

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

**CWMCLYDACH INFANTS SCHOOL
WERN STREET
CLYDACH VALE
TONYPANDY
RHONDDA CYNON TAFF
CF40 2BQ**

School Number: 674/2088

Date of Inspection: 28-30 June 2004

By

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Under Estyn contract number: T/273/03P

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

CONTENTS

	Page
1. CONTEXT	1
The school and its priorities	1
2. MAIN FINDINGS	2
The main findings of the report	2
3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	5
3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning	5
3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum	6
4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL	7
4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	7
4.2 Behaviour and attitudes	7
4.3 Attendance	8
5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION	8
5.1 Teaching	8
5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting	9
5.3 Curriculum	10
5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare	11
5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)	11
5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions	12
5.7 Partnership with industry	13
6. MANAGEMENT	14
6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement	14
6.2 Leadership and efficiency	15
6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	16

7.	SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING	16
	Standards achieved by pupils	16
	Provision for the under-fives	16
	English	21
	Mathematics	21
	Science	22
	Welsh second language	23
	Design and technology	24
	Information technology	25
	History	26
	Geography	26
	Art	27
	Music	28
	Physical education	29
	Religious education	29
8.	SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	30
	8.1 Progress since the last inspection	30
	8.2 Key issues for action	32
	APPENDIX	33
	A. Basic information about the school	33
	B. School data and indicators	33
	C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations	34
	D. The evidence base of the inspection	35
	E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	36

1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Cwmclydach Infants School is a local authority maintained school which serves the village of Clydach Vale in the Rhondda valley. The school caters for pupils aged from three to seven. Children are admitted to the nursery class soon after their third birthday on a part-time basis for the first few weeks, then full-time thereafter. The numbers of pupils on roll over the last three years have steadily declined and there is frequent movement of families to and from the area. There are 105 pupils on roll, including the 33 full-time nursery children. All pupils are from English speaking homes and Welsh is taught as a second language. The school's mission statement is: 'Each and every child is unique. We need to find a little bit of success for everyone of them'. The school aims 'to provide a stimulating environment in which pupils are nurtured emotionally and challenged intellectually in order to achieve their full potential'.

The school considers its catchment area to be economically disadvantaged; 42 per cent of the pupils are registered as being entitled to receive free school meals which is much higher than the national average of 19 per cent. The nature of the intake comprises mainly disadvantaged groups and includes many less able and a few able pupils. There are 28 pupils (27 per cent) on the school's Special Education Needs (SEN) register; there are no pupils with a statement of SEN. Baseline assessments are undertaken on entry to the nursery class and results indicate a below average attainment for many children.

The school was last inspected in 1998 and produced a post-inspection action plan to improve curriculum provision and pupils' standards of achievement. Some of the targets in the current School Development Plan (SDP) have been met. The focus for 2003-2005 will be to:

- raise pupils' standards of achievement in literacy, numeracy, science and information and communications technology (ICT);
- review and monitor the performance management process;
- continue to use a supportive monitoring system to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise pupils' standards of achievement;
- monitor the effectiveness of the key skills plan in order to raise standards of pupils' key skills across the curriculum;
- continue to develop Adult Carer skills in supporting 'Child Development and Learning' in school and at home;
- develop the Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) programme by taking part in the local schools cluster project.

The school's analysis of its National Curriculum (NC) Assessment results and comparative data is the basis for target setting to improve standards.

The Basic Skills Agency 'Quality Mark' was awarded to the school in September 2003.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Cwmclydach Infants School is a good school with high expectations of pupils' standards of achievement and behaviour. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection despite staffing problems and changes in the socio-economic nature of the school intake. The headteacher provides efficient, caring leadership and is well supported by the staff who work well together as an effective team.

Educational standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

- Pupils' standards of achievement were very good in 23 per cent of the 31 lessons observed, good in 68 per cent and satisfactory in nine per cent.
- The educational standards achieved by children under five are very good overall and they make very good progress from a low baseline on entry to the nursery. The overall quality of the educational provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and they make very good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- Standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

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

- Pupils' standards of achievement in the NC subjects and religious education in KS1 are as follows:

English	Good
Mathematics	Good
Science	Good
Welsh second language	Good
Design and technology	Good
Information technology	Good
History	Very good
Geography	Good
Art	Very good
Music	Good
Physical education	Good
Religious education	Good

- Standards are good overall in English. Pupils achieve good standards in speaking and listening skills which they use well in a variety of situations. They achieve good standards in reading and very good standards in writing, particularly in independent, extended writing.
- Standards are good in mathematics. Pupils make good progress in developing competence in numeracy skills and understanding of mathematical concepts. In science, standards are

good and pupils make good progress in developing scientific enquiry and investigative skills in a range of practical activities.

- The school's 2004 NC assessment results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are in line with the national results for 2003 with 79 per cent of pupils achieving at least level 2.
- When compared with other schools locally and nationally, where up to 48 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, the NC results are closer to the upper quartile (25 per cent of best performing schools). Boys achieved higher standards than girls.
- Children under five make very good progress in developing key skills and achieve high standards by the age of five. In KS1, standards achieved in literacy skills across the subjects are good overall. Pupils achieve good standards in speaking and listening skills which they use confidently and effectively in all areas of the curriculum. Their reading skills are good and pupils read a range of text with accuracy and understanding. Their writing skills are very well developed especially in the use of extended writing across the curriculum, for example, in subjects such as history and science. The use of numeracy skills in different subjects is good especially in problem solving tasks. Their use of a range of ICT skills for different purposes, in order to support learning across the curriculum, is good.

Ethos of the school

- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and pupils respond well to this area. They achieve high standards in their social development and understand the expectations of the school for good behaviour and positive attitudes. They appreciate the culture and heritage of Wales as well as other cultural traditions, although pupils' knowledge of other cultures is less well developed.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good and have a positive impact on standards achieved. The school has effective arrangements for promoting good behaviour and social development.
- Levels of attendance are satisfactory; there are good procedures in place to monitor and follow up absences and the school is gradually improving rates of attendance by setting realistic targets. Registration is not taken promptly at the start of the morning session and unauthorised absences are not always recorded where more than the recommended ten days of holiday are taken during term time; the school therefore does not comply with the requirements of the National Assembly of Wales (NAW) Circular 3/99. Punctuality at the start of the school day is satisfactory, although there are a minority of pupils who arrive late.

Quality of education

- The quality of teaching was very good in 19 per cent of lessons observed, good in 65 per cent and satisfactory in 16 per cent. The quality of lesson planning is good and identifies clear learning objectives and specific key skills to be taught. Lessons are well organised and work is appropriately planned to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is very good overall. Teachers have a thorough understanding of assessment procedures and quickly identify pupils' needs. There are very good arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' achievements and progress. The quality of written reports for parents is good; they provide useful information on pupils' progress and are appreciated by parents.
- Curriculum provision is good and ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The quality of the curriculum for children under five is good and succeeds in promoting the Desirable Outcomes in all areas of learning. In KS1, the schemes of work in each subject are effective in providing for progression and continuity in pupils' learning. The quality of whole school planning for the teaching of key skills is good and

succeeds in promoting the skills across the curriculum. There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities including gymnastics, dance and team games.

- The quality of educational support and personal guidance for pupils' welfare is very good. The school ensures that all pupils are equally valued and treated with respect and understanding. Their needs and progress are carefully monitored and their personal and social development is well promoted through the life of the school. There are very good procedures for promoting equality and the well-being, health and safety of pupils.
- The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good and complies with the SEN Code of Practice. Pupils receive good support and make steady progress in their learning towards the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs); they achieve good standards according to their level of ability. They respond well to work set for them as individuals and in groups and benefit from support from the SEN teacher.
- Partnerships between the school and parents, the community, schools and other institutions are good. Parents are well informed about the activities of the school. People in the community are proud of the school and contribute significantly to curriculum development and to the enjoyment of pupils' learning and personal development.
- The school's partnership with industry is good and has a beneficial impact on pupils' standards of achievement through staff training and school-based projects.

Management

- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good. There are effective procedures for evaluating pupils' standards of achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. The school carefully monitors the progress made towards achieving targets.
- The quality of leadership and management of the school is very good. There are clear aims and policies, including a commitment to equality of opportunity for all, which promote a caring ethos and high standards. The headteacher provides efficient, caring leadership and ensures a clear sense of purpose and direction for the school. Despite staffing problems and the prolonged absence of teachers, the school has continued to function smoothly.
- The governing body is supportive of the school and is well informed through the headteacher's regular reports. The governors are fully involved in the work of the school through their formal curricular links with subject co-ordinators in order to monitor provision and standards of achievement.
- Resources are managed efficiently and budget planning reinforces the aims of the school, ensuring good value for money. There is, however, a budget overspend of £10,000 but the Local Education Authority (LEA) is supporting the school's financial plan to reduce the deficit. The school's monitoring and self-evaluation procedures are effective in identifying areas for development and training needs of staff. Targets for improvement are set and are incorporated into the SDP which is a useful working document for prioritising areas for improvement over a three year period.
- The overall provision for staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good and has a beneficial impact on pupils' standards of achievement. Pupils are well supported by qualified and experienced staff who are effectively deployed. The provision and quality of resources are good and staff and pupils make effective use of all available books, materials and equipment.
- The school has spacious accommodation for the number of pupils on roll. Good use is made of all available space to provide an attractive working environment for pupils. The quality of the inside accommodation is mainly good although there are some patches of damp and peeling paint. Classrooms and shared areas are enhanced by good quality displays, some of which are interactive and support pupils' learning.

- Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress and has met the targets set in the action plan, which addresses the key issues from the previous inspection report. These include:-
 - maintaining the current good standards;
 - addressing the shortcomings in subjects and areas of learning by disseminating good practice;
 - extending the system of monitoring to include curriculum leaders so that there is a clearer focus on standards;
 - improving pupils' punctuality by ensuring a prompt start to morning and afternoon sessions.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Pupils' standards of achievement were very good in 23 per cent of lessons observed, good in 68 per cent and satisfactory in the remaining nine per cent.

