

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

***CASTLE CAEREINION VP SCHOOL
CASTLE CAERENION
WELSHPOOL***

School Number: 666-3022

Date of Inspection: 29 September-1 October 2003

By

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Registered Inspector***

Date: 17 November 2003

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Castle Caereinion VP School is situated in the village of Castle Caereinion, about five miles outside Welshpool in Powys. Most pupils come from the village and surrounding area and there are 47 full time pupils on roll, aged 4-11 years and two part-time (2 days a week) nursery children. The school states that most pupils come from backgrounds that are neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. The full range of ability is represented amongst pupils. Nine per cent of pupils are registered as being entitled to free school meals.

Ten pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN), of whom one is on School Support, six on School Action and three on School Action Plus.

Pupils are organised into three mixed age classes, catering for reception and Y1 pupils (4-6 years); Y2 and Y3 pupils (7-9 years); and Y4, Y5 and Y6 (9-11 years) respectively.

The school's main priorities for the coming year are:

- to raise standards in mathematics, Welsh, music and information technology;
- to review the provision for Early Years;
- to ensure appropriate coverage of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig;
- to further refine and develop planning, assessment, recording and reporting procedures.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

- The overall quality of the provision for the under fives is generally appropriate to their needs. The children make satisfactory progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards of achievement in the six areas of learning are as follows:

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

- In Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2), pupils' standards of achievement in different National Curriculum (NC) subjects and religious education are as follows:

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

- Standards achieved by pupils across the school were good in 60 per cent of lessons inspected, satisfactory in 32 per cent and unsatisfactory in the remaining eight per cent.
- The school did not participate in the 2003 NC assessment tests because of a tragic bereavement in the school. Teacher assessment results indicate that pupils achieve slightly above the national average in both key stages.
- In KS1, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in applying literacy, numeracy and information technology skills across the curriculum. In KS2, they achieve good standards in all these aspects.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. They are friendly and courteous and interact harmoniously with each other throughout the school day. Of particular note, is the way in which older pupils take on the role of looking after, and mentoring the younger pupils.
- Levels of attendance are good and have been consistently above 95 per cent in the last three terms. The school's attendance registers in one class do not, however, comply with statutory requirements in the way that some absences are recorded. The punctuality of pupils is good.
- Twenty five lessons or part lessons were observed during the inspection period. The quality of teaching was very good in 16 per cent, good in 56 per cent, satisfactory in 20 per cent and unsatisfactory in eight per cent.
- The good and very good teaching is characterised by teachers' high expectations of pupils and the planning of stimulating and challenging tasks to extend pupils to the utmost of their ability.
- Where the teaching is unsatisfactory, expectations of pupils' capabilities are low and the tasks planned lack focus and challenge.
- The school's arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting are satisfactory. Individual targets in literacy and numeracy are effective in raising standards. The good assessment procedures in place are not, however, used consistently between classes to provide differentiated activities to meet the varying ages and ability levels of pupils. In

one class, marking is of high quality and provides effective feedback to pupils. In some other instances, the marking does not provide sufficient detail to improve learning.

- The overall quality of the curriculum for the under fives and for pupils in KS1 is satisfactory. The quality of the curriculum for pupils in KS2 is good. Whole school planning is good and, in most cases, pupils are provided with a good range of activities. On some occasions, in one class, there are weaknesses in the content of activities provided for pupils. In this class, there is a lack of challenge and rigour in some of the work planned.
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities to extend pupils' learning. There are appropriate policies in place for personal and social education, equal opportunities and race awareness. The content of these is well implemented in relevant aspects of the curriculum as well as in the day to day life of the school.
- Support and guidance is good. There are, however shortcomings in the arrangements for pupils' welfare in relation to health and safety aspects. Teachers and support staff know the children well. Pupils feel safe and secure in the school's caring environment. They feel confident to approach the adults for support and guidance at any time.
- Arrangements for the delivery and collection of pupils at the beginning and end of the school day are unsatisfactory. Cars driving into the playground pose safety hazards for pupils. The poor condition of the KS1 toilet area was raised as a key issue in the last inspection report. Nothing has been done to improve conditions despite the health and safety concerns for young children.
- The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. Pupils identified as having SEN make good progress and achieve good standards in relation to the targets set.
- Partnership with the community is very good and links with parents, schools and other institutions are good. These positive features make a significant contribution to pupils' standards of achievement and their personal development.
- Since the appointment of the current head teacher, the schools priorities for development have rightly been focussed on curriculum areas. As a result, links with industry and commerce are presently unsatisfactory.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is very good. There is a comprehensive self-assessment document containing the results of analysis undertaken of all assessment data leading to individual target setting for pupils. Detail of all monitoring undertaken by the head teacher, staff and LEA personnel are included.
- A detailed analysis of responses from staff, pupils and parents to questionnaires sent out is included. Although overwhelmingly positive, areas for improvement have been identified and strategies devised to rectify them.
- The school development plan (SDP) is linked closely with self-assessment and clearly identifies priorities and targets, expenditure, time schedules and the valuation of outcomes.
- The head teacher, who has been in post for only one year, is already displaying good leadership qualities. She provides a clear direction, and much has been done in a short time to raise standards and to improve the quality of the teaching and learning.

