

**Inspection under Section 28 of the
Education Act 2005**

**Abermule Primary School
Abermule
Montgomery
Powys
SY15 6ND**

School Number: 6662002

Date of Inspection: 09/10/06

by

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78730**

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Abermule Primary School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Abermule Primary School took place between 09/10/06 and 11/10/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Michael T. Ridout undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	many important shortcomings

There are three types of inspection.

For **all** inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject reports.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports on all subjects.

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y 13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Abermule School is a community school for boys and girls aged from four to eleven years. It is organised in four classes. There are 100 full-time equivalent (fte) pupils on roll, including 13 children under five. The average class size is 25. There are five full time equivalent (fte) teachers, including two part-time teachers. To enhance this provision there are four teaching assistants (three part time) and two qualified nursery nurses who job share one post. In addition the Local Education Authority (LEA) provides part-time teaching for Welsh as a second language and five support assistants (four part time) for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).
2. The school is situated in the village of Abermule, about three miles north of Newtown. It occupies an extensive site that includes a Community Centre. The head teacher acts as warden of the Centre and secretary of the Centre Management Committee. The school serves the surrounding rural area, including the villages of Llandyssil, Llanmerewig and Cefyn-y-Coed. Abermule has mainly privately owned homes and a few are rented. The school describes the community as relatively advantaged.
3. Two and a half per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is below national and local averages. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities and none come from homes where Welsh is the first language. English is the predominant tongue spoken and the school teaches Welsh as a second language.
4. Assessment data, including baseline assessments, confirms that the school receives pupils from the full range of abilities, including a good number of more-able pupils. Nineteen per cent of pupils are identified as having SEN. Three pupils have a statement of SEN.
5. The school was last inspected in November 2000. At the time standards were judged overall satisfactory. Improvements in provision, such as new equipment and adaptations to the accommodation have been made. The number on roll has reduced markedly (around 25%), with a reduction from six to five classes in September 2005 and from five to four classes in September 2006.

The school's priorities and targets

6. A statement of values with the following headings guides the work of the school: Learning, Management, Relationships and Equal Opportunities.
7. The school identifies three main priorities for 2006/7 in the school development plan (SDP):
 1. improve standards of using, investigating and applying knowledge and skills in mathematics and science by developing a teaching and learning policy which centres on thinking skills;
 2. produce a new two year curriculum plan 2006 - 2008, and
 3. produce an effective and manageable whole school assessment system.

Summary

8. Abermule School has a distinctive family ethos that reflects well the good features in its provision but there are important shortcomings in standards and progress and in the effectiveness of educational leadership.
9. In accordance with the Education Act 2005, I am of the opinion, and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) agrees, that this school is in need of significant improvement.
10. The inspection finds a mismatch between the standards indicated in the school's National Curriculum (NC) assessment results and the standards achieved in pupils' work during the lessons seen and in their work over time. Pupils' good levels of ability, as indicated by standardised assessments, are not fully reflected in the progress and achievement of pupils across their studies.

Table of grades awarded

Key question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	Grade 3
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	Grade 4
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	Grade 3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	Grade 2
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	Grade 4
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	Grade 4
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	Grade 3

11. The evidence of inspection did not match the grading for any of the key questions given by the school in the self-evaluation report prepared before the inspection.

Standards

12. Standards were judged as follows in 19 lessons or parts of lessons, in the subjects and areas of learning inspected:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
-	42%	47%	11%	-

13. In around two-fifths of lessons observed standards of achievement were good. This is well below the 2007 Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) target of at least good standards in 65 per cent of lessons inspected.

14. Although learners demonstrate at least sound levels of knowledge and understanding and they demonstrate a good ability to learn and work productively they are not always enabled to achieve their very best.

Areas of learning for under-fives

15. The overall quality of the educational provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and the children are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

Language, literacy and communication	Grade 2
Personal and social development	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 1
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2

16. Children under five make at least good progress. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good; they develop basic and key skills well across their learning.

Grades for standards in subjects inspected:

Inspection Area	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	Grade 3	Grade 3
Welsh second language	Grade 4	Grade 4
Science	Grade 3	Grade 3
Information technology	Grade 3	Grade 3
Geography	Grade 4	Grade 4

17. The first-hand evidence of inspection, including the scrutiny of pupils' work from the last academic year, confirms widely variable progress across both key stages.
18. The more able pupils and less able including those with SEN are not always enabled to achieve their potential. This is particularly evident in the middle years.
19. Standards in basic and key skills, and bilingual skills are underdeveloped in both key stages.
20. The results of NC teacher assessments in 2005 in both key stages are broadly in line with national figures. In comparison with schools having up to eight per cent free school meals results in both key stages were below average in English and mathematics and above average in science.
21. The results for 2006 show an improvement compared with the previous year. However, the trend in results since the last inspection is flat overall.
22. Outside lessons behaviour is very good and positive relationships are exemplary. However, where lessons fail to engage learners many do not

maintain concentration. This has a negative effect on the standards they achieve and the quality of learning.

23. The under-fives develop a range of independent learning skills well but in both key stages pupils progress in the development of the skills required for lifelong learning are underdeveloped.
24. The level of attendance is good, usually about 95 per cent. This is a little better than local and national figures.
25. Pupils make good progress in developing their personal and social skills and in their moral and wider development. They develop a sound understanding of equal opportunities and of diversity.

The quality of education and training

26. The quality of teaching was judged as follows in 26 lessons or parts of lessons:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
-	31%	35%	31%	4%

27. In around one in three lessons observed teaching was good. This is well below the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her annual report 2004 – 2005. Nationally, the quality of teaching is good in 79 per cent of lessons, with 18 per cent of lessons having outstanding features.
28. Despite the absence of clear direction for teaching, including effective guidance on the implementation of schemes of work, there is some good practice in teaching and some aspects of assessment.
29. Teaching of the under-fives is good with support staff making a strong contribution to children's learning.
30. The high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching observed is a significant feature across both key stages.
31. Expectations are not always high enough, lesson planning is not sufficiently developed in matching work to pupils' differing needs and the management of learning lacks rigour and consistency. The pace is often slow.
32. In the vast majority of lessons there is insufficient emphasis on teaching bilingual skills.
33. There are good arrangements to assess pupils' attainments using standardised tests but the use made of this information to help promote higher standards is limited.
34. The school is successful overall in providing a broad curriculum. A particular strength of provision is that all learners benefit from a wide range of outdoor learning experiences.

35. A good feature of the school's provision is the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided.
36. Children under five receive rich learning opportunities, both indoors and outdoors.
37. The planned curriculum across both key stages provides a sound basis for ensuring progression in learning but shortcomings in implementing schemes of work mean that appropriate progression is not always assured.
38. The emphasis on basic, key and bilingual skills is underdeveloped.
39. The programme for Personal and Social Education (PSE), including health education is an integral part of the curriculum. The quality of provision for equal opportunities is good.
40. The provision to promote pupils' moral and social development is good but the provision to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness is less well developed.
41. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is adequately developed.
42. The school works well with parents and carers and the wider community. Its community status is clearly reinforced by its ethos.
43. The school is successful in providing high quality pastoral support and guidance for pupils.
44. The arrangements in place to support pupils with SEN are comprehensive but the available support is not always used fully and effectively.
45. A number of health and safety concerns were reported to the governing body (GB) following the inspection.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership has identified some important areas for improvement in its self-evaluation and recognises that the recent reorganisation of classes and staff responsibilities offers opportunity to establish clear strategic direction in resolving long-standing and important shortcomings in the school's provision.
47. Leadership is successful in the pastoral aspects of the school's work but there is little evidence to show the effective impact of leadership in improving quality and standards over time.
48. The arrangements for teachers' performance management are in line with requirements.
49. The GB is strongly supportive of the school but is over reliant on the head teacher for information to assist them in monitoring the quality of provision and helping to set the school's strategic direction.

