

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

PONTHIR VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ponthir

Newport

School Number: 678-3002

Date of Inspection: 2-4 February 2004

by

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Registered Inspector

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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:

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Ponthir VC Primary School is situated in the village of Ponthir, midway between Caerleon and Cwmbran. The school serves a mixture of mainly private homes. The area is prosperous. The majority of pupils come from the village but some also travel to the school from the surrounding area. In the last 10 years, the school roll has peaked due to an influx of pupils from new building developments.

The school occupies a generous site in the centre of the village. Originally built for five to seven year olds, the accommodation is enhanced by two demountable classrooms. There are currently 74 pupils on roll aged between four and 11 years. The school roll has fallen since the last inspection. Currently, one per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is lower than at the time of the last inspection (five per cent). This proportion is also below the average for schools both in Torfaen and in all Wales.

English is the predominant language for the majority of pupils. Under two per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority groups. There are nine pupils (12 per cent of the school population) on the school's register of Special Educational Need (SEN). This proportion has decreased since the time of the last inspection. There are no pupils with statements outlining their entitlement to additional support.

The School Development Plan (SDP) details the school's priorities for the current year and outlines its plans for the future.

The school was last inspected in February 1998.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Ponthir VC Primary School is a very inclusive school with a very strong and supportive ethos. Children are valued for the individual contribution they make to the life and work of the school. Standards achieved are consistently good at the end of Key Stage (KS) 2.

- Standards of pupils' achievement were good or better in 76 per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection and satisfactory in the remaining 24 per cent.
- When they start school at the age of four, children have a wide range of skills and experiences. Overall attainment on entry varies from year to year. Over time, it is at least average.
- The educational provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards in each area of learning are as follows:

Area of learning	Reception (4-5 year olds)
Language, Literacy and Communication Skills	Good
Personal and Social Development	Good
Mathematical Development	Good
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Good
Physical Development	Satisfactory
Creative Development	Good

- Standards of achievement in KS1 and KS2 are as follows:

Subject	KS1 (Y1 and Y2)	KS2 (Y3 to Y6)
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Satisfactory	Good
Welsh second language	Satisfactory	Good
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Good
Information technology	Satisfactory	Good
History	Good	Good
Geography	Satisfactory	Good
Art	Satisfactory	Good
Music	Good	Good
Physical education	Satisfactory	Good
Religious education	Good	Good

- In the 2003 assessments, all pupils reached the expected Level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The KS1 core subject indicator was 100 per cent, compared to 79 per cent in all schools nationally. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 is above the national average.
- The school's 2003 National Curriculum (NC) assessment results at the end of KS2 give a core subject indicator of 67 per cent, which is above the national average of 63 per cent. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 well exceeded the national averages.
- Pupils make good progress in the school. Recent staffing difficulties have affected the progression in pupils' learning but the situation has stabilised with the help of the local education authority (LEA). There are no significant differences in the progress of boys and girls. Pupils with SEN make good, and often very good, progress. The school successfully identifies the needs of the more able, gifted and talented and provides challenging work to help them make good progress.
- Standards achieved by pupils in key skills across the curriculum are good. Overall, children under five make good use of key skills across the areas of learning. In KS1 and KS2, pupils' use of speaking and listening skills are very good. Reading, writing and numeracy skills are used effectively by pupils in all subjects to develop their learning across the curriculum. Pupils' use of information and communications technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum is good in KS2 and satisfactory in KS1. Teachers do not develop the good emphasis on the development of key skills in ICT in their medium-term plans in their short-term planning.
- The school successfully promotes a positive and supportive environment in which pupils are valued, confident, happy and secure. Throughout the school, there is an atmosphere of calm endeavour and an ethos of quiet tolerance and understanding of the needs of others. Pupils effectively develop a good understanding of the heritage and culture of Wales. Staff and pupils use incidental Welsh consistently throughout the school.
- The standard of behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. The school is a welcoming, friendly and orderly community. Pupils are sensible and responsible and, when asked, willingly take on additional duties and responsibilities.

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- Attendance and punctuality are good, as are the procedures for monitoring attendance. For the year 2002/03, the average attendance of 95.36 per cent was the highest for any primary school within the County Borough of Torfaen.
 - The quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, teaching was very good in 40 per cent of the 30 lessons or part lessons observed, good in 40 per cent and satisfactory in 20 per cent of lessons. No unsatisfactory or poor lessons were seen.
 - In reception and KS1, children are sensitively, yet firmly, managed and relationships between adults and children positive. Staff place a good emphasis on developing listening and speaking skills. Explanations are clear and staff encourage good working habits. Staff support pupils with SEN well. Teachers know their children well and their expectations of what children can achieve are generally good. However, there are times during practical lessons when teachers over-direct pupils' learning.
 - In KS2, the quality of teaching is high with very good teaching in half the lessons seen. Work is challenging yet achievable and pupils are enthused by stimulating, and often inspiring, teaching. There is good support for those with special needs and effective challenge for more able pupils. Pupils' views and efforts are strongly valued. Pupils work well with each other, show initiative and make good use of independent study and research skills.
 - The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good throughout the school. There are good strategies for tracking pupils' achievement and progress. The recent implementation of individual target setting in English has already had a good impact on pupils' standards of achievement.
 - Teachers use assessment well to identify and plan for the differing needs of pupils. Reports to parents are of good quality and comply with statutory requirements. They provide information on standards achieved and indicate how to improve.
 - The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It suitably reflects the aims of the school and successfully promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical developments of pupils. The amount of teaching time broadly meets the recommendations of the Welsh Assembly Government.
 - Curriculum policies meet the requirements of the Wales Curriculum 2000 and there are suitable schemes of work in place for all subjects. Arrangements for personal and social education features are good. The school's coverage of *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is good.
 - The school has a suitable homework policy. For the most part, homework is set regularly and is relevant to pupils' learning. However, there have been some exceptions to this due to staff changes. Not all parents are fully aware of the school's expectations for work done at home or of the topics being studied each term.
 - The quality of support and guidance is good. Suitable arrangements are in place for first aid and the administration of medicines. Child protection procedures follow local guidelines. There are regular health and safety audits.
 - The quality of the provision for pupils with SEN is good. Pupils make good progress and achieve good standards in both key stages. Individual targets are set in measurable terms but the recording of the review process does not meet the requirements of the Code of Practice.
 - The school's partnerships with parents and the community are good overall. The school keeps parents informed of events in school through regular newsletters. The prospectus

provides much useful information but does not currently conform to statutory requirements.

- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory. Analysis of statutory test and assessment (SAT) results over time accurately identifies trends and shortcomings. The format of the SDP is good but priorities are not clear. There are too many targets for the plan to be effectively manageable by staff.
- The school's aims and values are well reflected in its work. The leadership and efficiency of the school are both satisfactory. The headteacher is highly committed to the school and its pupils; she works tirelessly to promote and sustain the school's ethos. However, the leadership tends to be reactive, rather than proactive to events and the way forward for the school is not always clear.
- Staff work extremely hard. The school has yet to address how it can effectively reduce bureaucracy and effectively manage teachers' workload, particularly in the light of the headteacher becoming a class-based teacher.
- The governing body is very supportive of the school. The chairperson is experienced and perceptive. The management of the school's budget and other financial resources is satisfactory. However, the governors' efforts to maintain four classes during a period of contraction in the school roll has sapped reserves and the school now faces some difficult decisions.
- The provision of accommodation and learning resources is good overall. The school has generous outdoor facilities but there is no fenced area for Reception children to use for organised play and other learning activities during lessons. Teachers make effective use of a suitable range of learning resources. A particular strength is the information technology suite.
- Staffing is satisfactory. The falling number on roll means that staffing arrangements are in a period of transition. The LEA has provided considerable support during this time, including the secondment of an advisory teacher to relieve the headteacher of her teaching responsibilities. Non-teaching staff are much-valued members of the school community.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Standards are good overall in reception and KS1. They are consistently good in KS2.

- When they start school in the reception year, children have a wide range of skills and experiences. Numbers in each year group are small, and this means that the overall attainment on entry varies from year to year. Over time, it is at least average.
- Standards of pupils' achievement were good or better in 76 per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection and satisfactory in the remaining 24 per cent.
- The quality of the provision for children in reception in the six areas of learning is good. Children achieve good standards and make good progress in their language, literacy and communication skills; personal and social development; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development. In their physical development, children achieve satisfactory standards.

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- Standards of achievement are good in both key stages in English, mathematics, history, music and religious education. In Welsh second language, science, design and technology, information technology, geography, art and physical education standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.
 - As the number of pupils in last year's Y2 and Y6 were small, only limited information about the school's 2003 NC assessment results for the end of KS1 and KS2 are published.
 - In the 2003 assessments, all pupils reached the expected Level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The KS1 core subject indicator (that is, the percentage of Y2 pupils assessed by teachers at least Level 2 in English, mathematics and science in combination) was 100 per cent, compared to 79 per cent in all schools nationally. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels is above the national average.
 - National Curriculum assessment results at the end of KS1 show that 100 per cent of pupils gained at least Level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science in each of the three preceding years. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 has generally been at or above the national average.
 - The school's 2003 NC assessment results at the end of KS2 give a core subject indicator (that is, the percentage of Y6 pupils attaining at least Level 4 in English, mathematics and science in combination) of 67 per cent. This is above the national average of 63 per cent. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 well exceeded the all Wales (national) averages.
 - National Curriculum assessment results at the end of KS2 show that the proportion of pupils gaining at least Level 4 in English, mathematics and science has been above the national average in each of the three preceding years. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 has mostly exceeded the national average.
 - Pupils make good progress in the school. Recent staffing difficulties have affected the progression in pupils' learning but the LEA has helped to stabilise the situation. There are no significant differences in the progress of boys and girls.
 - Pupils with SEN made good, and often very good, progress. The school successfully identifies the needs of the more able, gifted and talented and provides challenging work to help them make good progress too.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

Standards achieved by pupils in key skills across the curriculum are good.

- Overall, children under five make good use of key skills across the areas of learning. They listen carefully and speak clearly, using a wide vocabulary to express themselves. They apply good reading and writing skills in many different situations, such as their discussions about totem poles. They use numeracy skills when giving directions to get from home to school. They make satisfactory use of computer programs in their creative development.
- In KS1 and KS2, pupils concentrate and listen very well in lessons. They are attentive, especially when listening to stories, and carry out instructions effectively. Pupils' speaking skills are very good. They express their thoughts clearly and confidently take part in discussions.
- Reading and writing skills are used effectively by pupils in all subjects to develop their learning across the curriculum. Older pupils research topics in history, geography and

science, using books, CD-ROMs and the Internet. They successfully present information and ideas in a variety of formats.

- Pupils' application of numeracy skills across the curriculum is good. In science and geography, pupils use standard units of measure and illustrate their findings with tables and graphs. In design and technology, pupils include dimensions on their designs and measure carefully when making articles.
- The use of ICT skills across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is good in KS2 and satisfactory in KS1. By the end of KS2, pupils are well able to apply a wide range of ICT skills across the curriculum, including making multi-media presentations.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Provision for pupil's cultural and spiritual development is good. Provision for their moral and social development is very good.

- The headteacher and all staff are highly successful in creating a positive and supportive environment in which pupils are valued, confident, happy and secure. The school actively encourages caring and respect for others and these values are positively reflected in many aspects of the curriculum. Throughout the school, there is an atmosphere of calm endeavour and an ethos of quiet tolerance and understanding of the needs of others. Pupils take pride in their own achievements and applaud the success of others.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development and the daily act of worship makes a significant contribution to this provision. An air of reverence is established and maintained throughout morning worship and a strong sense of a caring, family community is evident.
- The quality of relationships in the school is very good; staff provide good role models for pupils and work hard to create a calm and caring working environment. Staff value and reward pupils' achievements and use such opportunities to develop effectively positive attitudes.
- The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong. Staff successfully illustrate and reinforce moral values through discussions of every day events in lessons. These values are particularly evident in extra-curricular activities through pupils' concern for the environment and conservation issues.
- Pupils support a wide variety of national and local charities and are sensitive to the needs of others. Links with the local churches and the community enrich and extend pupils' learning experiences and enhance their social and moral development.
- The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils are sociable, polite and welcoming and are clearly familiar with the expectations set by the school. Older and more capable pupils take care of the younger ones, are courteous, helpful to visitors, and aware of their responsibilities to one another. They readily volunteer for and accept responsibility, consistently offering mutual help and support in work and play. Pupils are enthusiastic when actively involved in decision-making within the school, such as the school council.

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- The provision for cultural development is good and the school provides a rich programme of extra-curricular activities including residential visits to Gilwern. Visits to local historical sites, the Welsh Assembly and work developed across the curriculum enhance pupils' awareness of their own locality and effectively develop a good understanding of the heritage and culture of Wales. Staff and pupils use incidental Welsh consistently throughout the school.
 - The school successfully promotes racial equality through aspects of the personal and social education programme and through the curriculum reflecting the school's equal opportunities and social inclusion policies. The school has adopted the nationally recommended Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) framework for personal and social educational guidance.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

The standard of behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good. The effectiveness of the arrangements for promoting good behaviour is good. This represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection.

- The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and procedures are in place to improve standards through positive behaviour management strategies. The headteacher and staff work hard to promote these and pupils know what the school expects of them. Pupils are valued and respected, and their friendly concern for each other is a reflection of the staff's caring attitude towards them. The school is a welcoming, friendly and orderly community.
- During break times, children mix and play happily together. There are two playgrounds for pupils of different ages, and supervision meets the needs of the site. When conditions allow, pupils also play on the extensive grassed areas.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. During lessons, pupils effectively maintain their concentration and interest. They are sensible and responsible and, when asked, willingly take on additional duties and responsibilities.
- Parents who responded to the questionnaires indicated that they agreed that the school achieves high standards of good behaviour. They similarly indicated agreement that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on the children.
- The school has policies for dealing with bullying and discrimination. No instances of either were observed during inspection.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are good, as are the procedures for monitoring attendance.