- The role of the governing body has developed over the past year and members are becoming more knowledgeable about the curriculum and its delivery. Prior to this, the governing body did not have satisfactory oversight of the school's curriculum and budget delegation.
- The excessive deficit of almost £10,000, inherited by the present head teacher, was a key issue in the last inspection. During the past year, the deficit has been cut significantly and the budget managed effectively.
- The 2002 governors' report to parents does not comply with statutory requirements. There are also omissions in the school prospectus, and the completion of daily registers does not comply fully with requirements in one class.
- Not all the key issues from the last inspection report have been successfully resolved. Serious concerns remain about the state of the infant toilets and of car parking in the school yard.
- The overall provision for staffing, resources and accommodation is good.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

In the lessons observed during the inspection, pupils' standards of achievement were good in 60 per cent, satisfactory in 32 per cent and unsatisfactory in eight per cent.

- Children under five make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactory standards in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They achieve good standards in their personal and social development and physical development.
- Pupils in KS1 achieve satisfactory standards in using the key skills of language and literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) across the curriculum. Pupils in KS2 achieve good standards in all these aspects.
- In KS1, standards of achievement are satisfactory in English, mathematics, Welsh second language, design and technology, information technology, history and geography. They are good in science, art, music, physical education and religious education.
- In KS2, standards of achievement are satisfactory in Welsh second language, design and technology and geography. They are good in English, mathematics, science, information technology, history, art, music, physical education and religious education.
- There has been a good improvement in the all round standards achieved by pupils since the last inspection.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve good standards in relation to the targets set.
- As a result of a child's bereavement, the school did not participate in the KS2 NC assessment tests in 2003. Teacher assessments indicate that the performance of pupils in the school is slightly above the national average in English, mathematics and science. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in listening, speaking, reading and writing across the curriculum in KS1 and they achieve good standards in all these aspects in KS2. The use of numeracy skills are satisfactorily developed across the curriculum in KS1 and standards are good in KS2. The use of ICT skills across the curriculum is satisfactory in both key stages.

- The progress and achievement of children under five in the key skills across the six areas of learning are satisfactory.
- In KS1 and KS2, the vast majority of pupils listen well in lessons and respond effectively. A small number of pupils in KS1 and a few in Y4 find difficulty in listening and concentrating for extended periods.
- Most pupils in KS1 answer questions willingly and offer sensible responses. In KS2, many pupils make effective and perceptive contributions to discussions. The majority of Y5 and Y6 pupils display well developed reasoning skills and can discuss their points of view sensibly and effectively.
- Reading skills develop satisfactorily in KS1. Pupils in KS2 display effective research skills when seeking information on relevant topics.
- Pupils in KS2 have good opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes and most achieve good standards, particularly in subjects such as science, history and religious education... The scope of writing is more limited in KS1 although this has improved recently in Y2.
- While the use of numeracy skills is more limited in KS1, pupils in KS2 estimate and measure effectively during various activities. Older pupils can reason and analyse information effectively when handling data.
- The use of ICT is satisfactory in KS1 and is good in KS2. Word processing skills are developing well as is pupils' confidence in using a range of programs to reinforce and extend their work in literacy and numeracy. Pupils in KS2 pupils make effective use of the Internet and CD-ROMs to gather relevant information in a number of curriculum areas.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

- The school provides a caring environment in which pupils relate well to adults and to each other. They display respect for, and kindness towards, each other.
- Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. They express views confidently and listen to the opinions of others. The ethos of the school provides an effective focus for pupils' moral development.
- Visiting speakers are a regular feature of school life and community links contribute positively to pupils' social and moral development.
- Achievements of pupils are recognised, both in and out of school; a positive ethos prevails in all aspects of school life. A system of house points and merit awards supports achievement in a range of areas.

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- Older children are encouraged to act as mentors to younger pupils and undertake such supportive tasks responsibly and effectively. The social development of older pupils is very good.
 - A range of cultural activities is available to pupils. Good use is made of the local community and a wide range of extra-curricular activities contribute positively to the social and cultural development of pupils.
 - Some attention is given to the Cwricwlwm Cymreig through the daily life of the school but this is not a strong feature of the curriculum at present. This is an area that the school has highlighted for development in the coming year.
 - The school effectively promotes racial equality through enabling pupils to study a range of cultures and faiths in their religious education studies and by its commitment to raise pupils' self esteem and their respect for others.
 - Pupils respond positively to the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.

- The school has clear strategies for behaviour management. Sanctions and rewards are outlined in the school's policy for behaviour and discipline.
- All classes display the school rules and pupils know them well. There is a pupil handbook that sets out clear expectations of behaviour and consequences.
- Pupils have good relationships with each other and with all members of staff. They are courteous and self-confident when talking to adults.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to do well. They are interested and enthusiastic; they settle quickly to their work, sustain concentration and persevere with their tasks. Older pupils, in particular, organise themselves quickly and work collaboratively in pairs and groups.
- The school operates a merit system within which staff reward pupils with house points and merits for hard work, good behaviour and attitudes, citizenship and helpfulness.
- Older pupils take on appropriate responsibilities such as helping in assemblies, acting as monitors in the dining hall, and mentoring younger children.
- There have been no exclusions in the last few years.
- The school's discipline policy provides sound procedures for dealing with any instances of bullying or racism. No instances of bullying or racism were observed during the inspection.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance rates are good, averaging 96 per cent over the last three terms preceding the inspection.

- The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly. Absence from school is usually because pupils are ill, although occasionally it is due to family holidays taken during term time.
- Pupils arrive at school on time each day.