- Standards of achievement of children under five are very good overall. They make very good progress, from a low baseline on entry, in all the areas of learning. Children in the nursery achieve very good standards in all the areas of learning. Reception children achieve very good standards in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development and good standards in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical and physical development. By the age of five, the majority of children achieve, and some exceed, the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- In KS1, standards are good overall in English. Pupils achieve good standards in speaking and listening skills which they use well in many aspects of their work. They achieve good standards in reading and benefit from the home/school reading system whereby parents support their children's reading. Standards in writing are very good; their skills in independent, extended writing are particularly good. Pupils make good progress in improving their handwriting skills and their work is very well presented.
- Standards are good in mathematics and pupils make good progress in developing their competence in number and understanding of concepts. In science, standards are good and pupils succeed in developing their skills of independent scientific enquiry.
- In the 2004 NC teacher assessment results, 79 per cent of pupils attained at least level 2 in the core subjects, which was in line with the 2003 national average score of 79 per cent. A high proportion of pupils who were assessed were on the SEN register (45 per cent) and were receiving support for learning difficulties.
- In English, 83 per cent of pupils achieved level 2 or above, which was in line with the national average (83 per cent), with 21 per cent achieving level 3, which was slightly above the national average (20 per cent).
- In mathematics, 83 per cent of pupils achieved level 2 or above which was below the national average (87 per cent), with 24 per cent achieving level 3, which was in line with the national average (24 per cent).
- Teacher assessment in science indicated that pupils' achievements were below the national average (88 per cent), with 80 per cent achieving level 2 and above and of those, 21 per cent achieved level 3 which is almost in line with the national average of 22 per cent.

- When compared with other schools locally and nationally, where up to 48 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, the NC results are closer to the upper quartile (25 per cent of best performing schools). Boys achieved higher standards than girls.
- In the foundation subjects, standards of achievement are at least good in all subjects and very good in history and art. In religious education standards are good. Pupils have made good progress since the previous inspection and continue to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding in all these subjects.
- All pupils make good progress towards the targets for improvement set by the school in relation to national criteria. The targets are based on effective teacher assessment as well as the results of baseline and NC assessments. Those pupils with SEN make good progress, relative to their ability, towards the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs).

3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum

Pupils achieve good standards overall in literacy and communication skills, in numeracy skills and in the use of ICT across the subjects and areas of learning.

- Children under five make very good use of key skills in activities within the areas of learning. Creative play activities are effective in promoting language skills and children make very good progress. They develop their numeracy skills and knowledge of mathematics through a range of practical activities as well as through scientific and technological investigations. They use a listening centre and computer equipment confidently in order to enhance their learning.
- In KS1, pupils use their speaking skills well in a range of situations. Pupils are confident and speak clearly and audibly when responding to questions, describing events and taking part in discussions. Their listening skills are good; they listen carefully and respond appropriately to instructions, to questions and to the views of other pupils.
- Pupils are encouraged to read a variety of books and benefit from taking part in class reading sessions. Pupils use reference books in lessons to find information about various subjects, for example, the growth of plants in science, and write informative booklets for others to read. By the end of the key stage, many are beginning to read accurately, with good expression and with an understanding of a variety of texts in different subjects.
- Pupils make very good progress in improving their written work in a variety of forms, including information booklets, reports, stories, poems and letters. Their extended writing in subjects across the curriculum is particularly good, especially their accounts of events in history and writing reports in science.
- Pupils' standards in numeracy across the curriculum are good. They make good use of their numerical skills and measure and calculate accurately in science, geography and design and technology. Their data handling skills are used well to record the results of investigations. They confidently handle numbers in mental, oral and written tasks.
- Overall standards in ICT to support learning across the curriculum are good. Pupils use ICT equipment and software confidently to support their learning in a range of subjects. They develop basic computer skills systematically and use computers often to consolidate their skills. They make good use of ICT to record, illustrate and present their writing and to produce graphs and data bases in subjects such as geography and science. Pupils' use of the Internet to find information and the e-mail facility is underdeveloped.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress in improving basic language and numeracy skills in line with the targets set in their IEPs. They make good use of ICT to support their learning.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils' spiritual, cultural and moral development is good, and social development is very good.

- There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on personal belief and develop their spirituality through collective worship. Different styles of worship, both in class groups and as a school, contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn that some items are special and precious, not only because of their intrinsic value but also because of their personal and religious significance. Worship also celebrates individuality and achievement and being special to God.
- Prayers before lunch and at the end of the day are part of the daily life of the whole school; these are low key and inclusive for pupils of no faith background. Giving thanks for food, friends and families teaches pupils to value the world, themselves and each other.
- Strong relationships between teachers and other adults in the school are a model for pupils and teach them the importance of good manners, respect and concern for others. Teachers know the individual circumstances of their pupils very well and respond to their specific needs with sensitivity, care and concern.
- Pupils know the school rules and obey them without question. There is no evidence of oppressive behaviour or bullying. The school is totally inclusive and the ethos of the school makes pupils feel safe, secure and special. Pupils respond to this by developing self-esteem, confidence and an understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The school has a good range of policies which successfully promote equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender or disability.
- The school provides frequent opportunities for pupils to socialise and work collaboratively in pairs and small groups. Pupils learn the importance of caring for those outside their immediate family and friends by raising money for charities, such as the Noah's Ark Appeal. At Christmas, pupils sing at the local residential home for the elderly and at harvest time the produce is donated to the residents. Good community links contribute well to pupils' social development. Father Michael and the Pastor, the community policeman, fire fighters and other visitors are welcomed into the school and children learn from them.
- Pupils appreciate the culture and heritage of Wales as well as other cultural traditions. They develop a very good understanding of their own culture through a well-integrated approach to the Welsh language and a strong *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* in history, geography and the arts. In history, the sense of belonging to a rich Welsh heritage and 'knowing ones roots' is particularly strong. This is an outstanding feature of the school. Provision for developing pupils' specific knowledge of other cultures represented more widely in Wales and Britain is less well developed.

4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

The standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning are good; the school promotes a family atmosphere of care and consideration for others.

- When in the classroom or moving about the school, pupils are respectful of others and behave in a quiet and orderly manner.

- Good standards of behaviour in the classroom and attitudes to learning have a positive effect on the quality of life and levels of achievement.
- Pupils show consideration towards one another, they play happily together, and are respectful and courteous to teachers and visitors.
- The school's policies for behavioural management, racism, equal opportunities and anti-bullying are in place and put to very good effect. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are few and are dealt with quietly and firmly. One pupil was temporarily excluded for five days and all appropriate procedures were followed by the school.
- Throughout the school, pupils show positive attitudes to learning and are able to sustain concentration over sometimes lengthy classroom sessions, although some restlessness creeps in particularly during oral sessions and assemblies.
- Parents are satisfied that the school achieves high standards of behaviour and that the values and attitudes it promotes have a positive effect on their children.

4.3 Attendance

Levels of attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

- The school's efforts in promoting regular attendance are showing signs of success. The average attendance figure for the three terms prior to inspection has risen to 90 per cent with 3.5 per cent unauthorised absence. Parents are made aware of the detrimental effect of taking children out of school during term time, but holidays and sickness remain the main causes of absence.
- Targets are set and pupils are rewarded for improved attendance with certificates awarded at the celebration of achievement assemblies. Certificates for full attendance are displayed at the front entrance.
- Registers are completed in the morning and afternoon, but not always promptly at the beginning of the morning session as required by NAW Circular 3/99. A minority of pupils are late arriving in school and can miss the important welcome and preparation for the day. Registers are neat and tidily maintained, absences are correctly codified but holiday absences in excess of the recommended ten days are not always recorded as unauthorised absence. Registers are regularly reviewed in conjunction with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Teachers and the school secretary calculate the weekly and termly figures. The school has yet to adopt an electronic database for recording and analysing attendance.
- Parents generally co-operate by notifying the school of reasons for their child's absence. Unexplained, frequent absence or consistent lateness is followed up, involving if necessary the services of the EWO and/or the Education Community Co-ordinator.

<h2>5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION</h2>

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching was very good in 19 per cent of lessons observed, good in 65 per cent and satisfactory in 16 per cent.

- The quality of teaching of children under five is good overall. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and plan a good range of experiences within the six areas of learning.

- In KS1, knowledge and understanding of subjects is secure and good use is made of professional training to improve expertise. Teachers use a good range of resources and strategies to maintain pupils' interest and ensure that equal opportunity is offered to all.
- In the majority of cases, lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives which are focused on the skills, knowledge and concepts which the pupils are to acquire. Introductions to lessons often consolidate previous learning and encourage pupils to participate in discussions.
- Work is well matched to the needs of all pupils with appropriate tasks set for them as individuals, pairs or groups. All pupils are provided with good support, especially those with SEN who are well supported both in the classroom and in withdrawal groups.
- Lessons are well organised; teachers manage their pupils well and have good relationships with them. A very good range of teaching techniques and organisational strategies is used effectively for different activities and purposes. Good quality questioning encourages pupils to explain their thinking and extend their understanding.
- Teachers make good use of plenary sessions at the end of lessons to consolidate skills and knowledge, to assess understanding and to evaluate progress.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

The quality of the school's arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting is very good and is a strength of the school. This has a positive effect on pupils' progress because teachers have a clear understanding of their individual needs.

- There are separate policies for assessment, recording and reporting and these provide useful guidelines for staff. The school uses the LEA baseline assessments when children enter the nursery; staff make effective use of the results to identify individual children's needs.
- The school makes good use of standardised tests to regularly assess pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy. These assessments identify underachievers and target areas for improvement. Reading tests identify pupils who require extra support in developing reading skills, particularly in Year 2. Pupils with SEN have well prepared IEPs with appropriate targets which are shared and properly reviewed.
- The school uses data well to track cohorts and individuals. It sets challenging targets for improvement and analyses results for individuals and for specific groups of pupils to identify gender or other issues. Tracking data is compared with NC Teacher Assessments and progress in pupils achieving their targets.
- Assessment opportunities are built into schemes of work in all subjects. Teachers' assessments are recorded and information is fed into their lesson planning. Information from assessments is kept in files.
- In the nursery, the teacher and nursery nurse make detailed notes of children's achievements during observations, which are shared at planning sessions.
- Teachers assess pupils regularly and their assessments are very accurate, particularly since the implementation of skills ladders. These break skills in core subjects down into very small steps, and are displayed in the front cover of pupils' books, where progress can clearly be seen. As each element is achieved it is shaded so that pupils know whether they have achieved their targets.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly with helpful comments for improvement. Pupils know where they need to improve and they use the skills ladders as their targets. Teachers plan to extend the use of the skills ladders beyond the core subjects.

