

**REPORT**

**on the**

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

**TREFECHAN NURSERY SCHOOL  
ROWAN RISE  
TREFECHAN  
MERTHYR TYDFIL  
CF48 2EW**

School Number: 675/1002

Date of Inspection: 12 – 14 May 2003

**By**

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Registered Inspector 78384

Under Estyn contract number: T/239/02P

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## **CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES**

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

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

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

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

## **GRADE DESCRIPTIONS**

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

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

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## 1. CONTEXT

### The school and its priorities

Trefechan Nursery School is situated in the village of Cefn Coed y Cymmer on the outskirts of Merthyr Tydfil. There are currently 33 full time children on roll and 21 part-time children. Thirteen of the part-time children attend the morning session and the remaining eight children attend in the afternoon. Children are admitted to the nursery at the beginning of the year in which they are four. There are no children from Welsh speaking homes but Welsh is taught as a second language.

The school considers its catchment area to be neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. The nature of the intake is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged and comprises the full ability range. There are no children currently on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN). Baseline assessments are undertaken shortly after entry to school and results indicate an average attainment for the majority of children.

The school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for literacy and numeracy in September 2002. The last inspection of the school took place in January 1998.

In its mission statement the school states: 'We exist to enable our children to enjoy today and be prepared for tomorrow'.

The school's main aims are listed as;

- to work in partnership with parents to meet the needs of the children in terms of personal, academic and social development;
- to establish a happy, safe and secure environment within which children learn to have respect for themselves, each other and the community in which they live;
- to provide them with the necessary skills to live and learn in an ever-changing society.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

### The main findings of the report

Trefechan Nursery provides a very good learning environment for young children.

- The educational provision within the school is very good and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards of achievement in the six areas of learning are as follows:

Language, literacy and communication skills	Very good
Personal and social development	Very good
Mathematical development	Very good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Very good

Creative development	Very good
Physical development	Very good

- Children’s standards of achievement were very good in 43 per cent of sessions observed, good in 36 per cent and satisfactory in 21 per cent.
- Standards in the use of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are very good.
- The provision for children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and reflects the warm, caring and supportive ethos within the school; children respond very well to the provision made for them.
- Children’s behaviour is very good and they have very good attitudes to learning. Only in a few instances, when the teaching in small groups lacks stimulation and challenge, do some children become inattentive and disobedient. In the main, the quality of the children’s behaviour and attitudes has a very positive impact on the standards achieved.
- Levels of attendance are satisfactory. The vast majority of absences are due to childhood illnesses but a few families take holidays in term time and this has an unfavourable impact on attendance averages.
- The quality of teaching was very good in 43 per cent of sessions observed, good in 32 per cent, satisfactory in 14 per cent and unsatisfactory in 11 per cent. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Desirable Outcome for Children’s Learning. The majority have high expectations and set interesting tasks to increase children’s skills, knowledge and understanding in the six areas of learning. In a very small number of group sessions, the tasks set pupils lack challenge and stimulation and are inappropriate to their needs. At these times, a few children show clearly their displeasure and become inattentive and disobedient.
- The school has very good arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting children’s achievements and progress. Assessments are used appropriately to inform future planning and are used effectively to set individual targets for improvement.
- Curricular provision is of very good quality providing, for the vast majority of the time, a range of rich and stimulating learning experiences for young children. The quality of curriculum planning is very good and learning objectives are clearly focused for each activity.
- The quality of the provision for support, guidance and children’s welfare is very good. Pupils are safe, secure and happy within the nursery. All members of staff give high priority to the well-being of each child.
- The quality of the provision for special educational needs (SEN) is very good and complies with the new Code of Practice. Children respond well to the support provided and make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs). The children’s standards of achievement are satisfactory in relation to their age and stage of development.

- The partnerships between the school and parents, the community, schools and other institutions are very good and have a very beneficial effect on the children's learning and the standards they achieve. Parents are very involved with the school and are very supportive of all it does. The school's provision with industry is also very good and contributes very effectively to the quality of the education provision.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is generally good. There are good systems in place for monitoring progress and standards of achievement but not yet for evaluating the quality of teaching across the school. The monitoring of adult support within group situations is under-developed. As a result, the quality of the educational experiences provided for children varies according to the adult support given, but is of high quality in most cases.
- The quality of the leadership in the school is very good. The school's aims and values, including a commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity, are evident in all day to day activities. The head teacher provides a clear sense of purpose and direction for the school.
- The school's Management Panel is supportive and members are knowledgeable and interested in the life and work of the school.
- The levels and quality of staffing, accommodation and learning resources are very good. Of particular note, is the stimulating learning environment created for young children both inside and outside the building. Another noteworthy feature is the warm and friendly family atmosphere created by all staff, working closely as a team, and including the secretary, caretaker, cook and dinner ladies; as a result, an atmosphere is created within which young children thrive.
- All but one of the key issues identified in the last inspection report in January 1998 have been successfully addressed. The key issue relating to large groups remains. In a very few instances, children have to sit in large groups for too long and this results in individual contributions being restricted and, in some cases, children growing tired and losing interest.
- Taking all aspects of the life and work of the school into consideration, the school gives very good value for money.

