
- All the available work and records of a representative sample of pupils from each class, and the work of a sample of pupils with SEN was scrutinised. A representative number of pupils were heard to read both formally and informally.
- A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection.
- The registered inspector held a meeting attended by 18 parents before the inspection and considered 57 parents' responses to a questionnaire.
- The inspection took place over three days. The registered inspector reported the main findings to the staff at the end of the inspection and held a post inspection meeting with governors.

## E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Mr M T Ridout	RgI	The school and its priorities; educational standards; teaching; quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement; leadership and efficiency; progress since the last inspection.	Mathematics; science; geography; history; religious education.
Mrs R Steeds	Team	standards in key skills; pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; curriculum; provision for the under-fives.	Welsh as a second language; English; art. music.
Mr H J Phillips	Team	assessment recording and reporting; support, guidance and pupils' welfare; provision for pupils with SEN.	design and technology; information technology; physical education.
Mrs. P Dodd Racher	Lay	Behaviour and attitudes; attendance; partnership with parents, the community, schools and other institutions; partnership with industry; staffing, accommodation and learning resources.	

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