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- The school cares well for those pupils whose attendance gives rise for concern. Outside agencies are involved where appropriate.
 - Registration periods are efficient and registers are completed on time. However, not all registers, clearly indicate, by use of the agreed codes, why a pupil is absent from school. This means it is difficult to effectively monitor attendance.
 - Lessons and school sessions start and finish on time.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

Twenty five lessons or part lessons were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching was very good in 16 per cent of the lessons observed, good in 56 per cent, satisfactory in 20 per cent and unsatisfactory in eight per cent.

- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and of the requirements of the NC and religious education.
- They plan thoroughly and, in most cases, classroom management and the organisation of lessons are of good or very good quality.
- There are clear aims and objectives to lessons. Interesting and detailed introductions are followed by differentiated tasks that effectively meet the needs of the wide range of ages and ability in each class.
- Where the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory, the main shortcomings were that follow-up activities were not planned in sufficient detail to ensure challenge and rigour to extend pupils' learning. In addition, some activities for the under fives lacked focus resulting in the children playing aimlessly for some of the time.
- The main factors that raised the teaching to very good were the well planned questioning techniques that encouraged pupils to experiment, find out for themselves and offer thoughtful and extended answers. In these lessons, pupils were occupied at worthwhile activities from the start to the end of the lessons and teachers' very high expectations resulted in pupils giving of their best at all times.
- Very good quality support is provided by the classroom assistant, the Athro Bro and the part-time SEN teacher.
- Available resources are used imaginatively and effectively to support learning.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The school's arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting are satisfactory.

- In the nursery and reception class, children's achievements are assessed and recorded using a baseline profile, in line with the local education authority's requirements.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' abilities and this is recorded systematically. In general, however, the good systems for assessment procedures, leading to the planning of differentiated tasks to meet the needs of all abilities, are not implemented effectively in all classes.

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- The school's marking policy is not applied consistently throughout the school. In one class, marking is of high quality and provides effective feedback to pupils. In some instances, the marking does not provide sufficient detail to improve learning.
 - Reports to parents are produced annually. These are detailed and well presented with clear comments about progress. Consultations with parents are held twice yearly. Teacher assessments and test scores related to NC levels are reported at the end of each key stage and comparative data provided.
 - Individual pupil profiles contain results of standardised tests and copies of reports to parents.
 - Identification and assessment of children with SEN are well structured and assessment information is used effectively to plan work to meet their individual needs.

5.3 Curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum for children under five and for pupils in KS1 is satisfactory. The quality of the curriculum for pupils in KS2 is good. The school's curriculum meets the statutory requirements for the NC and religious education.

- The curriculum for the under fives takes account of the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and the planning is of a satisfactory standard across all six areas of learning.
- In KS1 and KS2, the quality of the planning is good and there is imaginative and effective inter-curricular links developed through the planning for the termly themes.
- The planning for developing key skills across the curriculum is good in all classes.
- There are schemes of work for all subjects and, during the past year, these have been reviewed and updated to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000.
- Teachers' medium and short term plans are of good quality and provide effective support for learning.
- All classes contain more than one age group and, despite the difficulties this poses, the management and organisation of the teaching and learning is of good quality. It is of very good quality in the older junior class. On some occasions, there are weaknesses in the management and organisational strategies that are in place for group and individual activities in one class.
- Planning and provision of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is developing satisfactory. At present, this is not a prominent feature in the school's curriculum but is listed as one of the school's present targets for development. There is good use of incidental Welsh throughout the school day in two classes.
- Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including drama, recorders, computers, art and sport.
- There are appropriate policies for personal and social education, equal opportunities and race awareness. The content of these is well implemented in relevant aspects of the curriculum as well as in the day-to-day life of the school.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

Support and guidance is generally good. However, there are some serious shortcomings in the provision for pupils' welfare in relation to health and safety aspects.

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- The school has an appropriate range of policies that set clear and concise guidelines for promoting racial equality and equal opportunities.
 - The school's policy for child protection conforms to statutory requirements. The head teacher is the co-ordinator and information regarding child protection issues is disseminated to all members of staff.
 - The head teacher is the designated teacher for first aid and has relevant qualifications.
 - Arrangements for contacting parents during the school day are good.
 - Teachers and support staff know the pupils well. Pupils feel secure in the school's caring environment and feel confident to approach the adults for support and guidance at any time.
 - Clear guidance is given to support staff in relation to pupils' class work. As a result, they provide support of very good quality for the pupils in their care.
 - Pupils are satisfactorily supervised in the school and at playtimes.
 - Arrangements for the delivery and collection of pupils at the beginning and end of the school day are unsatisfactory. Cars driving into the playground pose safety hazards for pupils.
 - The KS1 toilet area is in very poor condition and poses health and safety concerns for young pupils. This was raised as a matter of concern in the last inspection report and nothing has been done in the intervening years to improve the facilities.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN

The school's provision for pupils with SEN is good. Pupils identified as having SEN make good progress and achieve good standards in relation to the targets set.