50. The GB does not meet its statutory obligations in full. It does not publish the full range of information for parents and has yet to appoint a designated governor for Child Protection.
51. Important shortcomings are evident in the school's processes to improve quality and standards.
52. The overall provision of staff and resources is good but there are particular shortcomings in the provision of books.
53. The strategic organisation and deployment of key resources is sound but the general practice of providing four lengthy teaching sessions each day limits the variety of learning styles and too frequently results in a slow pace of work. Furthermore, the management of support staff within lessons is not always efficient and effective.
54. The school has yet to demonstrate good value for money in relation to pupils' overall achievements and the targets set in the SDP in recent years.
55. The previous inspection in October 2000 reported slow progress in resolving some long-standing issues. This inspection reports a similar picture.
56. Since the last inspection, the school has strengthened assessment procedures, provided schemes of work in all NC subjects and improved provision and standards in information technology (IT). However, standards across the subjects of the NC have not improved sufficiently and long-standing issues concerning leadership and planning for improvement have still not been resolved fully.

Recommendations

57. In order to improve further the quality of learning and raise overall standards the school and the GB, with the support of the LEA, should implement the SDP fully and seek to:
- R1 raise standards in Welsh as a second language and geography where important shortcomings are identified and raise standards further in English, science and information technology by resolving the shortcomings;
 - R2 improve overall progress, in line with pupils' capabilities, having particular regard for the more able and less able pupils, including those with SEN;
 - R3 improve achievement in basic and key skills, and enable pupils to develop the skills required for lifelong learning;
 - R4 build on the good elements of teaching to improve the overall quality and impact of teaching, placing strong emphasis on raising expectations of achievement, strengthening lesson planning and ensuring lessons engage the learner;
 - R5 implement schemes of work fully to ensure appropriate progression in learning;
 - R6 provide clear educational and strategic leadership in developing an effective learning and teaching policy and implementing rigorous monitoring procedures to secure its consistent implementation¹;
 - R7 ensure the efficient and effective use of support staff, learning resources and lessons time;
 - R8 develop the role of the GB in setting the strategic direction of the school and ensure statutory requirements are met in full.
58. The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

¹ this is a priority identified in the SDP 2006 – 2007.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

59. The findings of inspection differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question grade 2. This is because the inspection finds a mismatch between the standards indicated in the school's NC assessment results and the standards achieved in pupils' work during lessons over time. Furthermore, the good levels of ability indicated by standardised assessments are not fully reflected in pupils' progress and achievement across their studies.

60. Standards were judged as follows in 19 lessons or parts of lessons, in the subjects and areas of learning inspected:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
-	42%	47%	11%	-

61. In around two-fifths of lessons observed standards of achievement were good. This is well below the 2007 WAG target of at least good standards in 65 per cent of lessons inspected.

62. Learners achieve sound overall standards in knowledge and understanding. The majority have a good capacity to achieve high standards and they appear to learn a great deal incidentally as they listen and observe. However, the limited range of pupils' work in both key stages confirms the extent to which skills are underdeveloped within subjects.

63. The good capabilities of the majority of pupils identified in baseline assessments and a range of assessment data collated by the school are not consistently reflected in pupils' work. Discussion with pupils across the school confirms they have good general knowledge, the ability to think and enquiring minds.

64. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's learning.

65. Children under five achieve at least good standards in all areas of learning.

66. In both key stages, on the basis of NC end of key stage teacher assessments, pupils are generally successful in meeting end of key stage targets for attainment.

67. Across both key stages pupils' work does not reflect appropriate levels in key skills. Pupils seldom develop speaking and listening, reading, writing, numeracy skills and the use of information and communications technology (ICT) as an integral part of their learning. For instance, there is limited evidence of the effective and extended use of writing and ICT in science. Achievement in bilingual skills is underdeveloped.

68. Furthermore, there is little evidence of pupils developing creative and problem solving skills in challenging and relevant contexts. One notable exception however, was the work undertaken by pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 during a forest school session.
69. Learners achieve similar levels of success whatever their background.
70. The results of NC teacher assessments in 2005 in both key stages are broadly in line with national figures. This is reflected in the proportion of pupils attaining at least expected levels in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with schools having up to eight per cent free school meals results in both key stages were below average in English and mathematics and above average in science.
71. The 2006 NC assessment results show an improvement compared with the previous year.
72. Analysis of the school's results shows a fluctuating picture in the relative performance of boys and girls. This is due in part to the small numbers in each cohort.
73. Trends in performance over the last six years are broadly flat. There is some variation between the performance levels of different cohorts. There is greater consistency in KS2 compared with KS1. Overall, results indicate levels of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection.
74. Children under five make at least good progress in their learning.
75. Pupils in both key stages do not make the progress of which they are capable in much of their work. When given the opportunity pupils readily acquire new knowledge or skills such as when a group of Y6 pupils investigated shadows in a science lesson.
76. Pupils of all abilities often undertake similar tasks. As a consequence more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and able to make good progress. Similarly less able learners, including those with SEN, do not consistently undertake tasks closely tailored to their needs and ability.
77. In many of the lessons observed pupils often had limited understanding of the tasks they were given. This contributes to the generally slow pace of work. Pupils have little understanding of specific learning targets set for them and only limited understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.
78. In the aspects of personal development pupils make good progress towards fulfilling their potential but the standards reflected in their academic work indicate they are not prepared fully for moving on to the next stage of their education.
79. Pupils are generally self motivated and show a degree of enthusiasm for work, in particular with the more stimulating and challenging activities. There are occasions when pupils are slow to settle down to their work although the majority of them show positive attitudes to learning. Many pupils do not

maintain concentration in lessons, which has a negative effect on the standards they achieve and the quality of life in school.