- For the year 2002/03, the average attendance of 95.36 per cent was the highest for any primary school within the County Borough of Torfaen. For the three terms prior to this inspection, the average has increased to 95.42 per cent. There is very little unauthorised absence. Parents co-operate by notifying the school of their child's absence. Parents are aware of the procedures of taking children out of school during term time.
- Teachers complete class registration sheets at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Attendance figures are uploaded onto an electronic database from which statistical information is drawn for review and analysis.

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- Monitoring of attendance is carried out by the headteacher, who liases with the education welfare officer about any concerns about absenteeism.
 - Few pupils arrive late for school and lessons start on time.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching is good. This represents considerable improvement since the last inspection.

- During the inspection, teaching was very good in 40 per cent of the 30 lessons or part lessons observed, good in 40 per cent and satisfactory in 20 per cent of lessons. No unsatisfactory or poor lessons were seen.
- At the time of the last inspection, teaching was very good in 23 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory or poor in 27 per cent.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall. The specialist knowledge of the seconded advisory teacher is put to good use in the school.
- Teaching in reception and KS1 is good overall. Children are sensitively, yet firmly, managed and relationships between adults and children positive. Teachers' expectations of children's behaviour are good, and all children actively encouraged to take a full part in class discussions. Staff place a good emphasis on developing listening and speaking skills. Explanations are clear and staff encourage good working habits. Staff support pupils with SEN well.
- Learning in most lessons moves at a good pace but, on occasions, children sit for too long on the carpet during the introductory section. For the most part, teachers effectively use questions to gauge what children know and can do, but sometimes too much use is made of questions to which there is only one answer.
- Learning support staff develop children's learning well, particularly for those in the reception class. Children benefit from individual and small group teaching in, for example, the creative area of learning.
- Teachers know their children well and effectively use assessment information to plan the next steps in learning. Their expectations of what children can achieve are good overall. However, there are times during lessons when teachers over-direct pupils' learning, particularly where there are a number of different activities underway. In such circumstances, staff do not sufficiently promote pupils' independent learning skills to enable them to develop their ideas and understanding. Generally, good use is made of the plenary part of lessons to revisit key teaching points and assess pupils' understanding of what they have been taught.
- In KS2, the quality of teaching is high with very good teaching in half the lessons seen. In these lessons, teaching inspires pupils to achieve their very best. The pace of lessons is brisk; work is challenging yet achievable and pupils are enthused by keen and stimulating teaching. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the outset and effectively return to these at different stages of the lesson.
- Teachers accurately address pupils' learning needs through a range of engaging and purposeful learning activities. There is good support for those with special needs and effective challenge for more able pupils. Pupils' views and efforts are strongly valued.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement are high. Strong working relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, promote the achievement of high standards. Pupils work well with each other, show initiative and

make good use of independent study and research skills. Teachers set challenging work because they know their pupils well. Well-focussed learning objectives build effectively on earlier work.

- Some particularly effective use is made of ICT in KS2. In reception and KS1, the use of ICT is satisfactory. There is a good emphasis on the development of key skills in ICT in teachers' medium-term plans but they do not consistently follow it through in their short-term planning.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work during this academic year indicates some lack of continuity in learning due to staff changes. The quality of recent marking in the school is good, with some effective and constructive targets identified to help pupils improve their work. In the course of discussion, pupils in Y5 and Y6 demonstrated a good, mature understanding of their achievements and their targets for development.
- Staff promote incidental Welsh well in lessons throughout the school. Teachers make good use of learning resources. Support staff make a good contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good throughout the school.

- An assessment policy and appropriate procedures are in place to guide teachers. Since the last inspection, the headteacher and staff have successfully targeted assessment and its use as an area for improvement. They have established good strategies for tracking pupils' achievement and progress.
- Teachers closely monitor reception children's progress. An LEA baseline assessment is carried out during the first term of the reception year. Other assessments identify pupils' language ages on entry. Good use is made of these results to plan learning.
- Pupils' performance in NC assessments and tests is carefully analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in the teaching. Teachers use SATs to monitor progress in reading, spelling and numeracy. They use the findings effectively to assess pupils' progress and to plan appropriate targets for improvement.
- The recording of pupils' achievement across some of the foundation subjects is currently being refined. The school is continuing to develop portfolios of pupils' work, which are annotated and assessed, to exemplify standards in some core and foundation subjects.
- Teachers keep detailed records about the progress of individual pupils and update these on a regular basis. The school has adopted an individual pupils' tracking system and this is used effectively by all staff. Pupils' work is regularly marked in accordance with the school's marking policy. Comments are positive and encouraging but not always diagnostic. The recent implementation of individual target setting in English has already had an impact on pupils' standards of achievement.
- Teachers' medium-term planning identifies appropriate assessment opportunities and strategies for teaching key skills across the curriculum but these are not always included in teacher's short-term planning, particularly in ICT.
- Detailed diagnostic and formative assessment records are kept on the progress of pupils with SEN and the information is used effectively to give them the appropriate support and differentiation. Similarly, teachers use assessment well to identify and plan for the needs of more able pupils.

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- The school is very good in assessing the pastoral and emotional needs of its pupils and gives effective support where required.
 - Reports to parents are of good quality and comply with statutory requirements. They provide information on standards achieved and indicate how to improve. Parents are aware of the targets set for their children and have the opportunity to respond to these reports. However, no space is available for pupils to be involved in self-assessment and evaluate the areas that require improvement.

5.3 Curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory with a number of good features.

- The curriculum suitably reflects the aims of the school and successfully promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical developments of pupils.
- The curriculum for children in Reception successfully promotes progress in all six areas of the Desirable Learning Outcomes.
- The curriculum in KS1 and KS2 meets with statutory requirements. It covers all the prescribed subjects of the NC. Religious education is taught in accordance with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. In the last academic year there were no pupils for whom the NC was modified or for whom it was disapplied.
- The amount of teaching time broadly meets the Welsh Assembly Government's recommendations.
- Curriculum policies meet the requirements of the Wales Curriculum 2000 and there are suitable schemes of work in place for all subjects. These outline learning outcomes and indicate opportunities for assessment and evaluation.
- Arrangements for personal and social education features are good. The staff have adopted a nationally available scheme and is in the process of adapting it to the school's needs. Visitors, including the school nurse and police, contribute effectively to the provision. The school council provides a good opportunity for pupils to develop their understanding of the decision making process and develop their appreciation of global citizenship.
- The school's coverage of *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is good. It is evident throughout the curriculum. Pupils develop a good awareness of sustainability issues through the geography curriculum, particularly in their study of the water supply in a developing country.
- Teachers' short-term planning builds effectively on medium and long-term plans other than in the development of key skills. Planning for the combined Reception and KS1 classes is developing satisfactorily. In art, and in design and technology, there is insufficient provision for older pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning and develop their ideas.
- The turnover of staff, particularly in the Y3/Y4 class, has had some adverse affect on the continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The present arrangements have successfully addressed these issues.
- The curriculum is socially inclusive. The school works hard to provide all its pupils with full curricular equality and opportunity.

