

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

**TROEDYRHIW JUNIOR SCHOOL**

**Archer Street  
Troedyrhiw  
Merthyr Tydfil  
CF48 4JQ**

**School Number: 675/2027**

**Date of Inspection:  
1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> December 2003**

**PHILLIP EDWARDS**

**REGISTERED INSPECTOR: W227/15669**

**12<sup>th</sup> January 2004**

**UNDER ESTYN CONTRACT NUMBER: T/49/03P**

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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 the age of eighteen is intended to ease communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local education authorities and to emphasise the importance of continuity.

The term "reception" is applied to the year-group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) who attain the age of five during the academic year. "Year 1" (Y1) is applied to the year-group of pupils who attain the age of six during the academic year and so on to Y13 – the year-group who attain the age of eighteen 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; Key Stage 2 of Y3 to Y6; Key Stage 3 of Y7 to Y9; Key Stage 4 of Y10 and Y11 (which is the final year of compulsory education).

## GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The following five-point grading scale is used to represent the main judgments in the report:

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**

Troedyrhiw Junior School is situated in the village of Troedyrhiw, near the town of Merthyr Tydfil and is administered by Merthyr Tydfil Local Education Authority. It has a roll of 157 pupils aged seven to 11 years; the majority come from the villages of Troedyrhiw, Pentrebach and the surrounding area. In general terms the school describes three quarters of the area it serves as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged and a quarter as economically disadvantaged. The annual intake covers the full ability range. Approximately 31% of pupils are registered as being entitled to receive free school meals. All pupils come from homes where English is the main or only language. There are 50 pupils identified by the school as requiring special educational needs (SEN) support with one carrying a statement of SEN. The school has a class for 13 pupils from outside the immediate locality with moderate learning difficulties. The deputy head teacher is acting as headteacher while the incumbent head is on long-term sickness.

The school has identified the following medium target areas in its school development plan (SDP) for 2003 – 2004:

- Develop some targets from the previous SDP, on-going school monitoring and evaluation outcomes, national priorities, performance management, outcome of whole school self assessment, external school reviews and LEA priorities.

The school includes the following areas to be considered in the long term until 2006:

- Standards of achievement in mathematics and English, the ethos, quality of provision, learning and teaching, equal opportunities in subject areas of physical education, information and communications technology (ICT) and design and technology (D&T), pupils' welfare, parents and the community, leadership and management, premises and the governing body (GB).

The school has an appropriate set of aims and its vision statement is encapsulated in the acronym T.E.A.M. – **T**ogether, **E**veryone, **A**chieves **M**ore

The school was last inspected in February 1998.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

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

This is a good school which is very well led and provides a significant value added education for its pupils.

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

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
English	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory
Welsh 2 <sup>nd</sup> Language	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Good
Information Technology	Good
History	Good
Geography	Good
Art	Good
Music	Good
Physical Education	Good
Religious Education	Good

- Standards of achievement are good in approximately 61% of lessons seen and satisfactory in around 33%.
- In KS2, standards are good in design and technology, information technology, history, geography, art, music, physical education and religious education. They are satisfactory in English, mathematics, science and Welsh as a second language.
- In the NC test and task results for summer 2003 at the end of KS2, the percentage of pupils achieving level four in English, mathematics and science was higher than the national average, with some achieving the higher level five. However, a significant number of pupils achieve the lower level three, with some at level two. The percentage of pupils achieving level four or above in all the core subjects by test was well below the national average for 2003. When these results are compared with schools in a similar catchment area, they are at the lower quartile.
- Standards achieved in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, number and information and ICT are good and satisfactory in writing. Throughout the school pupils listen attentively, speak confidently and contribute readily to discussions during lessons. Pupils apply their reading skills well across the curriculum. Pupils write satisfactorily and sometimes well for a variety of purposes. A significant number transfer their skills in writing insufficiently to other subjects to enable them to write independently in depth. Pupils demonstrate good numeracy skills and make good progress in ICT where word processing and information retrieval are integral parts of lessons. Relative to their age and ability, the pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress in applying their speaking, listening, reading, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural development is good; their social development is very good. Daily acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements. The school effectively promotes racial equality through its commitment towards promoting the self-esteem of all pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good and contribute to the quality of life in the school, to the standards pupils achieve and to their personal and social development. The school is a happy, supportive and orderly community. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond positively to their calm and consistent approach.

- Attendance rates are satisfactory and there are no instances of unauthorised absence. The school has set the target of achieving a whole school attendance rate of 93 per cent for this academic year and is working diligently to achieve this.
- The quality of teaching is good or better in around 76% of lessons seen. It is very good in approximately 32% of lessons and good in around 44%. It is satisfactory in about 20% of lessons. In the best practice, teachers have high expectations of their pupils and provide interesting and thought-provoking work to meet the often wide range of abilities of pupils. In most lessons, including those set for English and mathematics, work is well matched to the needs of the pupils and good support is provided for those with SEN.
- Procedures for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' work are consistently good. Progress is continuously and systematically assessed throughout the key stage. The majority of pupils with SEN have been identified before entry to the junior school, but there are procedures in place to monitor pupils and to identify special educational needs of pupils should they occur. The quality of marking is generally good and sometimes very good. Annual reports comply with statutory requirements and provide a detailed record of pupils' achievements.
- Overall, the school provides pupils with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that complies fully with statutory requirements. Planning for progression in key skills is well established and where this is embedded consistently in daily planning there is a positive impact on standards. Strong emphasis is placed on personal and social education. The school's policy and scheme of work meets the ACCAC framework introduced in September 2003. Homework is carefully planned. The school had a good approach to home-school tasks. All children have equal access to all parts of the curriculum. The school provides a wide range of extra curricular activities during the year, including sports such as hockey, netball, rugby, football, athletics, cricket, orienteering and other club activities, which contribute effectively to pupils' learning.
- The quality of support and guidance and the attention paid to pupils' welfare throughout the school is good. A happy atmosphere prevails in the school and pupils work and play in a caring, supportive environment where they feel secure and valued.
- The acting headteacher, teaching and support staff know and understand their pupils well. Pupils' individual needs are clearly identified and staff effectively monitor and support their academic progress, social development and personal welfare. The school's policy for equal opportunities is successful and high priority is given to the social inclusion of all pupils.
- Overall, good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Very good liaison takes place between the special needs co-ordinator and the various agencies of the local education authority (LEA). Good support is received from the classroom assistants and volunteer helpers in the mainstream school and in class 7. Overall, pupils make steady progress in line with their abilities. All pupils are fully integrated into the ordinary life of the school. All pupils have individual educational plans that meet their needs. Although the designated class is for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, there are many pupils with specific behaviour and emotional problems and this has an adverse effect on the smooth running of the class. The school has good strategies for managing pupil behaviour both in the mainstream school and class 7. The pupils in class 7 who

attend the PRU on a part time basis are enabled to acquire appropriate strategies for behaviour management.