- Co-ordinators have developed portfolios of annotated examples of pupils' work with NC levels of attainment in core subjects in order to help colleagues further improve the accuracy of assessments. Although examples of pupils work in foundation subjects are not levelled, they give new staff or those changing year groups, a clear indication of standards expected by pupils of different ages.
- Reports to parents for nursery and reception children are good. They are clear and informative and focus on the child's development. Reports for KS 1 are also good. They are very informative about core subjects and identify targets for improvement. However, information about some foundation subjects is not always sufficiently detailed and specific. Comments about these subjects tend to focus rather more on work pupils have covered rather than what they know or have achieved. Parents and pupils are given an opportunity to comment on the report and this results in a more collaborative or shared approach to learning.
- Parents are invited to school twice a year for formal consultations with teachers. In addition to these opportunities to discuss their children's progress, staff are always ready to meet with and support parents to deal with any problems.

5.3 Curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum for children under five is appropriate to their needs and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. The schemes of work in the six areas of learning are effective in ensuring progression and continuity for the development of skills, knowledge and understanding in each area.
- In KS1, the curriculum is broad, relevant and appropriately balanced. It complies with statutory requirements, including the teaching of religious education and a daily act of collective worship. Its organisation is good with sufficient time allocated to all subjects. Curriculum provision for all pupils, including those with SEN, is good.
- The whole-school planning for the teaching of key skills is good and is effectively focused on promoting pupils' use of literacy, numeracy, ICT and problem solving skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- There are appropriate policies and schemes of work for all subjects. The latter are effective in providing for continuity and progression in the NC programmes of study across the key stage. Curriculum planning is detailed and is clearly focused on learning objectives and the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The school encourages parents to support home/school tasks, especially reading, in order to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities including gymnastics, dance and team games.
- *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is successfully promoted across the curriculum. Pupils respond well to incidental Welsh spoken through the day and enjoy participating in Welsh cultural activities such as St David's Day celebrations. Visitors to school and opportunities for pupils to undertake educational visits in the local area extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of Wales and its heritage.
- Pupils' educational development is further enhanced by studying the local environment where they are encouraged to study issues such as the effects of pollution and changes to the landscape. Pupils have a good understanding of issues related to sustainable development.
- The school makes good provision for personal and social education (PSE) which is integrated through the curriculum topics and complies with the Qualifications,

Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACCAC) 2000 PSE framework. It includes personal, social, health and hygiene issues through well planned activities in the PSE programme.

- Curriculum provision is effective in ensuring that all activities are socially inclusive and that there is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.

5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

The quality of provision for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils is very good.

- Pupils are given very good support and encouragement in lessons and those pupils with SEN are provided with the extra teaching and adult help they need to achieve as well as they can. The school supports and monitors the local authority's 'looked after' pupils and liaises well with external agencies. Pupils are well supervised throughout the day and at lunchtime and break times.
- The school welcomes pupils and families with specific medical needs and has appropriate procedures for supporting them. The headteacher has recently attended training for implementing disability access and the school has undertaken an audit of the building. The nature and age of the building restricts disabled access but all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to limit their effects.
- The premises are secure and accident and emergency procedures for potentially dangerous situations are clearly documented. The school prospectus contains safety information about illness, medicines and the security gates that makes procedures clear to parents and carers. This also describes the school's equal opportunities and racial discrimination policies which are consistently applied.
- The designated teacher for first aid has updated her training recently and accidents are recorded. Health and safety procedures are well documented and staff take appropriate precautions to minimise risks. They also alert pupils to potential hazards. Medicines and dangerous substances are correctly stored and emergency equipment is regularly checked. The head teacher has been updated on child protection issues; she is the designated person to whom any concerns are to be reported. The school complies with all its statutory responsibilities and provides detailed policies and guidelines on all important issues, including child protection.
- The school provides very well for the personal and social development of pupils. Circle time provides a focus for personal and social education and health, sex and relationships education is integrated into the wider curriculum. Pupils' personal and social education and health education are further enriched by visits from the police, the dentist and other health workers.
- The school celebrates pupils' achievements and values their work. Books of pupils' own stories, carefully laminated, are displayed where visitors can browse through them. Staff make pupils feel special by valuing what they say even if it is incorrect. This raises their self-esteem and belief in what they can achieve.

5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good. Pupils make good progress towards the targets in their IEPs and achieve good standards in line with their level of ability.

- There are 28 pupils on the school's SEN register; there are no pupils with a statement of SEN. Of those pupils who have been identified as having special needs, five are at Early

Years Action, one at Early Years Action Plus, 20 are on the School Action stage and two are on School Action Plus.

- Provision for meeting the needs of pupils with SEN is good and support for pupils with learning difficulties and behaviour problems is very positive. Pupils are well integrated into all aspects of school life and are making good progress.
- The policy for SEN is comprehensive and complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice and the Disability and Discrimination Acts. It gives clear guidance to all those involved in SEN procedures. There is a named governor for SEN who provides good support to the special education needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and successfully monitors the implementation of the policy and pupils' progress.
- The SENCO, in consultation with the teachers, is responsible for overseeing all SEN provision according to the Code of Practice. She provides sound advice and support for all staff and ensures effective liaison between class teachers and the SEN support teacher.
- The SEN support teacher withdraws groups of Year 2 pupils for extra support in language and numeracy skills. These sessions are extremely valuable in providing extra help for those pupils identified as underachieving, especially in reading. They respond with enthusiasm to the range of practical activities which support their learning and raise their self-esteem.
- All pupils are well supported in lessons and make good progress. Pupils are provided with appropriate tasks which allow them to work at their own pace and level of ability. They make good use of ICT to support their learning, especially the numeracy program which provides suitable tasks, matched to each pupil's level of ability.
- Systems for identifying and assessing the needs of pupils with SEN are good, especially in the early years where baseline assessments provide information for early intervention. Record keeping is thorough, well organised and up to date.
- The quality of IEPs is good and realistic targets are set for pupils to achieve; they make good progress in line with targets set. The targets provide good guidance for teachers and support staff in planning work to help overcome difficulties and present a suitable level of challenge. At Early Years Action and School Action stages of the graduated approach, the SENCO prepares targets in the IEPs, in consultation with the class teachers and support staff. Pupils' progress is reviewed termly and the IEPs are modified as required. Detailed records are kept of pupils' progress.
- Parents are informed of developments and are encouraged to be involved in supporting their children.
- All pupils with SEN, including those with disabilities, are provided with equal access to the curriculum through well planned tasks which ensure that pupils work at the appropriate level of ability.
- Liaison between the SENCO, class teachers, SEN support teacher and outside agencies is effective.

5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions

The quality of partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions is good. People in the community are proud of the school and contribute significantly to curriculum development and to the enjoyment of pupils' learning and personal development.

- The quality of information about the school provided for parents is good. The school prospectus contains much useful information. It is reviewed annually and meets statutory requirements. Newsletters and letters to parents provide details of school events and

information of day to day activities. The governing body informs parents of school developments through its annual meeting and report to parents.

- Formal consultation meetings for parents with teachers occur twice a year and at other times by arrangement. The consultations provide an opportunity for parents to discuss their children's progress, their annual written reports and the way forward. Informal contact occurs daily before and after school.
- Parents and people in the community are encouraged to assist in school and many do. They listen to children read, help in the classroom and assist with school visits.
- A Breakfast Club which operates between 7.30 am and 9.00 am provides a useful facility for working parents. Children attending engage themselves with supervised activity and play. The school, in conjunction with *Coleg Morgannwg* also runs a weekly Family Learning Group, where parents can improve their understanding of the curriculum and improve the learning support they give their children at home.
- Friends of the School organise a number of fund raising and social events throughout the year. Moneys raised have provided additional resources and equipment such as the new stage for the school hall.
- The school has forged a strong partnership with the community. Some pupils visit a local home for the elderly, where they entertain the residents with musical performances and distribute produce from the school's harvest festival. The community is regarded as a valuable learning resource. Children in the early years are taken for walks in the community; they learn about shops and local businesses and understand how they fit into the community. They learn how to post a letter at the post office. Visitors from the community talk to pupils about life in the area in the past and give demonstrations of everyday activities, such as wash-day. These occasions provide pupils with a valuable historical understanding of their local area.
- The school has formed a close relationship with the parish church of St Thomas. Clergy visit school to talk to pupils and take assembly. Pupils visit the church to study the building as a place of worship. They have been involved in a role-play Christening and learned about the church artefacts and furnishings.
- The procedures for receiving children into the nursery ensure a warm welcome and help children settle quickly into nursery routines.
- A strong liaison has been established over the years with the neighbouring Cwmclydach Junior School to which all pupils transfer. The arrangements for moving to the junior school are well practised and ensure a smooth transition.
- There are good links with a college of further education and initial teacher training colleges; the school provides training and work experience for childcare and teacher training students, which enhance pupils' standards of achievement and extend their range of experiences.
- The school supports a number of children's charities and helps pupils understand that there are people in the world less fortunate than themselves.

5.7 Partnership with industry

The quality of partnerships with industry is good.

- The school has developed a strong and effective partnership with industry. It benefits staff development and has a positive impact on the quality of educational provision and pupils' standards of achievement.
- A number of visitors talk to children about their work. Some visitors are introduced as 'People who help us' and include the police and fire service, road safety and health

visitors. Other visitors and local artisans add interest to the curriculum. They talk about the history of Clydach Vale. Artisans, such as craftworkers and artists demonstrate their crafts and work with pupils who learn techniques, such as weaving, ceramic modelling, painting and brick-making.