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

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

Standards of achievement were very good in 43 per cent of sessions observed, good in 36 per cent, satisfactory in 21 per cent.

- The children's standards of achievement are very good overall in all six areas of learning. In their personal and social skills, they display independence and interact effectively with adults and other children. They share equipment and learn to take their turn. They act responsibly when handing out milk and fruit at break times.

- They begin to communicate effectively and older children do so using complete sentences. They achieve very good standards in listening and in their early reading and writing development. Very good standards are achieved in the development of the children's understanding and ability to use Welsh in everyday situations.
- In their mathematical development, children achieve very good standards in their development of sorting, ordering and classifying and older pupils understand the relationship of one object to another. They can identify shapes and describe their properties. They use mathematical language in relevant contexts.
- Standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are very good. Children benefit from well planned activities which promote practical investigation and exploration. They learn to care for plants and animals in their school environment and at home. They use a computer confidently and have had experience of using e-mail facilities.
- Standards in physical development are very good. Children handle and use large and small equipment effectively. They use space well and are aware of others around them. They display very good control and agility as they run, jump, climb, crawl and balance. They handle small tools adeptly and safely.
- Standards in creative development are very good. They confidently explore line, colour, shape and texture through art and craft activities. They enjoy singing a range of songs and rhymes which they sing enthusiastically and with clear diction. They explore sounds using a range of instruments. They use their imagination effectively when role playing in various settings.
- Children's use of key skills across the curriculum is very good. They are developing effective communication skills which they use for various purposes such as talking to adults, to each other and when using their imagination to play a role in various imaginary situations. They use their developing counting skills to allocate milk and fruit around tables at break time and they use money in relevant contexts in their school travel shop and café. They use a range of ICT skills across the curriculum. For example, they confidently operate a listening centre to hear taped stories and they use computer equipment to sort and match images and to produce art work. They are familiar with sending messages by e-mail.
- Pupils who have been identified with SEN make very good progress towards the targets set.

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

Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum are very good.

- The school has successfully addressed the need to develop the use of money in role-play situations. Further opportunities for pupils to develop numeracy and early writing skills through their role-play are used well. Children make marks on paper to represent lists of their friends' requirements from the refreshment trolley and numbers of drinks needed.
- The school has set its own targets to improve speaking skills. Staff encourage children to use complete sentences when answering questions and expressing their needs.

- Children make very good progress in developing listening skills and they listen attentively to visitors. They begin to listen to each other and to take turns in answering the teachers' questions. They listen to a wide range of different styles of music.
- Children achieve very high standards in early reading skills. They handle books confidently and even the youngest pupils understand that text carries meaning. Children use the school's lending library service with their parents, grandparents and carers and they discuss which books they have read. Most children recognise their own name and many recognise letters and some familiar words in the books they choose. They begin to follow some of the text in Big Books that are appropriately linked to curriculum areas and topics.
- The children make very good progress in developing early writing skills. Most pupils attempt to write their own names and some begin to attempt other letters and words. They clearly enjoy the frequent opportunities that the school provides to voluntarily practice emergent writing.
- The school ensures that every curriculum opportunity to develop numeracy and literacy skills is fully explored without making the links so tenuous that they become strained or irrelevant. When children make spider cakes, they name the shape of the spider's body, count the legs and consider how many to put on each side of the body. Milk and fruit time provides a natural opportunity to develop number work.
- The school effectively promotes very good standards in early speaking and understanding of Welsh. Children are encouraged to change from one language to another in an effective and natural way, learning new vocabulary as different situations arise.
- The provision for the development of pupils' skills in information and communications technology is exemplary and the standard achieved by young children is very good. Children use programmable toys, listening stations and a wide range of computer software that enriches their learning experiences across the whole curriculum.

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

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

The school's provision for the children's spiritual moral, social and cultural development and the progress made by them are very good. It is an outstanding feature of the school.

- The school promotes children's spirituality very well by giving them an opportunity to reflect on the value of God's smallest creatures through their work on minibeasts. This also contributes well to pupils' early understanding of Sustainable Development and the need to be stewards of the natural environment.
- There are exceptionally strong links with the local church and the Rural Dean is very much part of the school. Prayer is reverent, but appropriate for very young children and a natural part of school life. Praise is spontaneous, joyful and fun.