- The school places great value on its relationships with parents, schools, institutions and the local community and overall, enjoys good partnerships in all these areas. Regular and effective liaison takes place with the infant school from which pupils transfer. There are good pastoral and administrative links with the main receiving secondary school. Curriculum links are in the early stages of development and the school recognises that there is scope for further development to ensure greater continuity and progression between KS2 and KS3.
- The school's partnership with industry is good and well established throughout the school and the valuable links with industry, business and commerce contribute significantly to pupils' motivation, learning and standards of achievement.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is very good overall. Under the guidance of the incumbent head and for around the past 15 months, the acting head, the school has developed a highly effective, self-critical culture for self-evaluation among staff and governors and there is an appropriate commitment to school improvement and the raising of standards. The comprehensive and accessible SDP sets out the important actions to be taken in order to meet the targets set for improvement. Although progress in improving standards in the core subjects is steady due to very effective self-evaluation and planning for improvement, they remain below national and local expectations.
- The leadership and efficiency of the school is very good overall. The acting head manages the school effectively; the GB is very supportive and shares her values. Staff operate as a team, support one another and provide enriching experiences for pupils. The head and GB of the school are very effective in managing the budget and resources in relation to the SDP and the school's educational objectives. Careful forward planning indicates that a significant carry-over be retained in order to maintain minimum disruption in staffing and class sizes during a foreseen short-term fall in pupil numbers.
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall. The acting head and staff work very effectively as a team. All work is reviewed regularly and classroom activities monitored in order to effect improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Classrooms in the mainstream are of an adequate size and offer pleasant learning spaces for pupils. The classroom for special needs limits the organisation and management of the class where many pupils require a quiet space for reflection. Overall, learning resources are very good for all subjects and used appropriately. The lunchtime supervisors, dinner staff, caretaker, and school secretary provide good support for the school and discharge their duties efficiently and effectively. The school building and grounds are kept in a good state of cleanliness.
- Progress since the last inspection is good overall.

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

#### **3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning**

Standards of achievement are good in approximately 61% of lessons seen and satisfactory in around 33%.

- In KS2, standards are good in design and technology, information technology, history, geography, art, music, physical education and religious education. They are satisfactory in English, mathematics, science and Welsh as a second language.
- In the NC test and task results for summer 2003 at the end of KS2, the percentage of pupils achieving level four in English, mathematics and science was higher than the national average, with some achieving the higher level five. However, a significant number of pupils achieve the lower level three, with some at level two. The percentage of pupils achieving level four or above in all the core subjects by test was well below the national average for 2003. When these results are compared with schools in a similar catchment area, they are at the lower quartile.

#### **3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum**

Standards achieved in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, number and ICT are good and satisfactory in writing.

- Throughout the school pupils listen attentively, speak confidently and contribute readily to discussions during lessons. For example, during physical education activities pupils communicate well with each other, readily offering ideas and suggestions on how to improve their performance.
- Pupils apply their reading skills well, using class books, CD-ROMS and other reference material from the school library to investigate a range of topics across the curriculum.
- Pupils write satisfactorily and sometimes well for a variety of purposes, such as making lists, class books, descriptions, explanatory notes or reports, but a significant number make insufficient progress in spelling and writing. A significant number transfer their skills in writing insufficiently to other subjects to enable them to write independently in depth.
- Pupils demonstrate good numeracy skills, for example when they measure accurately in design and technology or read six-figure co-ordinates in geography.
- Pupils make good progress in ICT where word processing and information retrieval are integral parts of lessons.
- Relative to their age and ability, the pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress in applying their speaking, listening, reading, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.

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

### **4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural development is good; their social development is very good.

- Daily acts of collective worship in the hall are an important part of the school day. They are orderly, effectively conducted and follow a weekly theme; they meet statutory requirements and generally provide pupils with the opportunity to reflect on and develop universal values common to Christianity and other major religions. Pupils' spirituality is enriched through an appreciation of music, praise and prayer.
- The ethos of the school, which encourages respect for self and others, provides a strong and effective focus for pupils' moral development. Pupils' sound understanding of the difference between right and wrong is developed effectively through class debates where they express views openly and confidently and listen to the opinions of others.
- The acting head and staff have high expectations of pupils and act as very good role models. The School Watch initiative promotes good relationships among pupils; they share ideas and exercise their responsibilities maturely. Older pupils have an acute awareness of the needs of others.
- Pupils' social development is enhanced further through a varied range of extra-curricular activities and links with the community. Pupils collaborate well in lessons, particularly when they have opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Appropriate attention is given to the cwricwlwm Cymreig and multi-cultural education in the daily life of the school including music, art and the celebration of festivals.
- The school effectively promotes racial equality through its commitment towards promoting the self-esteem of all pupils.

### **4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes**

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. The school is a happy, supportive and orderly community.

- The acting headteacher, teaching and support staff recognise the importance of good behaviour as a foundation for pupils' learning and all work diligently to promote good behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond positively to their calm and consistent approach.
- The school has an effective policy and set of procedures to promote positive behaviour, which are implemented fairly and consistently by staff. A clear code of conduct exists and pupils understand what is expected of them. They are aware of the sanctions imposed for inappropriate behaviour and appreciate the need for class and school rules, which they perceive as fair.

- Good behaviour and effort are celebrated in the classroom and in school assemblies. Pupils are keen to gain individual and house points for good behaviour and effort, and initiatives such as *Pupil of the Week* are greatly enjoyed by pupils and appreciated by parents.
- The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good and this contributes significantly to pupils' self-esteem, confidence and positive behaviour. Pupils' relationships with teachers and support staff are mutually respectful and friendly. Pupils are polite, courteous and relate well to staff, to each other and to visitors.
- Overall, pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and play. Most co-operate willingly with staff and their fellow pupils, settle quickly to tasks and sustain concentration. They enjoy their work, are keen to do their best and they take pride in their achievements. They know their work is appreciated and valued by their teachers.
- The behaviour and attitudes of a minority of pupils provide particular challenges for staff. The school makes every effort to encourage pupils to understand, manage and develop their standards of behaviour to the best of their abilities. Overall, teachers implement effective strategies to deal with pupils whose behaviour is giving cause for concern; every effort is made to promote understanding and acceptance of school rules and conventions.
- The school has established effective procedures to deal with pupils whose behaviour is giving cause for concern and who might be at risk of exclusion. Pupils are counselled, parents are involved and support is sought from external agencies and the behaviour support unit of the LEA when necessary.
- The school operates a successful monitor system. Pupils from School Watch have formulated the school's code of conduct, which is simple, relevant and clearly understood by pupils. Pupils undertake their duties conscientiously and act responsibly; they contribute to the good order that exists in the school and are proactive in keeping their school clean and tidy.
- The school actively promotes the values of tolerance, consideration and fair play, and the acting headteacher and staff take the issues of bullying, racism and sexism seriously. Effective policies and procedures are in place to deal with any incidents that are brought to the attention of staff. No such incidents were observed during the inspection.
- Parents appreciate the efforts of the school in encouraging good behaviour and are supportive of the values that the school promotes.
- Overall, the good behaviour of pupils and their positive attitudes to learning contribute effectively to the quality of life in the school, the standards pupils achieve and their personal and social development.