80. Outside lessons, for example during break-time and lunchtime, pupils' behaviour is very good. Pupils move around the school in a quiet, orderly manner and they show respect to their fellow pupils and to adults, listening and responding appropriately to instructions and requests. Pupils' manners and attitudes at break-time and at lunchtimes are particularly good. However, during lessons the level of noise is disruptive and some pupils show indiscipline. Pupils' constant chatter and fidgeting has a detrimental effect on pupils' learning and many of them are distracted by those who find it difficult to sit quietly
81. Outside lessons pupils are considerate of others and of school property and demonstrate a developing level of self-confidence, taking a degree of responsibility for their own behaviour and attitudes. These good qualities are not seen consistently in lessons across both key stages.
82. One pupil was excluded during the last year. The appropriate procedures were followed.
83. The level of attendance is good, usually about 95 per cent. This is a little better than local and national figures. Recorded unauthorised absence is consistently low.
84. Registers are completed appropriately and quickly at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. There are no significant or unexplained variations in attendance levels across the school or throughout the year. Punctuality is good at the start of the day and throughout the school day, allowing sessions to start promptly without interruption.
85. The school takes appropriate account of the requirements of National Assembly of Wales Circular 3/99 that sets out the requirements for recording absence.
86. Although pupils have opportunities to work individually and co-operatively as part of a group they seldom use these experiences effectively to develop their decision-making and problem solving skills. Although pupils have well developed keyboard skills they are not enabled to use their research skills effectively. For example, there is little evidence of pupils planning a project, locating information through skimming and scanning a variety of texts and media, making notes and organising their writing into a well structured and well presented piece of work. As a consequence pupils' lifelong learning skills are underdeveloped.
87. Pupils make good progress in developing their personal and social skills and in their moral and wider development. The very good relationship between pupils and adults helps enable pupils to become secure and confident in their learning.
88. Teachers help pupils to become increasingly more sensitive to the needs of others, to care for those that are less fortunate and to develop an understanding of right and wrong. This aspect is promoted through assemblies and pupils respond positively such as by enthusiastically supporting charities.

89. In discussion, pupils adopt mature attitudes and recognise the need to treat everyone fairly and without discrimination. They show a positive awareness of the diversity of beliefs and cultures present in today's society and a sound awareness of equal opportunities.
90. Pupils have good moral values and show fair play and consideration for others.
91. The initial development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the workplace and the local community is helped by occasional visits to the school by members of the local community. Overall, pupils are under prepared for effective participation in the workplace.
92. Pupils serve the community by supporting a range of environmental initiatives. Pupils' visits to local places of interest enhance the NC and increase their understanding of the community.
93. Many community clubs use the school facilities in the evenings and pupils are encouraged to participate.

The quality of education and training

Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

94. The findings of inspection differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question grade 2. This is because important shortcomings in teaching are evident. However, despite the absence of clear direction for teaching, including clear guidance on the implementation of schemes of work, there is some good practice in teaching and some aspects of assessment.
95. The school has identified the need to develop a learning and teaching policy and thereby to improve the organisation of learning and teaching across both key stages. As yet this remains an aspiration, as there is little evidence of a strategy to support, guide and improve the impact of teaching over the medium term.
96. The high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching observed is a significant feature across both key stages.

97. The quality of teaching was judged as follows in 26 lessons or parts of lessons:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	31%	35%	31%	4%

98. In around one in three lessons observed teaching was good. This is well below the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her annual report 2004 – 2005. Nationally, the quality of teaching is good in 79 per cent of lessons, with 18 per cent of lessons having outstanding features.
99. Teaching of the under-fives is good with support staff making a strong contribution to children's learning.
100. The contribution of support staff to learning and teaching is widely variable in both key stages. Where structured programmes are implemented, such as in withdrawal sessions with small numbers of pupils, and where teachers focus the work of assistants in whole class lessons they enhance learning well. However, both the management and organisation of the work of support staff is not always well managed by teachers.
101. A distinctive feature of teaching across the school is the good working relationships members of staff established with all pupils. This was particularly evident in the discussions between the class teacher and pupils in Y5 and Y6 following a forest school's session.
102. The extent to which teachers challenge learners to achieve excellence is widely variable. In a few lessons high expectations and a lively rapport successfully promote good thinking, such as when pupils in Y3 enthusiastically explained solutions to mathematical challenges.

103. However, in too many lessons high achievement is not sustained or expected. In particular, a slow pace of learning and poor standards of presentation, often with work left unfinished, is prevalent.
104. Teachers benefit from suitable training opportunities but the extent of their knowledge of good primary practice and their subject knowledge and confidence in some areas is widely varied. Despite training in the teaching of IT there was little direct teaching of IT during the inspection.
105. The lack of guidance for lesson planning is reflected in the quality of teachers' day-to-day plans. There is little consistency and only seldom are the learning objectives clearly defined and explained to pupils in terms they understand.
106. The present emphasis on teaching the mixed age classes in two parallel groups, often with quite different work for each, limits the variety of teaching strategies and organisational methods used. This results in over direction, often with pupils completing insufficiently demanding worksheets. As a consequence, in many lessons the active engagement of pupils is not sustained.
107. There is good emphasis on promoting equal opportunity and a positive approach to issues of gender, race and disability equality.
108. In the vast majority of lessons there is insufficient emphasis on teaching bilingual skills. In a small minority of lessons, however, incidental Welsh is used and opportunities provided for structured speaking and listening in English and Welsh.
109. Teachers maintain a range of records to help monitor pupils' progress. However, planning to meet pupils' individual needs is underdeveloped. Planning reflects the content of schemes of work and seldom matches work precisely enough to pupils' individual needs.
110. The arrangements to formally assess pupils' attainment are good. The school systematically implements a range of standardised tests, mainly in English and mathematics.
111. Baseline assessments for under-fives and the arrangements for end of key stage NC teacher assessments are in line with requirements.
112. The school plans to implement a number of nationally developed assessment materials to evaluate standards in subjects other than English and mathematics. At present samples of pupils' work in English, mathematics and one foundation subject are collated each term. The value of this process in exemplifying standards is reduced however, as the work is not always rigorously assessed using NC criteria.
113. In IT pupils maintain a record of their achievement. However, there is little evidence to show that strategies including marking are used effectively and consistently to help learners understand the strengths of their work and identify the steps needed for improvement.

114. The quality of annual written reports to parents about their children's progress and achievement are of sound quality. Parents confirm they value both the written reports and the dialogue they have with teachers. Although future learning targets are discussed these are not always included in reports.

Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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115. The findings of inspection differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question grade 1. Pupils' bilingual and key skills are underdeveloped and the implementation of curricular planning does not adequately take into consideration the needs of individual pupils in both key stages. These are important shortcomings.
116. The school is successful overall in providing a broad curriculum that complies with statutory requirements. A particular strength of provision is that all learners benefit from a wide range of outdoor learning experiences. The school makes effective use of a wild garden and pond and other features within the school grounds. Furthermore, the school has productive links with the local forest school
117. Children under five receive rich learning opportunities, both indoors and outdoors. They learn actively through investigations and are encouraged to develop a wide range of learning skills. In preparation for the Foundation Phase the outdoor curriculum is being developed very effectively. Although it is not yet fully integrated into daily provision in all weathers, plans for this are underway.
118. The schemes of work for all subjects of the NC and religious education provide a sound basis for ensuring balance across subjects and continuity and progression in learning across both key stages. However, shortcomings in the implementation of schemes of work mean that these aspects are not always assured.
119. There is appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark three times, most recently this year.
120. Key skills are noted in lesson plans but because the planning is undeveloped pupils receive few opportunities to develop key skills fully. Furthermore, opportunities to develop creative and problem-solving skills are underdeveloped.
121. A good feature of the school's provision is the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided. Visits to places of educational interest, visitors to the school and the provision of instrumental tuition significantly enrich learning opportunities. Pupils also benefit from residential visits to an outdoor centre and to Llangrannog every year. Furthermore, good numbers attend a range of