- The school successfully promotes very high standards of behaviour. Children know the difference between right and wrong and between acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour. Staff have high expectations of manners and behaviour and the children aspire to these standards. Good behaviour is positively reinforced by frequent praise and example and inappropriate behaviour is promptly dealt with by suitable ‘Time Out’ strategies.
- Very good relationships are to be found within the school. All staff and pupils are caring towards one another and staff provide very good role models of consideration and respect. The children develop a strong sense of caring for others. When a child ‘fitted’ in one of the teaching sessions the children calmly made room for him and remained quietly concerned until the teacher had dealt with him. When he recovered the children ‘took care’ of him. Pupils are also involved in a considerable amount of charity work undertaken by the school and entertain the over 60’s club. Children’s understanding of the social strand of Sustainable Development is effectively promoted through caring for others, and including everyone.
- The provision for developing pupils’ social skills is very good. This is particularly well done at lunchtime. Manners are exemplary and behaviour at this time is also of a very high standard. Children set the tables themselves on attractive tablecloths and serve one another at milk and fruit time.
- The school is an integral part of the local community where visitors form a strong and caring team to enrich the curriculum and develop the children socially. Regular events and celebrations that create a very good sense of community are held at the school and these are very well attended.
- The provision for the children’s cultural development is very good. It is addressed very well through the curriculum topic of Bears from around the World and through work on the weather. Children play with dolls representing various cultures, and the school has a good range of books and photographs depicting life in other countries and cultures as well resources that reflect the range of cultures found in modern Britain. Children are introduced to Christian celebrations and also those from other major faiths. Children are taught that God’s love is inclusive and unconditional.
- Another good example of the school’s provision is the multicultural day that involves parents and raises the awareness and understanding of the whole community. Children dress in a variety of national costumes, make musical instruments and artefacts from other countries, read stories from a range of different cultures and eat foods from around the world including a meal from the local Chinese Restaurant.
- Welsh culture is promoted effectively through very good use of incidental Welsh that is of high quality as well as a range of songs and rhymes. Children celebrate Saint David’s Day and receive visits from local Welsh craftspeople including a woodcarver.

## **4.2 Behaviour and attitudes**

The overall behaviour of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning is very good and is a significant contributory factor to the quality of life in the school. The children display very good attitudes to their learning.

- Clear expectations of appropriate behaviour are established when children enter school. All children understand what is and is not acceptable conduct.
- As part of a reward system to encourage good behaviour, the children are awarded certificates, badges and stars to go on a star chart. There is a special chair for exemplary behaviour and the children are very proud when selected to sit on this.
- They show an increasing ability to concentrate on their tasks and the majority can persevere at a task for a good amount of time.
- The children are interested and responsive. They take turns, share resources easily and interact well with one another.
- All in turn are given responsibility, such as helping with the distribution of milk and fruit during each session and tidying-up after activities. The children undertake these willingly and respond well.
- Only in a very few instances, when the work prepared in a small group situation did not challenge and stimulate them, did a few children display unacceptable patterns of behaviour. At these times, a very small number became inattentive and disobedient.

### **4.3 Attendance**

Attendance is satisfactory.

- Over the last three terms attendance has averaged 87 per cent. The vast majority of absences are the result of childhood illnesses and viral infections.
- There are, however, a small number of families who take holiday during term time and this impacts adversely on overall attendance rates.
- The school regularly emphasises the need for parents to ensure their children attend school regularly. Patterns of attendance are closely monitored. For the most part, the vast majority of parents co-operate with the school and inform them when their children are absent, usually by telephone.
- Most children arrive on time for the start of the nursery sessions. There are a few parents who frequently arrive late. This puts their children at a disadvantage because they miss the introduction to the session and activities.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

The quality of teaching was very good in 43 per cent of the sessions observed, good in 32 per cent, satisfactory in 14 per cent and unsatisfactory in 11 per cent.

- The overall quality of teaching is good or better and enables the children to make significant progress across all areas of learning.
- Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and most provide very good support for children to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in the six areas of learning.
- Long term, weekly and daily planning is effective and clearly identifies learning objectives. Most staff have high expectations and set challenging and interesting tasks to stimulate and extend children's learning. A noteworthy feature of the teaching is the rich and varied experiences provided for the children, including opportunities for practical exploration and investigations.
- Work is generally well matched to children's needs, with exciting activities planned for them to work as individuals or groups. In a very small number of instances, group tasks, although following the curriculum framework, are uninteresting and not well delivered. At these times, the children get bored and restless and some display clearly their displeasure at the tasks set.
- Staff interaction and intervention is mainly of very good quality and is successful in promoting children's learning.
- Most staff use a good range of teaching techniques and organisational strategies for different activities and purposes. Strategies to promote speaking and early writing skills are very successful in developing good quality language interaction amongst the children. Staff have also devised effective strategies for ensuring full participation by girls in technical activities.

