

**REPORT**

**on the**

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

**Garnfach Infant School  
Nantyglo  
Blaenau Gwent  
NP23 4LL**

School Number: 677/2193

Date of Inspection: 3rd – 5th November 2003

**By**

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Under Estyn contract number: T/05/03P

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## **CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES**

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

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

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

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

## **GRADE DESCRIPTIONS**

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

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

# CONTENTS

|  | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>1. CONTEXT</b>  |             |
| The school and its priorities  | 1           |
| <b>2. MAIN FINDINGS</b>  |             |
| The main findings of the report  | 1           |
| <b>3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>                         |             |
| 3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning                   | 5           |
| 3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum                 | 7           |
| <b>4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL</b>  |             |
| 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development              | 7           |
| 4.2 Behaviour and attitudes  | 8           |
| 4.3 Attendance   | 9           |
| <b>5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION</b>   |             |
| 5.1 Teaching   | 9           |
| 5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting                                    | 11          |
| 5.3 Curriculum   | 11          |
| 5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare                                  | 13          |
| 5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)              | 13          |
| 5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions | 14          |
| 5.7 Partnership with industry  | 15          |
| <b>6. MANAGEMENT</b>   |             |
| 6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement                | 15          |
| 6.2 Leadership and efficiency  | 16          |
| 6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources                         | 17          |

## **7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Provision for the under-fives | 18 |
| English                       | 22 |
| Mathematics                   | 23 |
| Science                       | 23 |
| Welsh second language         | 24 |
| Design and technology         | 25 |
| Information technology        | 25 |
| History                       | 26 |
| Geography                     | 26 |
| Art                           | 27 |
| Music                         | 27 |
| Physical education            | 28 |
| Religious education           | 28 |

## **8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

|     |                                    |    |
|-----|------------------------------------|----|
| 8.1 | Progress since the last inspection | 29 |
| 8.2 | Key issues for action              | 30 |

## **APPENDIX**

|    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| A. | Basic information about the school                                 | 31 |
| B. | School data and indicators   | 31 |
| C. | Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations | 32 |
| D. | The evidence base of the inspection                                | 32 |
| E. | Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team            | 33 |

## **1. CONTEXT**

### **The school and its priorities**

Garnfach Infant school is a community school situated in the centre of Nantyglo. It serves a mixture of mainly rented and some owner-occupier homes. The school describes the area as economically disadvantaged. The majority of pupils come from the immediate area. Many families have been associated with the school for three or four generations.

The school was built well over 100 years ago. It has been remodelled and extended many times over the years. It has been an infant school for nearly 30 years. Parents and the community are currently being consulted about proposals to amalgamate the school with the nearby Coedcae Junior school. There are currently 136 pupils on roll, aged between 3 and 7 years. This includes 29 children who attend the nursery, 19 on a part-time basis. In the spring and summer terms, the nursery provides places for children who have just turned three. The school roll fluctuates from year to year but is broadly similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection. Currently, just over half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. This proportion is significantly above the average for schools both in Blaenau Gwent and all Wales.

English is the predominant language for all pupils. Five per cent come from traveller families. There are 23 pupils (16 per cent of the school's population) on the school's register of Special Educational Need (SEN). This is broadly similar to that found in the majority of primary schools. Three pupils have statements outlining their special educational needs. The school reports that the proportion with SEN has increased since the time of the last inspection.

The School Development Plan (SDP) details the areas for development for this school year. These include plans to:

- improve the provision for oracy;
- introduce a new model for school self-evaluation;
- improve the provision in Early Years;
- adapt the local education authority's scheme of work for mathematics to better meet the needs of children in the school;
- maintain and improve community links, especially during the consultations over amalgamation.

The school was last inspected in November 1998.

## **2. MAIN FINDINGS**

### **The main findings of the report**

This is a good school with a very strong ethos. Children are well motivated and make good progress, whatever their ability level.

- Standards of pupils' achievement were good in 67 per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection. They were satisfactory in 33 per cent of lessons observed. Pupils make good progress both in lessons and over time.
- The educational provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning (DLOs). Many children enter the nursery with limited skills, particularly in language and number. As they move through the nursery and reception classes, they make good progress and the majority achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year (Y)1.
- Standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

| <b>Area of learning</b>                     | <b>Nursery</b> | <b>Reception</b> |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Language, literacy and communication skills | Good           | Good             |
| Personal and Social Development             | Very good      | Good             |
| Mathematical Development                    | Good           | Good             |
| Knowledge and Understanding of the World    | Good           | Good             |
| Physical Development                        | Good           | Satisfactory     |
| Creative Development                        | Good           | Good             |

- Standards achieved by pupils in Key Stage (KS)1 are good. Standards in National Curriculum (NC) subjects and religious education are as follows:

| <b>Subject</b>         | <b>KS1 (Y1 and Y2)</b> |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| English                | Good                   |
| Mathematics            | Good                   |
| Science                | Good                   |
| Welsh second language  | Good                   |
| Design and technology  | Satisfactory           |
| Information technology | Good                   |
| History                | Good                   |
| Geography              | Good                   |
| Art                    | Good                   |
| Music                  | Satisfactory           |
| Physical education     | Satisfactory           |
| Religious education    | Good                   |

- The school's KS1 National Curriculum Assessment (NCA) results for 2003 indicate a continued improvement in the standards achieved by pupils. Teacher assessments conducted in May 2003 show that all 100 per cent of Y2 pupils achieved Level 2 or above in science and 94 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above in mathematics. In reading, 88 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above, and 89 per cent achieved Level 2 or above in writing. In speaking and listening, 94 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above.
- Compared with all Key Stage 1 schools in Wales these results are in the upper quartile (the top 25 per cent) in science and above the median in mathematics and English. Compared with both similar schools in Wales and all English medium schools in Wales (on the basis of free school meal eligibility), results in English, mathematics and science

are above the upper quartile in each category. In comparison with other schools in Blaenau Gwent, the school's results are in the top band. Compared with the latest national results (2003), the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In speaking and listening, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 was below average; standards in listening are better than those in speaking.

- The KS1 core subject indicator for 2003 (that is, the percentage of Y2 pupils attaining at least Level 2 in English, mathematics and science in combination) was 88 per cent. This compares with an average of 79 per cent in all schools nationally, 62% in similar schools (on the basis of free school meal entitlement) and 69 per cent in Blaenau Gwent schools.
- Standards achieved by pupils in using the key skills of listening, reading, writing, numeracy and using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) across the curriculum are good. Although broadly satisfactory, standards in speaking across the curriculum are not high enough. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop and improve their skills through, for example, drama and role-play.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The provision for their spiritual and cultural development is good. The school provides good coverage of the culture of Wales. Regular out-of-school visits, and opportunities to work with visitors to the school, significantly foster the development of pupils' social skills and cultural skills. Pupils enjoy coming to school and benefit from the school's warm and friendly atmosphere. There is a strong community spirit and the quality of relationships is very good.
- Standards of behaviour and the attitudes of pupils in the classroom and around the school are strengths of the school, and have a positive effect on the quality of life, and levels of achievement in the school. Pupils sustain their concentration well.
- Attendance levels and pupils' punctuality are satisfactory. The whole school attendance averaged 90 per cent for the three terms before the inspection, with minimal unauthorised absence. Sickness and holidays during term time are the main causes for absence. The attendance of pupils from traveller families is satisfactory.
- The quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, teaching was very good in 10 per cent of lessons, good in 70 per cent and satisfactory in 20 per cent of the 30 lessons observed. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The key to the rising standards achieved by pupils is the way in which teachers use assessment information and support staff to plan work that meets all pupils' needs.
- Teaching in the under-fives classes is predominantly good. Activities are carefully planned and well organised. Support staff are fully involved in helping children to learn. In KS1, teaching is consistently good. Teachers tailor lessons well to pupils' learning needs. Staff provide a high level of support for pupils who learn at different rates. The needs of slower and faster learners alike are well met. Staff and pupils get on well together and pupils try hard to do their best.
- The school's arrangements for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' progress are a model of very good practice. Staff are implementing an efficient, effective and manageable system that is clearly linked to improving standards. Teachers regularly mark

their pupils' work, indicating how to improve the content. Pupils talk confidently about their work and demonstrate a good understanding of what they need to do to improve.