- clubs that include, recorder club, badminton, tennis, netball and hockey. This provision adds a valuable dimension to pupils' learning experiences.
122. PSE, including health education is an integral part of the curriculum, and sex education is provided in accordance with school policy.
 123. Teachers provide good role models for pupils' moral development; as a result, pupils acquire a good set of values and know right from wrong. Pupils' social development is also good; they demonstrate concern for one another, are sensitive to the needs of others and regularly raise money for charities.
 124. Collective worship meets statutory requirements and contributes to pupils' sense of responsibility towards the environment. Acts of worship are broadly Christian in nature though pupils learn to respect the other main religious traditions. The local vicar takes assembly regularly. Children in the early years were seen to display awe and wonder at the world around them when investigating the hedgerow. A good feature of the provision for under-fives was the time they were given to respond to their experiences and the way in which they were encouraged to reflect on them. Opportunities for quiet reflection, however, were not provided in assembly or in lessons seen in KS1 and KS2.
 125. The school is an integral part of the community and has strong links with parents. Many parents enthusiastically support school events and the Friends organisation raises valuable funds for the school.
 126. Parents are provided with regular newsletters, 25 per year, prepared by the head teacher and are able to attend three parents' evenings per year to review and discuss their child's progress.
 127. The school has good links with the local high schools, other primary schools in the cluster group and a special school. Work experience placements are provided for a number of high school pupils. Links with teacher training colleges are now established with 'trainee teachers' placed at the school for varying periods during the year. The school also provides student placements through its well established links with Coleg Powys.
 128. Vocational topics contained in the schools' PSE programme help provide pupils with some work-related education.
 129. Apart from sponsorship of the school prospectus, there are very few partnerships or formal links with employers or local industry and the current provision of effective work related education experiences is limited. A few teachers have undertaken one day visits to other organisations, they have yet to undertake industrial/commercial placements and use their experiences to enrich the curriculum.
 130. There is no structured programme that ensures progression in pupils' oracy skills in English and Welsh. As a result, their bilingual skills are underdeveloped. In particular their competence in Welsh is limited and insecure.
 131. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is adequately developed through visits to places such as the Powysland museum, residential courses and participation in the Urdd

Eisteddfod at which the school frequently wins prizes, the most recent being the first prize in art. Pupils do not, however, have a sufficient awareness of the famous people and history of their locality. Subjects such as history, geography, art and literature are not used well to extend pupils' knowledge of the culture of Wales.

132. The school has high expectations of all its pupils and promotes equality of access to the curriculum. Any incident of stereotyping is promptly and appropriately challenged.
133. Policies for promoting and practising equal opportunity, equality of access and racial equality are formally adopted and effectively implemented. No pupil is barred from any of the school's activities and clubs. The school openly recognises and respects diversity.
134. Numerous practical examples of promoting sustainable development are visible in and around the school. Through these initiatives and through other subjects, pupils develop a greater understanding of this aspect. Paper recycling, composting and energy conservation are promoted and practised by pupils. Pupils are actively and enthusiastically involved with the ECO schools initiative and have, to date, achieved the bronze level award.
135. The school promotes healthy lifestyles and is designated a Healthy School. Pupils are aware of the healthy eating programme.
136. Links with a school in Kenya helps to promote pupils' understanding of global citizenship; this aspect is progressing well.
137. A small number of pupils help run the daily fruit tuck shop and the young savers club but, overall, the opportunities to develop pupils' entrepreneurial skills are not fully exploited and developed.
138. The setting of homework is not a consistent feature throughout the school. However, those pupils that are given homework are encouraged to complete their set homework tasks promptly and to take an increasing level of responsibility for their own learning. A number of aspects of the school's PSE programme help develop pupils' understanding of tolerance, flexibility and adaptability. The provision of curriculum sessions for parents is a regular feature that contributes positively to the school's curriculum.

Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
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139. The findings of inspection differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question grade 1. The inspection endorses a number of good features in the school's provision but did not identify any outstanding features.
140. The school plans and manages its care and support arrangements effectively. There are good links with the support services and the school makes effective use of them. This is a school in which pupils feel safe, respected and valued.

Members of staff take all reasonable care to protect pupils from harm and there are sound structures in place to ensure the welfare of pupils.

141. The school works well with parents and carers and the wider community. Its community status is clearly reinforced by its ethos. This is a distinctive feature. The school's head teacher co-ordinates the work of the community centre and the two institutions are interlinked in a way that positively benefits both pupils and the community at large. A good example, is the after school child care facility which is open to pupils of all ages and provides parents with a valuable service.
142. A very high number of parents attend the parents' evenings to discuss their children's progress. The Friends of Abermule are very active and have raised money to purchase for example, sports kit, a reading scheme and early years equipment for the school.
143. The pre-school playgroup, which is managed by the school, is a good feature of provision. Support staff work in both the playgroup and in the early years class. The children know the adults well before induction to the school. This enables the smooth transition from home to school. The children settle well at school and parents are warmly welcomed in the classroom thus contributing to the feeling of a supportive community.
144. The school is successful in providing high quality pastoral support and guidance for pupils. This is reflected in the good quality of relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils benefit from the good range of issues discussed through the PSE programme.
145. The school regularly advises pupils and parents that all pupils are expected to attend regularly and punctually. The system for monitoring attendance and punctuality is effective. Registers are completed appropriately and quickly at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Procedures for following up lateness or absence are well established.
146. The school does not tolerate bullying or inappropriate behaviour and any reported incidents are dealt with appropriately.
147. The school's merit system for recognising good standards of behaviour, attendance and achievement is understood well by pupils.
148. Risk assessments of the premises are undertaken regularly and appropriate risk assessments are carried out for all educational visits. These are mainly based on models provided by the local authority.
149. The school gives appropriate priority to assuring pupils' health, welfare and safety. All staff have received training in first aid. The school has achieved health promoting school (level three) status. It is proactive in promoting pupils' awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles, such as through the PSE programme. Furthermore, the daily meals provision offers a balanced choice of midday meal.

150. The school's PSE programme contains topics related to health and safety and pupils develop an appropriate awareness of health and safety. Good procedures are in place to fully meet the needs of pupils who are unwell or who have suffered an injury whilst in school.
151. During the inspection a number of health and safety issues were discussed with the school. The issues reported to the GB will be kept under regular review.
152. The head teacher is the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator. The GB has endorsed the school's policy, based on the all-Wales model, and the school staff has received relevant training and update briefings. Members of staff are aware of the signs of possible child abuse and the specific procedures they must closely follow. A designated Child Protection governor has yet to be appointed. Appropriate complaint and appeal procedures are in place.
153. The school has effective procedures for the diagnosis of individual learning needs. The procedures in place to support pupils with SEN are in line with the recommendations of the Code of Practice. There is a special educational needs co-ordinator and a designated governor for SEN. A suitable list of pupils receiving support at the school action and school action plus stages is maintained.
154. Where appropriate pupils are provided with an individual education plan (IEP) or an individual behaviour plan (IBP). Members of staff formulate the targets and parents or carers are kept informed. There are appropriate arrangements for the regular review of progress, with opportunity for the parent and the pupil to be involved.
155. A small number of pupils have a statement of SEN. The arrangements for the annual review of the provision made meets statutory requirements.
156. The levels of support provided by the school and by the local authority are sufficient to meet pupils' needs. However, the available support is not always used fully and effectively. This is because the learning targets identified in IEPs are often too broad and lesson planning and organisation does not focus clearly enough on ensuring continuity of learning and support. As a result, learning experiences become fragmented between one-to-one support, small withdrawal groups and work in lessons with the whole class.
157. The provision made for pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress and that of others is appropriate.
158. All are treated fairly and consistently, irrespective of gender or social or academic background. Equal opportunities are actively promoted, for example, there are mixed rugby and football teams and all pupils regardless of ability, race or gender, have access to the full range of school activities and are appropriately supported by both teaching and non-teaching staff.
159. Pupils have little opportunity to experience ethnic diversity at first-hand. However, the school enables them to appreciate cultural and religious differences within society by means of its links with Kenya and through assemblies, religious education lessons and the PSE curriculum.

