

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Llangewydd Road
Bridgend
CF31 4JW**

School Number: 6723322

Date of Inspection: 06/07/09

by

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St Mary's Catholic 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 St Mary's Catholic Primary School took place between 06/07/09 and 09/07/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by Peter Mathias 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 **short** 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	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
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. St Mary's Catholic Primary School is situated close to the centre of the town of Bridgend which is the Local Authority (LA). It serves the Catholic Community in the local area and further afield, with a significant number of pupils travelling some distance to the school. Pupils come from homes where there is a wide-range of socio-economic circumstances and housing.
2. There are 209 pupils on roll between the ages of four and eleven and 31 full-time equivalent children who attend the nursery. This is a significant increase from the 219 on roll at the time of the last inspection in June 2003.
3. The school was part of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) pilot arrangements for the introduction of the Foundation Phase. As a result of this the school organises and teaches all children from the nursery until the start of Y3 in terms of the areas of learning for the Foundation Phase.
4. Pupils represent the full range of ability. When they start school in the nursery children's skills and experiences are generally in line with those found amongst children of that age.
5. The school reports that 7.5% of pupils are considered eligible for free school meals which is well below the LA average of 18.1% and the all-Wales average of 17.5%. About 5% of pupils are considered by the school to have some degree of special educational needs (SEN) which is well below average for primary schools. One pupil has a statement of SEN for moderate learning difficulties and no pupil has the National Curriculum (NC) disapplied. Three pupils are 'looked after' by the LA. No pupil was excluded in the previous school year.
6. English is the predominant language of 65% of pupils with 35% having other first languages and 69% of pupils are from Welsh backgrounds but no pupil uses Welsh as the language of the home. Ten pupils currently receive help in English as an additional language.
7. Of the 35% of pupils who do not have English as a first language, about half have Polish as a first language and the remainder speak Tagalog at home. This reflects the recent changes in the wider Catholic community where, since the last inspection, workers from Poland and the Philippines have moved into the school's catchment area. At the time of the previous inspection 8% of pupils spoke English as an additional language.
8. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2008. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark (2), Eco-schools Green Flag Status and the second leaf of the Healthy Schools Award.

The school's aims

9. The school's aims are wide and appropriate to the ages and abilities of the pupils and reflect the school's Roman Catholic foundation. During the inspection the deputy

headteacher was on a long-term secondment to the LA and one of the two assistant headteachers was on maternity leave.

10. The school's mission statement is, "As a Catholic family we will do our best to live as Christ taught us; to work our hardest in class and to be fair in work and play."

The school's priorities and targets
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11. The school's priorities and targets for 2008/2009 are to:
- raise standards in reading;
 - continue to improve teaching in the Foundation Phase and build on existing techniques for encouraging pupils to discover how to learn;
 - continue to develop the quality of collective worship;
 - implement changes in the NC;
 - review support for pupils with English as an additional language;
 - enhance the governing body's role in setting the strategic direction for the school;
 - improve the quality of self evaluation in subjects and utilise data effectively;
and
 - continue building improvements and develop the outdoor learning environment.

Summary

12. St Mary's is a very good school which provides a high quality education for all of its pupils. It is well led and has made good progress since its last inspection in June 2003. The key issues of that inspection have been thoroughly addressed.

Table of grades awarded

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

13. The inspection team agrees with six of the seven judgments made by the school in the self-evaluation report and about the standards it has achieved in other areas of its work. The grade awarded for Key Question 5 was one lower than that given by the school. This is because while the headteacher has put in place several important new initiatives, there has not been sufficient time for them to have a full effect. Additionally, while the headteacher and an assistant headteacher work well together as a senior management team, currently two teachers from that group, including the deputy headteacher, are absent from the school. As a result the senior management team is not functioning fully and does not provide the highest quality of leadership of which it is capable.
14. As this was a short inspection no judgments were made about the standards of achievement in the subjects and areas of learning inspected.
15. The overall quality of educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes.
16. Many children begin school with around the expected levels of basic skills. They make very good progress in the Foundation Phase and in KS2. They are very well placed to continue to achieve very well in the next phase of their education. Nearly all meet and exceed the predications made for them when they began school.