- The school provides a good curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of its pupils. The school meets statutory requirements and teaches religious education in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The school's promotion of Welsh culture, language and heritage is good. The school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities.
- The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. Effective monitoring of activities ensures that all children experience a full range of activities over time. Some teaching sessions are too long; there are some missed opportunities for pupils to learn to work independently and develop their investigative and inquiry skills. In Y2, teaching time is well used to help pupils develop their writing skills.
- The school provides a very caring and supportive environment where pupils feel happy, secure and valued. The provision for the care and welfare of children under five is very good. Staff give high priority to children's personal development. Throughout the school, staff ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of the life and work of the school. Although the building is on different levels, there is suitable provision for pupils who use wheelchairs.
- Staff know their pupils very well and monitor their academic progress, social development and personal well being very carefully. Pupils are well supervised and cared for at break and lunch times. Pupils say they are happy to turn to adults for help and that they are well looked after.
- The provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is very good. A particular strength of the school's provision is its early identification of, and response to, concerns. All pupils with SEN have access to the full range of classroom experiences and they achieve good standards. They make good progress towards the targets set in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Pupils from traveller families make similar progress to others. More able pupils make good progress.
- The school's partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions is good. The school is proud of its links with the community, and the community is justifiably proud of the school. Children enjoy meeting a variety of visitors from the local area. Close links have developed over the years between the infant school and Coedcae Junior School. Staff from both schools are in touch with each other regularly.
- The school's partnership with industry is good. It has established appropriate links with commercial concerns. Talks and demonstrations given by visitors significantly broaden children's understanding of the world of work. The school benefits materially from its links with industry.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement are good. The headteacher has accurately identified the main areas of improvement for school improvement. The school development plan (SDP) is detailed and provides a very good foundation for future progress. The school effectively reviews assessment data and sets itself challenging, yet realistic targets.

- The leadership and efficiency of the school are good. The acting headteacher leads the school well. She fosters a very successful team spirit within the school. All members of staff are valued for their personal, as well as corporate, contribution, to the work of the school. The strong ethos of the school successfully reflects its aims and values. The school is socially inclusive. Well led, governors fulfil their role as the school's critical friend robustly. The governing body is committed to maintaining and further raising standards in the school. The school meets all statutory requirements.
- Day-to-day management is good. The administrative routines are well-established and suitable systems in place. The curriculum co-ordinators lead their areas of responsibility well. A strength of the school is the way in which staff work so well with each other. The school evaluates the impact of its major spending decisions. The acting headteacher is assiduous in her pursuit of any available grants or financial support. The ratio of adults to children is particularly beneficial to learning. The school makes good efforts to maintain the building and grounds.
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall. All teaching staff are appropriately qualified to teach the NC and religious education. They are very well supported by the support staff, who contribute in a caring manner to pupils' learning and well being, and have a positive impact on the life of the school.
- This is a very old school building and staff have worked hard to produce a creatively rich and stimulating environment for pupils. The cleaners and caretaker keep the accommodation clean and well maintained. Learning resources are good. They are well deployed to support and enrich the quality of teaching and learning. There is a suitable outside area adjacent to the nursery. Access to an outside area for children in the reception classes is limited; this impedes children's progress in their physical development, particularly for those with co-ordination difficulties.
- The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in 1998, not only in response to the key issues but also in raising the standards achieved by pupils. The school acknowledges that there is scope to develop further opportunities for pupils to work independently and conduct investigative work.

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

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

Standards achieved are good.

- Standards of pupils' achievement were good in 67 per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection. They were satisfactory in 33 per cent of lessons observed.
- Many children enter the nursery with limited skills, particularly in language and number. As they move through the nursery and reception classes, they make good progress. Standards are good in the nursery and reception classes in language, literacy and communication skills; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Personal and social development is very good in the nursery and good in the reception classes. Physical development is good in the nursery

and satisfactory in the reception classes. The majority of children achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all areas of learning by the time they enter Y1.

- Standards are good in KS1 in English, mathematics, science, Welsh second language, art, geography, history and information technology. They are satisfactory in design and technology, music and physical education. Standards in religious education are good. Pupils make good progress both in lessons and over time.
- The school's KS1 NCA results for 2003 indicate a continued improvement in the standards achieved by pupils. Teacher assessments conducted in May 2003 show that 100 per cent of Y2 pupils achieved Level 2 or above in science and 94 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above in mathematics. In reading, 88 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above, and 89 per cent achieved Level 2 or above in writing. In speaking and listening, 94 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above.
- Compared with all KS1 schools in Wales these results are in the upper quartile (the top 25 per cent) in science and above the median in mathematics and English. Compared with both similar schools in Wales and all English medium schools in Wales (on the basis of free school meal eligibility), results in English, mathematics and science are above the upper quartile in each category. In comparison with other schools in Blaenau Gwent, the school's results are in the top band.
- Compared with the latest national results (2003), the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In speaking and listening, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 was below average; standards in listening are better than those in speaking.
- The KS1 core subject indicator for 2003 (that is, the percentage of Y2 pupils attaining at least Level 2 in English, mathematics and science in combination) was 88 per cent. This compares with an average of 79 per cent in all schools nationally, 62% in similar schools (on the basis of free school meal entitlement) and 69 per cent in Blaenau Gwent schools.
- In Y1, pupils are grouped by ability for literacy and numeracy. This helps pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Pupils make consistent progress as they move through the Early Years and KS1 classes.
- There are no significant differences in the standards achieved, or the progress made, between boys and girls. The school's very thorough assessment procedures ensure the early identification of, and attention to, individual children's needs
- Pupils with SEN make good progress towards the targets set in their IEPs. Good quality support from staff helps pupils to take a full part in lessons and they achieve good standards. Teachers plan consistently to meet the needs of individual pupils. Where it is likely to be beneficial, groups of pupils are withdrawn from class lessons for additional help. They do not miss out on what others are doing because their work is carefully planned and organised alongside the rest of the class.
- Pupils from traveller families make similar progress to others. The school recognises that some pupils have particular strengths and skills in some subject areas. It makes good provision for these pupils' learning together with their social and emotional development.

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

The standards achieved in using the key skills of listening, reading, writing, numeracy and using ICT across the curriculum are good. Standards in speaking across the curriculum, although broadly satisfactory, are not high enough.