- The school has a clear and detailed policy for SEN; it complies with the new Code of Practice (COP) and is implemented effectively.
- The head teacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO); she carries out her duties effectively and keeps relevant documentation efficiently. The part-time support teacher also carries out her role effectively and liaises appropriately with staff. All pupils with SEN have detailed individual education plans (IEPs).
- Ten pupils receive support through the School Action and School Action Plus stages. No pupil has a statement of SEN. The progress of pupils is reviewed regularly.
- Strategies for in-class and withdrawal teaching are used appropriately. The focus of withdrawal is on reading and spelling. The content of the work is well matched to the targets in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) and pupils make good progress and achieve good standards in relation to the targets set...
- The involvement of parents in setting targets and reviewing progress is underdeveloped at present but the school has identified this in the SDP as one of its targets for the coming year.
- Pupils with SEN take a full part in all school activities.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

Partnership with the community is very good, links and liaison with parents, schools and other institutions are good. These positive features make a significant contribution to pupils' standards of achievement and their personal development.

- In response to the pre-inspection questionnaires sent out and at the pre inspection meeting, parents expressed positive views and support for the school.
- Several of the parents help with class based activities, for example hearing pupils read. Parents also help in other ways such as accompanying pupils on school trips and helping with routine office tasks like photocopying. The head teacher values this additional "pair of hands" that contributes significantly to the smooth running of the school.
- Events such as the Christmas Concert are very well supported by parents and grandparents. Parents' evenings, to discuss pupil' progress, also receive very good support. A large number of parents support the work their children do at home by hearing them read and helping the older pupils with specific homework projects.
- The very active parent and teacher association (PTA) raise considerable sums of money, over £2,000 in the past year that benefits the school financially. For instance, recent purchases have included resources for physical education and science.
- There is an appropriate home/school agreement clearly setting out the school's aims and expectations. The vast majority of parents have signed this. The school promotes an "open door policy" and will readily see parents to discuss suggestions or concerns; parents indicate they appreciate this. Equally, but only informally, it seeks their views and alters its practice accordingly as, for instance, with the promotion of a healthy playtime snack and the provision of water bottles for pupils.
- The information provided for parents is of good quality. There are plenty of informal opportunities, both before and after the school day, for parents, if they wish, to talk with the adults who look after their children. Parents' evenings are held regularly where a more formal discussion can take place. These are supplemented by an open evening in the autumn term when parents can view demonstration lessons as well as talking to class teachers.
- Parents receive good general information about school life in addition to a regular informative newsletter. Written information about what their children will learn, such as topics for the term or homework arrangements are sent only at the start of the school year.
- The prospectus is well presented but does not contain all the information it should. Although parents are invited to discussions with teachers, no written information is provided about the Early Years curriculum for parents whose children are about to start at school.
- The school enjoys a very good relationship with the local community, including the church. The school hosts regular coffee mornings that are very well attended by local residents. Pupils collect and distribute harvest hampers to the elderly in the village. Because the school shares its site with the community centre, many joint activities are organised that bring both the community and parents together; funds raised benefit both the school as well as the community.
- There are good links with the playgroup and mother and toddler group that uses the school's facilities. Links with local primary and secondary schools are also good. Regular

sporting events take place with the other primary schools in the area. There are well-planned transition arrangements with local secondary schools and this ensures that pupils have some knowledge of their new school before they transfer at the age of 11. The school regularly accepts pupils on work experience placements from the local secondary schools.

- Students on placements from nearby further education colleges are also made welcome, as well as those who are training to become teachers. Beneficial support for the school is received from the education welfare office, curriculum support teams and other relevant agencies.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

Since the appointment of the current head teacher, the schools priorities for development have appropriately been focussed on curriculum areas. As a result, links with industry and commerce are presently unsatisfactory.

- There are only very limited links with commerce to raise pupils' awareness of the world of work. These include visits to the church, a local furniture restoration workshop and the local shop.
- No staff placements to commerce or industry have taken place.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

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

- The head teacher has produced a comprehensive self-assessment document that is of very good quality. It includes information on curriculum reviews undertaken and an analysis of all assessment data, school-based and national. There is full information on the target setting for pupils.
- Reports from monitoring visits undertaken by LEA personnel are included. Detail is also included of the monitoring undertaken by the head teacher and curriculum co-ordinators on each others' planning files and the work in pupils' books. Notes on the feedback given by the head teacher, with notes on what is needed to provide further support, are placed on file.
- There is evidence of the effective development of the roles of curriculum co-ordinators. Job descriptions are clear. Annual reports to the governors, which been produced by the co-ordinators on their particular subjects, are informative and of very good quality. The reports clarify the present situation and proposed action plan for each subject.
- The subject files produced by subject co-ordinators to guide the work in their subjects are of good quality and some, such as the science file, are of very good quality.
- The SDP is a useful and effective document for future development. It clearly identifies priorities and targets, expenditure, time schedules and the evaluation of outcomes.
- In order to ensure customer satisfaction, the school has sent questionnaires to parents, staff and pupils. A detailed analysis has been made of the information gained, and although overwhelmingly positive, areas for improvement have been identified and strategies devised to rectify them.

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- In addition to the information imparted by the co-ordinators, the head teacher provides verbal and written feedback to governors. Progress within the identified priorities in the SDP is discussed and detail given of how their impact on learning is carefully assessed.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

The head teacher provides good leadership.