- Visits to places of interest to support topic work increase awareness of the world of work and add interest to the curriculum. Visits to local shops and work places, Roath Park Lake in Cardiff, The Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagan's and a power station provide a wealth of learning experiences across the curriculum.
- Year 2 pupils demonstrate very good business acumen and skills through a mini-enterprise of making and selling Christmas cards and gift tags.
- The school's liaison with the Education in Business Partnership (EBP) is developing well. The EBP has provided funding towards school visits. Some staff have taken the opportunity to familiarise themselves with Roath Park Lake in preparation to field work undertaken by Year 2. There are also links with a building firm and pupils have benefited from observing a demonstration of brick-making.
- The school has benefited materially from its partnership with industry. Through its contacts, local businesses have provided equipment, raffle prizes and donations towards school funds.
- The school's written policy on its partnership with industry is brief and lacks the necessary guidance and strategies to formalise the development of this aspect of the curriculum.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

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

- There is an effective self-evaluation process which is linked to the school's monitoring and evaluation systems. It provides a useful framework for evaluating standards and quality in order to plan future developments.
- The headteacher, governors and staff are committed to improving standards. They make good use of assessment data, information from monitoring procedures and the action plan from the previous inspection to evaluate standards and plan for improvement. A detailed analysis is made of pupils' assessment results, including the results of baseline, NC and school based assessment tests.
- All staff are involved in the self-evaluation process as part of the school's self-assessment system, closely linked to the school's performance management policy. This is effective in raising the quality of professional expertise and identifying priorities for improving standards of teaching and learning. Staff development needs are closely linked to school improvement priorities.
- Key areas for improvement are identified from performance indicators and are built into the SDP, giving a clear focus for self-evaluation and school improvement. Action plans have clear targets, development action, success criteria, responsibilities, planned expenditure and time schedules. The main targets are to improve pupils' achievements in numeracy, literacy, ICT and science and to develop the Adult Carer skills for parents in supporting 'Child Development and Learning' in school and at home. The targets are realistic and appropriate and have been incorporated into the SDP as a result of the self-evaluation process. The headteacher's reports to governors contain detailed evaluations of progress towards achieving the targets.

- The school evaluates progress made towards achieving the targets through monitoring pupils' work, teachers' planning and the quality of teaching and learning. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and the school has met the targets in the action plan to improve standards of achievement, curriculum provision and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Monitoring procedures are effective in identifying areas for improvement. The teachers share the co-ordination of subjects, which results in a heavy workload for a small staff. Despite staff absence, the role of the subject co-ordinator in monitoring standards has continued to develop.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The quality of leadership and management of the school is very good and ensures a clear sense of purpose and direction to the work of the school.

- The headteacher provides efficient, caring leadership and support for the staff, especially the newly appointed temporary teachers, in improving the educational provision and pupils' standards of achievement. The staff work as an effective team and share the co-ordination of subjects and areas of learning. The monitoring roles of co-ordinators have improved since the previous inspection; they review policies and schemes of work and monitor standards and the quality of provision on a regular basis. They have produced effective portfolios of examples of pupils' work demonstrating progress across the school in each subject.
- The school's aims and values, which promote equality for all, are well reflected in the work of the school and are successfully implemented by staff and governors. The school achieves its aims of providing a stimulating environment in which pupils are nurtured emotionally and challenged intellectually in order to achieve their full potential.
- Despite the absence or loss of a significant number of staff over varying periods of time, the school has continued to function smoothly.
- The governing body is supportive of the school and effectively fulfils all its statutory obligations. The governors are well informed through regular reports from the headteacher and understand their roles and responsibilities. There is a well organised committee structure for managing aspects such as finance. Governors make regular visits to the school and have formal links with subject co-ordinators in order to monitor the quality of education and pupils' standards of achievement.
- The governing body, through its finance committee, ensures that budget-setting relates efficiently to the school's educational priorities in the SDP over a three year period. The governors are aware of the need for secure budget planning and the importance of cost effectiveness, especially with regard to falling rolls and a reduced budget. However, there is an overspend of £10,000 at present and the school is working with the LEA to produce a financial plan to reduce the deficit.
- The school has a delegated budget which is well administered. The LEA finance department provides useful advice and support. The finance committee monitors spending and sets the budget which is ratified by the whole governing body.
- A recent financial audit found most procedures to be well managed and the school has addressed the recommendations made in the report. The school manages its resources efficiently and ensures good value for money.
- There is a full-time clerical assistant who manages the financial administration very efficiently and, working closely with the headteacher, undertakes administrative tasks to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

The provision for staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good overall and has a beneficial effect on pupils' standards of achievements.

- The school is adequately staffed for the number of pupils on roll, although there are no classroom support assistants, except the nursery nurse in the nursery. Staff work well together as a team and volunteers generously offer assistance to staff for activities requiring extra adult support. This, combined with the good quality resources and the way in which staff create an attractive learning environment, contributes well to the development of pupils.
- Staff are suitably qualified, they are extremely hardworking and support each other well. Despite a number of major staff changes, they have worked together to create an effective team to overcome the difficulties of illness and redundancy. Staff regularly update their knowledge and continue with their professional development through performance management and training.
- The quantity and quality of the schools resources in all subject areas are good and serve to promote effective learning. There are sufficient books in the library for pupils to borrow, in addition to those in the classrooms; these are colour coded to assist in making an appropriate selection. There is also an adequate number of computers and software. The range and quality of the historical artefacts that the school owns make an outstanding contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The accommodation is spacious for the number of pupils on roll, both indoors and outdoors. The school is kept very clean and well maintained despite its age. This contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of school and their care of the school environment.
- There are, nevertheless, areas of disrepair and severe damp that cannot easily be addressed by the school. These damp areas, where paint is peeling badly, are on the stairs to the nursery and in some of the classrooms. These detract from the ethos of the school which is otherwise made visually attractive to those that work and learn there as well as to visitors.
- The outside accommodation provides ample space for outdoor play and games but there is no field or grassed areas. There is a separate dining hall which is shared with the junior school; the building is poorly maintained with flaking paint exposing bare plaster on all internal walls. There is a safe, secure outdoor play area for children under five which is used regularly by the nursery children but not as often by the children in reception.
- The school building is made colourful and welcoming to pupils by the attractiveness of the work displayed on the walls. These good quality displays of children's work are stimulating, interactive and promote learning. They reflect the work of the school across the whole curriculum and there is an area of interest in every part of the building.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

The educational provision for children under five, taken overall, is appropriate to their needs and they make very good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's learning. Children in the nursery make very good progress from a low base line and achieve very good

standards in all six areas of learning. Children in reception continue to make very good progress and achieve very good standards in their personal and social and creative development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards in mathematical development, language, literacy and communication skills and physical development are good.

Good features

Language, literacy and communications skills

- Children in the nursery listen attentively and learn to speak clearly; they apply these skills across the six areas of learning. In movement sessions, for example, they listen to instructions carefully and learn positional language when moving between one hoop and another.
- Through engaging in role-play with adults, children learn how to sequence the events of a story. This helps them not only to develop their literacy skills but to understand the passing of time.
- Children choose from a range of books, holding them and turning the pages correctly. They begin to understand that books are written by an author and that print carries meaning. Children listen to stories and rhymes that are read or told to them and begin to discuss the reason why characters behave in a particular way. Most children recognise their own name cards and some can write their name from memory.
- Children enjoy early writing experiences and use paper and pencils to take messages in their role-play and free choice activities.
- Children have frequent opportunities to extend and practise their Welsh vocabulary through singing, counting and conversing. They listen carefully and respond to simple questions.
- In reception, children listen attentively when others are speaking during circle time sessions. They apply this skill when listening to and following instructions in other areas of their learning. This helps them to achieve well, particularly during physical education lessons.
- Children respond to questions clearly and express themselves with growing confidence during circle time. In literacy sessions, they express preferences for different parts of a story and give reasons for their choice.
- Children begin to form letters with increasing pencil control and correct orientation. Their writing of their own name is recognisable. Children dictate a sentence for the teacher to scribe and underwrite or overwrite according to their stage of development. They also begin to develop their own emergent writing. Many understand that writing can be used for different purposes and some realise that a list looks different from a story.
- When choosing books, children begin to express preferences for different types of stories. They are able to retell some of the main events in stories and offer explanations. Children select books independently to read in their free choice time and handle them carefully. They know which way to turn the pages and follow the text. Some pupils read simple words in interest books and early readers. They discuss the story and the events shown in the pictures. Children use computer software to further develop their early reading skills.
- In Welsh, children listen very carefully and respond well to questions. They know colours and the names of a good number of animals. They begin to phrase their own questions to ask the doll. They ask ‘Sut wyt ti?’ and ‘Beth sy’n bod?’ Children begin to read phrases and start to recognise the names of animals. Children know a range of Welsh songs and rhymes; they sing tunefully and regularly count in Welsh during numeracy sessions.

Shortcomings

- Children in reception do not regularly experiment freely as emergent writers.

Mathematical development

- In the nursery, children develop their mathematical skills through using and applying the skills in all the areas of learning. They use their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts through, for example, the story of 'The Three Bears' to order objects by size.
- When preparing for lunch, they count cutlery and set the tables, matching colours of cups to tablecloths. They recognise the size and colour of the hoops during movement sessions. They begin to apply their learning and solve problems by measuring knives using non-standards units, such as hand spans, to check the size.
- Children count confidently to six and some can count accurately to ten; they begin to recognise the number symbols. They put out the correct number of items and make sets of objects to given criteria.
- Many children know colours and the names of simple 2D shapes.
- In reception, children recognise and order numbers to ten; they write numerals correctly and some can count to 20. They enjoy number games that help them to consolidate their learning.
- Children can make sets of objects to five and most of them can record the sets accurately. They make number books to help them remember what they have learnt. More able pupils can add sets of objects.
- When ordering length by gluing three pieces of ribbon into their books, children explain clearly which is the longest and which is the shortest. Some children can order more than three ribbons according to length.
- Role-play, such as shopping with money, enables children to begin to recognise coins. Some children identify coins up to 20p and match them to their correct numbers.