- Children under five make good progress overall in the development of key skills. Children in the nursery make good progress in all key skills, often from a low starting point. Although children have regular opportunities for role-play in the reception classes, this is more often an independent activity rather than one that is supervised and developed by staff.
- Children confidently work on appropriate computer programs by using the mouse and the keyboard. They operate the listening station (tape player) and compact disc player by themselves.
- Pupils in KS1 listen well to their teachers, to other adults and to their peers. Although most pupils respond well to direct questions, many find difficulty in speaking at length or drawing on a sufficiently wide vocabulary when asked to expand and develop their ideas. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop and improve their skills through drama and role-play. Arrangements are currently in hand to increase the provision in this area.
- Pupils' reading skills are well developed and older pupils make increasing use of texts to extend their learning across subjects. Pupils develop their writing to good effect in several subjects. Older pupils adapt their style of writing to suit different contexts.
- Pupils have good mental agility in numeracy and use these skills well in geography, for example, when making a simple model of a classroom. Y1 pupils use a simple data base program to enter information on weather, and display the results.
- Pupils develop a basic range of ICT skills, and Y2 pupils operate several programs with confidence. They begin to discover the flexibility and facilities of ICT by successfully investigating different methods of presenting data, graphics and text.
- Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in investigative and independent work across the curriculum. Standards have risen since the last inspection but the school is keen to improve these further.

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

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

The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and that for their moral and social development is very good. The effective provision in all four areas makes a significant contribution to all aspects of school life.

- The school's friendly ethos of care and the staff's high expectations for pupils' personal development strongly reflect its positive values and beliefs, set out in the school's aims

*Learning to Live* and the motto *Proudly Moving Forward Together*. Children in the nursery and reception classes play a full part in the life and work of the school. They join in assemblies on a regular basis.

- Daily assemblies include a meaningful act of collective worship. Pupils develop greater understanding of their own and other people's lives and the impact their actions have on others; they gain insights to religious belief and commitment. During these services, prayers and poems, written by the pupils, are regularly used. Pupils regularly sing hymns in Welsh and English. The local clergy visit regularly, and pupils frequently attend services in the local churches.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and benefit from the school's warm and friendly atmosphere. There is a strong community spirit and the quality of relationships is very good. The staff provide very good role models and the pupils are effectively encouraged to be thoughtful and supportive towards each other. The generous contributions to charitable organisations demonstrate pupils' concern for those less fortunate than themselves.
- Class rules, written by the pupils, are on display in each classroom. In the nursery and reception classes, children regularly discuss moral and social issues that affect them. In the nursery, the care of the environment is a popular theme. When given suitable opportunities to show initiative and collaborate during lessons, pupils respond well.
- The school provides good coverage of the culture of Wales. Pupils sing Welsh folk songs and there is a Welsh dance club. Pupils listen to music from across the world during assembly. Planned visits include opportunities across several subjects to raise pupils' awareness that we live in a multicultural society. The school makes good efforts to develop pupils' awareness of day-to-day rituals and customs in the family life of children from different faith groups.
- Extra-curricular activities enhance the school's provision for pupils' development. Regular out-of-school visits, and opportunities to work with visitors to the school, significantly foster the development of pupils' social skills and cultural skills.
- Pupils respond well to the school's provision for their personal development. Their good attitudes and behaviour, and in their growing understanding of their place in the world, successfully reflects this.

## **4.2 Behaviour and attitudes**

The school is an orderly community, standards of behaviour are good, and pupils' attitudes to learning are also good.

- Standards of behaviour and the attitudes of pupils in the classroom and around the school are strengths of the school, and have a positive effect on the quality of life, and levels of achievement in the school.

- Children set their own standards of behaviour and draw up classroom rules as guides to good behaviour. The school council, made up of representatives of each class, is also active in drawing up rules to re-enforce positive behaviour.
- Children throughout the school are polite and considerate in classrooms, on the playground, at assembly and at lunch, and while moving around the school. They show consideration towards one another, and are respectful and courteous to teachers and visitors. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are few, and staff deal with these quietly and firmly.
- Throughout the school children show positive attitudes to learning and sustain concentration over sometimes lengthy classroom sessions. They are keen and committed, and enjoy learning.

### **4.3 Attendance**

Attendance levels and pupils' punctuality are satisfactory.

- The whole school attendance averaged 90 per cent for the three terms before the inspection, with minimal unauthorised absence. Sickness and holidays during term time are the main causes for absence. The attendance of pupils from traveller families is satisfactory.
- Teachers complete registers promptly and correctly at the beginning of each session allowing lessons to begin on time. The school complies fully with statutory requirements. Administrative staff review the registers daily, and immediately follow up any unexplained absence or lateness. Information from the registers is inputted weekly onto an electronic database, from which is produced statistical data for review and analysis. However, there is some unnecessary duplication in the collection and analysis of attendance information.
- Most parents co-operate by promptly notifying the school of reasons for their child's absence. The school recognises and rewards those children whose attendance records are good. With a few exceptions, children arrive in school on time, allowing morning and afternoon sessions to begin promptly.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

The quality of teaching is good.

- During the inspection, teaching was very good in 10 per cent of lessons, good in 70 per cent and satisfactory in 20 per cent of the 30 lessons observed. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. A strength of teaching in the school is the way in which teachers use assessment information and support staff to plan work that meets the needs of all pupils.

- Teaching in the under-fives classes is predominantly good. In the lessons seen during the inspection in these classes, teaching was very good in six per cent of lessons, good in 59 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in the remainder. Activities are carefully planned and well organised. Support staff are fully involved in helping children to learn.
- In KS1, teaching is consistently good. It was very good in 15 per cent of lessons and good in 85 per cent of the lessons observed during the inspection. Teachers tailor lessons well to pupils' learning needs and staff provide a high level of support for pupils who learn at different rates. The needs of slower and faster learners alike are well met. Staff and pupils get on well together, and pupils try hard to do their best.
- In the best lessons, teachers skilfully capture pupils' interest and attention, and successfully address their learning needs through a good range of engaging and purposeful learning activities. The pace of these lessons is brisk, time is well used and pupils' learning builds well on their earlier work and experiences.
- Staff manage children well and encourage their pupils to develop good working habits. Expectations of behaviour are very high and consistently applied. In the nursery and reception classes, staff give high priority to the development of personal and social skills. Staff expectations of what pupils can achieve are also very good. Teaching and support staff work very closely together. Support staff are highly skilled and make a valuable contribution to pupils' successful learning.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of what they teach are good, and they use a good range of teaching techniques and strategies to match work closely to the needs and abilities of their pupils. The school's very good assessment procedures enable staff to have an accurate and informed understanding of what pupils know and can do. Teachers clearly identify what they expect specific groups of pupils to achieve in lessons. Learning objectives in lesson plans relate well to NC requirements, and progression in learning is very good. Opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills as part of their everyday learning are good.
- Teachers' planning has many very good features but teaching time is not always used to the best advantage. Most lessons proceed at a good pace but some are too long, particularly in the reception classes. Although most pupils maintain their concentration well for such periods, the quality of learning starts to tail off towards the end of these sessions. The use of longer sessions for writing in Y2 is good practice and is helping pupils to achieve good standards.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are usually taught within the class but there is some purposeful one-to-one and small group provision made outside the class for pupils with particular needs. Staff are well prepared and focus carefully on individual pupil's learning needs. The school also recognises that more able pupils may have particular learning needs. Staff successfully adapt work to cater for their needs.
- Teachers use lesson introductions well to outline the work planned and develop ideas. They carefully link activities to learning objectives. Staff use different types of questions successfully to check that pupils have understood instructions and to find out what they know and can do. In the best lessons, teachers actively encourage pupils to think about what they are doing and give them well-planned opportunities to work independently.

In discussions at the end of lessons (the plenary), teachers successfully re-iterate the main points in pupils' learning, and highlight the next steps in learning.

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

The arrangements for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' progress are very good. This is a model of very good practice.