### **4.3 Attendance**

Attendance rates are satisfactory and there are no instances of unauthorised absence.

- Rates of attendance for the past three terms average 92%.
- Most pupils are punctual and keen to attend school. Registration sessions and lessons start promptly.

- Registration is conducted efficiently and in accordance with statutory requirements.
- The acting headteacher monitors attendance and punctuality carefully. Effective procedures are in place to encourage good attendance and punctuality, to ensure pupils' absence is adequately explained and to follow up situations where necessary.
- Parents are supportive in advising the school, by telephone and letter, of the reasons for their children's absence from school.
- The GB is rightly concerned about the number of parents who take their children on holiday during term time. This has an adverse impact on the continuity of pupils' formal education and on overall rates of attendance for the school.
- Regular and effective liaison takes place with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- Good attendance is celebrated and rewarded throughout the school. Many pupils have good records of attendance.
- The school has set the target of achieving a whole school attendance rate of 93% for this academic year and is working diligently to achieve this. The high priority given to attendance and punctuality is frequently made known to pupils and parents.
- The school complies with attendance requirements set out in the National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99, *Pupil Support and Social Inclusion*.

## 5 QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### 5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching is good or better in 76% of lessons seen. It is very good in approximately 32% of lessons and good in around 44%. It is satisfactory in about 20% of lessons.

- Good classroom management by teachers and effective use of praise and encouragement motivate pupils to make more effort to produce better quality work and engender a love of learning.
- Teachers plan their lessons well and meet regularly every week to ensure continuity of purpose, content and progression, particularly for parallel age classes.
- Good and better teaching in the school is characterised by detailed planning, where learning outcomes and pupils' tasks are clearly stated and skills and knowledge are consolidated in plenary sessions.
- All teachers employ a variety of methods involving whole class, group or individual strategies to enable pupils to remain on task. However, in some lessons inappropriate work is set for pupils', for example, in mathematics some work is not planned at the appropriate level of pupils' ability. Also where groups of pupils research different parts of a topic and report back to other groups during

plenaries, they tend to learn well the knowledge acquired in their own group work, but limited knowledge is retained from the other groups' work.

- In the best practice, teachers have high expectations of their pupils and provide interesting and thought-provoking work to meet the often wide range of abilities of pupils; there is good variety and pace to the teaching and flexibility in class organisation. In the few unsatisfactory lessons observed, an over-reliance on teacher direction, lack of pace and inappropriate tasks impede progress.
- In most lessons, including those set for English and mathematics, work is well matched to the needs of the pupils and good support is provided for those with SEN.

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

Procedures for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' work are good.

- The school has detailed policy documents that fully take account of national recommendations.
- A baseline profile is drawn up of each child's attainments on transfer from the infants' school. Good use is made of the transitional language books for future teaching.
- Progress is continuously and systematically assessed throughout the key stage. Commercially produced tests are administered each year to determine attainments in reading, spelling and mathematics and then to set individual targets and to inform the setting arrangements for English and mathematics.
- The majority of pupils with SEN have been identified before entry to the junior school, but there are procedures in place to monitor pupils and to identify special educational needs of pupils should they occur.
- Due account is taken of NC requirements. Individual achievement is measured against NC levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science and recorded on the school's pupil tracking system. Analysis of this information assists the school in the prediction of the end of key stage levels of achievement for pupils, but the school is usually over-optimistic in this exercise as results are generally lower than the predictions.
- School portfolios of moderated work in English, mathematics and science help to secure accurate assessment by teachers.
- The quality of marking is generally good and sometimes very good. Teachers inform the pupils what they should do to improve the style and quality of their work and give them clear guidance.
- Plenary sessions are often short, but are generally supportive of pupils' achievements and assist teachers in their assessment of pupils' progress against the learning objectives.
- Individual pupil targets written in the front of their books provide an effective aide memoir for pupils on a day-to-day basis to check their work against personal targets.
- The system for pupil self-assessment of learning offers time for reflection of what they have learnt, but in many cases is not rigorous enough for pupils to refine their

skills and consider what are the next steps for them. In the best practice, pupils set themselves personal goals.

- Three meetings are held each year to give good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers.
- Annual reports comply with statutory requirements and provide a detailed record of pupils' achievement.

### **5.3 Curriculum**

Overall, the school provides pupils with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that complies fully with statutory requirements.

- Pupils receive a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that is presented in a stimulating manner. They receive a good range of experiences, which are generally well matched to their needs.
- Planning for progression in key skills is well established and where this is embedded consistently in daily planning there is a positive impact on standards.
- Long, medium and short-term planning is generally good.
- Strong emphasis is placed on personal and social education. Pupils receive good support from teachers and peers alike. Good use is made of the weekly circle time for pupils to explore feelings and to share ideas. The school's policy and scheme of work meets the ACCAC framework introduced in September 2003.
- Homework is carefully planned. The school has a good approach to home-school tasks. Parents work in close partnership with the school at these times.
- The school is a caring community that provides good support for everyone in its care. All children have equal access to all parts of the curriculum. The whole school approach to lessons for music, Welsh and physical education contributes successfully to pupils' social and educational skills.
- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities during the year, including sports such as hockey, netball, rugby, football, athletics, cricket, orienteering and other club activities, which contribute effectively to pupils' learning.
- Pupils enjoy visits to places of interest within the locality and further afield. These provide a positive understanding of many subjects, in particular science, history, geography and religious education.

### **5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare**

The quality of support and guidance and the attention paid to pupils' welfare throughout the school is good.

- The acting headteacher and staff attach particular importance to the pastoral care of pupils. A happy atmosphere prevails in the school and pupils work and play in a caring, supportive environment where they feel secure and valued.
- Pupils are confident in seeking the help and support of staff. They readily turn to adults for help and are listened to and treated with respect. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is very good and this contributes significantly to pupils' personal development and well-being.

- The acting headteacher, teaching and support staff know and understand their pupils well. Pupils' individual needs are clearly identified and staff effectively monitor and support their academic progress, social development and personal welfare.
- The school has a detailed policy and set of procedures to promote health and safety, which are monitored by staff and the governing body.
- Aspects of hygiene, health, personal and emotional well-being are incorporated into an effective personal and social education (PSE) programme and staff are skilled at delivering these topics with tact and sensitivity. Within the programme, the introduction of 'circle time' has had a positive effect on pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- The school has a clear policy and set of procedures to deal with child protection issues, which are known and understood by staff. Good working relationships have been developed with social services and other external welfare agencies.
- The school's policy for equal opportunities is successful and high priority is given to the social inclusion of all pupils.

## **5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN**

Overall, good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.