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

Arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting are very good.

- Children are assessed using a range of county and national assessments appropriate for the under fives. The school also uses its own in-house system as appropriate. This information is easily accessible and is in a format that can be readily understood and used to provide a clear indication of the stage the child has reached.
- The system chosen by the school enables all those involved in the day to day education of the children to continuously assess and monitor progress and update records as appropriate.
- Parents receive formal reports on their children's progress twice a year but are welcome to discuss any issues of concern as they arise.
- The school uses assessment for a range of purposes including tracking groups of pupils. Gender issues in relation to free choice activities have been identified during routine

assessments. These have shown that girls seldom choose building activities and boys are reluctant to select writing activities. As a result, tasks for building and writing activities have been made more attractive to both sexes. Positive encouragement of the girls has been particularly successful with many more now choosing to work in the technology area.

- The school has produced its own guidance notes for carrying out monitoring and evaluation.

### **5.3 Curriculum**

The quality of the school's curriculum is very good.

- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the children. It successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- There are detailed and effective curriculum documents to cover all aspects and areas of learning. These provide good quality guidance for nursery staff.
- A rich and varied range of learning experiences is provided and these are planned to ensure that the children's knowledge, and their skills of enquiry and exploration are successfully developed.
- The curriculum is planned and organised around a termly topic that incorporates a range of activities within each area of learning. These are carefully planned to promote the children's independence, their ability to show initiative and to take responsibility.
- Teachers and nursery nurses share the responsibilities for teaching groups of children. For the most part, they work effectively as a team although the quality of the experiences provided is much better in some groups than others.
- Key skills are well planned within each area of learning and succeed well in promoting the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum.
- The development of the children's personal and social education is a strength of the school. Circle time, discussion during group time, taking turns at giving out the fruit and milk and tidying-up after activities all contribute effectively to this aspect of the curriculum.
- Good use is made of home/school tasks to consolidate and extend children's learning. Parents help the children with the task and come to the weekly library sessions to help their children select books to read at home. These shared tasks enable parents to become active in their children's learning.
- The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is effectively promoted. There is very good use of incidental Welsh through the school day and there are planned sessions to develop the children's use of basic language patterns and to extend their vocabulary. The children's understanding of Welsh culture is developed through stories, songs and rhymes in the language and St David's Day celebrations.

- The curriculum involves the children in activities that enable them to care for plants and living creatures and, as a result, their awareness of issues relating to sustainable development is heightened.
- The curriculum is enriched by numerous visits to the locality and further afield.
- All activities planned for the children are socially inclusive and there is equality of access and opportunity for all.

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

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

- The school provides very good support to both parents and children to ease the transition from home to school. Parents are encouraged to share in the education of their children and the school provides workshops and seminars to explain the concepts of Early Years Education and to help parents support their children at home. The Parents Achievement in Learning (PAL) scheme, undertaken by the school, is designed to help parents to help their children.
- There is a detailed Health and Safety policy that includes procedures for storage and administration of medicines, dealing with accidents, rules for behaviour and for lunchtime supervision as well as for school trips. Health and Safety aspects are integrated successfully into all areas of school life, including good manners and behaviour.
- The school grounds are safe and secure and children are taught to handle equipment safely.
- Fire alarms and equipment are regularly tested and fire drills and procedures are in place.
- New Child Protection Procedures are identified in the SDP. Staff are clear about procedures and have attended a recent course to update their knowledge.
- The medical needs of pupils are very well catered for and staff have recently undertaken training on issues relating to asthma, epilepsy and diabetes. Training for all staff in dealing with convulsions has also been urgently requested in response to the very recent diagnosis of a pupil who has begun to suffer in this way. Meanwhile, appropriate measures have been agreed and implemented to deal with the current situation and these were witnessed as being effective during the inspection.
- Policies for Personal and Social Education, Racial Equality and Inclusion that promote equal opportunities for all pupils and staff are thorough and detailed. These policies appropriately refer to celebrating diversity.
- There is an appropriate policy for sex education for very young children.
- Children are taught equality and inclusiveness. The school has responded to the need for inclusion of all groups of pupils by positive strategies to encourage girls to choose the technology area and boys to choose writing.

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

The quality of the provision for children with SEN is very good. The children achieve satisfactory standards and make very good progress towards the targets set.