- The school's assessment policy provides clear, concise guidelines for a variety of procedures that are closely linked to curricular planning. Staff are implementing an efficient, effective and manageable system that is clearly linked to improving standards.
- The accuracy and consistency of assessment are very good. Marking follows the guidelines of the policy and is consistent and accurate. The teachers regularly mark their pupils' work indicating how they can improve the content. Pupils talk confidently about their work and demonstrate a good understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Regular meetings are held with parents. During the first term, targets are reviewed; during the second term, progress is evaluated and at the end of the third term, pupils' written reports are reviewed. The quality of the annual written reports provided for parents is good. These provide clear judgements on pupils' achievement and give a good indication of how pupils can improve their work. Parents are invited to add their comments.
- Good use is made of the information gained from an accredited baseline scheme at the age of five to plan appropriate work for pupils in Y1. The older pupils are assessed thoroughly using standard assessment procedures. Staff make very good use of the data to form teaching groups and promote higher standards.
- There is a very good system for recording pupils' progress, which is used fully to set targets for individual improvement as well as informing the teaching and learning. Teachers demonstrate good understanding of NC levels. They regularly compare and moderate their assessments of pupils' work. Subject co-ordinators have developed collections of assessed work and photographic evidence in all subjects. These are very useful for all staff.
- Regular, planned non-contact time is made available for staff to formally assess, monitor and record pupils' work in English, mathematics and science each term and set appropriate targets based on this information. Regular assessment procedures in the foundation subjects are effectively linked to the curriculum plans.
- Teachers' weekly plans include a section on assessment and an evaluation of the work undertaken. This is successfully used to inform future planning. Pupils are clear about their individual targets.

## **5.3 Curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of its pupils.

- The school provides a good curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes. It is relevant to the children's ages and needs, and promotes good progress in all six areas of learning leading to the Desirable Learning Outcomes under five. Effective monitoring of activities ensures that all children experience a full range of activities over time.
- The curriculum in KS1 meets with statutory requirements. It includes all the prescribed subjects of the NC and religious education, which is taught in accordance with the requirements of the Blaenau Gwent locally agreed syllabus. The school's curriculum successfully reflects the aims of the school and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development very well.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. Staff make good provision for developing pupils' awareness of sustainability and the importance of recycling; pupils understand why they use a peat-free compost when growing seed and plants.
- The school's promotion of Welsh culture, language and heritage is good. Prominence is given to the use of Welsh in displays, both in classrooms and around the school. *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* features strongly in history, geography, music and art. A weekly Welsh dance club takes place after school. Staff effectively promote pupils' awareness of cultural diversity in discussions, and through visits and visitors.
- The school's comprehensive schemes of work fully reflect the requirements of the Wales Curriculum 2000. It is successfully adapting the literacy and numeracy strategies to the needs of pupils in the school. In the last academic year, no pupil was disapplied from any part of the NC. The school makes very good provision for pupils for whom the NC is modified.
- The amount of teaching time meets the recommendations of the National Assembly for Wales (NAFW). However, the school has not reviewed the length of teaching sessions within the school day since it introduced the literacy and numeracy strategies. However, some sessions are too long; there are some missed opportunities for pupils to learn to work independently and develop their investigative and inquiry skills. In Y2, teaching time is flexibly used to help pupils develop their writing skills. This is good and effective practice.
- Teachers' short-term planning builds well on medium and long-term plans and identifies clear learning objectives. There is good provision for pupils who learn at different rates in both the core and foundation subjects. Planning for the development of key skills across the curriculum is good. The school has rightly identified that it needs to give greater focus to developing pupils' speaking skills in English and across the curriculum.
- The school successfully provides all its pupils with full equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum. Boys and girls have equal access to all activities. The provision for pupils from traveller families is good. Staff provide valuable help and support for those pupils who have particular behavioural or learning needs, including those identified as more able.
- Educational visits and visitors enhance the curriculum well. Representatives of the police and fire brigade help develop pupils' understanding of *People who help us*. Visits to the seaside, the Brecon Canal and a farm park serve to broaden pupils' appreciation of

contrasting areas. The school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular sporting and musical activities.

- The school has an agreed homework policy and parents support this well through the home/school agreement. Reading activities are regular features of homework and older pupils learn spellings at home in preparation for their weekly test. Homework in history and geography aims to help pupils improve their research skills. Each term there is a whole school topic in personal and social education for which pupils undertake work at home.

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

The school provides a very caring and supportive environment where pupils feel happy, secure and valued.

- The provision for the care and welfare of children under five is very good. Staff give high priority to children's personal development. Throughout the school, staff ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of its life and work. The school conforms with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good. Staff know their pupils very well and monitor their academic progress, social development and personal well being very carefully. Pupils are well supervised and cared for at break and lunch times. Pupils say they are happy to turn to adults for help and that they are well looked after if they fall over or are feeling poorly.
- The school's very good personal, health and social education programme includes health, hygiene, sex education and drug awareness. Strong links with local health centres, fire brigade and police contribute well to its provision.
- The acting headteacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for dealing with child protection issues. Procedures are very good and known by staff. There are sufficient, trained first-aiders, and appropriate resources available to deal with minor accidents.
- No major health and safety risks were identified in the school during the inspection week. Governors undertake regular risk assessments of the school building and site. Staff make risk assessments for visits outside school.

#### **5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)**

The provision for pupils with SEN is very good. They make good progress in relation to the targets set in their IEPs and achieve good standards.

- There are 23 pupils on the special needs register. This is broadly similar to that found in the majority of primary schools. There are 10 at the School Action stage and a further 10 at the School Action plus stages. Three pupils have statements of SEN.
- A particular strength of the school's provision is its early identification of needs. In the nursery, staff discuss these with parents and carers, and seek expert advice, often

informally to begin with. As a result, children's needs are promptly and effectively addressed. In a number of instances, this prompt intervention means that children do not have to be placed on the register at a later date. Regular reviews ensure that children move up, down and off the register as appropriate.

- The school has revised its SEN policy to meet the latest requirements of the National Assembly for Wales. All pupils with SEN have access to the full range of classroom experiences. Although the building is on different levels, the school makes suitable provision for pupils who use wheelchairs.
- Throughout the school, pupils with SEN make good, and often very good, progress towards the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). Targets are clear and have dates for review. Staff successfully identify the small steps in learning required to help pupils succeed. Pupils with statements of SEN are well supported with work specifically tailored to their individual needs. Pupils are very supportive of each other and give their help readily.
- The acting headteacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). She advises colleagues and ensures that they follow the school's procedures. In her regular visits to classrooms, she monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the school's provision at first hand. Staff keep parents regularly informed of their child's progress and invite them to the school for review meetings. The school maintains close and effective contacts with external agencies.

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

The school's partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions is good.

- The school prospectus provides parents with much useful information. This is supplemented with regular newsletters and letters to parents. Notices posted at school entrances and the school web site also keep parents informed. There is a separate, informative handbook for parents with children in the nursery. Parents are pleased with the information school provides.
- Parents receive written annual reports on their children and have an opportunity to discuss these with teachers. Formal consultations with teachers and parents occur three times each year, and at other times by arrangement. Informal contact occurs daily before and after school.
- Whilst there is no formal parent/teacher association, parents are supportive and provide assistance with school activities. Fund raising events raise considerable sums, providing much useful additional revenue for school resources and equipment.
- The school is proud of its links with the community, and the community is justifiably proud of the school. Parents and the local community join pupils for Easter, Harvest and Christmas services at the parish church of St Anne's and at the nearby Methodist chapel. Members of the clergy visit the school and regularly take assembly.