160. The school deals openly with the subject of bullying and the overwhelming majority of parents and pupils feel that any instances are dealt with promptly and sensitively.
161. Although the school has no physically disabled learners at present, there is a disabled toilet and the building may be accessed by ramps. There is, however, no ramp in place to access the under-fives outdoor learning area from the early years classroom.

Leadership and management

Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

162. The findings of inspection differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question grade 2. Although leadership has identified some important areas for improvement in its self-evaluation report there is little evidence to show the effective impact of leadership in improving quality and standards over time.
163. Leadership is successful in providing clear direction through values and aims that permeate its provision in the pastoral aspects of the school's work. However, there is limited evidence of the consistent impact of targets identified in previous school development plans.
164. Staff members and governors have a good understanding of the family ethos promoted by the school. The school's stated values regarding relationships and equal opportunities are well reflected in school life but the overall provision has yet to reflect fully and consistently the seven values for learning adopted by the school.
165. In collaboration with the community centre, managed by the head teacher, there is some provision to promote initiatives in line with national priorities for regeneration and lifelong learning. There is less evidence in the day-to-day work of the school although teachers benefit from training events organised in collaboration with partner schools.
166. The school is successful in meeting its end of key stage targets for attainment but there is little evidence of its success in improving key aspects of learning, teaching and achievement in line with the priorities stated in previous plans for development.
167. The management and deployment of teachers is appropriate but the leadership provided through systems to improve the performance of individual staff lacks rigour. The collegiate approach through staff discussion and debate is not yet supported by robust appraisal systems linked to learning and teaching.
168. Leadership recognises that recent restructuring of staff responsibilities, including the provision of sufficient management time for the head teacher, offers opportunity to establish strategic direction in resolving long-standing and important shortcomings in the school's provision. The self-evaluation report provides a good basis to provide educational vision and clear direction in moving the school forward.
169. The arrangements for performance management are in line with requirements and the process is increasingly being used to help focus the work of staff in meeting the school's priority needs.

170. The GB is strongly supportive of the school and is an effective support in resolving a number of challenging resource issues.
171. However, governors are over reliant on the head teacher for information to assist them in monitoring the quality of provision and helping to set the school's strategic direction. Although the GB has the required committees in place, its systems to engage with the school are underdeveloped.
172. The GB does not meet its statutory obligations in full. It does not publish the full range of information for parents and has yet to appoint designated governor for Child Protection.

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
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173. The findings of inspection differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question grade 2. This is because important shortcomings are evident in the school's processes to improve quality and standards.
174. The extent to which staff members are well informed about quality and standards in subjects across the school is variable. A positive feature is the recent subject evaluations some teachers have prepared. However, subject monitoring is not well developed neither is it sufficiently robust.
175. In the past, lessons have been observed occasionally and monitoring sheets completed. However, the process lacks rigour and does not focus clearly enough on standards. Teachers collect pupils' books and examine them from time to time. This is not done regularly enough; neither does it have a specific purpose. As a result, teachers are not sufficiently well informed about performance across the school and are unable to plan effectively for improvement.
176. The quality of the self-evaluation report is reduced by the mismatch between first-hand evidence and the school's judgements. The inspection team's judgements differ from the school's judgement in all seven key questions.
177. The self-evaluation report indicates some of the school's strengths and identifies some important areas where it needs to improve. It does not, however, make effective use of first-hand evidence to support the judgements made. Although the report closely follows the school inspection framework, the self-evaluation process in the school is not formalised and lacks both structure and rigour. Members of staff discuss aspects of the school's work but little is formally recorded.
178. Parents and governors are consulted through a questionnaire that informs the SDP. In its present form it lacks clarity and it is difficult for parents to respond fully. Pupils' views are not formally sought as part of the self-evaluation process.

179. The SDP, drawn up by the head teacher in consultation with staff and governors, includes targets for raising standards across the curriculum. Current priorities include developing a policy for teaching and learning and producing a whole school assessment system. New resources are purchased to support the school's curriculum targets, both currently and in the past, but there is little evidence to demonstrate that actions taken over time have led to measurable improvements.
180. As a consequence the school is unable to demonstrate its actions have resulted in a significant improvement in standards and quality since the last inspection in November 2000. A similar situation was reported by the previous inspection team in its assessment of improvement following the school's inspection in September 1995.
181. Since the last inspection, the school has strengthened assessment procedures, provided schemes of work in all NC subjects and improved provision and standards in IT. However, standards across the subjects of the NC have not improved sufficiently and longstanding issues concerning educational leadership and planning for improvement have still not been resolved fully.

Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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182. The findings of inspection differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school graded this key question grade 1. This is due to shortcomings in the efficient use of key resources, including some elements of staffing, particular learning resources and the use of lesson time.
183. There are sufficient qualified and experienced teachers for the numbers on roll. All have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and the head teacher deploys them appropriately. The recent restructuring of staff responsibilities is comprehensive and in line with the school's needs. The arrangements to provide teachers with the required planning, preparation and marking time, outside their class, are well considered and provide good opportunity for the head teacher to gain an overview of learning across the school.
184. The overall provision of support staff is good. Where this provision is consistently well managed, such as in the early years, all the staff work very well together as a team to plan, implement and evaluate provision. This has clear benefits for the children. In other classes the contribution of support staff is not always developed fully.
185. The part-time school secretaries make a significant contribution to school administration and help to ensure that day-to-day routines run smoothly. Members of the ancillary staff, including cleaners and supervisors, make a positive contribution to the life and work of the school.
186. Learning resources are generally accessible to pupils. The range of resources provided is appropriate to learners' ages and needs in most areas. However, there are insufficient resources to promote pupils' development of higher order

reading skills and information retrieval skills. The library is inadequate. This makes it difficult for pupils to access information independently.