- Policies and procedures comply with the new national code of practice (CoP).
- The school has a local authority designated class for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (class 7). None has a statement; provision is effective
- Overall, approximately 28% of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. This is above national averages; one pupil in the mainstream school has a statement for moderate learning difficulties and is integrated into the school successfully.
- Very good liaison takes place between the special needs co-ordinator and the various agencies of the local education authority (LEA). The advice and support given is of a high quality and much appreciated. Very good support is received from the LEA behaviour support team and the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) in Merthyr Tydfil.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and ensure that work is matched to their needs, especially in English, mathematics and science. Differentiation in many foundation subjects is well related to the setting groups in English.
- Good support is received from the classroom assistants and volunteer helpers in the mainstream school and in class 7.
- Overall, pupils make steady progress in line with their abilities.
- All pupils are fully integrated into the ordinary life of the school. Pupils from class 7, the special class, are very well integrated into music, physical education and Welsh lessons three afternoons a week. The school provides good access for pupils with a physical disability, who make progress during these lessons.
- All pupils have individual educational plans that meet their needs appropriately. Parents and pupils are invited to contribute and each signs the agreement.

- Although the designated class is for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, there are many pupils with specific behaviour and emotional problems and this has an adverse effect on the smooth running of the class. Unwelcome behaviour on occasions disrupts the pace and flow of lessons.
- The accommodation for class seven imposes constraints for day-to-day management of the class, for example, there is no place for a quiet room as a time-out area or for small group teaching.
- The school has good strategies for managing pupil behaviour both in the mainstream school and class 7. The pupils in class 7 who attend the PRU on a part-time basis are enabled to acquire appropriate strategies for behaviour management.

## **5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions**

The school places great value on its relationships with parents, schools, institutions and the local community and overall, enjoys good partnerships in all these areas.

- Many parents are supportive of the school. They appreciate its welcoming nature and value the ready access they have to the acting headteacher and staff. Parents express a high level of satisfaction with the aims and values of the school and the high expectations of good behaviour that the school successfully promotes within a caring, supportive community.
- A useful home/school agreement has been drawn up which has readily been accepted by the majority of parents.
- Parents are kept well informed through regular newsletters, an informative annual report of the governing body, daily informal contact with staff and by regular meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' work and progress. The school prospectus is currently being updated to ensure all statutory information is included for parents.
- Parents make a positive contribution to the life and work of the school. A number give freely of their time helping out in the classroom, accompanying pupils on educational visits and in fund-raising for the school. A group of parents meet informally at the school on a weekly basis and organise social and fund-raising events, which enhance links with the local community and provide the school with a valuable source of additional income. The contribution of parents is greatly valued by the school, and parents make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Parents appreciate the way in which the school consults them on various aspects of the life and work of the school. For example, the school is reviewing its homework policy and is actively seeking the views of parents.
- Regular and effective liaison takes place with the infant school from which pupils transfer. Arrangements for transfer are good and ensure that pupils settle quickly into their new school environment.
- There are good pastoral and administrative links with the main receiving secondary school. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils are good and ensure that Y6 pupils look forward to secondary school with confidence. Curriculum links are in the early stages of development and the school recognises that there is

scope for further development to ensure greater continuity and progression between KS2 and KS3.

- The school enjoys a close partnership with a teacher-training university whose students are placed in the school as part of their training. Pupils from local secondary schools also undertake work experience placements at the school. All students are well supported by staff and they make a positive contribution to school life.
- The school enjoys a good partnership with the local community. Good use is made of the local community as a learning resource; educational visits and the expertise of members of the local community make a positive contribution to pupils' learning in many subject areas. The school regularly serves the community by supporting a number of civic, cultural, environmental and charitable projects.
- Overall, the good links that the school enjoys with parents and community, schools and other institutions have a positive impact on pupils' motivation, standards of achievement and personal and social development.

## **5.7 Partnership with Industry**

The school's partnership with industry is good.

- Partnership with industry is well established throughout the school and the valuable links with industry, business and commerce enrich work in many curriculum areas.
- The school has no formal policy for industry links but effective strategies are in place to raise the economic and industrial understanding of pupils and to give them insight into the world of work.
- No teachers have yet undertaken a relevant industrial placement with a view to enhancing professional development and enriching curriculum provision for pupils.
- The school has developed a good working relationship with the Education and Business Partnership (EBP). Pupils enjoy workshops and clubs sponsored by EBP whose support has helped the school introduce pupils successfully to the British Association of Young Scientists (BAYS) after-school clubs.
- Older pupils have had the opportunity to take part in an *Enterprise in Industry* day, sponsored by EBP, which has given them insight into creating business opportunities and provided information about possible career choices.
- Through their visits to a number of industrial, retail and commercial sites within their locality and further afield, including shops, supermarkets, a power station, a railway station and local factory, pupils are gaining first-hand knowledge of different working environments and an understanding of the variety of work undertaken in the area. Pupils have undertaken a survey of the nature of business and employment in their locality, which has given them insight into the world of work.
- Teachers actively encourage personnel from a variety of professions and occupations to speak to pupils about their work. The contribution of personnel from the emergency services, together with health professionals, a bank manager, a postmaster and local councillors, has had a positive impact on pupils' learning.

- The school has a long-standing and beneficial link with a local factory. Pupils have visited the factory, and personnel regularly assist in the classroom under the direction of the class teacher.
- Local business, industry and commerce view the school in a positive light and are supportive of the school.
- The school is committed to the continuing development of a positive partnership with industry. The links already established contribute significantly to pupils' motivation, learning and standards of achievement.

## **6. MANAGEMENT**

### **6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement**

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

- Under the guidance of the incumbent head and for around the past 15 months, the acting head, the school has developed a highly effective, self-critical culture for self-evaluation among staff and governors and there is an appropriate commitment to school improvement and the raising of standards.
- Performance is measured very well in the core subjects against targets set for individual pupils, specific groups and the school as a whole and comparisons are made with local and national data.
- Good use is made of NC assessment and other tests to identify trends and weaknesses. Analysis of data from a variety of sources is used very effectively to identify areas requiring specific attention and to track progress.
- Subject co-ordinators scrutinise pupils' work and collate levelled subject portfolios in the core subjects, and the information gained is used to plan future improvements. The school keeps celebration portfolios of the foundation subjects to record aspects of the school life; they are not all levelled, but the school recognises the value of doing so in future to ensure consistency in judging the levels at which pupils are working.
- The comprehensive and accessible SDP sets out the important actions to be taken in order to meet the targets set for improvement. These actions are costed prudently and success criteria, personnel and timescales included appropriately.
- The long-term planning of the school provides a solid foundation for the future vision and strategy of the school.
- Curriculum leaders have identified opportunities to move their subjects forward and they plan improvements carefully. New priorities are generated through this ongoing process of whole school self-evaluation.
- The SDP is a useful tool for ensuring and promoting the school's future targets. It is very clear and concise and reviews the success of earlier targets at appropriate stages. It is regularly monitored by staff and governors; progress is reported regularly to the GB by the acting headteacher.

- Although progress in improving standards in the core subjects is steady due to very effective self-evaluation and planning for improvement, they remain below national and local expectations mainly due to a significant number of pupils, including pupils with SEN, achieving the lower levels in the core subjects.