- Children from the school have visited and entertained residents at a home for the elderly and the local hospital. The school supports various charities. Children are well aware there are people less fortunate than themselves.
- Children enjoy meeting a variety of visitors from the community. The police officer, fire fighters and road safety officers visit regularly and talk about their work in the community.
- Close links have developed over the years between the infant school and Coedcae Junior School. Staff from both schools are in touch with each other regularly. The arrangement for transferring from one to the other is well practised and ensures a smooth transition.
- The school provides training for nursery teachers, and work experience for secondary school students. It is also available for the training of student teachers.

## **5.7 Partnership with industry**

The school's partnership with industry is good.

- The school has established appropriate links with commercial concerns. Children visit local shops and the library. Recent visits further a field include Techniquet and the Welsh folk museum at St. Fagans.
- Children's understanding of the world of work is broadened significantly by occasional talks and demonstrations given by visiting speakers, such as a local councillor, policeman, road safety officer, fire fighters and health visitors. In discussion, children show a good understanding of the work of these visitors and the value of their jobs in the community.
- The school has benefited materially from its links with industry. A local company provides paper for the school.
- The school continues a programme of staff training in conjunction with the Education Business Partnership. Some teachers' development has benefited and been enriched through placements in a commercial concern.

# **6. MANAGEMENT**

## **6.1 Self-evaluation and planning for improvement**

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement are good. The headteacher has accurately identified the main areas of improvement for school improvement.

- The headteacher and staff meet regularly to discuss pupils' learning and the quality of teaching across the curriculum. Planning for whole school development is good. The headteacher and staff regularly review existing strategies and, when appropriate, make changes.

- Pupils are aware of improvements taking place in the school, such as the forthcoming installation of *Broadband* technology to help them make better use of their computers. The school is in a good position to build upon achievements and extend procedures for self-evaluation further.
- The SDP is detailed and provides a very good foundation for future progress. The school has set itself a good range of appropriate targets, which are reviewed regularly. Curriculum co-ordinators have carried out effective reviews of their subject areas and these are fully incorporated within the SDP.
- The school has very good procedures for evaluating the standards achieved by pupils. It effectively reviews assessment data and sets challenging, yet realistic targets. The school's self evaluation policy is a very effective document.
- Subject co-ordinators monitor their curriculum areas regularly and work closely with their colleagues. There is appropriate, planned non-contact time made available for staff for this purpose.

## 6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The leadership and efficiency of the school are good.

- The acting headteacher leads the school well. She fosters a very successful team spirit within the school. All members of staff are valued for their personal, as well as corporate, contribution, to the work of the school. Her philosophy of *business as usual* whilst discussions take place about the amalgamation of the school with the nearby Coedcae Junior School ensures that the education of pupils currently in the school remains the main priority for parents, staff and governors. She and the governors are working well with all the other parties involved in these discussions.
- The strong ethos of the school successfully reflects its aims and values. Staff know children well as individuals, and make every effort to ensure that the school is socially inclusive. Although the building is old, the learning environment is bright and welcoming. Standards are rising because of the rigorous attention given to the analysis and use of assessment information to improve teaching and learning.
- Day-to-day management is good. The administrative routines are well-established and suitable systems in place.
- All areas of the curriculum have a subject manager. The co-ordinators lead their areas of responsibility well. They advise colleagues, scrutinise planning and look at pupils' work. A strength of the school is the way in which staff work so well with each other.
- Members of the governing body are drawn from across the community. They contribute well to the development of the school's links and partnerships within the community. Well led, governors fulfil their role as the school's critical friend robustly. They keep a careful eye on the school's compliance with statutory requirements and their decisions are suitably recorded in the minutes of meetings.

- The governing body regularly receives information about curriculum developments, assessment information and target setting. The acting headteacher and individual members of staff also keep them well informed about other matters through written and oral reports. The school has a systematic programme in place for the review of policies and schemes of work and this includes time for governors to consider and approve proposals. The governing body is committed to maintaining and further raising standards in the school.
- The SDP successfully identifies the school's priorities for the immediate period and highlights ongoing developments during the next two to three years. It provides good detail as to how they will be addressed and evaluated. All priorities are costed, time scales set and success criteria identified.
- The school evaluates the impact of its major spending decisions. It responds well to the issues that arise from the monitoring of pupils' results and achievements. The school's budget and other financial resources, including specific grants to the school, are carefully managed and monitored. Governors actively consider *best value* when approving expenditure. The acting headteacher is assiduous in her pursuit of any available grants or financial support. The ratio of adults to children is particularly beneficial to learning. The school makes good efforts to maintain the building and grounds.
- The school's administrative procedures were last audited in 1998. The school reports that all the recommendations have been addressed.

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

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall.

- All staff are appropriately qualified to teach the NC and religious education. Job descriptions are in place and reviewed appropriately. All teachers have attended an appropriate range of in-service courses. These have contributed effectively to their professional development and to the standards achieved by pupils.
- Teaching staff are very well supported by the effective use of support staff, who contribute in a caring manner to pupils' learning and well being, and have a positive impact on the life of the school.
- This is a very old school building and staff have worked hard to produce a creatively rich and stimulating environment for pupils. This is having a good effect on pupils' learning. Pupils like seeing their work displayed and are keen to show this off to visitors. Staff in the large nursery area have worked hard to provide an attractive and stimulating area for the children. All classrooms are used purposefully to support learning. The cleaners and caretaker keep the accommodation clean and well maintained. The main hall is used appropriately for dining, physical education and assemblies.
- Learning resources are good and are well deployed to support and enrich the teaching and learning of the NC and religious education. The school has worked hard to increase the amount and variety of ICT equipment and software and these are used purposefully to support teaching and learning.

- There is no easy access to an outside area for children in the reception classes. Staff take groups of children to use the nursery outside area and its equipment. This impedes children in the reception classes from making better progress in their physical development, particularly for those with co-ordination difficulties.

## 7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

### Standards achieved by pupils

#### Provision for the under-fives

- The educational provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning (DLOs).
- The nursery (3-4 year olds) offers both full and part-time places for children. Teachers' initial assessments show that a high number of children have limited experiences in all the areas of learning. Children make good progress – and some make very good progress - in the nursery. They attend full-time in the reception classes (4-5 year olds) from the beginning of the school year in which they reach their fifth birthday. Although the pace of progress is more measured, children continue to make good progress.
- The nursery and reception classes are generously staffed by teachers, nursery nurses and classroom support staff. The accommodation, although not ideal, is well used. Standards in physical development are good in the nursery but only satisfactory in the reception classes because of the outdoor facilities are not easily accessible.
- Standards in children's personal and social development are very good in the nursery and good in the reception classes. In both the nursery and reception classes, standards are good in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world; in their language, literacy and communication skills; mathematical development; and creative development. Despite their low starting point, the majority of children successfully achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all areas of learning.
- There is a good balance of activities, including class teaching, group teaching and practical activities. Daily routines are well established. In the nursery, there are good opportunities for children to make choices and select their activities. Some of the teaching sessions in the reception classes are too long for children to sustain their interest for the whole time.

#### Good features

**Nursery children achieve very good standards in the development of their personal and social skills. Reception children achieve good standards in this area of learning.**

- Nursery children settle quickly into the daily routine in the nursery. They mix well together, share equipment with each other and work purposefully in small groups. Although many need prompting and encouragement to participate in class discussions,

most children take turns when answering questions. They take good responsibility for tidying away at the end of an activity. They make rapid progress in this area of learning.

- Reception children work well on their own and in small groups. They enjoy new activities and, when given the opportunity, make sensible choices about what they want to do next. Most are willingly to show visitors what they are doing and to answer questions. Children share equipment with each other and respect each other's opinions and property. They have a growing understanding of group and individual responsibility. Children concentrate well, sometimes for longer than is expected for their age.
- In both the nursery and reception classes, children understand the importance of listening to instructions and taking care, particularly when crossing the road. They understand the role of the *Lollipop Lady* and why she dresses in bright colours.