187. Many books across the school are not in a good condition and there is an insufficient range of fiction to promote effective reading experiences across a wide range of literature. Neither are there sufficient good quality reference books. However, the provision of 'story sacks', book boxes and a book club are positive features.
188. The investment in outdoor resources for the under-fives is a notable improvement. In particular, fencing off the outdoor classroom has done much to enhance children's learning and to prepare for the forthcoming Foundation Phase. All pupils benefit from the way in which the attractive school grounds and outdoor learning areas are used to promote learning.
189. The school has purchased a substantial amount of equipment to support the teaching of IT but some of this equipment is not always used effectively or efficiently.
190. Accommodation is good for the number of pupils and the condition of the building is good. The internal appearance of the school is enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work that celebrate their achievements. The school is very clean and tidy, well maintained and effectively used on the whole. Although regular use of the classroom housing the library and some computers is timetabled, this provision is not always used fully and effectively.
191. The strategic organisation and deployment of key resources is sound but the general practice of providing four lengthy teaching sessions limits the variety of learning styles and too frequently results in a slow pace of work.
192. The management of support staff within lessons is not always efficient and the lack of clear arrangements for withdrawal groups and the use of learning spaces outside the class base, sometimes reduce the efficiency of teaching.
193. Arrangements to review the use of resources are largely unformalised. The GB ensures value for money in purchases and contracts but the school has yet to demonstrate good value for money in relation to pupils' overall achievements and the targets set in the SDP in recent years.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Under-fives

194. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's learning.

Language, literacy and communication skills

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

195. Children are developing good language and express themselves confidently as a result of the consistently rich model of language that they hear from adults. Because of the stimulating teaching and rich first-hand experiences they receive, such as investigating the hedgerow and producing puppet shows, they acquire good listening skills and possess a growing and varied vocabulary. They use these to express themselves effectively when they converse, respond to questions posed by Henry the puppet and when they speak about their experiences and feelings.

196. Well-resourced role-play areas ensure that the children have appropriate opportunities to engage in mark-making using a wide range of implements and that they understand the purposes of writing. The children have a good knowledge of Welsh vocabulary and can answer simple questions appropriately. They know and enjoy saying a very wide range of rhymes in both English and Welsh and listen attentively to and engage well with stories. Their interest in books is being well-developed by the use of a library of stimulating book bags made by parents, one of which they choose and take home every weekend.

Shortcomings

197. Children's experience of mark making requires further development before they engage in formal writing.

Personal and social development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

198. The children are confident and independent learners who are learning to take responsibility for their actions. They ask for information when necessary and help their friends when the need arises. Children undress themselves competently for physical education lessons. They make every attempt to remove their socks and shoes, and to put them back on when they have finished, with minimal assistance. All wash and dry their hands before eating and socialise well with the older pupils at the dinner table where they demonstrate good table manners.

199. The children self-register for lunch every morning using pictorial symbols and take responsibility for regulating the number of children engaging in any activity at one time in the same way. All welcome new experiences and participate in them with great enthusiasm. The children like and value one another and behave towards adults and other children with courtesy and respect. They persevere with things that capture their interests and maintain their concentration well for extended periods in both class and whole school situations.

Mathematical development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
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Good features

200. The children know an extensive range of mathematical rhymes and songs which they accompany with appropriate actions to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts involved, for example, 'huge, big, small.' They possess very good mathematical vocabulary that includes comparative language as well as number and they use it accurately. The concepts of size, length, number and shape are developing well.

201. Some children engage in emergent mathematical recording during role-play, for example, by using a clock face to indicate the time of a party on an invitation, thus demonstrating a growing understanding of the concept of time. All are able to measure length using non-standard measurements. Children have a sound knowledge of number up to 10 and all enjoy engaging in mathematical activities, both those that are teacher directed and those that they create themselves during role-play.

Shortcomings

202. Children's experience of mark-making as the basis of the symbol system of mathematics before they engage in the formal recording of number in the mathematics scheme booklets requires further development.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

203. Children's investigative skills are an outstanding feature; they observe worms and snails during the course of their exploration of the grounds and apply reasoning well in order to understand and explain why they think certain things happen. They understand also that different materials react to heat in different ways, for example, that plastic melts and that metal rusts.

Good features

204. The children have a very good understanding of the seasons and their characteristics that is developed through rich first-hand experiences such as going outside to investigate the effects of autumn on the hedgerow. As a result of the independence and responsibility they receive, they are able to make decisions and to solve problems that arise with minimal adult intervention.
205. The children are actively involved in their own learning and resolve problems very well with appropriate adult support, when required, in the form of extended, open-ended questioning. Examples of this include how to readjust a bridge they have made to make it stronger and how to connect pieces of drainpipe to make a water run and then disassemble and reassemble it in order to change its direction. They demonstrate a very good ability to concentrate on and persevere with this for extended periods. They have a very good awareness of and interest in the environment of the school and demonstrate respect and responsibility for it and the creatures that inhabit it, such as the moles.

Physical development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
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Good features

206. Children move their bodies confidently and demonstrate good control and co-ordination when responding to the teacher's instructions and exploring their environment. Their good understanding of positional language enhances their ability to co-ordinate movements and they derive pleasure from experimenting with a variety of ways of controlling their bodies, for example, rolling down the grass banks. They enjoy moving in a variety of ways and handle both large and small equipment with confidence.
207. When investigating outdoors, they enjoy using their bodies to create different movements and patterns unselfconsciously, making full and imaginative use of space. The children's manipulative skills with their hands are developing well as a result of the range of opportunities they receive, such as drawing, cutting, gluing, painting and printing.

Creative development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
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Good features

208. Children enjoy drawing, painting and modelling and have produced self-portraits of a very good standard using oil pastels. They have made well finished models of faces; these show they take pride in their work.
209. The children handle a range of equipment confidently and make choices about which materials they use. A good feature is the way in which children have the opportunity to engage in creative activities outdoors, for example, printing, creating puppet shows and role-play. They enjoy singing and demonstrate an

awareness of pitch when answering the register and are able to keep a steady beat.

English

Key Stage 1: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Key Stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Good features

210. Standards in speaking are good in both key stages; they are adequate in listening. In KS1, pupils take turns in conversations, contribute to them effectively and carry out their teachers' instructions. By the end of the key stage, most pupils possess a good vocabulary and they express themselves confidently using Standard English.
211. By the end of KS2, most pupils use appropriate speech for a range of purposes. They discuss their activities in groups and some more able pupils articulate their ideas with clarity and confidence. Pupils at the end of the key stage make adequate use of some subject specific vocabulary.
212. Standards in reading in both key stages have some good features. Pupils in KS1 recognise a wide range of words and have a good knowledge of sound-symbol relationships. Some understand what title and author mean. Pupils read mechanically with an appropriate degree of accuracy. Pupils of all abilities read with more interest when using picture books they have chosen themselves.
213. Pupils in KS2 continue to read mechanically from a structured reading scheme and group reading texts supplemented by books from the classroom. Some are developing personal preferences for certain authors and can name their favourite books. Pupils read accurately on the whole.
214. In lower KS1, pupils write simple sentences sometimes using capital letters and full stops. Older pupils spell familiar words well and use personal dictionaries. They write for a limited range of audiences, for example, stories, news and lists.
215. In lower KS2, pupils have written, simple dialogues, news, rules, instructions, a letter, limericks, accounts of their holiday and a number of stories, some of which are extended and of an adequate standard. Pupils have completed grammar exercises on similes for example, and comprehension exercises about published texts. Pupils draft pieces of work on the computer and in the middle of the key stage they produce some effective descriptive writing and poems.
216. In upper KS2, pupils write extended pieces such as stories, letters, rules, play scripts, dialogues and instructions. The completion of grammar exercises shows sound knowledge of proverbs, verbs, and conjunctives. Some older pupils demonstrate awareness of paragraphs and use them appropriately. They have also produced attractive leaflets about substance misuse which are well organised and of a good standard.