## **6.2 Leadership and Efficiency**

The leadership and efficiency of the school is very good overall.

- The acting head maintains the very high standards set by the incumbent head and tackles her tasks conscientiously with a sense of purpose and pride giving a clear direction to the work of the school. Her leadership and management skills are very good ensuring all staff are valued and a good team spirit exists. She is a positive influence towards school improvement and the caring ethos of the school.
- The straightforward mission statement and clear aims and values adopted by the school contribute to a shared sense of purpose and a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and raising standards of pupils.
- The GB is very supportive of the acting head and shares her values. Governors are knowledgeable and fully committed to the life and work of the school; they fulfil their pastoral role well.
- The acting head is ably supported by the school management team, including two senior teachers; together they fulfil the management and leadership responsibilities within the school calmly and efficiently. Staff operate as a team, support one another and provide enriching experiences for pupils.
- The school has very good systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The acting head and core subject co-ordinators monitor provision in the classroom in these curricular areas and appropriate records are kept detailing the strengths and weaknesses identified. Teachers are given feedback after monitoring and attend appropriate in-service courses to enhance their professional development.
- The head and GB of the school are very effective in managing the budget and resources in relation to the SDP and the school's educational objectives. Careful forward planning indicates that a significant carry-over be retained in order to maintain minimum disruption in staffing and class sizes during a foreseen short-term fall in pupil numbers.
- The effectiveness of school routines, administration and organisation is smooth and efficient and enables the school to function as a happy, well-organised and harmonious community.

## **6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources**

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall.

- The school is adequately staffed with appropriately qualified teachers.
- Performance management is well established, teacher targets have been set and informative records kept.
- The classroom and corridor displays provide an attractive learning environment for pupils and staff and celebrate achievement.

- Classrooms in the mainstream are of an adequate size and offer pleasant learning spaces for pupils. The classroom for special needs limits the organisation and management of the class where many pupils require a quiet space for reflection.
- The library, although small in size, is an attractive area and is well used by pupils for research. It contains an appropriate range of books.
- The school has three interactive white boards and accompanying software. In two classrooms these are well used to introduce lessons and to develop pupils' IT skills. During the inspection the third board was unused.
- Overall, learning resources are very good for all subjects and used appropriately.
- There are at least three computers in each class and these are used effectively to support learning across the curriculum.
- The lunchtime supervisors, dinner staff, caretaker, and school secretary provide good support for the school and discharge their duties efficiently and effectively. The school building and grounds are kept in a good state of cleanliness.

## 7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

#### **English**

Standards of achievement in English are satisfactory overall

#### **Good features**

- Many younger pupils make significant progress in speaking and listening. They develop a broad vocabulary and are beginning to express their ideas and opinions clearly. The majority of pupils are attentive listeners who take an interest in what others have to say.
- As they progress through the key stage pupils develop their listening skills; they are interested and maintain concentration whilst stories, poems and information texts are being shared.
- Younger pupils participate well in discussions with other children and adults, often clearly recounting their experiences. They are able to express what they have learnt orally; their responses to questions are appropriate and reflect the interest shown in the work.
- The quality of older pupils' discussion is good and varied. For example, they express enthusiastically opinions giving valid reasons about fashion in clothes. They suggest people wear fashionable clothes to impress others and what they wear indicates what type of person, or how wealthy, they are.
- Pupils make steady progress in learning to read in line with their abilities and by the end of the key stage the average or higher achieving pupils read texts with a good degree of accuracy and expression.

- The majority of younger pupils can describe what happened in a passage and talk about the story line, its setting and characters. Older more able pupils are able to use inference and deduction well.
- Pupils have a sound understanding of different genres they read, such as poetry. They can identify the title of a book, its illustrator and its author and make a reasoned prediction of the story from the cover picture. They express valid opinions about the ideas conveyed in a story book. Pupils generally read text to the class clearly.
- Pupils search reference books from the school library for information using an index and contents appropriately. They discuss sensibly what to look for, such as pictures and text and consider how to transfer information to their own work. Some copy information, others write independently and others combine the two.
- Older pupils read narrative poems with appropriate understanding and interpret their implied or multi-layered meanings. They have an increasing familiarity with significant poets and writers of the past. The majority of pupils read the text well to the class, clearly and with good projection.
- Younger pupils show a growing understanding of the use of literacy skills such as the use of different linking words and phrases which add interest to a story; they make reasonable attempts to improve their independent writing skills.
- Pupils can identify the genre of report writing in the text of a newspaper article well. For example, using newspaper writing planners, they recognise the need for a bold headline and catchy opening sentence to claim the readers' attention. They learn to write in a newspaper style about a sporting hero Michael Owen, including photographs, interesting facts, bold titles and quotes taken from a newspaper; they use ICT effectively for editing and organising writing appropriately into paragraphs.
- As pupils progress through the key stage, they adapt formal and informal writing for different audiences satisfactorily. They understand that their speech and writing can be adapted to respond to different audiences and that there are certain conventions they may need to be consider, for example in formal letters. They use a good range of vocabulary, paying particular attention to adverbs and adjectives when writing.
- Older pupils make good attempts at writing their own stage directions, indicating clearly how the characters should say the words. They go on to write their own play script. More able pupils write at length with good stage directions.
- As they progress through the key stage, older pupils become more confident with the use of rhyme, simile, metaphor and personification. They recognise examples in poems appropriately.
- Pupils use picturesque words like scurried, rippled and alerted in written work. They have a good grasp of alliteration which they use to good effect when they write a poem on the moon. For example 'The moon is a copper coin without the queen's head carved into it'.

### **Shortcomings**

- Whereas standards of many pupils are generally good and sometimes very good, a significant number of pupils underachieve in English, particularly in writing. A

significant number do not write at sufficient length in their English work or across the curriculum. They are often unable to develop themes or ideas, within a reasonable time to a satisfactory conclusion, to enable them to write with fluency, confidence and at length. Spelling and punctuation often cause problems for them.

- Lower achieving pupils are often reluctant participants in class. Their writing skills are not as good as their speaking and listening skills. Whilst they often use a good range of vocabulary in speaking, they find it a challenge to translate this into their written work.
- A significant number of pupils are at present reading below the expected standards. They are often hesitant and have difficulties with encoding more difficult words.
- Answers to questions for a significant number of pupils are short and they do not expand them sufficiently or use a wide range of vocabulary.

## **Mathematics**

Standards of achievement in mathematics are satisfactory.