- The head teacher, who has been in post for only one year, is already displaying good leadership qualities. She provides a clear direction and has done much in a short space of time to raise standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
- A caring ethos has been combined with a strong work ethic within which staff are expected to operate cohesively as a team.
- Staff responsibilities have developed significantly over the past year. Each member of staff now undertakes her responsibility as subject leader efficiently and effectively. Schemes of work and policy documents have all been reviewed and updated. Staff have attended a range of relevant courses and provided feedback for colleagues.
- The role of the governing body has developed over the past year and members are becoming more knowledgeable about the curriculum and its delivery. Prior to this, the governing body did not have satisfactory oversight of the school's curriculum and budget delegation.
- The excessive deficit of almost £10,000, inherited by the present head teacher, was a cause of concern at the time of the last inspection. During this past year, the deficit has been cut significantly and the budget managed effectively. However, the cuts that have had to be made have restricted the purchase of essential equipment in areas such as history, geography and religious education. The money raised by the PTA has enabled the school to buy other essential resources.
- The governors' role in relation to statutory matters is unsatisfactory. The 2002 annual report to parents does not comply with statutory requirements. There are also omissions in the school prospectus and the completion of daily registers does not comply fully with requirements in one class.
- The school's administrative procedures and day to day practices are effective.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

The overall provision for staffing, resources and accommodation is good.

- The school is well-staffed. Staff are appropriately qualified and are suitably deployed.
- The school has a clear staff development policy and each member has participated in well planned and appropriately targeted in-service training.
- A comprehensive audit of the school's needs is carried out annually. An appropriate balance is struck between whole school targets and individual needs in the provision of training. Provision is also made for medium and long-term targets to be set by individuals.
- In-service training, based on needs analysis, takes place on a regular basis and staff share the training outcomes in staff meetings.

- The accommodation provides adequate space which is well utilised. Pupils are taught in clean, bright and colourful surroundings. Most areas of the school contain attractive displays of pupils' work, creating a purposeful and stimulating learning environment.
- The toilets for younger pupils are in a poor condition and in need of urgent attention.
- The playground is in good condition and the children have grassed areas on which to play. The site is well maintained.
- The parking of cars in the yard at the end of the school day is a danger and a threat to the health and safety of pupils.
- The quality and quantity of resources for learning are generally good, although there are shortcomings in some subject areas. Resources are organised and utilised efficiently and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning.
- Classroom assistants have a significant, positive impact on the quality of learning and the standards achieved by pupils.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

The quality of the provision for the under fives is generally appropriate to their needs and fosters the desirable learning outcomes for children's learning. There are two nursery children (3 years) who started school at the beginning of term and attend on a part-time basis for two days each week. The two children were not seen enough during the inspection to form judgements about their progress and achievement. They, together with the five reception children (4-5 years), form part of a class that also includes Y1 pupils.

The main shortcomings in the provision for the under fives is that there is no safe and secure area for their play. They do not have easy access to suitable toys for outdoor play and some activities within the classroom do not provide sufficient challenge to extend their learning.

Good features

- Standards of achievement in **language, literacy and communication skills** are satisfactory. The children listen and respond well to stories. A few talk eagerly about what they see and do. They enjoy handling books and all are beginning to recognise and read familiar words. One child has made a good start as an independent reader. Writing skills are developing satisfactorily and the children take every opportunity to practice their emergent writing skills when posting letters in their class post office. Most can write their own name with a good degree of accuracy.
- Standards of achievement in the children's **mathematical development** are satisfactory. They recognise numbers to 10 and most can order numbers correctly to six. They can place objects next to a relevant number up to five. They can recognise and name four simple two-dimensional shapes.
- Good standards are achieved in **personal and social development**. The children behave well and show a good degree of independence in selecting resources. They concentrate well on their tasks and they understand the need to take turns in shared activities. Most dress and undress independently for physical activities. They relate well to each other and to adults.

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- Standards of achievement in the children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** are satisfactory. They have an appropriate knowledge of their village and most can recognise some landmarks on a map of the journey they undertook around the village. They are familiar with features of a postman's work and they understand the importance of their family.
 - The development of the children's **creative skills** is satisfactory. They paint bold pictures and some use the space on the paper effectively. They have used paint and some materials effectively in their paintings of 'My Mum' and within the class collage of 'The Postman's Journey'. They use percussion instruments to keep a beat. Some show imagination when involved in role play activities in the class post office.
 - Standards of achievement in the children's **physical development** are good. They show increasing control of the computer mouse and of other small items of equipment such as scissors, pencils and paint brushes. When undertaking physical activities in the hall and on the playground, they use space well and display good control of their bodies when undertaking activities such as running, jumping and moving in different ways.

Shortcomings

- A few children are very reticent and reluctant to talk at length.
- Most find the words in their reading books too difficult to decipher.
- The children do not use mathematical language confidently and the concept of 'more' and 'less' is not well understood by them.
- Some do not have a good understanding of the work done on the class topic, 'People who help us'.
- The use of incidental Welsh in the class is limited and the children's repertoire of Welsh words and phrases is very limited.

English

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.

Good features

- Pupils' listening skills are generally good throughout the school. Most listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They respond sensibly to suggestions and instructions.
- The listening skills of pupils in Y5 and Y6 are very good. They respond thoughtfully and perceptively to teachers' questions and wait their turn to speak. They show respect for each other's point of view and most are not afraid to offer a different perspective to develop an argument or discussion.
- Most pupils, but in particular older pupils, display good standards of communication skills when discussing work they have previously covered.
- Standards in reading are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2. Pupils in KS1 make good progress in their ability to read accurately and fluently and, by Y2, most can discuss plots and characters in the books they read.
- Pupils in Y5 and Y6 talk knowledgeably about a range of texts and give sound and valid reasons for their preferences for different authors. Older pupils successfully locate information in reference books and through the Internet and use this effectively to support and extend their work.