217. Across KS2 pupils produced some effective poems in response to working with a poet. A book of poems, and a newspaper of a good standard, produced by older pupils, has been printed for a wider audience.

Shortcomings

218. Pupils' listening skills were impaired by their inattentiveness in lessons seen.

219. Pupils in both key stages read mechanically and their reading lacks fluency. They do not use a wide range of cueing strategies and their over-dependence on phonics impairs their enjoyment and understanding of what they read.

220. In neither key stage do pupils make sufficient progress in writing. Writing across the curriculum is underdeveloped in both key stages and pupils' ability to write extended well structured pieces of writing is limited.

221. In both key stages, the presentation of pupils' work is frequently untidy and the use of punctuation and cursive writing is inconsistent and often inaccurate, thus impairing pupils' written communication.

222. In both key stages, pupils do not develop their skills sufficiently in the different forms of writing that they produce.

223. In KS2, pupils' higher order and information retrieval skills are underdeveloped thus impairing their reading and restricting their ability to engage in independent learning and study skills.

Welsh second language

Key Stage 1: Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

Key Stage 2: Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

Good features

224. Pupils in Y1 know a number of Welsh songs and rhymes which they sing clearly during lessons and at certain times of the day, for example during registration. They know colours and have a growing knowledge of vocabulary to describe feelings. Younger pupils can hold up the appropriate puppet when asked in Welsh to do so.

225. Pupils in Y2 are able to frame simple questions using the pattern 'Oes?' and 'Nag oes'. They can also fill in simple questionnaires accurately.

226. When reading a very simple Welsh text, pupils across the key stage can read out a few words.

227. In Y2, pupils have written simple sentences following the patterns 'Es i' and 'Ces i', 'Ga I ... Cei.' They have written accurate responses to 'Beth yw d'enw di?' and can write up to three sentences following a given pattern.

228. In lower KS2, pupils are beginning to maintain a simple dialogue using the given sentences that they read out quite well. Pupils have written two sentences about themselves and sentences about their families and the seasons. They have written sentences based on the pattern 'Rwyn gallu... Wyt ti?' and written a simple dialogue and some news.
229. Pupils in upper KS2 have a good knowledge of the Welsh names of shops and significant places. They ask simple questions following the given sentence patterns and most respond to 'Ble mae?' correctly and frame their answer in a sentence. They have a good knowledge of prepositional vocabulary. When reading, pupils can sound out many words by using their phonetical knowledge.
230. In upper KS2, pupils have accurately completed simple sentences on a given pattern. They have written a simple dialogue and some news with support and have achieved an adequate degree of accuracy. Older pupils have written sentences based on 'Wyt ti wedi?' they have written questions and answers, dialogues, news, adjectives and extended sentences about things they have done.

Shortcomings

231. Pupils in both key stages are unable to respond appropriately to questions posed outside the context of the lesson, for example 'Pwy wyt ti?'
232. In both key stages, pupils' knowledge of vocabulary is insecure.
233. Pupils are unable to engage sufficiently in conversational Welsh; there is insufficient progression throughout both key stages in pupils' ability to converse.
234. Although a minority of pupils in KS2 are able to answer simple questions within a limited context they cannot sustain a simple conversation.
235. In both key stages, pupils' knowledge of sentence patterns is insecure.
236. Across the school, pupils do not respond accurately to the language patterns they are currently using in their class work.
237. The reading of pupils in both key stages is underdeveloped and little progress is made between and within key stages.
238. In KS2, the presentation of pupils' written work is poor.

Science

Key Stage 1: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Key Stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Good features

239. In KS1, pupils learn from first hand experience gained through using the school environment. They gain a sound knowledge of mini beasts and their habitat, know plants and animals need warmth, light and nutrients, and distinguish between living and non-living things.
240. By the end of the key stage pupils know that the human body needs different foods for activity and for growth and pupils know how a switch controls a simple circuit. More able pupils distinguish between materials that conduct electricity and those that do not.
241. In Y3, pupils confidently distinguish between healthy and less healthy foods. They are aware of the significance of the fat content of food and understand the importance of fruit and vegetables as part of a balanced diet.
242. In Y4, more able pupils draw on prior knowledge to predict which foods are acid or alkaline and with guidance they use litmus paper to test the food samples provided.
243. Pupils in Y5 and Y6, begin to plan investigations such as how we can change the size and shape of a shadow. They have a good understanding of the concept of fair testing and build well on previous learning to make predictions and try out their plans before refining their methods.
244. Previous work and discussions with older pupils in KS2 confirm they acquire sound knowledge of materials and their properties, a good understanding of the major organs of the human body, a basic knowledge of physical processes including electricity, forces and the solar system. Pupils' knowledge of life processes and living things, including food chains, growth and nutrition is steadily developing.

Shortcomings

245. Across the school pupils' skills in planning, selecting resources, carrying out and recording investigations is underdeveloped.
246. Taken overall, pupils do not develop a sufficient depth of scientific knowledge and understanding across the programmes of study. They seldom build effectively on previous learning to further their studies.
247. Although enquiry skills were being developed from a low base in the lessons seen, previous work shows over reliance on pupils completing work sheets, with a significant amount of work unfinished and poorly presented.

248. The skills of observation, classification and recording are underdeveloped.

Information technology

Key Stage 1: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Key Stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Good features

249. Pupils in both key stages have well developed keyboard and mouse control skills. They log on, readily operate simple programs to reinforce skills in other subjects and skilfully use word processing applications. The vast majority know how to set up a document, edit and reformat text and they confidently save, retrieve and print their work.

250. In Y1, pupils gain appropriate skills in using the mouse, to click on and drag pictures to match text, for instance, and in Y2, pupils competently use information technology to practice skills such as spelling. Previous work indicates that pupils develop appropriate editing skills and learn to use menus and tools through the use of simple graphics and modelling programs.

251. Pupils in Y3 and Y4 competently type and print poems that they have written. The older pupils in Y4 are confident in accessing selected websites to support learning in science. They scroll through pictures and text and readily switch from one website to another.

252. In Y5 and Y6, pupils plan slides for a multi-media presentation. They consider the impact of text and graphics and the most competent pupils successfully use skills learned at home to manipulate text and graphics to produce their chosen visual effects.

253. The scrutiny of pupils' previous work and discussions with representative groups reveals younger pupils learn to use a simple database. They input information and generate simple graphs. Older pupils confirm they have used simulation and modelling programs and as a result they have some knowledge of using IT to help make decisions and solve problems. They readily recall how to use spreadsheets and more able pupils confidently describe how to program cells and select options for generating graphs. By the end of KS2 many pupils acquire good skills in manipulating images, combining text and graphics and using a range of information technology tools.

Shortcomings

254. In KS1, pupils seldom use information from a variety of IT sources and investigate how it may be sorted, classified and presented.