17. As the school was part of the initial pilot for the introduction of the Foundation Phase and has continued to develop the Foundation Phase curriculum in Y1 and Y2, no data is available in respect of the 2008 national teacher assessments for seven year olds. However, as part of the pilot arrangements the school did take part in a series of assessments in order to judge its performance. In these assessments the school performed very well. Nearly 90% of children achieved Outcome 5 the expected level or higher in language, literacy and communication and in personal and social development, well being and cultural diversity with 94% of children attaining outcome five or higher in mathematical development. These results are very positive. In these assessments girls performed about the same as boys.
18. In the 2008 national teacher assessments for eleven year olds, the proportions of pupils at the expected level (Level 4) in English, mathematics and science were well above most schools in the LA and in Wales as were the combined results of these three subjects. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) was also above. In recent years girls have slightly outperformed boys by a small amount.
19. When these results are compared to schools considered to have a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (below 8%), the school performed below most of these similar schools in all three subjects and when the results were combined.
20. However, care should be taken when considering this information. In 2008 two pupils were assessed who had remained in the school for an additional year prior to transfer to a specialist unit for those with moderate learning difficulties. The group also included two pupils who were at the early stages of learning English. When the performance of these pupils is discounted the results were very high. The school met its targets agreed with the LA. Over recent years the overall trend of improvement has been positive.
21. In the 2009 national teacher assessments for eleven year olds the performance of pupils without those considered to be at an early stage of learning English, appears to be very high.
22. Standards and progress in the key skill of communication in English are good with outstanding features. Across the school nearly all express themselves confidently and are articulate. In the Foundation Phase they learn to read well for their ages and by the end of KS2 many read fluently with expression. From the Foundation Phase nearly all make a very good start; they write very well for a wide range of reasons in different styles and for different purposes.
23. In communication in Welsh the youngest children in the Foundation Phase make very good progress. They recognise, understand and use simple phrases and responses confidently. Nearly all older children in the Foundation Phase and pupils in KS2 communicate well bearing in mind their different starting points and cultural backgrounds. Pupils' bilingual skills follow a similar pattern and are good overall.
24. Mathematical skills are good. In the Foundation Phase the youngest children are beginning to use their emerging understanding of number and length to count and measure in their play. Older children use their mathematical skills well to draw simple graphs and to complete tally charts. Across the curriculum pupils in KS2 use their

mathematical skills well, for example in science to measure changes and in geography to calculate distances accurately.

25. Across the school skills in information and communications technology (ICT) are good. In the Foundation Phase the youngest children confidently navigate their way through simple programs. Older children use ICT in mathematics and science to create simple pictograms and to record changes. They confidently instruct a programmable toy to complete a series of manoeuvres. Nearly all pupils in KS2 are confident in applying their skills in ICT in a wide range of activities, for example to find solutions, patterns and relationships and to make electronic presentations.
26. By the end of KS2 nearly all pupils have a good understanding of their Welsh culture and heritage. From the early part of the Foundation Phase where all children begin to appreciate the Welsh way of life, they build up a good knowledge of Welsh artists, composers, musicians, writers and famous sportsmen and women.
27. Across the school personal and social skills are extended as are problem solving skills and the ability to work with others. Pupils' creative skills and the knowledge of how to improve learning and performance are good. Pupils have a good understanding of equal opportunities and of the diversity in modern society. They are well prepared for the world of work.
28. Attendance at 94.7% in the previous year is above the national average and in line with similar schools. Nearly all pupils arrive on time and lessons begin promptly.

The quality of education and training

Grades for teaching

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
45%	55%	0%	0%	0%

29. These figures are well above the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) in the Annual Report (primary) 2007/2008 where the quality of teaching is Grade 2 or better in 83% of lessons and Grade 1 in 16%. In this inspection a very high proportion of lessons were Grade 1 compared to most schools. These results are above those of the previous inspection.
30. In the Foundation Phase teachers show an outstanding understanding of how to plan and organise very imaginative and stimulating activities and experiences both inside and outside the classrooms. These are very much in line with the Foundation Phase outcomes.
31. Across the school plans for those with some degree of SEN are thorough and ensure that those pupils receive good opportunities to be appropriately challenged and supported. Teachers plan very effectively to ensure that those with English as an additional language (EAL) have the help they need and play a full part in their lessons.