Personal and social development

- Children in the nursery become increasingly independent. They find their name cards when they arrive in the morning. They go to the toilet by themselves and develop an understanding of good hygiene practices through independently washing their hands. They begin to locate their own clothes and take off their shoes and socks for movement activities in the hall, retrieve them at the end of the session and make a very good attempt to put them back on correctly.
- Children help adults prepare for lunch by setting the tables correctly with cutlery and cups. Children are encouraged to express emotions through facial expressions and talk about their feelings. They explain why their friends are special.
- They frequently welcome visitors from the local community into the school, including the clergy, police and dentist. They make regular visits in the local area to extend their learning experiences.
- In reception, children are polite and co-operate well with one another and with adults throughout the school day. They say thank you and help each other and willingly share and take turns.
- Children talk about feelings during circle time; they show facial expressions and discuss what makes them angry and how they deal with these feelings.
- Children become increasingly independent as they learn to clear away and keep their work and play areas clean and tidy. They develop high standards and respond very well to expectations of classroom tidiness.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- In the nursery, children know the days of the week in the correct order and use picture cards to correctly sequence events in ‘The Very Hungry Caterpillar’ story. They also sequence the stages in making porridge.
- Through their study of butterflies, children begin to understand growth and change. They know that caterpillars, like humans, require food for growth. Children are able to name some of the common fruits and discuss their colour and shape.
- When using computers, children demonstrate good control of the mouse when adding spots to a drawing of a butterfly and print their work with help. They can use a number game to successfully match objects to the correct numeral. They use a range of computer software to support their learning.
- Children use computers and tape recorders, including listening centres, in other areas of learning.
- When they celebrate Spencer Bear’s Birthday, children learn about time passing. They look at old and new teddies and this helps them to develop a concept of chronology.
- Children make frequent outside visits into the local community and this extends their opportunities for learning about the place in which they live. When out walking, children observe slugs and draw them later.
- Children enjoy preparing and eating food and this helps them to learn a whole range of skills. They make toast and porridge and visit the local shop to buy the ingredients for cooking activities. They begin to learn about healthy food.
- In reception, children learn about personal responsibility for keeping healthy. They learn more about healthy food and discuss the importance of warming up and cooling down in physical education lessons. Many children know that breathing gets faster during exercise and that the body gets hotter.
- Children make effective comparisons between different environments. They visit Porthcawl to learn about the features of rock pools and study a beach environment. They use this experience as a basis for their work in class. Children involve their parents in home/school tasks to create collages using natural beach materials. They examine their findings with a magnifying glass and arrange their collection of shells, stones and seaweed in a very attractive interactive display.
- Through listening to visitors from the local community and asking questions, pupils learn about issues concerning health, the past, safety, religion, and how to care for puppies and baby owls.
- Children use the computer regularly to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and support their learning across the curriculum. They develop their word processing and simple data handling skills. They use simulations to represent real life situations and produce repeating patterns using a drawing and design program.

Creative development

- In the nursery, children use a wide range of creative techniques and media; they create pictures applying wax to a paint wash. Children make effective observational drawings of fruit and colour these using pastels. They work in 3D to model fruit from mouldable icing. Children are aware of the main features of a face; they correctly place eyes, nose and mouth on cut out bear shapes. Children use the computer to generate some of their artwork. They create an attractive picture of a butterfly.
- They begin to plan and design their own work; they design a cradle for a baby and choose how to decorate it. Children make choices about which materials to use to decorate caterpillars made from card circles.

- Children know a good range of action songs and sing them tunefully. They have good opportunities to experiment freely with a suitable range of musical instruments.
- Children enjoy frequent opportunities to develop their creativity through effective, directed role-play. Working regularly with adults to re-enact stories like ‘The Three Bears’ and real life situations helps them to work more creatively and independently later. Children then use a vast array of props to practise their role-play skills in a number of different themed areas.
- In reception, children enjoy singing and listen carefully to instructions and to each other; their singing is confident and tuneful. They can name and play a range of musical instruments and explain clearly how a sound is made. Children begin to follow picture cues when playing instruments, starting and stopping as directed. They listen to a recording of their work and begin to evaluate it.
- Children listen to a piece of music and discuss how it makes them feel. They also respond by drawing a picture of the image that comes into their mind when they hear it.
- Children have frequent opportunities to develop their creativity through role-play and they particularly enjoy the seaside corner. Children dress in beachwear and apply sunscreen before sitting in a deckchair to eat their ice cream, purchased from the ice cream van.
- Children make good use of a range of media and explore different techniques. In their artwork they use chalk, crayon, pen and paint. They print and create collages as well as working in three dimensions. Children show some skill in their observational drawing and they also use computer software to generate artwork. They explore the use of drawing tools as part of their learning in information technology and link this to their work on observational drawing of flowers. They use an art program to create drawings of flowers. Children begin to understand colour mixing and start to examine colours more closely. They mix various shades of orange for flower paintings.

Physical Development

- In the nursery, children make very good progress in their physical development. They move in response to a tambourine, starting and stopping when asked to do so. Children control their bodies well when using space and changing direction. They jump in and out of hoops with two feet together, bending their knees.
- Children explore a wide range of tabletop activities that develop their fine motor skills very effectively. Most children use brushes, glue sticks and crayons competently and many handle scissors with confidence. They demonstrate good manipulative skills with small construction toys, art and craft materials and play dough.
- Outside, children develop their gross motor skills through using balls, skittles and hoops as well as a range of wheeled toys and large climbing equipment, including a tunnel.
- In reception, children have good manipulative skills for managing their clothing when they change for physical education lessons. They change independently and only require a small amount of help.
- Children run lightly in the hall and many of them skip competently, alternating their feet correctly. Children understand the concept of space. They throw and catch beanbags with increasing skill and learn to control their throwing.
- In the classroom children demonstrate good control of writing materials, the computer mouse and keyboard, brushes and drawing materials.

Shortcomings

- Reception children's physical development is restricted by limited outdoor activity and opportunity to explore large climbing apparatus and wheeled toys.

English

Standards of achievement in KS1 are good overall and pupils make good progress. They are very good in writing and good in speaking, listening and reading.

Good Features

- Pupils achieve good standards in speaking. They take part enthusiastically in role-play activities and opportunities to express their own views and feelings during circle time.
- Pupils' listening skills are good. During oral sessions in all subjects they listen attentively.
- Standards in reading are good. Pupils choose from a range of library books at a suitable level of challenge which they take home in addition to their school reading book. Pupils read regularly to teachers, parents and carers. They talk about their favourite types of story. Some pupils talk about books they have at home and some visit the public library.
- Year 1 pupils begin to use a range of strategies, including phonics, to read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils in Year 1 make good progress over the course of the year in developing extended writing. They write with increasing confidence across a broad range of subject areas. Pupils frame questions using who, what, when, where, why and how. Spelling is good and pupils demonstrate that they understand phonics well.
- Pupils in Year 2 write for a wide range of purposes and understand the difference between factual and creative writing. They write postcards in the role of a character called Jack to inform his mother of his whereabouts. They understand how this differs from a letter and from a story.
- Pupils make good use the computer to write; they create a postcard layout for their work and type their message.
- Pupils are always effectively encouraged to see themselves as writers and respond by writing at length. Their factual writing to convey information is very good and pupils produce very well written booklets on how to grow seeds.
- Pupils make good use of word books to aid spelling and their work is well presented with very good standards of handwriting.
- Pupils with SEN are well supported in small groups and in class. They make good progress towards their targets in developing their language and literacy skills.

Shortcomings

- Older pupils do not build on their knowledge of letter formation to join letters in words.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement in KS1 are good and pupils make good progress.

Good features

- Pupils make good use of mathematical skills as an integral part of classroom activities, especially in the play areas, such as the sweet shop, the woodland mini-beast hunt and the building site. They make good use of problem solving and data handling skills to record scientific and technological investigations. ICT is used well to improve these skills.

- There is an emphasis on mental calculation and pupils respond well to questions, using a range of strategies to calculate and show answers. They have good mental recall of number facts which they use to solve problems.
- Year 1 pupils recognise numbers to 100, can order numbers to 20 and understand the concept of one more than and one less than. They know the vocabulary associated with addition and subtraction and can record their addition and subtraction calculations accurately. They recognise repeating patterns and sequences of numbers. Through practical investigations with pairs of socks, pupils begin to understand the significance of the 'odd one out' and the concept of odd and even numbers. They accurately count in twos and fives using a range of practical activities to help them.
- Year 2 pupils have a good grasp of mental mathematics and use a variety of strategies to calculate answers, which they explain clearly. Pupils accurately recognise number patterns on the hundred square and order numbers correctly to a hundred. They can add 100 to given numbers and calculate problems using numbers to 100. They understand place value in two digit numbers. They know multiples of two, five and ten and apply them to calculations. They record multiplication tables correctly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of money problems and can calculate amounts of money to £1. Practical shopping activities in the sweet shop help pupils understand the concepts of adding and subtracting amounts of money and calculating the correct change.
- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of shape. Younger pupils recognise and name two and three dimensional shapes and complete sequences of shapes. Older pupils name more complex shapes, investigate their properties and accurately count numbers of sides and corners. They can divide shapes into halves and quarters and correctly record the results.
- All pupils make very good use of data handling skills. They sort and classify a range of objects using criteria related to their properties. They collect information about the weather, favourite foods and pets and present their findings on a variety of graphs, sets, and charts. They understand the value of interpreting graphs to find information.
- Pupils understand the concept of time and successfully sequence the times of different activities in a day and match them to the correct times on a clock. Older pupils can tell the time on the hour and half-past the hour and some to quarter past the hour.
- Pupils have a good understanding of measures. Pupils confidently use standard and non-standard units to measure length, mass and capacity. They accurately measure lines in centimetres and record the results. They understand and use vocabulary related to mass; they know how to use a balance to compare weights and explain which are heavier or lighter.
- Older pupils make very good use of their mathematical skills when involved in a mini-enterprise scheme whereby they make Christmas cards and gift tags using a design program on the computer to sell at the Christmas Fayre. They calculate the costs of materials and envelopes and produce graphs and tables to record the results.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress in developing numeracy skills and achieve well, in line with their level of ability.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Science

Standards of achievement in KS1 are good and pupils make good progress.