### **Good features**

- Pupils develop a range of calculation strategies appropriate to their age. The majority of pupils use these to solve mental problems. Throughout the school pupils recognise and make sound use of number patterns in their work.
- Lower KS2 pupils identify odd and even numbers and explain clearly why a number is odd or even.
- Pupils have good knowledge of place value, including decimal fractions.
- Mathematical language is used to describe two and three-dimensional shapes and identify each from their description. Pupils use appropriate language to describe and compare shapes.
- They compile graphs and Venn and Carroll diagrams to record and organise information obtained from investigations and surveys.
- Most pupils solve money problems, including percentages. They have secure understanding of the equivalence of fractions, decimal fractions and percentages.
- Pupils have a sound understanding of four-figure co-ordinates that they apply to map work.
- Good attention is given to problem solving through the problem of the week. Pupils apply knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts to solve problems including world time and angles of rotation.
- Good use is made of ICT to consolidate learning in mathematics.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils have a slow recall of number facts and multiples and this adversely affects the speed of their mental calculation.
- Pupils name different triangles, but have insecure understanding of their properties and the calculation of angles.

- The oldest pupils have a basic understanding of area and perimeter, but are not using this knowledge effectively to calculate area and perimeter, particularly of irregular rectangular shapes.

## **Science**

Standards of achievement in science are satisfactory overall.

### **Good features**

- Pupils investigate electrical circuits well. They have a sound understanding of circuits in parallel and series format and know how to make a bulb shine more brightly.
- Due attention is paid by pupils to all aspects of the NC in the subject. They carry out investigations regularly and in the lower part of the key stage make good use of planning sheets to guide their work.
- When planning investigations, older pupils make sensible predictions and work carefully with apparatus to set up their tests. Good use is made of science language during whole class discussions.
- Work in books is well presented and indicates that the most able pupils draw conclusions from their investigations showing sound understanding.
- The majority of pupils have an understanding of the concept of fair testing and by the end of KS2, can explain how to set up a fair test.
- Pupils' develop their classification skills through sorting materials into different categories. Pupils have sound knowledge of solids, liquids and gases.
- Pupils make their own force meters and use these and commercial Newton meters to measure force. They understand that magnetism and gravity are forces and explain their ideas clearly.
- A good range of recording methods is used throughout the school, amongst which are diagrams, observational drawings, tables, block charts, posters and reports

### **Shortcomings**

- Overall, pupils have a slow recall of work undertaken in many areas of the science curriculum.
- In some classes where pupils watch the investigation and record from the central activity, pupils do not have a chance to plan for themselves and handle apparatus correctly in order to develop skills such as fine measurement.

## **Welsh second language**

Standards of achievement in Welsh as a second language are satisfactory.

### **Good features**

- The majority of pupils in the school listen attentively to teachers, respond enthusiastically to questions and work well with each other. They have good recall of a range of Welsh songs learnt.
- Pupils' familiarity with incidental Welsh is generally good; they understand a range of familiar vocabulary and sentence patterns and often respond appropriately to simple commands and greetings in the class situation.

- Pupils learn to count well up to 20 and satisfactorily up to 50. They have a good knowledge of most simple colours.
- Younger pupils chose appropriate responses from a given list to enable them to write complete sentences describing situations in a range of pictures, such as ‘Mae’r babi yn dost.’ (The baby is unwell.)
- Pupils copy sentences of a given dialogue between a doctor and a patient appropriately. They listen well to a story about a doctor ‘Y Meddyg’ from a big Welsh book and can recall and translate sentences satisfactorily. They build up a word bank on parts of the body which they record in their own group books and use to complete gaps in given sentences.
- By the end of the key stage pupils make satisfactory attempts to prepare questions for a ‘hot seating’ interview session. They work in pairs to prepare questions and answers they can use to carry out an interview of a famous person. They then perform interviews in front of the class.

### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils’ skills to initiate dialogue are limited and they are insecure in their responses.
- Younger pupils write little in their exercise books apart from some copied work; they rarely construct and write their own sentences.
- Older pupils are hesitant and slow to ask questions during simulated interview sessions.
- When they write questions and answers, the majority have considerable difficulty in recalling and spelling simple words, which inhibits progress.
- By the end of the key stage, pupils have limited vocabulary and have little idea of simple prepositions to enable them to describe the position of an object, such as the chair is under the table.

### **Design and technology**

During the inspection no lessons were observed in design and technology, but evidence from discussions with pupils, scrutiny of work and artefacts they design and make indicates that overall standards are good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils acquire appropriate skills with a widening range of materials and components as they move upwards through the school. Skills in design show a steady progression.
- Suitable attention is paid by pupils to all aspects of the subject throughout the school. They have constructed good three-dimensional models, such as animal puppets with individually designed shapes and mechanisms for movement.
- Suitable attention is given by pupils to construction. They make models that function by the use of levers and pulleys. These are strengthened in order to fit their purpose and finished to a good standard.

- Design planning is good. Pupils label diagrams, list materials that will be used and give written accounts of the process to be taken in the production of the model or item.
- Throughout the school pupils evaluate their work appropriately, showing a growing awareness as they move through the school of making a product fit for a purpose.
- Satisfactory attention is given to food technology and investigation.
- Control technology has been used effectively by pupils to light up a lighthouse and in work on circuits and motors to power a car. They construct circuit details for a computer programme to enable the lighthouse to flash in a given series.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings.

### **Information technology**

Standards of achievement in information technology are good.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils use a variety of information technology hardware confidently to enhance their learning, such as listening centres, CD players and a digital camera. Some are becoming conversant with operating the new interactive whiteboards.
- Pupils develop their information technology skills steadily in a variety of contexts with increasing confidence and competence as they progress through the key stage. Pupils throughout the key stage are clearly aware that control is integral to everyday devices, such as listening centres.
- Pupils combine images with text to achieve more interesting and informative presentations. By the end of the key stage word processing skills become better established and pupils become adept at redrafting written compositions on screen.
- Pupils are confident in their ability to use models or simulations to investigate and solve problems.
- Many can search a CD-ROM purposefully to access information across the curriculum, search a data base using the 'and' tool and understand that information can be searched using more than one criterion to refine the search.
- Pupils use word processing appropriately to draft and redraft work. They use different font styles and colours to make good presentations and many are able to use a spell check, find and replace and cut and paste facilities to help match their work to an audience. Pupils have sound facility with the shift key; they can delete letters and use the enter key to move a line up and down. They are aware of where punctuation marks are situated on the key board.
- Younger pupils can access CD-ROMS to download images for topic work with increasing skill; for example, they produce a good feature on the Battle of Hastings illustrated with pictures.
- A significant number of pupils are able to use the Internet to gather information related to their work in, for example, history, geography and science. Pupils are able

to use e-mail effectively, such as when they e-mail an ex-World War 2 soldier in America for information about life in the army for a history topic.

- Pupils use database programs to store and present data in a variety of contexts; they choose appropriate styles of graphical representation to present information, and make valid interpretations from them.
- Graphic and word processing packages are used adequately and pupils compose music using a computer program. They are confident in their use of the mouse.
- Pupils are able to choose appropriate styles of graphical representation to present information and make valid interpretations of them.
- Pupils use data handling programs successfully to present information in various graphical forms.
- Pupils make attractive symmetrical patterns using a paint program to consolidate their work on symmetry.
- Younger pupils learn to edit text with increasing confidence. They type a simple text and highlight it to enable them to change fonts and change its colour.
- The oldest pupils in KS2 are able to log on to the Internet confidently. They search a safe site for information on their history topic. They are able to save their pictures on to a file and enlarge them.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings, although there is variation in the acquisition of pupils' skills in accessing the full potential of IT as they progress through the key stages.