32. In the best lessons which are found across the school and which have many outstanding features, these include:
- very clear explanations of the objectives of the lessons and of the skills pupils will need to use in them;
 - very positive and enthusiastic encouragement so that the children feel that learning is fun and exciting;
 - outstanding appreciation of how to extend children's learning in many different ways through the same activities;
 - very successful strategies to encourage children to make choices for themselves and to work independently;
 - very well organised, purposeful and busy promotion of children's physical skills where children work very hard in response;
 - very well made links between different subjects in the topics being studied;
 - very well taken opportunities to extend pupils' bilingual skills and to emphasise pupils' Welsh heritage;
 - outstanding demonstrations of the skills pupils will need, combined with a very infectious enthusiasm for what is being taught;
 - very positive encouragement to all pupils to express their ideas confidently in the knowledge that their efforts will be highly valued;
 - systematic reviews of what has been taught to confirm that it has been fully understood; and
 - very effective encouragement so that pupils evaluate their own successes and those of others constructively.
33. The arrangements for assessing progress and their use in planning and informing those involved are good with no important shortcomings. They meet statutory requirements. Systems are well organised and rigorous and are very well used by teachers to ensure that learning is systematic and builds on what is already understood. Teachers assess accurately the standards achieved.
34. There are effective arrangements for teachers to agree with nearby schools including the secondary school to which most pupils transfer, the standards pupils are reaching by the age of eleven particularly in English, mathematics and science. There are also well established arrangements for teachers in the Foundation Phase to compare the standards children reach in the outcomes for children's learning at the age of seven. A particular strength is the development of strategies for pupils' self-evaluation in KS2. As a result pupils are building a good understanding of the purpose of assessment and how well they as individuals are achieving.

35. Reports to parents are comprehensive, informative and consistently set out. They give an accurate picture of the standards and the progress each pupil is making.
36. The curriculum is very wide, interesting and carefully balanced. It meets all legal requirements of the NC. A particular strength is the overall quality of the provision for the Foundation Phase which is outstanding. The school has made very good progress in planning for the new curriculum in line with a recent national review. However, the school is in the early stages of developing an up to date plan to develop systematically the teaching of the key skills and skills needed for successful learning.
37. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with outstanding features. Spiritual development is very well supported in many aspects of school life and from the earliest part of the Foundation Phase all are encouraged to reflect and to appreciate a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them.
38. Provision for moral development is very good and across the school values of truth, honesty, fairness and 'doing the right thing' are positively promoted.
39. Social development is provided for very effectively and gives the youngest to the oldest numerous opportunities to learn how to work and to play together co-operatively, to learn to respect similarities and differences between individuals and to take on responsibilities.
40. Arrangements for cultural development have many strong and outstanding features. All have many opportunities to appreciate the richness of the culture of Wales and of other areas of the world, particularly those from where a significant proportion of families originate. Arrangements for all to be aware of their responsibilities as citizens of the world and to protect the environment are well established and very effective. By the age of eleven, pupils are given a clear understanding of the world of work and how business and commerce functions.
41. Pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported. The systems through which the school plans in these areas are very thorough. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. There are very strong partnerships with parents.
42. Strategies to promote high levels of attendance and punctuality and good behaviour are thorough and effective.
43. There are good arrangements to promote pupils' wellbeing and to make them aware of the importance of living healthily. The school council is active and its views are carefully considered. It is giving pupils a clear understanding of the democratic process. Child protection arrangements meet local guidelines and recommended good practice.
44. The school has put in place very good procedures to encourage all to be tolerant, to treat each other equally, to understand other cultures and backgrounds and to address any issues of bullying or other forms of harassment.
45. A thorough survey of the site has been carried out to review accessibility for those with physical disabilities. There is a detailed action plan. However, the designated disabled toilet is cluttered, unattractive and unsuitable for wheelchair users. The site itself is difficult to travel around for those with physical disabilities. For example,

moving from the Foundation Phase area to the main school involves a lengthy journey for those with physical disability around the outside of the building.

Leadership and management

46. The headteacher gives a positive, thoughtful lead to the school and has built successfully on the firm foundations already in place. He has a very clear vision of where to take the school next. All staff work closely and effectively together. There is a very strong sense of teamwork between teachers and their LSAs. All those with specific responsibilities manage them well and have a clear picture about how their areas could be improved. The school takes careful note of national and local priorities. The Foundation Phase has been very successfully introduced and extended until the end of Y2. The management of this is particularly strong and effective. A breakfast club has been started. It is well supported.
47. The governing body is well led, is supportive and fulfils its statutory duties. It is well informed about the daily life of the school. However, currently governors do not hold the professional leadership of the school sufficiently to account. The governing body's role as a critical yet supportive friend of the professional staff is not well established enough in order for it to effectively judge properly the impact of its longer term decisions.
48. The school's self evaluation document is clear and comprehensive and is open and honest. It has been based upon the contributions of all those involved in the school and draws on a wide range of sources. The school development plan (SDP) and the school self-evaluation document are closely linked and properly focused on raising standards.
49. There are effective and efficient administrative systems in place and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. It has very extensive grounds which are particularly well used. Internal accommodation is adequate and is also well used. However, provision for those who are disabled is limited and their ease of access to the whole of the school is difficult.
50. The school is very well staffed with well qualified teachers and LSAs. Resources are of a good quality and quantity and are readily available and are well used.
51. Bearing in mind the overall very good quality of education provided and the progress pupils make, the school gives very good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school in the areas inspected, the staff and governing body need to:

- R1 update the planning in KS2 for the systematic teaching of key skills and the skills for learning; *
- R2 extend the role of the governing body as a critical friend of the school; * and
- R3 upgrade facilities for the disabled.

* Which the school has identified as a priority.

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.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 52. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 53. As the school was a pilot school for the introduction of the Foundation Phase no data is available in respect of the 2007/2008 national teacher assessments for seven year olds. However, as part of this initiative the school took part in assessments in language, literacy and communication, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity, along with the other pilot schools. In these assessments 90% of children achieved Outcome 5 (the expected level) or higher in language, literacy and communication and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity, with 94% of children attaining outcome five or higher in mathematical development. These results were well above other pilot schools in Wales. In these assessments girls and boys attained about the same.
- 54. In the 2008 national assessments for eleven year olds, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected level, (Level 4) in English, mathematics and science were well above the average for schools in the LA and in Wales as were the combined results of these three subjects. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels, Level 5 were also above these averages in all three subjects and when the results were combined. In recent years girls have slightly out performed boys in these assessments.

55. When these results are compared to schools considered to have a broadly similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (less than 8%), results in 2008 were below similar schools in English and mathematics. In science results were low in comparison to similar schools as were the combined results. In 2006 and 2007 these results were above most of these schools. In 2008 the school met the targets agreed with the LA. In recent years the overall trend of improvement has been positive.
56. In these assessments for eleven year olds in 2008, the group assessed included two pupils who had remained at the school for an additional year prior to entry to a specialist unit for those with moderate learning difficulties. Additionally there were two pupils in that group who were at the early stages of learning English. When the performance of these pupils is discounted, the school's results were very high.
57. There is evidence to suggest that in the 2009 national teacher assessments for eleven year olds, the school's performance without those pupils who have English as an additional language and have been resident in the UK for less than two years, is again very high.
58. As this was a short inspection, no grades are given for achievement in the lessons observed.
59. The overall quality of educational provision for the under fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes.
60. Many children begin school in the nursery with about the expected levels of basic skills. Nearly all make very good progress by the time they leave reception. They go on to exceed the targets predicted for them at seven and eleven years of age. Pupils who have English as an additional language and those pupils with SEN make very good progress over time.
61. In the key skill of communication in English achievement is good with outstanding features. Nearly all younger children in the Foundation Phase speak and listen very confidently to each other and to adults. They discuss animatedly amongst themselves, for example when going on an expedition to capture a dinosaur and giving and taking orders when trying to find ways of crossing a swamp. Within the early part of the Foundation Phase all children are beginning to record for themselves with increasing legibility. They recognise that the words in the books they use carry meaning and that a book should be read from left to right.
62. In Y1 and Y2 nearly all children speak and listen very well. They are very confident when speaking to larger audiences, for example during assemblies. They discuss enthusiastically when deciding what they need to do to complete an activity. They take turns to speak and listen and to think carefully about what is said. They read well with increasingly fluency and expression. They know how to find out information for themselves from a wide range of resources.
63. Within KS2 nearly all pupils construct a logical argument and express it clearly. They have well developed vocabularies and complex speech patterns. They read very well and enjoy talking about their favourite stories and writers. They have very well developed study and research skills. Across KS2 nearly all pupils write very well for a wide range of reasons. They write in a variety of styles and at length, for example in

history and in English when studying 'Carrie's War' and when compiling a biography of a famous Welshman or woman.