Good features

- Pupils successfully develop their skills of scientific enquiry through a range of practical investigations. They make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the programmes of study. They use correct vocabulary and develop a good understanding of key scientific processes such as fair testing and prediction.
- When learning about life processes and living things, pupils have a sound grasp of the growth of humans, animals and plants. Year 1 pupils investigate mini-beasts and insects and clearly describe their habitats and how they adapt to different environments, such as a woodland and a seashore. They successfully classify them according to characteristics, such as wings and numbers of legs. Their visit to Glynconnel Environmental Centre consolidates their knowledge of habitats and mini-beasts through practical investigations of the woodland and through pond-dipping. Pupils make very good use of problem solving skills when investigating a suitable habitat for wood lice and know that they need a dark, damp environment.
- Year 2 pupils investigate the conditions needed for seeds to germinate and know what living things need in order to grow. They make detailed observations of the growth of broad beans and sunflowers, grown under different conditions and produce very good quality information booklets to record the results.
- Pupils recognise the similarities and differences in the characteristics of a range of materials. They have good knowledge and understanding of the properties and behaviour of materials and use appropriate vocabulary to describe observations. Older pupils sort materials into those which are translucent, transparent and opaque and clearly explain the differences.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the uses of electricity in the home and also of the dangers of electricity. Year 2 pupils investigate forces and motion and know that a push or a pull can make something speed up or slow down. They construct a simple circuit and correctly name the component parts on a clearly labelled diagram. They successfully investigate conductors of electricity using a simple circuit to test which materials will allow electricity to flow through the circuit.
- All pupils understand the requirements for a healthy life-style and the importance of eating healthy foods and of exercise and rest.
- Pupils record their investigations through a range of methods. They use labelled diagrams, charts, text, graphs, flow charts and sets to record their findings. They make good use of ICT to record their work and to support their learning.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Welsh second language

Standards of achievement in KS1 are good in speaking and listening skills, reading and writing. Pupils make good progress.

Good features

- Pupils listen carefully to instructions and questions and respond well to incidental spoken Welsh, showing a good understanding of commands and greetings. They confidently discuss the weather and how they feel and take part enthusiastically in question and

answer sessions. They know the words of poems and action songs, which they recite and sing with good pronunciation.

- Pupils are familiar with a range of vocabulary; they know colours, can count and name different foods, clothes and everyday objects. They know the vocabulary associated with the weather, pets, animals, places and everyday activities. Pupils respond well to questions about themselves and make good attempts to answer in complete sentences, using known language patterns. They enjoy talking to Jac the puppet and confidently ask and answer questions giving affirmative and negative responses. They take part in role-play activities as they become more familiar with sentence patterns.
- Pupils enjoy reading stories in Welsh Big Books, such as *Y Frech Goch* and *Mae'n Gyfrinach* and make good attempts to read the text with understanding. They listen carefully to repeated phrases and questions, focusing on known sentence patterns and respond appropriately, showing an understanding of vocabulary. Pupils will often choose simple books and confidently read the text. The use of computer programs and CD ROMs help to consolidate reading and writing skills.
- They make good use of their knowledge of sentence patterns and vocabulary to write their own sentences. Older pupils can write a passage of up to seven sentences about themselves with accurate spelling and appropriate punctuation.
- Pupils clearly express likes and dislikes and write accurate sentences in response to questions. They draw pictures of the weather on computer and write the appropriate weather caption accurately. They confidently read their written work with good pronunciation.
- All pupils show a positive attitude to learning Welsh and have a very good awareness of *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* through their studies of Welsh music, poetry, history and art. St. David's Day is celebrated annually and reflects the language traditions and local heritage which promote a sense of pride and belonging in the community.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Design and technology

Standards of achievement in KS1 are good and pupils make good progress.

Good features

- Pupils have a good understanding of the designing, making and evaluating process and achieve high standards.
- Pupils in both year groups plan and evaluate their work carefully. They research their subject thoroughly before attempting to create their own designs.
- Pupils in Year 1 research boat designs on a computer CD ROM They do this in order to plan a suitable design for a boat. Pupils also use a computer aided design to develop sails for their boats.
- Pupils test a range of materials from which to make a boat as well as its weight and shape. They make good use of their scientific knowledge when working with materials, testing floating and sinking concepts and experimenting with methods of making the boats move. When considering weight and shape pupils are also developing their numeracy skills.
- In Year 2, pupils study North American Natives; they research information from books to find out how they made their tepees. They then test a range of suitable materials that have the necessary properties before making their own.

- They use the computer when designing a pencil case to investigate a suitable style and size of font for their name design.
- Pupils' work in design and technology links in with their work in literacy and science. As part of their theme of Jack and the Beanstalk, pupils test a range of materials from which to make an axle for Jack's cart. They also test the cart to find out if it is strong enough to carry the weight of the gold and the amount of force needed to move it.
- Work in design and technology promotes pupils' key skills in numeracy. Pupils measure axles and calculate the number of grams that their carts can hold before collapsing.
- Pupils work collaboratively to plan, test and evaluate their work. They agree how best to decorate and finish the end product. They replicate their designs carefully.
- Pupils evaluate and refine their work. They explain that they had to change the position of the axle hole at one side of their cart because the wheel was too high.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Information technology

Standards of achievement in KS1 are good and pupils make good progress.

Good features

- Pupils use ICT to develop and extend their learning in literacy and numeracy. Pupils use mathematics diagnostic programs which create individual learning tasks to suit their needs. Pupils work on these independently, moving through the levels and logging on and off independently.
- In both year groups, pupils develop their ICT skills to support their learning in most subjects through using computer programs. They also use programmable toys to learn about angles and direction and make good use of information technology equipment, including listening centres, audio and video tape recordings, to support their learning.
- In Year 1, pupils use a mapping program to make a town layout for their work in geography. They plan and label roads and physical features using drag and drop labels. They also draw island maps and design and label natural and man made features using similar techniques.
- In their science work, Year 1 pupils use ICT effectively to enhance their learning. They create and label a plant diagram for their science topic and they also use a data handling program to display the results of their work on mini beasts.
- Pupils in Year 2 use ICT with increasing confidence. Pupils make good use of data handling programs and create graphs, tables and Carroll diagrams to sort and record information.
- Pupils in Year 2 carry out research for their study of New Zealand. They print out a map of New Zealand and locate Christchurch on the map.
- In their work in science Year 2 pupils use software to create fully labelled diagrams sequencing the growth of a broad bean.
- Pupils in both year groups successfully use the computer to draw, paint and create designs for their art work; their drawing skills are particularly good. They demonstrate good skills to design and produce Christmas cards and gift tags for their mini-enterprise project.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' understanding of how information technology is used regularly in daily life is underdeveloped.
- Pupils' use of the Internet and e-mail facility is limited.

History

Standards of achievement in KS1 are very good and pupils make very good progress.

Good features

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the past, particularly the history of their local area, is very good. They use their study of history to develop their skills in writing for a range of purposes. They write factual accounts and create diary entries for a young coal miner; they pose research questions and describe events. In Year 1, pupils develop a chronological awareness when writing about an old teddy bear.
- In Year 2, pupils extend their skills further by describing life in Britain and in Wales when their grandparents were young. They also study the local flood of 1910 which claimed the lives of many children at the school.
- Pupils acquire knowledge of the lives of famous Welsh people; in their study of pirates Year 1 pupils research the life of Henry Morgan.
- Year 2 pupils search information books for facts on World War Two. They discover that famous people were evacuated. Some pupils work on their family tree to decide which of their relatives (born before 1940) would be the most suitable person to interview.
- Pupils develop a sound understanding of the past from the wealth of artefacts in the school. These are mainly displayed in Cegin Mamgu, a role play area designed as a Welsh Victorian kitchen. This is a wonderful resource that allows pupils the opportunity to feel and imagine life in a Welsh kitchen 100 years ago.
- Through local historians, pupils come to 'know' Clydach Vale of the past and develop a strong sense of belonging to its history. Pupils develop their enquiry skills very effectively by posing questions for these visiting experts
- Visits to places of historical interest, including the schoolroom at The Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagan's, also help pupils to extend their understanding of the past.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Geography

Standards of achievement in KS1 are good and pupils make good progress.

Good features

- Pupils have a good understanding and knowledge of place, direction and their locality. They use their geographical enquiry skills to list natural and human features in the locality and record these carefully using drawings, maps, symbols and labels. They recognise places in photographs and clearly explain their uses.
- Pupils use a globe and a map of the world and identify physical features including seas and land. They locate New Zealand and identify Christchurch on the South Island where they have links with another school. They exchange letters with pupils and compare the geographical features and climate of New Zealand with those of Wales.

- Pupils identify Wales on a map of the British Isles and on a map of the local area they identify their homes and the streets where they live. They draw simple maps that show a good sense of scale and position and describe the different types of buildings in the area.
- Pupils study the local area and use maps and photographs to identify a range of physical and human features. They write accounts of their observations and draw good quality maps which identify features, such as roads, houses, shops, churches, lakes, farms, factories, offices and the school. They conduct a building survey and use tally sheets to record their findings and construct graphs showing the different buildings and houses.
- Pupils have a good understanding of direction and, during a visit to Roath Park Lake in Cardiff, successfully use a compass to follow directions and use the points of the compass to draw sign-post maps. Pupils make comparisons of this lake with the lake in Clydach Vale and clearly explain the differences in their location and geographical features. They make thoughtful comparisons about the quality of the environments and suggest how they can be improved. Some pupils write letters on the computer to the local council with their suggestions for improving their local environment.
- By the end of the key stage, pupils' map making skills show good progress. They produce work that has regard for scale and use keys to help users interpret information. Pupils make good use of ICT to find information, to record weather patterns and to draw maps and plans.
- Pupils study the local environment and the effects of changes in recent years. They have a good understanding of issues such as the effect of pollution and the need to recycle waste. This contributes to their education for sustainable development.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Art

Standards of achievement in KS1 are very good and pupils make very good progress.

Good features

- Pupils confidently explore line, tone, colour, pattern, shape and texture and experiment with different art techniques including printed backgrounds and collage using a range of materials to produce texture, resulting in some attractive art work.
- Pupils explore paint and confidently use different brushes and tools to paint and print effective patterns. They investigate paint mixing techniques and use paint colours carefully to produce very good quality paintings, such as the woodland at Glyncornel Environmental Centre.
- Pupils make very good progress in developing their observational drawing skills and produce good quality, detailed drawings of self-portraits, plants and mini-beasts, particularly snails, using pencil, crayon, pastels and charcoal. They make close observations of historical artefacts, such as those found in a Victorian kitchen, and produce detailed pencil drawings.
- Year 1 pupils study a range of buildings in the local area, looking for texture and patterns in the walls and roofs; they produce good quality drawings using pencil and felt pen. They investigate the work of Kadinsky and note how the paint and colours are used to create pictures of tall buildings. Pupils use similar techniques to produce their own colourful paintings of buildings. They explore texture in clay and sand and create effective sculptures adding natural materials, such as seaweed, shells and stones.