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- In KS1, pupils' writing is developing satisfactorily. Younger pupils are beginning to write simple, linked sentences to record their thoughts and ideas. Pupils in Y2 are making good progress in their ability to sequence their ideas logically.
 - Pupils in KS2, in particular those in Y5 and Y6, write at length and for a good variety of purposes. Older KS2 pupils display a good awareness of the different reasons for their writing. The range of their writing includes dialogue, letter-writing, poetry, imaginative, descriptive and empathetic writing. Of particular note is the way in which pupils plan their written work. They study different authors and their styles of writing. They develop character sketches and write from different points of view. Some pupils achieve very good standards in aspects of their work.
 - The presentation of pupils' written work is satisfactory in KS1 and the lower of KS2. It is good at the upper end of KS2 with most Y6 pupils using grammatical and punctuation conventions effectively.

Shortcomings

- A few children in KS1 and some at the lower end of KS2, are rather fidgety during the introduction to lessons and activities and sometimes take an unacceptable amount of time to start listening attentively.
- Pupils in Y2 are very reticent when discussing a range of books and favourite authors they have previously read.
- Most of the written contributions from pupils in KS1 tend to be very brief and lack vivacity and imagination.

Mathematics

Standards in mathematics are satisfactory at KS1 and good at KS2.

Good features

- Most Y1 pupils can order numbers up to 100. They understand the place value of tens and can count in multiples of 2, 5, and 10. They can double numbers up to seven. They know the terms 'length' and 'width' and some can estimate and measure lengths using non-standard measures.
- Pupils in Y2 have a secure recall of number bonds to 20 and can halve two digit numbers. They know the basic two-dimensional shapes and can identify symmetry in them. They can add two digit numbers, identify fractions of halves and quarters, and divide numbers by 2 and 4. They use numbers to 1,000.
- At lower KS2, most pupils work confidently with 3 digit numbers. They know the names of regular polygons and can describe their properties. The most able can multiply and divide by single digit numbers and they understand and use basic fractions in problem solving situations.
- At upper KS2, pupils display good knowledge and understanding of the properties of shapes. They have a secure understanding of number operations and use mathematical language with confidence.
- They explain and use a variety of strategies to solve problems and explore alternative methods when appropriate. They know the conventions of fractions and can calculate equivalence.

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- Older pupils can use co-ordinates in four quadrants to reflect shapes. They convert hours to minutes mentally and measure angles accurately.
 - Pupils are acquiring good mental strategies in number work throughout the school.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' problem solving skills are underdeveloped in KS1.
- The skills of using ICT to investigate number and handle data are underdeveloped in both key stages.

Science

Standards in science are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in Y1 study electricity and display a good standard of knowledge and understanding of the work covered. They recognise a battery and are able to say that it provides power to produce movement, light or sound.
- Pupils in Y2 select materials, organise their work, carry out investigations and record results competently. They display good knowledge of the properties of materials. They can classify rocks and know the principles of healthy eating.
- In Y3 and Y4, pupils demonstrate good observational skills and collaborate well in investigative work on magnets. Children are aware of the concept of fair testing. They demonstrate sound understanding and record their work efficiently.
- In Y5 and Y6, pupils investigate circuits and can design their own switched circuits after experimentation and collaboration. They record results in a variety of ways and are able to draw conclusions from data.
- They collaborate to design experiments on materials and display a sound understanding of the concepts of fair testing, hypothesising and interpreting evidence in their investigations. They predict with confidence, observe carefully and record in a range of formats.
- Pupils throughout the school are highly motivated and display good scientific knowledge.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Welsh second language

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in both key stages. A contribution of high quality is made by the Athro Bro to the development of Welsh in the school. This is supported in two classes by effective use of incidental Welsh to ensure that pupils understand the purpose and function of the language.

Good features

- By the end of KS1, most pupils can understand and respond to simple questions about themselves.
- They count in Welsh to 10 and most know the names of basic colours.
- Pupils in Y3 and Y4 respond satisfactorily to questions about themselves, their pets and some can name the month in which their birthday occurs.
- Most understand when to apply different negative and positive responses such as ‘nag oes’, ‘oes’, and ‘ydy’, ‘nag ydy’ to questions posed.
- Pupils in Y5 and Y6 can respond positively and negatively to a range of simple questions about themselves, their health and their likes and dislikes.
- They can read a simple dialogue effectively making satisfactory attempts at decoding unfamiliar Welsh words.
- They record their work using simple sentences satisfactorily.

Shortcomings

- Some pupils in KS1 do not have a secure grasp of work previously covered and are hesitant in their responses to questions.
- Pupils in KS2 cannot sustain a simple dialogue in Welsh and their ability to read and write at a basic level is limited.

Design and technology

No lessons were observed during the inspection but a scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with pupils, indicates that standards are satisfactory in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 design and make moving vehicles. They evaluate their efforts and identify areas in which improvements could be made.
- Pupils in Y2 and Y3 understand that products are designed for different purposes and are able to evaluate them using a range of criteria. They plan, design and make photo frames, evaluating their efforts appropriately. They also design and make moving toys.
- Pupils in Y4, Y5 and Y6 confidently design and make slippers. They measure, use templates and test their designs. They record and evaluate competently. They display good knowledge of design principles and are able to apply their knowledge to the evaluation of various materials effectively.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills of using control technology are undeveloped in both key stages.