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- The curriculum is successfully enhanced by excursions and educational visits. The school provides good range of extra-curricular musical and sporting activities, which pupils enthusiastically support.
 - The school has a suitable homework policy. For the most part, homework is set regularly and is relevant to pupils' learning. However, there have been some exceptions to this due to staff changes. Not all parents are fully aware of the school's expectations for work done at home or of the topics being studied each term.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

The quality of support and guidance is good. The school has effectively addressed the health and safety issues identified in the previous report.

- The school is inviting and welcoming. It has a strong, supportive ethos which caters well for individuals and groups alike. Pupils' work is attractively displayed and pupils' efforts are well valued.
- Relationships between pupils, teaching and support staff and other adult helpers are good. Staff know and understand their pupils well. They give high priority to pupils' welfare and safety. Adults and pupils work together in a positive and supportive manner.
- Pupils with SEN are well involved in the life of the school and there is a good level of academic and social support for these pupils. The school is particularly good at raising pupils' self-worth, and positive attitudes to both work and play.
- Suitable arrangements are in place for first aid and the administration of medicines. Child protection procedures follow local guidelines. The headteacher, who is the named person, has attended recent training and all members of staff are aware of the school's procedures.
- The governing body conducts regular health and safety audits, and matters of concern are promptly addressed.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN

The quality of the provision for pupils with SEN is good and pupils are making good progress. Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

- Approximately 12 per cent of all pupils in the school are identified as requiring SEN support. Currently, there are no pupils with statements. A few pupils have both behavioural and learning difficulties. The school's special needs policy is comprehensive and complies with the current Code of Practice.
- There is a high proportion of able pupils in every class. The way in which teachers cater for pupils who learn at different rates is very good. This inclusiveness is a strength of the school.
- Early identification of pupils with SEN ensures purposeful support and differentiation by the class teachers, in the first instance, in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) at the school. The school encourages parents to be involved with supporting their child's achievements. Some home-school diaries provide good information for parents about their child's behaviour and achievement at school.
- The school has appropriate procedures and systems for identifying and assessing learning and behavioural difficulty. Teachers monitor pupils' performance regularly.

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- The SENCO, in consultation with class teachers, produces individual educational plans (IEPS) for each pupil. Targets are stated in observable, measurable terms that can be clearly monitored and reviewed. However, the recording of the review process is not evident in the individual profiles. This is a shortcoming.
 - Teachers receive a good level of support from a range of professional help provided by outside agencies. Visiting staff from the LEA provide good assistance to the school.
 - During the inspection, seconded local authority support staff provided good levels of support in classes. The quality of teaching in these sessions is good and pupils make suitable progress according to their needs and abilities. Suitable strategies and various methods of differentiation have a positive effect on performance and standards.
 - There are good SEN resources, which support the full range of special needs currently within the school. However, the use of ICT to support the learning of pupils with SEN is at an early stage of development.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

The school's partnerships with parents and the community are good overall.

- The school keeps parents informed of events in school through regular newsletters. The school's notice board at the main entrance is another means of communication. Although the prospectus provides much useful information, it does not include the school's address and telephone number, or the provision for pupils with disabilities. Consequently, it does not conform to statutory requirements. The governors' annual report to parents reviews the school year, and includes a financial statement. Parents have the opportunity to discuss the report with governors.
- Whilst the majority of parents have expressed satisfaction with the information provided by the school, some would prefer more information on the timetable, the curriculum and progress made.
- Formal contact with parents and teachers occurs twice yearly, other consultations are available by arrangement. The headteacher operates an *open door* policy, and informal contact with staff occurs at the beginning and end of the school day, especially in reception. School reports are issued annually.
- The Friends of the School, made up of teachers, parents and members of the community, successfully organise and manage a number of fundraising and social activities throughout the year. Monies raised through the village fete, Christmas fayre, quizzes and barbeques have boosted school funds and provided much valued equipment and resources.
- Pupils enjoy meeting a variety of people from the community including the community police officer, fire service, road and rail safety representatives. These visitors talk to the children about their work and make them aware of their place in the community.
- The school has well-established links with local places of worship. Pupils visit the parish church and the Baptist chapel to celebrate the main Christian festivals. Clergy visit the school, assist with religious education and take assembly.
- The school supports a number of charities at home and abroad, including the NSPCC, Noah's Ark appeal and Dogs for the Blind. This aspect of the school helps make pupils aware there are people in the world less fortunate than themselves.

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- The arrangements for receiving new children into the reception class are sound, and help children settle in quickly. The transfer arrangements for Y6 pupils to the Comprehensive school in Caerleon are good. They ensure a smooth transition and avoid any loss of momentum in pupils' progress.
 - The school welcomes and provides training opportunities for student teachers, and work experience for 16 year olds.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

The school's partnership with industry is satisfactory.

- The school introduces reception children to the world of work by guided walks around the village. They learn about road safety, visit local shops and understand how they serve the community.
- The *Biz Wiz* scheme, in which sells articles such as Christmas cards and calendars made by children, enhances older pupils' business acumen. Pupils also run the Friday tuck-shop.
- Visitors such as the potter, musicians and demonstrations of birds of prey increase awareness of life outside of school. Visits to places of interest in connection with topic work include Hampton Court, Cardiff Castle and Roman remains at Caerleon.
- The school has benefited materially from its links with industry. Businesses have provided donations and sponsorship, which have helped increase the school's provision of resources and equipment.
- The school's partnership with industry enriches staff development satisfactorily.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

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

- The headteacher's self-evaluation report gives a very detailed picture of the steps taken to address the shortcomings identified at the time of the previous inspection. Analysis of SAT results over time accurately identifies trends and shortcomings. Current strengths and shortcomings in the school's provision are identified, with all staff involved in the process.
- The SDP identifies a broad range of areas for development. Its format includes costings, budgetary implications and criteria for monitoring progress. Some areas develop over a two or three-year term. The governing body helps to shape the development plan and receives regular reports from the headteacher as to the progress made towards the targets set.
- Although the targets identified in the SDP are worthwhile, they are not prioritised. In the present situation, there are too many targets for the plan to be effectively manageable by staff.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

The leadership and efficiency of the school are both satisfactory.

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- The headteacher is highly committed to the school and its pupils; she works tirelessly to promote and sustain the school's ethos. The school's aims and values are well reflected in its work. The inclusiveness of the school's provision is a strength.
 - Addressing the shortcomings identified in the previous inspection report has dominated the school's work in the intervening period. One consequence of this is that the leadership tends to be reactive, rather than proactive, to the challenges arising from, for example, the falling number on roll.
 - Although the school actively promotes the achievement of high standards, the way forward for the school is not always clear. Too many targets in the SDP and a tendency to produce far more paperwork than is necessary for a school of this size, places heavy demands on staff.
 - This is a small school where staff undertake a number of subject management responsibilities. They work extremely hard. The development of information technology in the school has been well led.
 - The school has significantly benefited from the support of the LEA's advisory teachers in updating schemes of work, and monitoring teaching and learning. It has, however, yet to address how it can effectively reduce bureaucracy and manage teachers' workload, particularly in the light of the headteacher becoming a class-based teacher.
 - The governing body is very supportive of the school. The chairperson is experienced and perceptive. Its members bring valuable knowledge and skills to their work for the school. Many governors visit the school regularly and members have been instrumental in helping the school address the issues arising from the previous inspection. The governing body has a satisfactory understanding of the school's current strengths and shortcomings.
 - The school has suitable policies and schemes of work in place. With some minor exceptions to the prospectus, the school meets all statutory requirements. There is a small omission to the SEN Code of Practice.
 - The management of the school's budget and other financial resources, including specific grants to the school, is satisfactory. However, the governors' efforts to maintain four classes during a period of contraction in the school roll has sapped reserves. With the departure of a comparatively large Y6 to secondary school, the school faces some difficult decisions.
 - There are suitable financial systems and checks in place and the school has acted upon the recommendations made in the recent auditor's report. Targets in the SDP are costed and the school seeks to achieve best value when making major spending decisions.
 - The school runs smoothly. The school secretary undertakes her duties diligently.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

The provision of accommodation and learning resources is good; staffing is satisfactory.