- Pupils begin to appreciate the work of famous artists from different times and cultures. They study the work of Van Gogh, in particular, his painting of a stormy sea. They experiment with paint mixing techniques and make good attempts to paint seascapes in the same style, making good use of light and shade in the colours.
- Pupils study the work of Welsh artists and the way they portray Welsh life and landscapes. They work with the local artist Euryl Stevens to produce bold paintings and drawings of themselves and studies of flowers. Year 2 pupils produce some effective paintings of poppies in the style of Linda Fay Powell.
- All pupils investigate texture through collage work and weaving techniques using a range of paper, fabrics and threads. Younger pupils investigate the structure of open-weave dishcloth fabric and weave a variety of threads, ribbons, shells and wools into the fabric, producing very attractive pieces of woven work. Older pupils, in conjunction with their work on Native Americans, use a frame to make a loom and create very attractive woven pieces, embellished with ribbons, feathers, plaited wool and beads.
- Pupils experiment with clay, dough, card and junk material to produce interesting 3-D models. Year 1 pupils make effective models of fantasy creatures based on their knowledge of mini-beasts out of plasticine and clay. Older pupils successfully use clay to create figures and mini-beasts which they carefully decorate.
- All pupils make very good use of a drawing and graphic design computer system to create designs and art work.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Music

Standards of achievement in KS1 are good and pupils make good progress.

Good features

- Pupils have a well balanced range of skills in composing, performing and appraising music. They make good use of a computer program to listen to instrumentalists and correctly identify the instruments being played.
- They confidently sing a wide variety of songs, hymns and rhymes in English and in Welsh. They sing in tune with clear diction and appropriate attention to breathing and the quality of sounds.
- Pupils follow clapping patterns and body sounds and repeat them correctly, adapting to different rhythms. They can clap and play a range of instruments in time with the music, keeping a steady beat. They sort instruments into different types: those they beat, shake or scrape. They draw Carroll Diagrams to sort instruments according to different criteria.
- All pupils have a good understanding of pitch and can differentiate between high and low notes. They respond well to dynamics producing loud and quiet sounds and to pace by playing instruments and singing at a fast or slow pace as appropriate.
- Year 1 pupils create sounds to represent the events in the story of 'The Awongalema Tree'. They work in groups and use tuned and untuned instruments to compose rhythms to represent each animal in the story. They confidently act out parts of the story following the narrator's lead and successfully add the rhythmic compositions to enhance the story. They listen carefully to the taped recordings of their compositions and evaluate them offering suggestions for improvement.

- Year 2 pupils work in groups to compose music using a range of instruments and record their compositions through drawing symbols to represent their music; they recognise patterns in their recordings and understand that music is often based on repeated patterns.
- Pupils have good listening and appraisal skills. They listen to a variety of music played in assemblies and at other times and clearly describe the sounds and which instruments are played. They listen with appreciation to live performances, including a visiting musicians and the Welsh Brass Trio.
- Pupils' musical performances successfully enhance assemblies, community events and school productions.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Physical education

Standards of achievement in KS1 are good and pupils make good progress. Pupils experience a good range of physical activities including dance, gymnastics and games.

Good features

- All pupils understand the necessity for warm-up activities and explain clearly the beneficial effects of exercise on body fitness and general health. They describe changes to their breathing, heart rate, appearance and how they feel after exercise. They also appreciate a 'cool down' session at the end of a lesson. They handle apparatus sensibly and safely.
- Pupils have a good awareness of space and use it purposefully. They move at different levels, directions and speeds. They respond well to instruction and music to perform a range of movements.
- Pupils concentrate hard and show good co-ordination when they demonstrate a range of movements to travel from one area to another. They transfer weight from feet to hands to move in different directions and at varying levels. They demonstrate a sequence of movements using different body parts and work well with a partner to mirror each other's movements.
- Pupils are improving their throwing and catching skills. They can successfully aim a beanbag into a hoop from varying distances and practise underarm and overarm throws. They work well in pairs to roll a hoop to each other showing good co-ordination and control.
- Pupils make appropriate evaluations of their own work and that of others and offer suggestions for improvement.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop physical skills through extra-curricular activities, such as dance, gymnastics and team games.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Religious education

Standards of achievement in KS1 are good and pupils make good progress. The school meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.

Good features

- Pupils develop their knowledge of Christianity through their study of Baptism. Visits to the local church and effective use of role-play to demonstrate a Christening, help pupils understand the significance of this integral part of the Christian belief.
- Pupils in Year 1 visit the local church and know that it is a place of worship. They know the significance of worship and are familiar with the contents and structure of the church. They correctly name parts of the building and some of the church furniture and artefacts.
- Pupils in Year 1 accurately retell the story of Zaccheus. They understand the importance of friendship and apply this to their own lives. They explain how important it is to care about everyone and be kind to each other.
- In Year 1, pupils draw their own special friend and give clear explanations why they are special.
- Pupils in Year 2 study the Jewish faith. They know that Jews celebrate Shabbat on Friday evening and that very strict Jews are not allowed to do any work on their Sabbath.
- Pupils know some of the Jewish food customs, the names of some items of religious dress and the purpose of some Jewish religious artefacts.
- They understand the importance of religious celebrations for Christians and know the major Christian festivals. They have a good knowledge of Bible stories.
- Pupils in Year 2 begin to understand the importance of symbolism in religion. They know that certain items have a religious significance that is beyond the literal.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The school was inspected in 1998 and produced an action plan to address the key issues; all have been implemented.

Key Issue 1

Maintain the current good standards.

- Self-evaluation report 2004: A tracking system is used to monitor pupils' progress in the core subjects from nursery to Year 2. Underachievement in mathematics and English is identified and pupils are provided with appropriate support to improve standards. Pupils have individual targets for improvement in English and mathematics which are closely monitored through the use of skills ladders.
- The current inspection found that standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

Key Issue 2

Address any shortcomings in subjects and areas of learning by continuing to disseminate good practice in teaching.

- Self-evaluation report 2004: All shortcomings have been addressed in the following subjects: English speaking and listening, Welsh, mathematics, science, design and technology and music. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored by the headteacher and subject leaders and information is shared and discussed with staff.

- The current inspection found that all shortcomings in subjects and areas of learning have been addressed.

Key Issue 3

Extend the current system of monitoring to include the curriculum leaders so that they focus more clearly on standards in their subject.

- Self-evaluation report: The role of the curriculum leader has been developed by implementing a staff development programme. A target setting process ensures that qualitative and quantitative targets are set for the core subjects in KS1 and similar targets are set for children under five. Progress in achieving targets is monitored regularly and areas for further development are identified, for example, the family learning initiative.
- Curriculum leaders monitor the teaching and learning through observation of lessons, sampling pupils' work, monitoring teachers' planning and producing portfolios of pupils' work for moderation purposes.
- The current inspection found monitoring systems to be effective in focusing on improving standards.

Key Issue 4

Ensure a prompt start to morning and afternoon sessions.

- Self-evaluation report: There is an attendance and punctuality policy which supports this aim. The school works closely with parents and the Education Welfare Officer to monitor attendance and punctuality. The school works closely with the Education Community Co-ordinator to monitor families who continue to have problems with attendance and punctuality. The school monitors dinner supervision to ensure a prompt start to afternoon sessions.
- The current inspection found that levels of punctuality have improved, although a minority of pupils are consistently late in the mornings.

8.2 Key issues for action

In order to build on the good standards achieved by the pupils and to improve aspects of provision, the school needs to:-

- improve standards of achievement in subjects and areas of learning where there are shortcomings;
- continue to improve rates of attendance and comply with the requirements of the NAW Circular 3/99 by:
 - a) ensuring that attendance registers are taken promptly at the start of the morning session;
 - b) ensuring that unauthorised absences are recorded in the registers appropriately.

Acknowledgement

The registered inspector and team wish to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy before and during the inspection.

APPENDIX

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Cwmclydach Infants School
School type	Infant
Age -range of pupils	3-7
Address of school	Wern Street Clydach Vale Tonypany Rhondda Cynon Taff
Post-Code	CF40 2BQ
Telephone Number	01443 434370

Headteacher	Mrs J Bolton
Date of appointment	September 1990
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Pastor David Jones
Registered Inspector	Mrs M E Evans
Dates of inspection	28-30 June 2004

B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	33	22	21	29					105

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	5	0	5

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	18:1
Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	16:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	24
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.25:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School
Term 1	93	89		91
Term 2	87	90		89
Term 3	91	89		90

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	42
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	1

C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2004 compared with national results 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2004			Number of pupils in Y2: 29					
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	3	14	62	21	
		National	0	4	14	63	20	
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	3	14	62	21	
		National	0	4	14	55	27	
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	10	7	66	17	
		National	0	5	14	69	11	
EN: Speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	17	59	24	
		National	0	3	12	63	22	
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	17	59	24	
		National	0	2	11	63	24	
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	7	14	59	21	
		National	0	2	10	66	22	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school:	79	In Wales:	79

D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

D. Evidence base of the inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors who spent a total of six inspector days at the school.

Before the inspection:

- meetings were held with the headteacher and staff, the governing body and with the parents; four parents attended the pre-inspection meeting;
- questionnaires were distributed to all parents and the 19 completed questionnaires were carefully analysed;
- a scrutiny was made of school documentation.

During the inspection:

- evidence of lessons observed was based on approximately 18 hours of inspecting 31 lessons across the age groups;
- other observations included assemblies, registration, extra-curricular activities, lunch and breaktimes;
- discussions were held with the headteacher, class teachers, support staff and non-teaching staff about their roles and responsibilities;
- discussions were held with pupils about aspects of their work and life in school; inspectors listened to a representative sample of pupils read;
- a scrutiny was made of a sample of pupils' work from each year group as well as work in the classrooms and on display around the school.