- The school's policy for SEN is detailed and useful and has been updated in line with the new Code of Practice.
- The school identifies children that may have a potential learning or behavioural problem quickly and works with parents to seek the appropriate help from outside agencies if it is deemed appropriate.
- Extra support is provided for children with minor problems by placing them in small teaching groups. Close liaison with parents is maintained.
- Pupils move into larger groups when staff consider that progress has been made; this arrangement is flexible and appropriate to the individual child.
- Children with special educational needs are monitored through regularly updated field notes that are appropriately filed. They make very good progress towards the targets set and achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their age and stage of development.

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

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

- In response to the questionnaires and at the pre inspection meeting, parents expressed very positive views and support for the nursery.
- Many parents help with activities in the nursery. The teachers value this additional "pair of hands" that has a positive impact on the standards achieved by the children. Parents also help with home/school tasks such as making rainbow bear mobiles, by borrowing library books and helping their children learn to read. They make costumes so that children can take part in the many theme days, for instance the multi-cultural day, and they accompany children on planned nursery visits.
- Parents provide good support at events to raise money for nursery funds and a range of charities. Concerts, celebrations such as Harvest or St David's day all receive good support.
- A range of information workshops has been held to introduce parents to how numeracy and language and literacy are taught. In addition, the Parents and Learning (PAL) project has involved parents with their children making number games to develop numeracy skills.

- The information provided for parents is very good. There are plenty of informal opportunities both before and after the nursery day for parents to talk with staff. In addition to written interim reports provided for parents each term, evening meetings are held regularly where a more formal discussion can take place.
- Parents are fully involved in helping to settle their children into nursery. The initial link meeting provides a very good opportunity to share information and discuss issues or concerns, before the children start. The process of settling each child in is not rushed and parents' views are taken into account if it is felt that a child may not be settling too well.
- The nursery enjoys a very good relationship with the local community, including the church. The local community supports nursery events such as the annual carnival. The children regularly sing at the over 60's club, and pictorial evidence shows that this is very much enjoyed by all concerned. The local church is regularly used for celebration events, including recently the children's "mock" wedding celebration. The Rural Dean is a frequent and much welcomed visitor to the school. He is involved in many activities and is very well liked by the children.
- There is an extensive range of visitors to the nursery and many well-planned visits to places of interest within the locality. These serve well to broaden and enrich the children's curricular experiences.
- There are very good links with both the local primary and secondary school and several joint activities take place, such as the Three Schools Carol Service. Pupils from the secondary school undertake their work experience placements at the nursery whilst the music department often put on drama workshops and presentations for the children.
- There is very good liaison with Merthyr College from which the nursery accepts trainee nursery teachers. Currently, there are no links with trainee teacher establishments.

## **5.7 Partnership with industry**

The school's partnership with industry is very good.

- Given the very young age of the children, the school has a very effective strategy to raise their awareness of the world of work.
- The school has benefited from monetary donations from its links with industry. The local quarry, shops and businesses have all helped to purchase additional resources to support the teaching and learning.
- Children's understanding of the world of work is broadened by a range of talks and demonstrations given by visiting speakers. Visitors such as the Rural Dean, nurse, hairdresser, fireman, policeman, shopkeeper and postman talk about their work and help the children understand the value of their jobs in the community.
- Educational visits to local shops, a Chinese restaurant, a nearby leisure centre and a local quarry give children a good insight into the world of work.

- Role-play activities within the nursery such as hospital, shop, café and hairdressers are also effective in raising children's awareness of the world of work.

## **6. MANAGEMENT**

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

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

- The targets identified in the SDP are effective in moving the school forward. Action to be undertaken, success criteria, resources required, responsibilities and time schedules are clearly specified. Staff and governors review the plans regularly in order to improve the quality of provision and to raise standards.
- The evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning relies on observations and assessments of each child's progress and achievement across the six areas of learning. These are reliable and provide accurate information on the children's progress and development. The monitoring of the quality of adult support within group situations is under-developed. As a result, the learning experiences of some children in small groups are not as well organised, planned and delivered as in others.
- The school has made good progress since the last inspection and most of the key issues identified have been addressed successfully. The issue relating to large groups has not been fully addressed. Some group sessions remain too large, thus curtailing individual contributions from some children.
- A data analysis is carried out on baseline and school based assessments and appropriate targets for improvement are set and implemented.

### **6.2 Leadership and efficiency**

The quality of the leadership and efficiency is very good.

- The head teacher provides the school with very good leadership and a clear sense of direction. The aims of the school, identified in the first section of the report, are fully realised in the school's daily routine.
- A caring ethos is successfully combined with high expectations within which there is a very good team spirit between staff.
- The head teacher has a full time teaching commitment and provides very good support for staff in providing a range of rich learning experiences for the children. She is well supported by her deputy.
- There is a Management Panel comprising parent representatives and members of the wider community who are all very supportive of the school. Members are well informed and understand their roles in supporting the school.