- There is sufficient accommodation to meet the requirements of the statutory curriculum. Classrooms are of adequate size for the number of pupils and support staff use well-appointed rooms during withdrawal or small group work. The school makes good use of its large and well-maintained hall for lessons, lunch, school assemblies and for indoor activities at break times in bad weather.

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- Internally, the accommodation is clean and generally well maintained. Attractive displays of pupils' work enhance the appearance of corridors and classrooms and reflect a wide range of pupils' activity.
 - The school has generous outdoor facilities including grassed areas both for play and physical education. Staff and pupils have created a wildlife area, including a pond and walled gardens. However, there is no fenced area for reception children to use for organised play and other learning activities during lessons.
 - A suitable range of resources effectively supports teaching and learning. A particular strength is the information technology suite. The interactive white board provides an excellent resource for pupils and teachers alike. Libraries are adequately stocked and suitably organised; all pupils are aware of the procedures for borrowing and using books.
 - The school is staffed by suitably qualified and experienced teachers. At present, two part-time teachers are absent due to illness. The falling number on roll means that staffing arrangements are in a period of transition. During this time by funding a part-time teacher to work with Y2 children each morning.
 - In the run up to the inspection, the LEA has seconded an advisory teacher to relieve the headteacher of her teaching responsibilities. In addition, two learning support assistants are currently seconded to the school to work with individual and small groups of pupils in classes.
 - Non-teaching staff are much-valued members of the school community. The full-time classroom support in reception class works effectively with the class teacher.
 - Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and job descriptions are reviewed regularly. Staff development is linked to individual need as well as to initiatives identified in the SDP. Additional help from the LEA advisory service has been helpful in promoting school initiatives.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under-fives

The educational provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

- The school offers full-time places for reception (four to five-year-old) children. Numbers in each intake are small and children enter the school with a wide range of experiences in all the areas of learning. At present, the reception and Y1 children work together in the mornings; Y2 pupils join them each afternoon.
- Standards are good in children's personal and social development, their knowledge and understanding of the world, their language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development, and their creative development. In their physical development, standards are satisfactory. Most children achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five, any many exceed them.
- Classroom routines are well established. Staff provide a good balance of activities and children have suitable opportunities to select what they want to do. During the inspection, children benefited from the support of an additional learning support assistant. The

spacious classroom accommodation is well used. There is a sizeable playground available but this is not fenced off from the rest of the school grounds.

Good features

Reception children achieve good standards in the development of their personal and social skills.

- Children have a mature approach to their work. They take turns, make sensible choices about using equipment, and respect the views and property of others. They mix well with the older pupils in their class and have good regard for the class rules.
- Children play well with each other in the playground. They show initiative, concentrate well and most follow through their ideas to a sensible conclusion. Their relationships with adults are good. They take full responsibility for their personal needs.

Reception children achieve good standards in the development of language, literacy and communication skills.

- Children respond promptly to requests and follow instructions correctly. They answer questions in detail, comment about what is going on in and around the classroom, and express their views on a variety of different topics. They accurately repeat what they have heard.
- Children know the meaning of such terms as *title*, *author* and *illustrator*. They handle books carefully, turn the pages in order, and talk about the illustrations. They recognise rhyming words, and make informed suggestions as to what missing words or phrases might be. They suggest alternative ways in which a story may develop. Children have a good recollection of familiar words and many are confident to have a go at new or unfamiliar ones. Children's phonic skills are developing well.
- Children trace and copy adult writing, label pictures and drawings, and correctly sequence pictures to tell a story. Many are starting to write independently.
- Children greet each other, recite prayers and sing songs in Welsh. They refer to objects in the classroom in both English and Welsh.

Reception children achieve good standards in their mathematical development.

- Children recognise patterns, identify similarities and differences, and match objects. They correctly sequence numbers and shapes, identify regular two-dimensional shapes, work with numbers to 20 and beyond.
- Children understand the purpose of money and make decisions as to what they can afford to buy when they visit *John's shop* in the village. They understand terms such as *one more*, *bigger than*, *smaller than* and *same as*.

Reception children achieve good standards in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world.

- Children are familiar with the passing of time. They know the different seasons, describe the weather and make suggestions as to what sort of clothing is appropriate for different times of year. They talk about the different people in their families.
- Children describe some of the places they pass on their way to school and draw simple maps to illustrate their route. They compare different places, such as the town and the seaside, with their home area.

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- Pupils name a range of living creatures; many are aware of the importance of conserving rain forests.
 - Children use the computer independently. They successfully use the mouse to follow instructions.

Reception children achieve satisfactory standards in their physical development.

- When using large wheeled vehicles, children respond to requests to move in different directions and at different speeds. When practising road safety procedures, they understand commands such as *stop*, *walk*, *fast* and *slow*.
- Children take part, with older pupils, in Welsh country dancing.
- Children correctly handle different instruments and equipment. They use a range of different pens and pencils. They draw with increasing accuracy and make effective use of construction kits.

Reception children achieve good standards in their creative development.

- Children use a range of different tools, paints and simple printing techniques to produce attractive pictures.
- Children enjoy making a sound picture of a train journey. They are imaginative and make good use of instruments to portray the different parts of the journey through the town and country, and by the sea. They perform with confidence and respond well to an audience. They willingly join in songs in both English and Welsh.
- Children play imaginatively with sand and water, and make good use of toys and equipment to act out their stories and events.
- Children use a variety of different brushes and colours to develop their understanding of shape and form.

Shortcomings

- Children do not make enough use of ICT to support their learning across the areas of learning.
- Children's use of outside space is limited by the lack of a fenced outside area.

English

Overall, standards are good in both key stages. Standards in speaking and listening are very good, and good in reading and writing in both key stages.