After the inspection:

- meetings were held with the headteacher, the staff and the governing body to provide oral feedback on the inspection findings.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspector	Type	Subject Responsibilities	Aspect Responsibilities
Mrs M E Evans	Registered Inspector	mathematics; science; Welsh second language; geography; music; art; physical education.	main findings; standards of achievement; standards in key skills; quality of teaching; curriculum; SEN; quality of self-evaluation; leadership and efficiency; progress since the last inspection; key issues for action.
Mrs J Marsden	Team Inspector	under-fives; English; design and technology; information technology; history; religious education.	pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; assessment, recording and reporting; support, guidance and pupils' welfare; staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Mr C Brentnall	Lay Inspector		attendance; behaviour and attitudes; partnership with parents and the community; partnership with industry.

SUMMARY REPORT FOR PARENTS

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

**CWMCLYDACH INFANTS SCHOOL
WERN STREET
CLYDACH VALE
TONYPANDY
RHONDDA CYNON TAFF
CF40 2BQ**

School Number: 674/2088

Date of Inspection: 28-29 June 2004

By

Mrs M E Evans
Registered Inspector W202/78828

Under Estyn contract number: T/278/03P

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Cwmclydach Infants School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose is to identify strengths and weaknesses in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents more information about their children's schools. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of Cwmclydach Infants School took place between 28-30 June 2004. It was undertaken by an independent team of three inspectors, led by Mrs M E Evans. The inspection was commissioned by Estyn, a department of central government.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the efficiency with which financial resources were used and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Cwmclydach Infants School is a local authority maintained school which serves the village of Clydach Vale in the Rhondda valley. The school caters for pupils aged from three to seven. Children are admitted to the nursery class soon after their third birthday on a part-time basis for the first few weeks, then full-time thereafter. The numbers of pupils on roll over the last three years have steadily declined and there is frequent movement of families to and from the area. There are 105 pupils on roll, including the 33 full-time nursery children. All pupils are from English speaking homes and Welsh is taught as a second language. The school's mission statement is: 'Each and every child is unique. We need to find a little bit of success for everyone of them'. The school aims 'to provide a stimulating environment in which pupils are nurtured emotionally and challenged intellectually in order to achieve their full potential'.

The school considers its catchment area to be economically disadvantaged; 42 per cent of the pupils are registered as being entitled to receive free school meals which is much higher than the national average of 19 per cent. The nature of the intake comprises mainly disadvantaged groups and includes many less able and a few able pupils. There are 28 pupils (27 per cent) on the school's Special Education Needs (SEN) register; there are no pupils with a statement of SEN. Baseline assessments are undertaken on entry to the nursery class and results indicate a below average attainment for many children.

The school was last inspected in 1998 and produced a post-inspection action plan to improve curriculum provision and pupils' standards of achievement. Some of the targets in the current School Development Plan (SDP) have been met. The focus for 2003-2005 will be to:

- raise pupils' standards of achievement in literacy, numeracy, science and information and communications technology (ICT);
- review and monitor the performance management process;
- continue to use a supportive monitoring system to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise pupils' standards of achievement;
- monitor the effectiveness of the key skills plan in order to raise standards of pupils' key skills across the curriculum;
- continue to develop Adult Carer skills in supporting 'Child Development and Learning' in school and at home;
- develop the Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) programme by taking part in the local schools cluster project.

The school's analysis of its National Curriculum (NC) Assessment results and comparative data is the basis for target setting to improve standards.

The Basic Skills Agency 'Quality Mark' was awarded to the school in September 2003.

The main findings of the report

Cwmclydach Infants School is a good school with high expectations of pupils' standards of achievement and behaviour. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection despite staffing problems and changes in the socio-economic nature of the school intake. The headteacher provides efficient, caring leadership and is well supported by the staff who work well together as an effective team.

Educational standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

- Pupils' standards of achievement were very good in 23 per cent of the 31 lessons observed, good in 68 per cent and satisfactory in nine per cent.
- The educational standards achieved by children under five are very good overall and they make very good progress from a low baseline on entry to the nursery. The overall quality of the educational provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and they make very good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- Standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

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

- Pupils' standards of achievement in the NC subjects and religious education in KS1 are as follows:

English	Good
Mathematics	Good
Science	Good
Welsh second language	Good
Design and technology	Good
Information technology	Good
History	Very good
Geography	Good
Art	Very good
Music	Good
Physical education	Good
Religious education	Good

- Standards are good overall in English. Pupils achieve good standards in speaking and listening skills which they use well in a variety of situations. They achieve good standards in reading and very good standards in writing, particularly in independent, extended writing.
- Standards are good in mathematics. Pupils make good progress in developing competence in numeracy skills and understanding of mathematical concepts. In science, standards are good and pupils make good progress in developing scientific enquiry and investigative skills in a range of practical activities.

- The school's 2004 NC assessment results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are in line with the national results for 2003 with 79 per cent of pupils achieving at least level 2.
- When compared with other schools locally and nationally, where up to 48 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, the NC results are closer to the upper quartile (25 per cent of best performing schools). Boys achieved higher standards than girls.
- Children under five make very good progress in developing key skills and achieve high standards by the age of five. In KS1, standards achieved in literacy skills across the subjects are good overall. Pupils achieve good standards in speaking and listening skills which they use confidently and effectively in all areas of the curriculum. Their reading skills are good and pupils read a range of text with accuracy and understanding. Their writing skills are very well developed especially in the use of extended writing across the curriculum, for example, in subjects such as history and science. The use of numeracy skills in different subjects is good especially in problem solving tasks. Their use of a range of ICT skills for different purposes, in order to support learning across the curriculum, is good.

Ethos of the school

- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and pupils respond well to this area. They achieve high standards in their social development and understand the expectations of the school for good behaviour and positive attitudes. They appreciate the culture and heritage of Wales as well as other cultural traditions, although pupils' knowledge of other cultures is less well developed.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good and have a positive impact on standards achieved. The school has effective arrangements for promoting good behaviour and social development.
- Levels of attendance are satisfactory; there are good procedures in place to monitor and follow up absences and the school is gradually improving rates of attendance by setting realistic targets. Registration is not taken promptly at the start of the morning session and unauthorised absences are not always recorded where more than the recommended ten days of holiday are taken during term time; the school therefore does not comply with the requirements of the National Assembly of Wales (NAW) Circular 3/99. Punctuality at the start of the school day is satisfactory, although there are a minority of pupils who arrive late.

Quality of education

- The quality of teaching was very good in 19 per cent of lessons observed, good in 65 per cent and satisfactory in 16 per cent. The quality of lesson planning is good and identifies clear learning objectives and specific key skills to be taught. Lessons are well organised and work is appropriately planned to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is very good overall. Teachers have a thorough understanding of assessment procedures and quickly identify pupils' needs. There are very good arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' achievements and progress. The quality of written reports for parents is good; they provide useful information on pupils' progress and are appreciated by parents.

- Curriculum provision is good and ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The quality of the curriculum for children under five is good and succeeds in promoting the Desirable Outcomes in all areas of learning. In KS1, the schemes of work in each subject are effective in providing for progression and continuity in pupils' learning. The quality of whole school planning for the teaching of key skills is good and succeeds in promoting the skills across the curriculum. There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities including gymnastics, dance and team games.
- The quality of educational support and personal guidance for pupils' welfare is very good. The school ensures that all pupils are equally valued and treated with respect and understanding. Their needs and progress are carefully monitored and their personal and social development is well promoted through the life of the school. There are very good procedures for promoting equality and the well-being, health and safety of pupils.
- The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good and complies with the SEN Code of Practice. Pupils receive good support and make steady progress in their learning towards the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs); they achieve good standards according to their level of ability. They respond well to work set for them as individuals and in groups and benefit from support from the SEN teacher.
- Partnerships between the school and parents, the community, schools and other institutions are good. Parents are well informed about the activities of the school. People in the community are proud of the school and contribute significantly to curriculum development and to the enjoyment of pupils' learning and personal development.
- The school's partnership with industry is good and has a beneficial impact on pupils' standards of achievement through staff training and school-based projects.

Management

- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good. There are effective procedures for evaluating pupils' standards of achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. The school carefully monitors the progress made towards achieving targets.
- The quality of leadership and management of the school is very good. There are clear aims and policies, including a commitment to equality of opportunity for all, which promote a caring ethos and high standards. The headteacher provides efficient, caring leadership and ensures a clear sense of purpose and direction for the school. Despite staffing problems and the prolonged absence of teachers, the school has continued to function smoothly.
- The governing body is supportive of the school and is well informed through the headteacher's regular reports. The governors are fully involved in the work of the school through their formal curricular links with subject co-ordinators in order to monitor provision and standards of achievement.
- Resources are managed efficiently and budget planning reinforces the aims of the school, ensuring good value for money. There is, however, a budget overspend of £10,000 but the Local Education Authority (LEA) is supporting the school's financial plan to reduce the deficit. The school's monitoring and self-evaluation procedures are effective in identifying areas for development and training needs of staff. Targets for improvement are set and are incorporated into the SDP which is

a useful working document for prioritising areas for improvement over a three year period.

- The overall provision for staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good and has a beneficial impact on pupils' standards of achievement. Pupils are well supported by qualified and experienced staff who are effectively deployed. The provision and quality of resources are good and staff and pupils make effective use of all available books, materials and equipment.
- The school has spacious accommodation for the number of pupils on roll. Good use is made of all available space to provide an attractive working environment for pupils. The quality of the inside accommodation is mainly good although there are some patches of damp and peeling paint. Classrooms and shared areas are enhanced by good quality displays, some of which are interactive and support pupils' learning.
- Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress and has met the targets set in the action plan, which addresses the key issues from the previous inspection report. These include:-
 - maintaining the current good standards;
 - addressing the shortcomings in subjects and areas of learning by disseminating good practice;
 - extending the system of monitoring to include curriculum leaders so that there is a clearer focus on standards;
 - improving pupils' punctuality by ensuring a prompt start to morning and afternoon sessions.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to build on the good standards achieved by the pupils and to improve aspects of provision, the school needs to:-

- improve standards of achievement in subjects and areas of learning where there are shortcomings;
- continue to improve rates of attendance and comply with the requirements of the NAW Circular 3/99 by:
 - a) ensuring that attendance registers are taken promptly at the start of the morning session;
 - b) ensuring that unauthorised absences are recorded in the registers appropriately.

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 working days (or 45 working days where a translation is necessary) of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the issues. This action plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

Acknowledgement

The registered inspector and team wish to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy before and during the inspection.