### **Nursery and reception children achieve good standards in the development of language, literacy and communication skills.**

- Most children in the nursery respond promptly to one-to-one questions, many with single words or short phrases. Children follow simple instructions correctly. When responding to the story of accident-prone *Clumsy Colin*, children try hard to share their ideas of how he could avoid so many mishaps in future.
- When in a group, most children respond well to questions and requests. With adult encouragement, they add extra words and phrases and sometimes help each other to find the right words. In the role-play area, children talk to each other but there are times when they do things without exchanging any words or gestures.
- Children enjoy listening to stories. They understand that pictures tell a story. Most know that the written word carries meaning. They follow the story in a *big book* and correctly recognise some initial sounds of words. Some recognise individual words on labels and around the classroom without prompting. Children use a variety of writing implements, such as chalk, pencils and crayons, to draw pictures to tell a story or record what they have seen. They start to trace over their teacher's writing and some make recognisable letter shapes when writing on their own.
- Reception children answer questions, follow instructions and recall what they have been asked to do. Most listen carefully to adults when asked. They are willing to tell others what they have found or done. Some contribute without prompting to group discussions.
- Children are familiar with a range of well-known stories. They recall how a particular story might end and give a brief summary of the main events in the correct order. In the story of *Elmer the Elephant*, they recognise letter names and sounds from words in the text or on the marker board. When they read a *big book* together, many identify familiar words and phrases. They identify similarities and differences, for example, that Elmer's appearance is different from the other elephants. Children trace and copy adult writing and start to form their own letters and words. They label pictures and drawings, and correctly sequence pictures to tell a story; some add their own commentaries.
- In both the nursery and reception classes, children greet each other, say rhymes and sing simple songs in Welsh. They respond to simple questions and instructions about the

weather and classroom routines. In assemblies, they join in singing songs and saying prayers in both Welsh and English.

### **Nursery and reception children achieve good standards in their mathematical development.**

- Nursery children match patterns by shape and colour. They recognise and name two-dimensional shapes such as *square*, *circle* and *triangle*. They count with an adult up to ten and focus on different ways of showing four or five objects. They start to solve simple problems involving counting more or less. They consider such questions as, *How many boys/girls are here today?* When working with sand and water, they develop understanding of phrases such as *full* and *empty*.
- Reception children name familiar shapes, use such terms as *up* and *down*, and *left* and *right* when giving directions. They recognise patterns, and look for similarities and differences as they make their own repeated ones. They estimate *How many?* Some are confident in counting on *one more* or *two more*. They understand comparisons such as *bigger* and *smaller*. In dealing with money, children are familiar with measures and questions such as *How much?*

### **Nursery and reception children achieve good standards in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world.**

- Nursery children take an increasing interest in what is going on around them. They recognise familiar places in and around the school from photographs. They remember what they have seen when walking in the vicinity of the school.
- Children recognise that there are different times of the year and, through their daily discussions of the weather, start to appreciate continuity and change. They talk readily about themselves and their families. They start to understand the importance of caring for others, our environment as well as ourselves.
- Through hearing and acting out the Christmas story, reception children are beginning to understand the passage of time. They realise that Jesus was born a long time ago. They know that birthdays are important occasions and, from their own experiences, that celebrations often involve the giving and receiving of presents.
- Building on their work on road safety with traffic lights and the pelican crossing, reception children discover that there are many different sources of light. They suggest different sources, such as cars, vans and street lights. They understand that the sun and the moon are important sources of natural light. They know that before people had electricity in their houses, candles and oil lamps were used at night. They recognise that many useful items in their homes depend on electricity to work, and that some household goods contain computer technology.
- In both the nursery and reception classes, children use the computer with confidence. They move the cursor with the mouse to follow instructions and control a program. Children in the reception classes input instructions using a keypad to control a programmable toy.

- Visitors to the school, such as the community police officer, the local fire fighters and the road safety team, help both nursery and reception aged children to successfully improve their understanding of the area and what goes on around them.

**In their physical development, children in the nursery achieve good standards. In the reception classes, they achieve satisfactory standards.**

- Nursery children respond well to requests in English and Welsh to travel in different directions and at different speeds. They understand commands such as *Stop*, *run* and *walk*. They handle and use a range of different tools equipment in the classroom for pressing, rolling and cutting. They make good use of construction kits and the computer. They make their way around the outside area using a variety of large wheeled vehicles.
- Reception children use construction kits to build models, using techniques such as *push*, *pull* and *clip*. They handle a range of small equipment, tools and materials, such as scissors and glue correctly. Most children have a suitable awareness of space when in the hall. They start to link movements to make a sequence.

**Nursery and reception children achieve good standards in their creative development.**

- Most children in the nursery correctly name the primary colours. They successfully choose different sized brushes and colours when painting. When drawing, they make their own choices from a range of pens, pencils, chalks and crayons. They independently try different combinations of patterns and colours. They develop their imagination through play in the role-play area, and through mime.
- When making their own wallpaper, reception children handle printing blocks carefully unaided, and talk about their choice of colours. They successfully sort and match colours to make repeated patterns. They carefully cut, glue and join materials when designing and making a new coat for *Elmer*.
- Children in both the nursery and reception classes enjoy singing. They join in songs in both English and Welsh. Children clap rhythms and understand such terms as *faster* and *slower*.

### **Shortcomings**

- In the nursery, children's answers are often brief and their vocabulary is limited.
- Many reception children use short rather than long phrases or sentences; they do not have the vocabulary to explain their ideas in detail.
- A significant number of children in the reception classes find difficulty with co-ordination and some finer physical movements, such as holding their pencil correctly, running in small steps and in handling small equipment.

## English

Standards of achievement in English are good.

### Good features

- Pupils' listening skills are good. They listen carefully to instructions from staff and to what their fellow pupils have to say. Speaking skills are broadly satisfactory. Most pupils respond well to direct questions. Y1 pupils respond well to their teacher's encouragement and good example to structure their responses in a grammatical form. They use their individual marker boards to write down, and then read out, what they want to say in a discussion, for example, about the story of *The Lighthouse Keeper*.
- Standards in reading are good. Given their prior attainment, many pupils achieve very well. More able Y2 pupils read aloud with good expression and fluency, and show a growing awareness of audience. In Y1, pupils demonstrate that they know of different strategies for tackling new or unfamiliar words.
- In both year groups, pupils discuss their favourite books. They identify information on the outer cover of books about the author and illustrator, and explain how to use other information to satisfy preference or need. Pupils in Y2 know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. They explain how to find information on different topics from reference books.
- Standards in writing are good. Pupils progress well from copying what the teacher has written for them to independent writing. Good support from the occupational therapist has helped a number of Y1 pupils improve the quality of their handwriting. Writing skills develop well in English lessons and across the curriculum. Pupils know how to start their writing in different ways. They show imagination when creating an alternative ending to a familiar story. In writing an account about a character, such as *Guy Fawkes*, pupils identify and focus on specific features.
- Pupils' awareness of different audiences is good because of the variety of stimuli teachers provide for them. Pupils write at length and structure their work well because they take good notice of the supportive and developmental comments made by teachers. Their written work demonstrates a good range of vocabulary and wide choice of adjectives. For their ages, spelling is generally good. Pupils make good use of their word books and are willing to *have a go* at unfamiliar words.
- Pupils make good use of information and communication technology for word processing, reading, sorting and finding information and spelling exercises.