Good features

- In both key stages, pupils develop very good speaking skills. Pupils in KS1 explain what they are doing when involved in a task, discuss aspects of their work sensibly and pose relevant questions. Pupils in KS2, using appropriate vocabulary, participate constructively in whole-class discussions.
- When talking about organisation of recipes and cooking at home, pupils in Y3/Y4 relate simple experiences and events in their lives coherently and logically. Working in pairs, Y5/Y6 pupils offer confident opinions when describing characters based on a class text about myths.
- In both key stages, most pupils listen attentively and adapt their speech to a widening range of demands. Pupils in KS1 confidently outline how they approach and achieve different tasks. Pupils in KS2 use correct strategies when formally addressing their peers and visitors to the school.
- In KS1, standards of achievement in reading are good. Pupils read with developing fluency. During shared reading sessions using big books, pupils read confidently and involve themselves purposefully in the discussions of the text.
- The majority of KS2 pupils make good progress with their reading skills as they move through the key stage. They talk about their favourite books, giving good reasons for their choice. Year 3 and Y4 pupils recognise strong and weak features in a recipe and communicate their thoughts well. When reading aloud in class, pupils in Y5/Y6 communicate the meaning of a text effectively with appropriate emphasis and expression.
- Pupils' writing in KS1 progresses steadily with some individual pupils achieving very good standards. Year 1 understand the significance of the importance of spacing words for the reader whilst some pupils include punctuation in a meaningful way. More able

pupils make very good progress in extended writing using story beginnings, bubble speech and some character writing.

- In KS2, pupils respond well in their writing to a wide range of experiences. They have a good awareness of how to vary their language for particular purposes and readers. Pupils in Y3/Y4 use appropriate phrases when designing a poster for a wanted friend. Year 5 and Y6 pupils select vocabulary appropriately when writing a detailed, mythical character study. Many successfully transfer these strategies to their writing across the curriculum and make good progress. By the end of the key stage, pupils produce some extended writing of very good quality.
- The development in the presentation of written work and of handwriting is progressing well in both key stages.

Shortcomings

- Pupils do not consistently develop their skills as independent writers as they move through the school. They make insufficient use of ICT for drafting and editing their work.

Mathematics

Standards are good in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, pupils respond quickly and accurately to simple number questions and problems involving addition, subtraction and multiplication. They explain their workings and appreciate that there may be other ways of calculating the correct answer.
- Pupils recognise simple fractions and patterns in written numbers. They successfully calculate using different measures, including time and money.
- Pupils estimate and measure, using centimetres and metres. They recognise the properties of regular shapes and describe their features using the correct mathematical vocabulary. Pupils know that symmetrical shapes reflect along a line of symmetry.
- In KS2, pupils in Y3/Y4 respond rapidly to quick-fire mental mathematics questions. They double small and large numbers and try different ways of finding factors of given numbers.
- Pupils recognise and classify different angles, measure them correctly and apply this knowledge when, for example, writing programming instructions for a computer-controlled vehicle. They successfully use different number skills in calculating the size of angles using a protractor.
- Pupils in Y5/Y6 work effectively with a wide range of numbers, including decimals. They accurately multiply and divide by 10, 100 and 1000, and show dexterity in dealing with problems involving the multiples of six, seven and nine.
- Pupils work successfully with fractions including equivalent and mixed fractions. They work effectively with a range of measures, applying number skills well in different contexts. Their work on shape shows a secure grasp of measuring and calculating skills. Pupils successfully gather and interpret information, making good use of ICT.
- Pupils throughout the key stage make good and confident use of the interactive white board, calculator and computer programs to support their work.

Shortcomings

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- Occasionally, untidy presentation reduces the accuracy of pupils' written calculations.

Science

Standards are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.

Good features

- Key Stage 1 pupils successfully categorise plants and animals, and things that grow and those that do not. They identify where creatures live and the condition for plants to grow.
- Pupils identify push and pull forces, and relate these to everyday actions such as pulling up socks and brushing teeth. They know that a squeeze represents a push and that a stretch a pull, and relate this to riding a bicycle. They work together to find ways of using push and pull forces to propel a toy car with an elastic band.
- With prompting, pupils understand that a test must be fair if it is to be worthwhile. They complete tables to show their results.
- Key Stage 2 pupils have a good subject knowledge. They are familiar with reversible and irreversible changes, and knowledgeable about solids, liquids and gases. They successfully explain the relationship of the earth, sun and moon.
- Using CD-ROMs and the Internet, pupils research eclipses and successfully interpret their findings in their own words. They successfully plan investigations such as the most effective circuit for a burglar alarm. In experiments on condensation, they systematically record their method, observations and outcome.
- Pupils are familiar with the concept of a fair test and know to alter only one variable at a time. In their written accounts, pupils use correct symbols and terminology in their accounts. They make effective use of tables and graphs to record and illustrate their results. In their written accounts, pupils not only explain their findings but suggest reasons for the outcome.

Shortcomings

- At KS1, pupils' investigative skills are not sufficiently developed and pupils make uneven progress in recording their work.
- Pupils do not consistently make predictions before starting their investigations.

Welsh second language

Standards achieved in Welsh are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.

Good features

- Pupils in both key stages are developing confidence in using a good range of words and phrases. Their pronunciation is satisfactory and the range of their vocabulary increases throughout the key stages.
- In KS1, pupils recognise and use a number of greetings. They know the Welsh words and phrases to describe the weather. They respond appropriately to questions asked by the teacher describing their feelings- "*Rwy'n hapus*", "*Wedi blino*", "*Gweddol*". They sing a variety of songs, hymns and rhymes in Welsh and consistently count objects in Welsh across the curriculum.

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- Pupils in KS2 are increasingly confident in responding to a variety of language patterns. Their recall of previous work is good and sometimes very good. In Y5/Y6, most answer simple questions willingly and participate in practical exercises with confidence.
 - Key Stage 1 pupils repeat words and phrases read by the teacher and read simple sentences from cards to a satisfactory level.
 - Key Stage 2 pupils read and understand phrases in course books and worksheets, and some able pupils read simple books with confidence.
 - Pupils in KS1 make satisfactory progress in developing their writing skills. Key Stage 2 pupils in Y3/Y4 write about their likes and dislikes relating to school, correctly labelling their findings on posters they design using ICT. Pupils in Y5/Y6 connect sentences intelligibly and coherently, and form some negative sentences correctly.
 - Throughout the school, all teachers use incidental Welsh effectively. Words and phrases are displayed prominently in classrooms and around the school, supporting pupils' vocabulary.
 - The assistance of the *Athrawes Fro* in supporting and encouraging teachers in the delivery and organisation of the subject programme impacts positively on pupils' progress.

Shortcomings

- Pupils are not confident in initiating dialogue.

Design and technology

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

Good features

- In KS1, pupils make satisfactory progress in design and make activities. Pupils are developing skills in planning, evaluating and finishing their products. They choose suitable materials, cut, shape and join them appropriately. They mark out, cut, glue and paste competently.
- When making a plan for a park toy, KS1 pupils record their ideas using labelled pictures and sketches, and work well independently.
- Pupils in KS2 extend their designing, making and evaluating skills using a wider range of materials and components. Year 3 and Y4 investigate the mechanism for “pop-up” cards involving moving parts. Pupils work collaboratively in pairs, disassemble, join and make their own designs. Pupils explain the construction and evaluate the designs with the whole class. They are confident learners and make good progress.
- Evidence shows that Y3/Y4 pupils designed, modified and made changes to their photo frame models, and then discussed whether the modification did the job required. A good standard of work was achieved.
- Pupils in Y5/Y6 plan, design and refine a cam-operated toy. Evidence shows they work in pairs, measure, draw, label and plan the workings of a moving toy. A number of improvements had been made at various stages as a result of discussions and evaluation. Many of the finished products were of good quality.
- In both key stages pupils use tools and equipment appropriately with due regard to health and safety.