### **History**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Through out the school pupils have an appropriate sense of chronology.
- Pupils study the history of their locality and investigate how people lived at the time of the Industrial Revolution. Their awareness of living conditions for iron and coal workers is good; they relate well to the social conditions of the time.
- Pupils make good use of research tools, including the school library and ICT. They search CD-ROMs and the Internet. Tables, graphs, letters, comparative tables and advertising leaflets have been used to record work.
- When discussing work, pupils display appropriate familiarity with historical terms and famous people like Joseph Parry who spent his early days in Merthyr before emigrating to America and who later became Professor of music at Aberystwyth University.
- Good understanding is shown of the life during World War 2.
- Younger pupils in the key stage study life in Medieval Britain. They have sound understanding of what it would be like to live in a range of different castles and cottages.

- English is promoted well in the recording of history. Pupils compile for-sale leaflets for castles and cottages and make good use of observational drawings.
- Pupils enjoy visits to places of interest and this enhances their knowledge of times past. They have good recall of such visits.
- Pupils' discussion skills are good following independent research.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings in history, although there are instances of pupils inserting events into timelines that they have not researched fully and do not understand.

### **Geography**

No lessons were seen in the subject during the inspection due to timetable arrangements. Evidence from scrutiny of previous work and discussions with pupils and teachers suggests that standards are generally good.

### **Good features**

- Evidence from samples of previous work indicates that pupils study all aspects of the NC adequately.
- Pupils have sound understanding of the physical features of their locality and how they have changed since the times of the Industrial Revolution.
- Pupils draw clear and informative plans of their route to school and of their neighbourhood. They make good use of keys.
- Pupils further develop their knowledge and understanding of place. They have made an in-depth study of a Caribbean Island and have sound knowledge of the banana-growing industry in St. Lucia. They use correct geographical terminology to describe landscapes and physical features. Most pupils have an early understanding of how human activity and environment are linked.
- Pupils at the top of the school have sound knowledge and understanding of pollution and of changes in the iron and coalmining community in the valley.
- Sound use is made of ICT for research.
- Mapping skills are developing appropriately. Pupils have sound understanding of change from a study of maps of different dates. Many of the older pupils can locate a feature using four and six-figure reference numbers.
- The key skills of English and mathematics are promoted effectively.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings, but knowledge and understanding of world climates and associated vegetation and human activity is relatively limited.

### **Art**

Standards of achievement in art are good.

### **Good features**

- Younger pupils make square clay tiles castles using photographs and sketches of castles to guide their modelling. They demonstrate appropriate skills of rolling, cutting and shaping the clay with a spatula to make recognisable castle images ready for firing in a kiln. In particular, pupils' skills in using a 'slip' to attach pieces of clay to show three-dimensional details develop steadily.
- Older pupils, including pupils in class 7, work confidently with clay with good hand-eye co-ordination and manipulative skills to show clear detail of brickwork, portcullis and arrow slits in the tiles they make of castles.
- Pupils learn appropriate artistic skills in fabric crayon work and pastel/charcoal illustrations.
- Pupils create their own colourful designs with repeating patterns in the style of William Morris using pastels, crayon and chalk effectively.
- Pupils succeed through lively class discussions with the teacher to interpret and evaluate the work of the Welsh artist Nicholas Evans well. For example, when they interpret his work 'Miners' and 'Coming to the Surface', their descriptions of the facial features of miners crowded in a mine-shaft cage as long, sad, tired and hollow are very appropriate.
- Older pupils develop and refine their marking skills well when they draw a miner's face in proportion in the style of Nicholas Evans. They experiment appropriately with different types of marks in their sketch books to convey mood and draw a preliminary sketch before transferring it to sugar paper using charcoal. The majority of pupils draw satisfactory or better faces, with a significant number very good. They use charcoal mark, shades and line carefully and effectively to capture the long, sad, tired and hollow expressions of the miners' faces.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings.

### **Music**

Standards of achievement in music are good.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils are able to sing a variety of songs and have a good repertoire. Many pupils use untuned percussion instruments to accompany their music.
- Younger pupils clap rhythms in time well. They learn to create sounds with untuned percussion and perform them appropriately taking due care with dynamics. In groups, they make appropriate use of instruments to establish an appropriate mood based on The Caerphilly Castlers. A pupil in each group narrates the story well and others make the appropriate accompanying sound, including good control of the dynamics of louder and softer. They rehearse, record and evaluate their performance effectively. Discussions of what they think of their performances include why they choose different instruments to make specific sound effects and what can they do to improve their performances.
- Older pupils have a good sense of tempo on a range of percussion instruments. They place due emphasis on the first beat of the bar in common time to extenuate the beat. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of basic chord structure and

can name many notes on a key board. They are appropriately familiar with standard notation values such as crotchet and quaver.

- Pupils adapt quickly and on the whole accurately to changes of tempo when following a changing clapping rhythm. They listen to a CD of the chorus of the song 'Matilda' and learn to sing it quickly and tunefully with an appropriate happy rhythm. They adapt the rhythm heard on the recording and make their own using percussion instruments and key boards; pupils on the keyboards play rolling chords to accompany a percussion ostinato competently. The completed performance of singing and accompaniment sung along with the recording is good.
- Pupils use ICT effectively in the music program to compose music by dropping notation on to a staff which is then played back and improved appropriately.
- Overall, pupils sing tunefully and when they sing in harmony, keep their parts well.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings, but during whole school singing pupils generally clip the end of a singing phrase inappropriately.

## **Physical Education**

Standards in physical education are good.

### **Good features**

- Younger pupils have a good awareness of space. They are agile, have good body control and can demonstrate a number of imaginative symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes. They can hold their shape and move with precision into another shape. They work co-operatively in small groups, handle equipment sensibly and understand the benefits of exercise on the body. They pay particular attention to their starting and finishing positions and link their shapes and movements into imaginative and exciting sequences which they carry out with good control.
- The majority of pupils understand the need to warm up and cool down and realise the beneficial impact that exercise has on the body. They respond readily to instructions, co-operate well with other pupils and the majority show much enjoyment in their work. They show good awareness of the need to be fit and they realise the importance of health and safety considerations and are appropriately dressed for physical activity.
- Pupils are aware of health and safety issues and put out apparatus sensibly. They have good spatial awareness and body control; they work very well in pairs and small groups showing clarity and precision in their body shapes, especially in their jumping techniques. They are imaginative in the development of their sequences, evaluate their performance and celebrate each other's achievements. They can refine and improve their performance appropriately.
- Older pupils perform jumping activities in a variety of ways from apparatus, including twists and turns. They show appropriate management of their own body weight and understand the need for safe, soft landings after jumps both on the

floor and off the apparatus; they land confidently, often moving into a forward roll and finish in good style. They create imaginative sequences in their groups over the apparatus with clear beginnings and endings. They show suitable consideration for others and take turns and share well.