255. In both key stages pupils' enquiry and information retrieval skills using IT are underdeveloped.

256. In KS2, pupils do not build well on prior learning (including skills learned at home) to progressively develop their skills. They do not sufficiently apply and extend their competence in using the full range of information technology applications and tools, in relevant contexts.

Geography

Key Stage 1: Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

Key Stage 2: Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

Good features

257. In Y1, pupils' previous work indicates they gain a sound knowledge of different types of transport, they identify a range of features found in a street and draw simple maps and plans. When exploring the village pupils observe and record the traffic, record their findings in pictograms and name different types of transport.

258. Pupils in Y2 further their knowledge of maps appropriately. They name the countries of the British Isles and through following the travels of "Barnaby Bear" gain some knowledge of a mountain environment and of weather forecasts and the symbols used.

259. By the end of the key stage pupils have a good knowledge of the features of the village of Abermule and through drawing maps they plot routes and represent the key features identified using a pictorial key. More able pupils confidently recall how to locate features on a map using co-ordinates.

260. In lower KS2, pupils further their knowledge of the locality and identify changes in the village. They know the River Severn flows through a valley and can place Abermule on a map of Wales. They begin to make comparisons between the contrasting localities of Abermule and a seaside village in Pembrokeshire.

261. In upper KS2, discussion confirms pupils know that maps have different scales and they are confident in the use of atlases to locate information. They recall studying aerial photographs and through visits they develop orienteering skills.

262. The older pupils are increasingly aware of the impact of climate change. They identify the environmental impact of using energy and recognise the importance of recycling and using renewable sources of energy such as solar power.

Shortcomings

263. In KS1, pupils have limited awareness of the differing characteristics of places beyond Abermule. They seldom select information from resources provided, use this to ask questions or express views on attractive or unattractive features.

264. In KS2, pupils do not make sufficiently detailed comparisons between contrasting areas and do not learn enough about physical processes and human geography. The older pupils do not develop their studies fully in order to

begin to describe geographical patterns and appreciate the importance of location in understanding places.

265. Pupils in both key stages do not sufficiently develop the skills of geographical enquiry. Furthermore, their knowledge of geographical vocabulary is limited.

266. Across the school pupils' work in geography is poorly presented and studies are seldom developed fully in a meaningful context.

School's response to the inspection

267. We are pleased that the inspection report highlights the good provision for the pastoral care of our pupils and that it recognises the strength of the education provided for the under-fives in the school. It also acknowledges the difficulties of the past two years in downsizing the school from six classes to four and gives credit to school leadership and governors for tackling these issues and ensuring that the standard of accommodation, staffing and resources remains good.
268. The main focus of the report as regards pupil standards differentiates between their attainment in National Curriculum results and their achievements in day-to-day work. We acknowledge that there is a mismatch and that many children are capable of the higher standards of achievement indicated by their test results. We acknowledge that improvements are needed in teaching, the organisation of learning and in the monitoring of children's achievements by the school's leadership. An action plan will be devised to meet the recommendations listed in the report.
269. Staff and governors are determined to address these recommendations by the end of 2007. Raising standards in geography and Welsh as a second language will be priorities for us. Many of the issues in the report were already identified in our self-evaluation report and are included in our SDP. In particular, we plan to develop a teaching and learning policy. The new management structure in the school will facilitate the implementation of the action plan.
270. A copy of the action plan will be sent to all parents and the governors' annual report to parents will report on the progress we are making on the recommendations made in the inspection report.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Abermule Community Primary School
School type	Community Primary
Age-range of pupils	4 –11 years
Address of school	Abermule Montgomery Powys
Postcode	SY15 6ND
Telephone number	01686 630240

Head teacher	Mr Terry Wain
Date of appointment	April 1992
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Councillor Wynne Jones
Registered inspector	Mr Michael T. Ridout
Dates of inspection	9 th – 11 th October 2006

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	-	13	8	14	20	17	12	16	100

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	4	2	5.0

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	20 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	-
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.25 : 1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of School
Autumn 2005	-	91.5	94.8
Spring 2006	94.7	91.2	95.7
Summer 2006	93.2	91.5	95.3

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	2.5
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	1

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2005			Number of pupils in Y2:		18		
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher Assessment	School	-	-	17	56	27
		National	0.4	5.1	15.5	63.8	15.1
En: reading	Teacher Assessment	School	-	-	17	56	27
		National	0.4	5.2	17.3	55.6	21.4
En: writing	Teacher Assessment	School	-	-	17	50	33
		National	0.5	6.9	17.8	67.2	7.7
En: speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	-	-	0	100	0
		National	0.4	3.2	13.3	64.1	18.9
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	-	0	17	72	11
		National	0.4	3.0	11.6	60.0	25.1
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	-	-	-	89	11
		National	0.4	2.0	10.3	63.0	24.3

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	83%	In Wales	81%

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

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2005			Number of pupils in Y6		16						
Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	A	N	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	-	-	-	-	-	13	6	37	44
		National	0.4	0.1	1.1	0.3	0.7	4.1	14.7	46.7	31.7
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	50	31
		National	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.5	3.4	15.1	47.2	32.0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	44	44
		National	0.4	0.1	1.0	0.3	0.3	1.6	10.6	51.1	34.6

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment			
In the school	75%	In Wales	74%

D Pupils who are excepted 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
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

- The inspection team consisted of three inspectors who worked for six inspector days (over three days) gathering first-hand evidence. In total, 26 lessons or parts of lessons were observed and standards and teaching graded. Inspectors evaluated the pupils' work.
- The head teacher took the role of nominee, ensuring effective communication with the inspection team. The nominee attended meetings with inspectors and contributed fully to the discussion of inspection evidence.
- Inspectors observed registration sessions, school assemblies and break-times. All teachers present were observed teaching. Discussions were held with members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, representatives of the GB, parents and others, both during the initial inspection visit and during the inspection.
- All the available work and records of a representative sample of pupils from all year groups were scrutinised. Inspectors sought the views of a number of pupils in discussions with them.
- In line with the school's long-term curricular plans geography was not taught during the term of the inspection. Evidence is based on teachers' planning, pupils' previous work and discussions with some pupils. Furthermore, a variety of additional evidence was considered, including written accounts and photographs of pupils learning through field studies.
- The arthrawes fro was absent during the inspection. She normally undertakes the basic teaching of Welsh as a second language. In her absence the class teachers taught lessons in the subject.
- A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection.
- The registered inspector held a meeting attended by nine parents before the inspection and considered 16 parents' responses to a questionnaire.
- At the end of the inspection, the main findings of the inspection were discussed with the head teacher in his role as the nominee. A short time after the inspection, meetings were held with the head teacher and deputy head teacher, the staff, and the governors, to report the findings of the inspection.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr. M. T. Ridout Registered Inspector	Context Summary Recommendations Key question 1: How well do learners achieve? Key question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment? Key question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management? Key question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources? Science Information technology Geography
Mrs. B. Llewelyn Jones Team inspector	Key question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community? Key question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? Key question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards? Resources aspects of KQ7 Under fives English Welsh second language
Mr. K. Jones Lay inspector	Aspects of Key questions: 1, 3, 4 and 7.

Acknowledgement:

The inspectors wish to thank the governing body, staff, parents and pupils of the school for their co-operation, assistance and courtesy before and during the inspection.

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