Shortcomings

- In KS1, some design and make tasks, are too teacher-structured. Pupils do not sufficiently generate, plan and carry out their own design and make activities.

Information technology

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

Good features

- Pupils in KS1 know that icons represent particular programs and functions, and click and drag effectively. They confidently delete mistakes and produce capital letters using the shift key.
- Pupils use paint and graphics program with confidence. They select appropriate tools for the purpose, change the colour on the palette and use different effects, such as *spray* or *flood*.
- All pupils in KS2 make good progress in using the interactive white board to support their learning.
- Pupils in Y3/Y4 locate and load a program, cut and paste a picture from a previously saved file and use it to make posters about their *likes and dislikes* in a Welsh lesson. They make good use of the digital camera across curricular areas.
- By the end of KS2, pupils demonstrate a high degree of competence in using a database. They are well aware of the importance of giving accurate information and instructions.
- A significant feature is that the older pupils in KS2 use the computers frequently as an integral part of their learning. They demonstrate confidence and familiarity in using drop down menus when using a database to gather information for a census of Ponthir.
- Some pupils in KS2 consistently organise, exchange and present information in different forms and styles for specific audiences; for example, a presentation on a pupil's recent visit to Florida.

Shortcomings

- As they move through the school, pupils do not make enough use of computers to enhance and consolidate learning within the subject area.
- Pupils' skills in interpreting, analysing and communicating information are not progressively developed.

History

Standards of achievement are good in both key stages.

Good features

- In both key stages, pupils are interested in the subject; they listen well, and show a good recall of previous learning and use relevant language and vocabulary.
- Throughout the school, the effective use of time lines contributes to pupils' chronological awareness and enables pupils to recall facts about famous people and sequence events, particularly within their own locality.
- Key Stage 1 pupils develop an awareness of chronology and use appropriate vocabulary when discussing the similarities and differences between nurses *now and then* in the time of Florence Nightingale.

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- By the end of KS2, pupils have a good sense of the social aspect of history and show empathy with characters and events. They have a growing ability to identify the causes and consequences of historical events, for example, the reasons for Celtic occupation, and the impact of the Roman invasion.
 - Pupils in both key stages develop early skills in history enquiry using a range of historical sources. Younger KS2 pupils differentiate between primary and secondary sources of evidence when studying life in Roman times. Pupils know and understand such vocabulary as *hypocaust* and *caldarium*. They demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject when discussing artefacts with a visiting historian from the local museum.
 - Throughout the school, the effective use of visits to places of historical interest enhances pupils' historical knowledge and understanding. Pupils make good reference to local history, especially at the end of KS2, drawing on important developments, key events and notable people, and identifying the causes and some of the consequences of events and changes.
 - Pupils effectively communicate their understanding of historical events and situations through extended writing, role-play and having visitors to the school. Pupils recall with interest and enthusiasm their experience of having a Victorian day at school. They make good cross-curricular links when writing about the disaster in the mine.
 - The culture and heritage of Wales is well-established in pupils' awareness of their own locality and they effectively develop their understanding of how the present is linked to the past.
 - Pupils make very good use of ICT to source information, for investigation, and as a way of organising results.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Geography

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

Good features

- Key Stage 1 pupils are familiar with different forms of travel, locally, nationally and internationally. They identify different routes for travelling to school and match these to alternative means of transport.
- Pupils draw plans of the school and of the village. They use labels and symbols effectively to identify features. They give accurate directions to, for example, the nearby shop, village hall and the church.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of the position of Ponthir in relation to Cardiff. They are able to describe similarities and differences between two locations.
- Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of the water cycle and different types of weather. Pupils' plans of the water supply to buildings on the school site are detailed and accurate. These help pupils to make good comparisons with the provision of water in Burkina Faso in Africa. They have a good regard for environmental issues.

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- Pupils successfully gather and interpret information about the locality, for example, issues to do with car parking in the vicinity of the school. They have a good appreciation of the particular physical and economic features of Wales.
 - In considering the impact of the proposed nursery in the village, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the decision-making process and the importance of taking account of a wide range of differing views. Their conclusions demonstrate a good analysis of people's attitudes and values and the impact of social, economic and environmental factors.

Shortcomings

- At KS1, older pupils do not sufficiently apply and interpret their skills to a wider range of contexts.
- Pupils' use of ICT to support their work in geography is not consistent as they move through the school.

Art

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

Good features

- Key Stage 1 pupils have a secure understanding of colour and pattern. They successfully use computer programs to experiment and refine their ideas and to develop their imaginations.
- Pupils' observational skills are good. When looking at the examples of contemporary wood sculpture, they show an appreciation of line, texture and shape. They are interested in knowing the different ways of shaping and forming materials. In making three-dimensional models of totem poles, they make sensible choices about materials, weighing up the pros and cons of each.
- Key Stage 2 pupils have a good awareness of the impact of shadow in still-life work. They have looked at examples of contemporary work from Welsh and other artists. They have created their own still-life settings and used viewfinders to arrange and modify and develop their initial ideas and thoughts.
- Pupils make good and effective use of a wide range of different media, for example, pastels and paint for their studies of gourds and jugs.
- Working with a local visiting artist, pupils design and create three-dimensional work using paper, card and clay. Their sketchbooks illustrate the different stages of planning and how they have modified their designs as their work has progressed.
- Pupils' use their appreciation and evaluation of the work of others to help them refine and develop further their own ideas.

Shortcomings

- In KS1, older pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to plan, modify and adapt their ideas from their appraisals of their own and others' work.

Music

Standards achieved are good in both key stages.

Good features

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- In assembly, pupils in both key stages sing with enthusiasm and in tune. They have a good sense of rhythm and appropriate attention is paid to breathing, dynamics and pitch.
 - Key Stage 1 pupils know a range of topic-related songs including rhymes and songs in English and Welsh. They vary their voices to produce loud and quiet singing. They respond appropriately to instructions, remember and repeat musical patterns.
 - Pupils exhibit good listening skills and respond well when making their sound picture story about a train ride that takes them through the station, the town and into the countryside. Pupils improvise with the use of voice, percussion and simple phrases. They listen to each other, take turns using instruments and are confident performers.
 - Key Stage 2 pupils have a good sense of rhythm, duration, tempo and pitch. They work co-operatively to compose and structure a performance, which includes different musical elements. They perform their work confidently, using tuned and un-tuned instruments.
 - Pupils listen attentively to their own group performance and that of others. They discuss and evaluate their own compositions using a subject specific vocabulary to describe the musical elements. By the end of KS2, pupils have a good feel for rhythm; with some good use of dynamics, they successfully create, select and organise sounds to produce a specific mood and atmosphere.
 - Pupils sing Welsh hymns and songs and participate in school celebrations and concerts. Pupils in KS2 take part in the schools' percussion orchestra and perform in school assemblies together with other individual talented musicians. This experience further extends their skills and confidence and raises their level of achievement.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Physical Education

Standards are satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.