- The majority of pupils in the school reach the required standards in swimming and visit Dolygaer outdoor education centre to experience appropriate outdoor pursuits. They develop the skills they have learnt effectively.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings, but a significant number of pupils lack confidence in making judgements about their own or others' performance.

## **Religious Education**

Standards in religious education are good. The school follows the county agreed syllabus.

### **Good features**

- Pupils understand and can speak about the major festivals in the Christian church's calendar and recognise that other religions have special days.
- Pupils have an understanding of related festivals from different religions and know that Christmas and Hanukkah are both festivals of light.
- A growing awareness of religious symbolism by pupils is evident as they progress through the school. Study of religious artefacts promotes their understanding effectively.
- From a study of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam they know why each religion has a sacred text and understand the importance of the Bible, Old Testament and the Koran to the each believer in the celebration of their faith.
- Pupils can talk about the significance of places of worship and have good knowledge of the interior of a Christian Church.
- There is a good understanding of prayer and how people from different faiths prepare themselves for prayer.
- Pupils have good understanding of the relevance of learning about religions to their everyday living. They appreciate that other people have a right to worship and live in culture and faith groups within our society.
- Through a study of light and dark, pupils gain an understanding of fairness, prejudice and tolerance within a society.
- English is well promoted by pupils through discussion in lessons.

### **Shortcomings**

- Although there are no significant shortcomings, pupils are hesitant in the use of religious language and terminology.

## 8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### 8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

There were five key issues for action identified in the previous report.

The school must:

- improve pupils' achievements in the NCA tests in English, mathematics and science;

*There is a steady improvement in raising standards, but these remain below local and national expectations.*

- improve the accuracy of teacher assessment of pupil performance at NC level 5 in English, mathematics and science;

*Strategies such, as levelling portfolios of work have improved accuracy, but there is still some variation between teacher assessment and pupil performance at NC level 5.*

- for a significant number of pupils, consolidate their understanding and skills in reading and writing in English and in speaking, reading and writing in Welsh, in investigations in mathematics and in the processes of design in design and technology;

*The school has a very good policy and scheme of work in place which is at an early stage of implementation but forms a sound base for improving pupils' key skills. Standards of achievement in reading and writing in English vary from satisfactory to good overall and there are appropriate opportunities for investigative work in mathematics and design technology. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking, reading and writing in Welsh as a second language.*

- increase opportunities for pupils with SEN in the special class to broaden their learning experiences by spending more time in mainstream classes and with an appropriate level of support;

*Pupils from the special class are integrated appropriately into the mainstream classes on three afternoons per week. However, since the last inspection the nature of the intake of pupils with MLD in this class has changed with the addition of a significant number of pupils with EBD. This provides greater challenges for all teachers.*

- provide better progression in the work of pupils in religious education.

*This has been achieved successfully.*

### 8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school needs to:

- maintain good standards and improve those in subjects judged satisfactory;
- continue efforts made to improve curricular links with the receiving secondary school to ensure greater continuity between KS2 and KS3.

## APPENDIX

### A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Troedyrhiw
School type	Primary
Age-range of pupils	7 - 11
Address of school	Archer Street Troedyrhiw Merthyr Tydfil
Post-Code	CF48 4JQ
Telephone Number	01443 690275

Headteacher	Mrs G Rees (Acting head during inspection Mrs Kearns)
Date of appointment	1 September 1995
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Cllr H Jones
Registered Inspector	Mr Phillip Edwards
Dates of inspection	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2003

### B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>					
Year group	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	32	35	43	47	157

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	2	9

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	24:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	4:1 (a.m.) 6:1 (p.m.)
Average class size excluding special classes	24
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1:1

	<b>Whole school</b>
Autumn Term 1, 2002	93.15
Spring Term 2, 2003	92.45
Summer Term 3, 2003	93.15

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.	1
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## C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

### NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS 2 Results: 2003							Number of Pupils in Y6: 56						
Percentage of Pupils at Each Level													
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0		0	4	14	22	55	5	0
		National	0	0	2		0	1	6	16	44	31	0
	Test/Task	School	0	2	4	0			2	29	46	18	
		National	0	2	2	1			5	12	39	40	
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	11	21	54	14	0
		National	0	0	2		0	1	4	18	45	30	0
	Test/Task	School	0	5	0	0			7	30	45	13	
		National	0	2	1	1			4	18	42	33	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0		0	0	5	28	54	13	0
		National	0	0	2		0	0	2	12	48	35	0
	Test/Task	School	0	2	0	0			2	18	57	20	
		National	0	2	0	0			1	9	48	39	

Percentage of Pupils Attaining at least Level 4 in Mathematics, Science and English (or Welsh as a First Language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the School:	50 %	In the School:	48 %
In Wales:	70 %	In Wales:	70 %

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum  
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence  
N Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence.  
B Pupils who have not been entered for tests because they are working outside the levels of the tests  
W Pupils who are working towards Level 1 but have not yet achieved the standards needed for Level 1

The majority of eleven-year-old pupils are expected to attain Level 4.

## **D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection**

### **Record of Evidence Base of Inspection**

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors over a period of four days.

- Pre-inspection meetings were held with the acting head, staff and governing body.
- Five parents attended a meeting with two members of the inspection team.
- Thirty eight questionnaire responses were analysed and summarised of which 97% were very supportive of the school.
- All documentation submitted by the school was analysed and discussed, including the school development plan, policy and curriculum documents and teachers' planning files.
- Pupils were observed as they arrived and departed from school and during the midday and other breaks.
- At various times during the day, inspectors took the opportunity to talk to pupils and to discuss their work.
- Fifty four lessons or part-lessons were observed.
- Pupils were heard reading and were examined in their knowledge and understanding of English, mathematics, science and other subjects.
- A wide range of pupils' written and other work was examined in each class.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' work with class teachers and examined assessment records.
- Discussions were also held with the head, curriculum co-ordinators and other staff.
- The work of pupils with special educational needs was examined, including those in class 7.
- Minutes of meetings and documents relating to the financial management of the school were discussed.
- Budget figures were examined and discussed with the acting head.
- Attendance and pupil records were inspected.
- Inspectors attended four acts of collective worship.

## E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Subject Responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect Responsibilities</b>
Mr Phillip Edwards	RgI	English Welsh 2 <sup>nd</sup> Language Information Technology Art Music Physical Education	Context Main Findings of the Report Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Teaching Quality of Self Evaluation and Planning for Improvement Leadership & Efficiency Progress Since Last Inspection Key Issues
Mrs Valerie Howells	Team	Mathematics Science Design and Technology History Geography Religious Education	Assessment, Recording and Reporting Curriculum Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs Staffing, Accommodation and learning Resources
Mrs Janet Warr	Lay		Behaviour and Attitudes Attendance Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions Partnership with Industry