### Shortcomings

- Many pupils do not speak at length or draw on a sufficiently wide vocabulary to elaborate their spoken answers.
- When writing, some pupils do not form their letters consistently or hold their pencils correctly.

## **Mathematics**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- In KS1, pupils have a good grasp of basic number processes. The more able pupils know what each number in a two-digit number represents and can partition a teen number. They understand place value of a ten and units and can record vertically.
- Most pupils can produce graphs to show the most popular eye colour. As a class, they use the computer to complete a graph and interrogate the data. They understand how quickly a graph can be produced in this way and how easily changes can be made.
- Pupils know coins to 20, can recognise the hour and half hour on a clock and know the days, months and seasons. They suggest suitable standard or uniform non-standard units and measuring equipment to estimate and then measure length and area. They draw and interpret a pictograph and block graph independently. They recognise simple 2D and 3D shapes.
- Most Y2 pupils can identify and separate pentagons and hexagons; the more able pupils confidently identify the properties of these shapes. They use a number line to find different pairs of numbers with a given difference. They count onto numbers beyond ten. They start with the biggest number when adding and decide whether to add or take away when solving problems.
- Pupils develop investigation skills through practical experiences. They know coins to 20p and use them in the shop to buy things and give change. They add up to three coins vertically. They collect, display and interpret data in a number of ways.
- Suitable ICT software supports pupils' learning across the key stages, particularly with number and shape programs.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no major shortcomings.

## **Science**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils in Y1 enthusiastically investigate touch and sight, linked to their learning about the five senses. They successfully distinguish between a number of objects by describing them accurately and begin to imagine how difficult it is for people who are wholly or partially sighted.

- Pupils effectively describe and recognise things that are living and things that have never been alive. They discuss their own growth and development, and that within the family. They successfully compare this with animal growth and development. They accurately name the external parts of the body and compare measures for different pupils. They draw around their hands and compare sizes.
- In Y2, pupils successfully sort materials into natural and synthetic categories and accurately describe their characteristics, such as rough or smooth. They understand the terms translucent and opaque. They go on a texture trail and fruitfully investigate which material will absorb the most liquid.
- Pupils carefully observe the changes that take place when some materials are heated and cooled, for example when making toast. They successfully make simple electrical circuits and understand that if there is a break in a circuit it will not work.
- Pupils make good use of ICT programs to help them collect and present their findings.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no major shortcomings.

### **Welsh second language**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning Welsh. When teachers speak Welsh, they provide good role models of language. Pupils listen well, both to their teachers and to each other. They respond well to opportunities to use the language incidentally during the day.
- Pupils also respond well to the Welsh ethos, which has a high profile within the life of the school.
- Y1 pupils answer simple questions, know some basic language patterns and have a satisfactory vocabulary on the topic of food. They can read some simple words and phrases from a 'Big Book'. They use a word processing package to produce simple sentences. They know and enjoy singing a number of Welsh songs.
- Y2 pupils confidently ask and answer questions the parts of the body and know most of the colours. They know numbers to 20. They respond well to instructions.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no major shortcomings.

## **Design and technology**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory. No lessons were observed in Y2 during the inspection but scrutiny of a portfolio of past work demonstrates that standards are satisfactory across the key stage.

### **Good features**

- Pupils in Y1 are aware of the nutritional contents of food. They begin to understand the term *healthy eating*. Whilst making sandwiches, they successfully make simple decisions about the type of bread and filling; they effectively evaluate their work.
- On a visit to a local garden centre, pupils carefully select the pots and compost required to grow their chosen plants. Their good awareness of sustainable development suitably guides their choices. On returning to school, they successfully plant their pots and learn to look after them.
- Y2 pupils successfully make a moving face using split pins. They effectively consider suitable materials when making Christmas tree decorations. They carefully design and make clothes, suitable for either hot or cold weather, to dress a cardboard model. They design and make vehicles using construction kits. Most pupils give reasons for improving their product.
- Pupils respond well to encouragement to enquire and explain their findings.

### **Shortcomings**

- There is insufficient evidence to show that pupils are progressively developing their making skills.
- Pupils' written evaluations are in the early stages of development.

## **Information technology**

Standards of achievement are good in information technology.

### **Good features**

- Most Y1 pupils successfully use a word processing package to write a descriptive sentence about their topic on animals. They print their work with assistance. They understand that objects can be sorted according to criteria. They effectively collect, organise and display data.
- Y2 pupils use a word processing package with increasing confidence to describe the vehicles they have designed in design and technology. They confidently change the font and the colour and print their work independently. Pupils effectively use the symmetry option of a graphics package to make calendars. They systematically collect data on the weather for half a term, and independently retrieve, edit, interrogate it. They conscientiously save their work.

- Pupils successfully use subject specific software to re-enforce skills across the curriculum.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no major shortcomings.

### **History**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils' understanding of chronology is good. They understand the difference between yesterday, last year and long ago. They know about different sources of information, such as photographs, books and CD-ROMs. They understand that grandparents and older people have special memories of different times and places.
- When studying the history of their school they make good use of old photographs to make comparisons with today as well as reading of other schools in the past and enjoying enacting a school of the past in the museum. They recognise that artefacts from the past help them to identify how people lived in times gone by. Pupils compare and contrast these with their own lives and experiences.
- Their study of the lives of famous people from the past enables them to understand the way of life in the time these people lived. Their studies in history reflect the Cwricwlwm Cymreig as well as British history. In learning about Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot, pupils successfully link cause and effect and develop their appreciation of underlying causes.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Geography**

Standards of achievement are good.

- Pupils have a good understanding of the purpose and use of plans and maps. They successfully create and locate features using grid references.
- Pupils are familiar the main characteristics and features of their immediate area. They use geographical vocabulary correctly to describe features. On visits and around the immediate area, they carry out fieldwork activities and record their results using the digital camera, charts and written records.

- Pupils compare their own area with contrasting locations within easy travelling distance. They also compare their own area with Kent. They appreciate similarities and differences and know, for example, that roads and industry contribute to the growth of some areas. Their studies are detailed and they record the information in a variety of ways including well-labelled photographs, pictures and drawings.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Art**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils' portfolios and the good displays of their work throughout school indicate that pupils mix and match colours, explore smooth and rough textures, and make good progress in observing and creating their own work.
- Pupils use a range of materials such as paint, crayon and pastel to express their ideas and make images. They use different sized brushes, and mix and match simple colours. They use shading to give contrast and effect to their pencil sketches.
- Pupils work well in the style of modern, established artists, such as Colin Paynting. They are familiar with works by European artists, such as Picasso and Monet, and Welsh artists, such as Kyffin Williams.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Music**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils sing familiar hymns tunefully in acts of collective worship. They sing confidently in both Welsh and English and carefully follow a recorded accompaniment.
- They know that music can be used to express mood and feelings. They accompany songs using untuned percussion instruments
- Pupils listen attentively to recorded music. They recall what they listen to in school and discuss their personal likes and dislikes.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils have limited opportunities to use ICT to help them compose and evaluate their performances.
- Pupils do not have enough experience of using a range of tuned percussion instruments for composition and performance.

### **Physical education**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory. There is no swimming at present for reasons outside the school's control.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of space. They listen carefully to instructions and pay due attention to matters of personal safety. They appreciate the importance of warming up and cooling down.
- Pupils successfully use different movements to jump, twist and turn. They find different ways of moving over and around objects. They take part in traditional Welsh folk dancing.

#### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils do not sufficiently evaluate their performance or identify ways in which they can improve.