- The LEA administers the school's budget and the school has a capitation allowance which is administered efficiently. There are sufficient resources to support the work effectively in all areas of learning. The school provides very good value for money.
- The head teacher and part-time clerk undertake administration tasks efficiently and effectively and this ensures the smooth running of the school on a daily basis.

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

- The school is well staffed by two highly experienced early years teachers, one of whom is also the head teacher, and by two nursery nurses that also have considerable experience. All staff are appropriately qualified and are fully involved in all training sessions.
- It is particularly noteworthy how the school's staff, including the secretary, caretaker, cook and dinner ladies, work very closely as a team for the benefit of the children. As a result, a warm and friendly family atmosphere has been created in which young children thrive.
- Staff have been trained in the use of new technology, including the use of the interactive whiteboard. They regularly attend appropriate courses to update their professional skills.
- Staff are usually well deployed but there are some occasions when a large group of children works with one teacher whilst other members of staff are engaged in routine activities. The individual contributions of some children are severely curtailed within the large group leading to some becoming restless and tired before the end of the session.
- The inside of the building is scrupulously clean and the décor is bright and stimulating for young children. Cleanliness and hygiene are an integral part of the ethos in the school. Colourful boxes of tissues are placed where pupils can use them and the toilet area is made fresh and attractive. Hygiene and health routines are given high priority.
- Displays are interactive and effectively reinforce learning. Children's work is attractively displayed and valued. The school fully includes part-time children by ensuring that their work is given equal prominence in displays.
- The fabric of the building is showing some signs of wear. The external fascia boards and some patio slabs are in need of replacing as is some of the floor covering in the interior of the building. These repairs are due to be carried out in the near future.
- The quantity, quality and range of resources, including computers, are very good. Staff understand how to use these effectively to enrich learning experiences. Children are encouraged to care for toys and equipment, and books are carefully carried to and from school in specially designed carrier bags.
- The outdoor play area is attractive and educationally stimulating. It contains hard and grassed areas and markings for traffic tracks to avoid collisions when wheeled toys are in use. There is a sensory garden area, fixed climbing apparatus and two wooden play houses where role play can be effectively developed.

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

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

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

#### **Language, literacy and communication skills**

Standards of achievement are very good. Children make very good progress in developing their language, literacy and communication skills.

#### **Good features**

- Children develop good listening skills. They listen attentively to staff and respond appropriately to what they hear. They listen to each other when making individual contributions and clap appreciatively if someone has done something special. They enjoy listening to stories and take great pleasure in repeating the text of well known stories such as The Three Bears. They listen with concentration to taped stories and follow the accompanying text and illustrations with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment.
- The vast majority of the children have the confidence to talk about their experiences and to respond sensibly to questions. They make very good progress in their ability to communicate effectively. Encouraged by the effective language strategies used by staff to develop language skills, many of the children are beginning to respond in full sentences.
- Through the regular use of incidental Welsh and short teaching sessions, children acquire a very good basic vocabulary and answer questions, using simple language patterns, about themselves, the weather and their feelings. They know a wide range of songs and rhymes in Welsh. They respond appropriately to greetings and instructions and, as a result of the constant use of Welsh in the nursery, they can relate the language effectively to everyday situations. Standards in the acquisition of Welsh as a second language are very good.
- Children enjoy books and handle them carefully. They derive particular pleasure from the class books they have helped to make about their favourite stories and poems. They identify characters and themes in familiar stories and older children can recall and sequence the events of a story. They are beginning to recognise letters and single sounds and some read familiar words, including their own names and those of others.
- Children take every opportunity to practise their emergent writing in the play areas. They enjoy taking orders as they wheel a food trolley around the nursery and when making jottings in the travel shop or hospital area. They enjoy these early attempts at writing. Older pupils progress to forming letters and writing their own names legibly. Very good standards are achieved in the development of the children's early writing skills.

#### **Shortcomings**

- In some large group sessions, children's individual contributions are restricted by lack of opportunities to participate.
- In a few small group situations, the use of formal activities to develop sound and word recognition is inappropriate for the children concerned.

## **Personal and social development**

Children's personal and social development is very good.