Information technology

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.

Good features

- Pupils use appropriate equipment, such as listening centres and computers, confidently and independently.
- In both key stages, pupils are confident in their use of the keyboard and mouse. They develop increasing confidence in using a range of hardware and software.
- In both key stages, pupils can use word processing software to type text directly on to the screen. Most pupils in KS2 enhance the quality of their work on the computer and can draft and edit text, select fonts and incorporate computer graphics into their work.
- Older pupils access information electronically. They use the Internet to seek information and to extend their learning effectively.
- A variety of software is used confidently by pupils to support learning in several subjects such as history, geography, art and religious education. Pupils select, load and use CD-ROMs independently.

Shortcomings

- Although pupils in KS1 are familiar with the basic elements of the computer, their skills in working independently to select size and colour of font and to save and retrieve files are underdeveloped.
- Most are unfamiliar with e-mail facilities and do not use the Internet on a regular basis.

History

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS1. Standards of achievement are good in KS2.

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 understand that things change over time and can recognise differences between their lives and the lifestyles of earlier periods.
- They make personal timelines and draw family trees to study their family history.
- Pupils in Y2 and Y3 use secondary sources of evidence to compare life in Victorian times with the present day. They recall facts about the Victorian way of life and make comparisons with the lives of children in the nineteenth century and their own.
- Pupils in Y4, Y5 and Y6 use a range of sources to study the Victorians. They use textbooks, photographs, contemporary material and ICT to gather information. They make comparisons with the present day and discuss the information they have gathered effectively.

Shortcomings

- Some pupils in KS1 do not have a secure grasp of work previously covered.
- A small number of pupils in KS1 do not have a secure grasp of simple chronology.
- The skills of historical enquiry and handling artefacts to learn about the past are underdeveloped across the school.

Geography

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS1. No lessons were observed in KS2 but on the evidence gained from teachers' planning, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with them, standards of achievement are also judged to be satisfactory.

- Pupils in KS1 can identify the main features on a plan of the village. They collaborate well to produce a wall map of their village. They know the difference between a path and a road and talk about the people who work on farms and in shops.
- Older pupils have carried out a detailed study of the Padova region of Italy. They speak confidently about the study and can identify many of the physical and human features of the region.
- They have used maps, photographs and texts to investigate the region and its geography, making comparisons with their own village. They have carried out weather surveys to compare climate. Letters have been exchanged with Italian children.
- Older pupils undertake map reading exercises to find information. Most display satisfactory skills.

Shortcomings

- Investigative skills in geography are underdeveloped among pupils.
- Pupils' understanding of the relationship between people and their environment is underdeveloped.
- Mapping skills are insufficiently developed in both key stages.

Art

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Reception and Y1 pupils have painted pictures of themselves and of their mothers. They have participated in producing a colourful class collage. Through the work, there is evidence that pupils' skills and knowledge of line, shape and form are developing satisfactorily.
- They have used various materials to produce three-dimensional objects and painted them in vivid colours.
- Pupils in Y2 and Y3 have looked at the work of L S Lowry and, based on the stimulus of a black and white copy of one of his paintings, have created their own drawings. Their use of pencils to create different shades and tones is effective and some good quality work has developed.
- They are confident when mixing colours to produce various shades and hues to use in their paintings.
- In Y4, Y5 and Y6, pupils have observed closely various artefacts from their classroom interest table. They have studied them from different angles and produced representational drawings of good quality.
- Older pupils are confident in their use of a range of tools and materials.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' awareness of the work of famous Welsh artists is very limited.

Music

Standards of achievement are good in KS1 and in Y3. No lessons were observed with Y4, Y5 and Y6 pupils but a scrutiny of teachers' planning, the resources used and discussion with pupils, indicate that similar standards are also achieved by them.

- Reception children and Y1 pupils know a range of rhymes, songs and hymns which they sing tunefully and with obvious enjoyment.
- They have access to good quality percussion instruments and use them effectively to keep a beat.
- Pupils in Y2 and Y3 are familiar with dynamics and can plan and order sounds, using various instruments.
- They can select an appropriate instrument to represent the sound of an animal and then play their instrument, keeping a beat and with good rhythm.
- They can move backwards, forwards and sideways to the dictate of certain instruments.
- They record their musical compositions by way of symbols and when performing their music, they use their knowledge of dynamics effectively to change volume and speed.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Physical education

Standards in Physical Education are good in both key stages.

Good features

- In gymnastic lessons, pupils in both key stages follow instructions well. They plan and perform movements confidently and are aware of the need to utilise space effectively.
- They demonstrate the ability to appraise their own and others' efforts to improve performance.
- Pupils in KS1 work purposefully to perform jumps and to balance in various postures. Year 2 pupils plan and perform sequences of movements confidently.
- Pupils in KS2 display good control and balance in their movements. The majority demonstrate precision and fluency in performance and are willing to tackle new areas of learning.
- In games lessons, pupils co-operate well and display good ball skills. They demonstrate an awareness of space, tactical knowledge and are eager to improve.
- The importance of health related exercise is taught in all lessons.
- Pupils receive weekly swimming lessons at a local baths and all make at least satisfactory progress.
- The physical education provision is enhanced by a number of extra-curricular activities. For example, teams compete against local schools in rugby, netball and football and pupils have opportunities to take part in various sporting activities in the after-school clubs organised by teachers and parents.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Religious education