### **Religious education**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils develop insights to celebrations, beginning with their own experiences and extending to religious festivals, rituals and traditions in the Christian, Jewish and Hindi faiths. They know how important festivals such as Christmas, Hanukah and Diwali are celebrated.
- Pupils in Y1 learn about Sikhs and understand that an Indian priest is called a *Guru*. They listen to the story of *Guru Nanak*.
- They talk about the Jewish *Shabbat*, make *Challah* bread and understand that it is shared and covered. They make cards, divas and *Rangoli* patterns during Diwali.

- Y2 pupils understand that a church is a special place for Christians. They visit the local church and explore how it is used. They understand some of the special features of Christian worship. They have witnessed a baptism.

### Shortcomings

There are no major shortcomings.

## 8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### 8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in 1998, not only in response to the key issues but also in raising the standards achieved by pupils. The key issues from the previous inspection were to:

**(1) maintain the high quality of support and guidance provided for pupils and the strong sense of community which pervades the school (Aspect 5.4)**

- The school has made good progress. It has successfully maintained the high quality of its support and guidance and the strong sense of community in its work. Improved assessment and recording keeping have further raised the effectiveness of the personal and education guidance offered.

**(2) provide more planned opportunities for pupils to develop both confidence and competence in using information technology to support learning across the curriculum and thereby raise standards in this subject (Aspects 5.3 and 3.2)**

- The school has made good progress. Standards have risen from unsatisfactory to good.

**(3) ensure all pupils have regular access to the daily act of collective worship and consider enriching opportunities to promote the school's strong sense of corporate values (4.1)**

- The school has made good progress. All pupils attend the daily act of collective worship. The strong ethos of the school reflects very well its sense of community and care.

**(4) provide further opportunities for pupils to develop greater independence and to use their initiative through investigations and open-ended problem-solving tasks, particularly in mathematics and design and technology (5.1)**

- The school has made satisfactory progress. Pupils are willing to take responsibility for their own learning. Although staff provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and conduct investigative work, the school acknowledges that there is still scope for further development in this area.

**(5) build on the good procedures for curricular planning to develop school-based schemes of work to more effectively support teachers in lesson planning and enable them to take more account of assessment information when planning work for pupils of different abilities (5.2, 5.3)**

- The school has made good progress. The school is successfully adapting published curriculum guidance to the needs of its pupils. Assessment procedures are very good and the information they supply is well used by teachers to plan work for pupils of different abilities. The very good ratio of staff to pupils enables plans to be successfully carried through.

## **8.2 Key issues for action**

The governing body, acting headteacher and staff should now:

- raise standards in those subjects that are satisfactory;
- develop oracy in English and across the curriculum;
- develop further pupils' thinking, investigative and independent working skills;
- review the length of lessons.

*The inspection team wish to thank the governors, acting 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      | Garnfach Infant School                                  |
| School type         | Community   |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 7 years  |
| Address of school   | Ffoesmaen Road<br>Nantyglo<br>Brynmawr<br>Blaenau Gwent |
| Post-Code           | NP3 4LL   |
| Telephone Number    | 01495 310462  |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Acting Headteacher   | Mrs Rosemary Hammond                             |
| Date of appointment  | 8 <sup>th</sup> January 2001                     |
| Chair of Governors   | Mrs Julie Jefferies                              |
| Registered Inspector | Dr Michael Best                                  |
| Dates of inspection  | 3 <sup>rd</sup> to 5 <sup>th</sup> November 2003 |

### B. School data and indicators

| <i>Number of pupils in each year group</i> |         |    |    |    |             |
|--|---------|----|----|----|-------------|
| Year group                                 | N (fte) | R  | Y1 | Y2 | Total (fte) |
| Number of pupils                           | 20      | 40 | 37 | 30 | 126         |

| <i>Total number of teachers</i> |           |           |                            |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
|                                 | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time equivalent (fte) |
| Number of teachers              | 7         | 0         | 7                          |

| <i>Staffing information</i>                                       |        |
|---|--------|
| Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes) | 18:1   |
| Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes                        | 10:1   |
| Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in special classes                        | N/a    |
| Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes         | 22     |
| Teacher (fte) : class ratio                                       | 1.16:1 |

| <i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i> |      |      |     |              |
|---|------|------|-----|--------------|
|   | R    | KS1  | KS2 | Whole School |
| Summer 2003   | 89.4 | 91.3 | N/a | 90           |
| Spring 2003   | 90.2 | 91.8 | N/a | 91           |
| Autumn 2002   | 89.9 | 90.5 | N/a | 90           |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals             | 51 |
| Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection | 0  |

## C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations

### END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2003

| National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2003 |                    |          | Number of pupils in Y2: 34 |   |    |    |    |   |
|--|--------------------|----------|----------------------------|---|----|----|----|---|
| Percentage of pupils at each level               |                    |          |                            |   |    |    |    |   |
|  |                    |          | D                          | W | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4 |
| ENGLISH:   | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                          | 0 | 12 | 65 | 24 | 0 |
|  |                    | National | 0                          | 4 | 13 | 63 | 20 | 0 |
| EN: Reading                                      | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                          | 0 | 12 | 53 | 35 | 0 |
|  |                    | National | 0                          | 4 | 14 | 54 | 28 | 0 |
| EN: Writing                                      | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                          | 0 | 12 | 65 | 24 | 0 |
|  |                    | National | 0                          | 5 | 13 | 71 | 10 | 0 |
| EN: Speaking and listening                       | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                          | 0 | 6  | 88 | 6  | 0 |
|  |                    | National | 0                          | 2 | 11 | 64 | 22 | 0 |
| MATHEMATICS                                      | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                          | 0 | 6  | 59 | 35 | 0 |
|  |                    | National | 0                          | 2 | 9  | 61 | 26 | 0 |
| SCIENCE  | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                          | 0 | 0  | 71 | 29 | 0 |
|  |                    | National | 0                          | 2 | 10 | 68 | 20 | 0 |

| Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English according to teacher assessment |    |           |    |
|---|----|-----------|----|
| In the school:  | 88 | 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

- Three inspectors spent a total of six inspection days in the school. Thirty lessons were observed in whole or in part.
- Pre-inspection discussions about the life and work of the school were held with the acting headteacher and staff, the governing body and parents.
- Responses to the questionnaire for parents distributed before the inspection were analysed.
- During the inspection, discussions were held with the acting headteacher, staff and pupils in the school.
- Policy documents, schemes of work and other documentation were read, analysed and discussed with the acting headteacher and staff.
- A range of pupils' past and present work was examined.
- Post inspection meetings were held with the governors, acting headteacher and staff.

## E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

| <b>Inspector</b>  | <b>Type</b> | <b>Aspect Responsibilities</b>   | <b>Subject Responsibilities</b>   |
|-------------------|-------------|--|---|
| Michael Best      | RgI         | Context<br>Main findings<br>Standards achieved in subjects and areas<br>Quality of teaching<br>Curriculum<br>Support and guidance<br>Special educational needs<br>Leadership and efficiency<br>Progress since the last inspection<br>Key issues for action | Early years<br>English<br>History<br>Geography<br>Art<br>Music<br>Physical education                                      |
| Charles Brentall  | Lay         | Attitudes and behaviour<br>Attendance<br>Partnership with parents, community, schools and other institutions<br>Partnership with industry  |   |
| Helen Wynne Smith | Team        | Key skills across the curriculum<br>Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development<br>Assessment, recording and reporting<br>Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement<br>Staffing, accommodation and resources                           | Mathematics<br>Welsh second language<br>Science<br>Design and technology<br>Information technology<br>Religious education |