### **Good features**

- An expectation of high standards in the personal and social behaviour of the children is a high priority of the school. Children are developing a very good understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and understand the consequence of their actions on themselves and others.
- Throughout the inspection, the majority of children conformed to the rules and expectations of them. Most listen attentively, take turns and are considerate of others around them. Only in a very few instances, mainly when group work lacked stimulation, did some children become disobedient and inattentive.
- Children are employed purposefully for most of the nursery day and there is little aimless wandering from one activity to the other.
- They are encouraged to become independent and responsible for themselves. They take responsibility for their personal hygiene, washing their hands after using the toilet or before handling food. They each have their personal toothbrush in school and learn to clean their teeth after snacks and meals.
- Lunch times are social and civilised occasions when children learn to use a knife and fork and develop good table manners.
- Resources are easily accessible to children enabling them to select and make choices. They are encouraged and expected to replace the games and toys they have used and to tidy up after all activities. Most do this effectively and without fuss.
- Visitors to the school have brought animals and birds of prey for the children to observe. These, together with the sensory garden, including a pond containing tadpoles and other mini beasts, help the children to develop an understanding of the environment and of the needs of living things.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Mathematical development**

Children achieve very good standards in their mathematical development.

### **Good features**

- Children develop confidence in handling numbers through using a variety of games and puzzles. They enjoy a specially designated Number Day in addition to their regular learning activities. They sort and match objects and accurately reproduce repeating patterns.
- Many of the full-time children confidently name triangle, circle and square and they are learning to differentiate between squares and rectangles. They know common 3D shapes such as cylinder and cone and describe some of their properties. They identify shape in the built environment using photographs of churches, houses and bridges. They begin to use appropriate vocabulary and some do this very well. One child described his window at home as being 'rectangular' and another described his painting as a 'multicoloured circle'.
- Most children count accurately to 10 and many of the full time pupils recognise and name numbers shown at random. They are developing the skill of ordering numbers on a line and many are able to find missing numbers.
- Approximately 50% of full time children accurately make sets of objects to 10. They are beginning to understand empty sets and develop a concept of zero. Many have a good understanding of the relationship of one object to another.
- Children use and apply their knowledge in practical situations such as in sharing out fruit or in setting the correct number of places for lunch. They understand the purpose of money and enjoy using it in shopping activities and role-play. Some children identify a few coins and recognise the numbers on them.
- Older children begin to do some problem solving. They calculate how many bears have been removed from a group by counting how many are left.
- Most children understand the concept of full and empty. They estimate which containers hold the most water and use appropriate mathematical vocabulary for tall, short, wide, narrow, big and small.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Knowledge and Understanding of the world**

Standards of achievement are very good.

### **Good features**

- Children extend their scientific knowledge and understanding by visits to Techniquet and through the school science week. They explore the properties of materials and some know that only the metal part of the plastic fish will stick to a magnet.
- Children begin to develop an early understanding of the food chain, decay and recycling through making and studying a wormery. This contributes well to developing an understanding of sustainable development. Children have also contributed to a Birdwatch Project.
- They develop early awareness of simple scientific processes through cooking activities. They make a pancake mixture, fairy cakes and sandwiches. They also make bird cake for the wild birds. Children have had experience of tasting various breads from around the world and have expressed their preferences.
- Children describe types of weather and know the symbols that forecasters use. They observe different conditions outside, discussing strength of the wind, the wetness of the ground and the amount of cloud. The children know the difference between the summer and winter seasons and understand that other countries may have different types of weather from our own. They are beginning to develop some idea of where they live and they are becoming aware of other cultures and customs.
- Children develop a concept of time through daily routines and study of the seasons. They discuss changes in themselves and in the development of their younger brothers and sisters over time. They also observe changes over time in frog-spawn, sunflower seeds and plants.
- They know that information and communications technology is useful in people's daily lives. They begin to understand how e-mail works and enjoy receiving messages that staff read out to them. They make suggestions for a response and have been shown how to combine digital photographs with text. They display great interest in seeing slide shows of school events displayed on the school computers.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Physical development**

Standards of achievement are very good.

### **Good features**

- All the children enjoy daily access to a range of stimulating activities during outdoor play. They use space well and are aware of the presence of others around them.
- They show good co-ordination when running, climbing, balancing and jumping. They handle outdoor equipment confidently. When using wheeled toys, they pedal and steer purposefully and safely as they keep to the 'one way system' marked on the hard surface

area. They avoid obstacles effectively and show very good skill when manoeuvring their equipment.

- They role play effectively as they pretend to be pedestrians or traffic control officers on the marked pedestrian crossings. Of particular note, is the way in which the other children using the wheeled toys obey the signals to stop and move again as directed.
- The children's ball skills are developing well. They show very good hand eye co-ordination as they catch and throw. They develop a growing understanding of positional language as they undertake the activities.
- When tending their sensory garden, the children have opportunities to dig, move pebbles, collect twigs and observe the tadpoles and mini beasts in the pond area.
- Opportunities are provided at a local leisure centre for children to learn to swim. Parents accompany their children during these activities and all are reported to be developing confidence and an enjoyment of being in the water.
- Very good standards are achieved in the development of the children's fine motor skills. They skilfully handle malleable materials, squeezing and moulding them to good effect. They confidently handle small pieces in construction kits and when using tools, such as scissors, pencils, crayons, paint brushes and felt pens.
- During cookery sessions, they successfully mould and mix a range of ingredients to produce a finished product that they enjoy sharing and eating.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Creative development**

Standards of achievement are very good.