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils across the school are aware of the feelings of others and they appreciate values such as caring, sharing and helping.
- They discuss the importance of class and school rules and are aware that some rules are similar in different religions.
- Younger pupils appreciate the need for family, friends and people who help us.
- Pupils in Y2 and Y3 display good recall of some well known Bible stories and have a good grasp of customs and celebrations pertaining to Sikhism.
- Pupils in Y4, Y5 and Y6 are aware of some similarities and differences between the Christian and Buddhist religions. They have created their own Buddhist temple in the classroom and conducted a simple service denoting the significance of candles and of the prayer flag to send prayers across the world.
- They have written their own prayers and understand key beliefs, such as to praise and thank God, within a Christian prayer.

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- They can describe and compare the positions that people in different religions adopt in prayer and understand their significance.
 - They can identify different themes such as thanksgiving, light and celebration in different hymns.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' first-hand experiences in handling various religious artefacts and objects are curtailed by the lack of such resources in the school.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

Six key issues were identified in the last inspection report in November 1997:

- address shortcomings in subjects in which pupils achieve satisfactory standards, in particular spelling and punctuation in both key stages;
- improve safety aspects of health and safety to include improvements to the toilets and a review of the arrangements for allowing cars onto the playground at the beginning and end of the school day;
- implement more rigorous procedures to rectify the long-standing budget deficits;
- establish a planning system for the under fives based on the six areas of learning and extend the range of resources;
- further develop the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards and quality of work in all subjects;
- increase the teaching time by fifty five minutes per week to meet Welsh Office recommendation.

The following response has been forthcoming:

- in the last report, standards of achievement were judged to be mainly satisfactory in all subjects except design and technology and information technology in KS2, where they were judged to be good. As can be seen on the chart on Page 2 of the present report, there has been a marked improvement in standards of achievement in English, mathematics, information technology, history, music and art in KS2. Standards have improved in art and music in KS1;
- no improvements have been made to the KS1 toilets since the last inspection and this remains an area of considerable concern in relation to health and safety matters;
- the long-standing deficit in the school budget remains an issue of concern. However, some successful in-roads have been made in the present financial year to reduce the deficit. This has resulted in the school having to cut back on its music provision and being unable to purchase some necessary resources in history, geography and religious education;
- the school has addressed the need to plan the curriculum for the under fives based on the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. In addition, the resources provision for the under fives is now satisfactory;

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- during the last academic year, the role of curriculum co-ordinators has developed effectively;
 - school hours now meet the recommended time as suggested by the Welsh Assembly.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school needs to:

- address the shortcomings listed in subjects and aspects within the report;
- conform to statutory requirements in relation to registration in one class, the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents;
- devise strategies to improve some activities planned for children under five and Y1 pupils to ensure that they provide suitable challenges to extend the learning of all pupils;
- address as a matter of urgency the poor condition of the infant toilets;
- review the car parking arrangements at the front of the school at the beginning and end of the school day;
- continue to implement rigorous procedures to rectify the very long-standing budget deficit.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Castle Caereinion Voluntary Primary School
School type	Primary
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Castle Caereinion Welshpool Powys
Post-Code	SY21 9AL
Telephone Number	01938 850275

Headteacher	Miss Michelle Humphreys
Date of appointment	1 st September 2002
Chair of Governors	Mr Nick Over
Registered Inspector	Ms Lona Thomas
Dates of inspection	29 th September - 1 st October 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	1	5	11	3	7	8	8	5	48

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	3	2	3.3

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	15.6:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	N/A
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	15.6
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Term 1	99	96	97	97
Term 2	100	95	94	96
Term 3	92	98	93	94

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	9
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2003	Number of pupils in Y2: 9
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 was greater than four but fewer than 10, overall performance indicators only are included	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school:	88	In Wales:	80

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2003

NB. As a child from the school died in the weeks preceding the administration of the NC assessment tests, permission was granted for the school to make teacher assessments only. No pupil in KS2, therefore, undertook the tests in 2002.

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results: 2003	Number of pupils in Y6: 10
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 in was greater than four but fewer than 10, overall performance indicators only are included	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	70	In the school:	N/A
In Wales:	69.6	In Wales:	68.1

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

- Twenty five lessons were observed.
- A sample of pupils in both key stages was heard reading.
- A selection of pupils' written and practical work in all subjects was inspected.
- Inspectors held discussions with the head teacher, teachers and pupils during the inspection on a wide range of issues relating to the school.
- The school's planning documents, attendance registers and various files and records were considered.
- Inspectors attended the daily sessions of collective worship.
- Eleven parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and 16 questionnaires were returned.
- Discussions were held with governors in pre and post-inspection meetings.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Ms L Thomas	Rgl	Context; Main findings; Educational standards achieved by pupils; Standards achieved in the key skills across the curriculum; Quality of teaching; Curriculum; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Quality of self-evaluation; Leadership and efficiency; Progress since the last inspection; Key issues.	Early years; English; Welsh; Art; Music; Religious Education
Mr Neil Watkins	Team	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Behaviour and attitudes; Assessment, recording and reporting; SEN; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Mathematics; science; design and technology; information technology; history; geography; physical education.
Mrs Denise Shields	Lay	Attendance; Partnership with parents, community, schools and other institutions; partnership with industry.	

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