Good features

- In Welsh country dancing, KS1 pupils show a good awareness of space. They successfully memorise a sequence of steps and work well with a partner.
- Pupils respond promptly to instructions and vary the pace successfully. They demonstrate a good feel for rhythm.
- Pupils successfully develop throwing, catching and passing skills in team games.
- In KS2, Y3/Y4 pupils successfully plan and develop short sequences of balancing and travelling movements. They discuss and modify their plans with each other and produce a well co-ordinated performance. They have a good understanding of safety issues and the effect of exercise on the body. They participate well in warm-up and cool-down activities.
- With the help of specialist coaches, KS2 pupils successfully develop a range of individual and team game skills in tennis, football, netball and rugby.
- By the end of KS2, most pupils are confident swimmers.

Shortcomings

- At KS1, pupils do not sufficiently evaluate their own performances.

Religious Education

Standards of achievement in religious education are good in both key stages.

Good features

- In KS1, Y1 pupils clearly understand the need to *give thanks*. They talk and write about their special gifts and family celebrations, devise and write their own prayers.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of major Christian festivals develops well in KS1. Pupils' oral responses vary, but, overall, they demonstrate good recall of recent experiences such as reasons for the Christmas celebration and the angel telling Mary about baby Jesus.
- In KS2, Y3/4 pupils show empathy and understanding. They appreciate the importance of caring for others and friendship and, through discussion and dialogue in class, reflect thoughtfully on aspects of friendship. They understand how their actions affect others.
- In both key stages, pupils effectively develop an awareness of Christian practices. Their responses to topics, stories and ideas are well written.
- Evidence shows that by the end of KS2, pupils make oral and written comparisons between aspects of Christian and Islamic faiths. Some pupils achieve good standards in their knowledge and understanding of differing beliefs and practices.
- Throughout both key stages, pupils have a good understanding of significant stories from the Bible and they recall, write and illustrate these well. Links with the local community and churches contribute positively to pupils' knowledge and understanding. Key Stage 2 pupils successfully write about *special places* and their accounts of celebrations contain interesting detail.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

The school has made good progress in addressing the eleven issues identified in the previous inspection report.

1. Raise standards in information technology, geography, art and physical education at both KS1 and KS2 and design and technology at KS2. (Aspect 3.1)

The school has made good progress. Standards in these subjects are now satisfactory in KS1 and good in KS2.

2. Improve standards which are no more than satisfactory and deal with present weaknesses and shortcomings. (Aspect 3.1)

Overall, the school has made good progress.

3. Increase the range of pupils' written work and ensure regular opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum. (Aspects 5.1 and 5.3)

The school has made good progress.

4. Review class management and discipline strategies to improve behaviour in classrooms. (Aspects 4.1, 4.2, 5.1)

The school has made good progress.

5. Ensure the headteacher takes a more prominent role in monitoring and evaluating:

- **teachers' medium and short-term planning;**
- **classroom organisation and practice;**
- **standards of achievement in each year group.** (*Aspect 6.2*)

The school has made good progress.

6. Adopt a wider range of teaching strategies to give pupils more challenging tasks and greater opportunities for investigative work. (*Aspect 5.1*)

The school has made good progress.

7. Develop more rigorous and consistent assessment procedures to ensure that work is better matched to differing needs and abilities. (*Aspects 5.1 and 5.2*)

The school has made good progress.

8. Make better use of the accommodation and resources. (*Aspect 6.3*)

The school has made good progress.

9. Ensure the school's budget balances. (*Aspect 6.2*)

The school has made satisfactory progress. The school's budget for the current financial year is balanced and a small carry forward is anticipated. However, the number on roll has fallen faster than expected and the LEA is supporting staffing during this transitional period.

10. Involve governors more directly in the management of the school. (*Aspect 6.2*)

The school has made satisfactory progress. In terms of addressing the key issues from the last inspection, the involvement of the governors has been good. Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the school's present strengths and shortcomings.

11. Address health and safety issues. (*Aspects 5.4 and 6.3*)

The school has made good progress. It has successfully addressed the health and safety issues identified in the report.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The governing body and headteacher should now:

1. Raise standards where they are satisfactory;
2. Consolidate and build upon the good progress made since the last inspection by:
 - (i) ensuring that key skills, especially in ICT, are systematically identified in teachers' short-term planning and developed in day-to-day lessons;
 - (ii) keeping parents more informed about the curriculum their children are studying each term;
 - (iii) making better use of self-evaluation to identify a more manageable number of sharply focussed priorities for development;
 - (iv) auditing the school's systems to reduce repetition and unnecessary bureaucracy in both policy and practice;

- (v) supporting the headteacher's transition to a class-based teaching headship;
 - (vi) working with the local education authority to make the best use of the available financial resources.
3. Ensure that statutory requirements are met in respect of the prospectus and that the Code of Practice for SEN is adhered to fully.

APPENDIX

A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Ponthir VC Primary
School type	Voluntary Controlled
Age-range of pupils	4-11 years
Address of school	Caerleon Road Ponthir Newport
Post-Code	NP18 1GD
Telephone Number	01633 421651

Headteacher	Mrs Val Baker
Date of appointment	September 1994
Chair of Governors	Mrs Christine Prosser
Registered Inspector	Dr Michael Best
Dates of inspection	2 nd -4 th February 2004

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>								
Year group	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	8	11	10	7	14	6	18	74

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	4	1	4.6

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	17:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.53:1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>				
	R	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Autumn 2003	96.1	96.1	95.91	95.96
Summer 2003	97.66	96.15	93.74	94.42
Spring 2003	98.44	97.0	95.28	95.88

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0
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C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2003	Number of pupils in Y2: 6
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of KS1 was greater than four but fewer than 10, overall performance indicators only are included	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English according to teacher assessment			
In the school	100	In Wales	79

END OF KEY STAGE 2: 2003

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results: 2003	Number of pupils in Y6: 9
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of KS2 in was greater than four but fewer than 10, overall performance indicators only are included	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and English			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	67	In the school	67
In Wales	63	In Wales	63

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

Three inspectors spent a total of six inspection days in the school. Thirty lessons were observed in whole or in part.

- Pre-inspection discussions about the life and work of the school were held with the headteacher and staff, the governing body and parents.
- Responses to the questionnaire for parents distributed before the inspection were analysed.
- During the inspection, discussions were held with the headteacher, staff and pupils in the school.
- Policy documents, schemes of work and other documentation were read, analysed and discussed with the headteacher and staff.
- A range of pupils' past and present work was examined.
- Post inspection meetings were held with the governors, headteacher and staff.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Michael Best	RgI	Context; Main findings; Standards achieved; Key Skills; Teaching; Curriculum; Support and guidance; Self-evaluation; Leadership and efficiency; Progress since the last inspection; Key issues	early years; mathematics; science; geography; art; physical education
Charles Brentnall	Lay	Behaviour and attitudes; Attendance; Links with parents; Links with industry	
Julie Jones	Team	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Assessment, recording and reporting; Special Educational Needs; Staffing, accommodation and resources	English; Welsh second language; design and technology; information technology; history; music; religious education

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