### **Good features**

- Children paint very well using large and small brushes and different painting techniques. They observe carefully, representing what they see with a variety of different lines, strokes and dots. They choose colours carefully and understand that colours can be mixed to make different shades.
- Children demonstrate good control of scissors, apply small amounts of glue and confidently handle modelling materials. They hold pencils, pens and crayons correctly.
- They draw recognisable people and animals that often include closely observed detail such as facial expressions or spectacles. One child clearly remembered information from a previous study of mini-beasts and drew a spider with the correct number of legs without prompting.
- Children work in a wide range of media including thread and fabric. They practise weaving and use natural materials in collage.
- They use information technology software to produce high quality computer generated artwork.
- Children build models from recycled materials or use blocks to work in three dimensions. They represent their ideas of castles, churches and palaces. They describe the shape of their building using vocabulary learned in mathematics.
- Children listen and respond to music from a range of cultures and traditions. They discuss loud and soft and high and low sounds made by small bells and begin to move in response to music they have created themselves. Pupils joyfully accompany songs of praise using tambourines. They explore sounds independently and use a range of instruments confidently to keep a steady beat.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no significant shortcomings.

## **8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

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

The school was last inspected in January 1998 and produced an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection report. The school needed to:

- **further improve the overall quality of educational provision by continuing the process of including appropriate detail into the schemes of work;**

The educational provision is now of high quality and all the school's documentation contains good detail on how the curriculum is to be developed.

- **within the context of good curricular provision, focus further on:**
  - i. raising the standard of teaching and learning in outdoor play**
  - ii. developing the use of incidental Welsh among all staff**
  - iii. improving pupils' social and listening skills**
  - iv. developing the use of money in mathematical activities and in role play**

The school has made a very good response to all these matters. The teaching and learning during outdoor play is now of very good quality. The use of incidental Welsh by all staff is a significant feature in the very good standards achieved by the children in their early acquisition of Welsh. The children's social and listening skills are noted as being of very good quality. Money is an integral part of role-play and mathematical activities in the nursery.

- **give consideration to reducing the number of pupils in some larger group settings in order to develop pupils' social skills:**

There are a few occasions when groups remain too large and, as a result, there is evidence of individual contributions by some children being curtailed.

- **employ strategies to improve the punctuality of parents bringing children to school;**

This is no longer a major concern in the nursery.

### **8.2 Key issues for action**

To improve further the high standards achieved by the children, the school needs to:

- disseminate the very good teaching existing in the school more widely to ensure that all staff conform to the high expectations of them;
- ensure that children are not taught in large groups for too long.

#### *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	Trefechan Nursery
School type	Nursery
Age -range of pupils	3-4 years
Address of school	Rowan Rise Trefechan Merthyr Tydfil
Post-Code	CF48 2EW
Telephone Number	01685 721739

Headteacher	Mrs Avril Diplock
Date of appointment	November 1982
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mr M Chambers
Registered Inspector	Ms L Thomas
Dates of inspection	12- 14 May 2003

### B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>		
Year group	N (fte)	Total
Number of pupils	43.5	43.5

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

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	10.8:1
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>		
	Nursery	Whole School
Term 1	88.7	88.7
Term 2	89.7	89.7
Term 3	81.3	81.3

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0
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### **C. 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. During that period:

- 28 sessions of learning activities were observed;
- children's work was discussed with teachers and nursery nurses and, when appropriate, with the children themselves;
- examples of children's work were examined;
- all school documentation, including the school development plan, was studied in detail;
- attendance registers and children's assessment records were examined;
- the school's capitation budget was studied;
- a parents' meeting was arranged and attended by 12 parents, and 24 questionnaires were returned;
- two formal meetings were held with the Management Panel.

### **D. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team**

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Ms L Thomas RgI	Language, literacy and communication skills; Personal and social development; Physical development.	Main findings; Educational standards achieved by children; Behaviour and attitudes; Quality of teaching; Curriculum; Quality of self-evaluation; Leadership and efficiency; Progress since the last inspection; Key issues.
Mrs J Marsden Team	Mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development.	Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Assessment, recording and reporting; SEN; Support, guidance and children's welfare; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Mrs D Shields Lay		Attendance; Partnership with parents, community, schools and other institutions; Partnership with industry.