64. Communication skills in Welsh are good. Younger children in the Foundation Phase achieve very well. All recognise and use simple phrases and responses. They count in Welsh competently and quickly. For example when working in the woods they count objects in Welsh to 20 and carry out simple additions and subtractions in Welsh. Nearly all older children in the Foundation Phase listen very carefully and respond readily when spoken to in Welsh. By the end of KS2 nearly all pupils communicate clearly and confidently. They read well in Welsh as part of their activities and respond orally in a range of different situations. Pupils' bilingual skills follow a similar pattern.
65. Across the school mathematical skills are good. In the Foundation Phase the youngest children apply their growing understanding of how to count and to measure in a very wide range of activities. For example, they compare the length of pieces of wood when constructing a bridge to cross the river. They count objects accurately and recognise sequences in a wide range of activities. They 'buy and sell' and follow directions.
66. All older children in the Foundation Phase complete tally charts and simple graphs accurately, for example when processing information they have gathered about where they shop. They measure accurately in design technology when building a raft.
67. Nearly all pupils in KS2 have a good understanding of how to collect and interpret data they find, for example in science and geography. They measure accurately using scale, for example when finding the approximate length of rivers. They find solutions to problems by applying their knowledge of mathematical sequences.
68. Across the school, skills in ICT are good. All the youngest children in the Foundation Phase use the mouse confidently and competently to navigate through simple programs. Older children use a good range of resources well, for example to construct pictograms to do with transport. They set up a programmable toy to follow a prescribed route. They use digital cameras confidently to record their work. In KS2 nearly all use their skills well to make electronic presentations to research their work and illustrate it. They use ICT effectively to help them find solutions, patterns and relationships.
69. Pupils' understanding of the richness of their Welsh culture and heritage is good with no important shortcomings. From their earliest experiences in the Foundation Phase children build up a good knowledge of Welsh artists, composers, musicians, writers and successful sportsmen and women. Older pupils, for example visit the National Museum to study the work of Welsh portrait painters and as a result know a little about the important people in Welsh life in Tudor times such as Sir Thomas Mansel. They take part in a good range of cultural events which help them to appreciate the particular features of Welsh music and dance.
70. Across the school personal and social skills are outstanding. From the early part of the Foundation Phase all demonstrate a very clear understanding of how they can contribute to their school, their community and to the wider world. They show very

positive and constructive attitudes. They care for each other and recognise very clearly their own responsibilities to treat each other fairly and live out the school's mission statement, "To do our best as Christ taught us, to work our hardest in class and to be fair in work and play."

71. Problem solving skills are good with outstanding features. The youngest children readily and very successfully explore practical problems, for example, when following a route they have designed themselves which involved overcoming a wide range of obstacles. They solve problems as individuals and as groups very confidently. Older children explore different choices and try different solutions, for example in carrying out experiments to create simple electrical circuits. In KS2 pupils have a very good understanding of how to approach a practical or theoretical problem. They carry out systematic experiments to discover the likely probability of an event occurring, such as finding a black ball hidden amongst three white balls. Older KS2 pupils raise their own questions and respond enthusiastically to the challenges set for them.
72. Creative skills are good. From the beginning of the Foundation Phase children express themselves well when using different media and materials. They perform with confidence when singing and making music and experiment with sound and rhythm sensitively.
73. A particular strength of the school is the way in which pupils work very willingly together. Younger children in the Foundation Phase children are considerate of the needs of others and co-operate very well in small and larger groups. They share their ideas and resources readily, for example when discussing an activity to complete together they divide their tasks fairly between each group member.
74. Overall, pupils' knowledge of how to improve their own learning and performance is good. The youngest children in the Foundation Phase are eager to discuss what they are doing and to make suggestions to each other about how it could be improved. They do this naturally and constructively. Older children and pupils in KS2 are beginning to identify more formally, as well as orally, what they need to do to improve. They understand prior to the beginning of an activity and at the appropriate stages throughout it, what they are doing well and what they need to do to complete it.
75. Attendance for the previous twelve months, at 94.7%, is above the average for primary schools in Wales and in line with that for similar schools. Nearly all pupils arrive punctually at the beginning of the school day.
76. Across the school nearly all pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning. They behave well and are very conscientious. They are developing a strong sense of independence and the ability to work by themselves and with others showing initiative and determination to succeed. They make outstanding progress in their personal, social, moral and wider development and demonstrate a healthy respect for the religious, social and cultural traditions of different people and recognise the importance of treating each other equally irrespective of gender or background.
77. A wide range of visitors from the commercial environment introduce pupils to occupations as diverse as estate agency, solar engineering and banking. Pupils also visit a number of business premises. All these links give them a good awareness of the workplace and the types of jobs they may aspire to. They are also prepared well

for participation in the wider world through the school's many links with its own local community.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

78. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

79. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
45%	55%	0%	0%	0%

80. The quality of teaching is good or better, that is Grade 1 or Grade 2 in 100% of lessons. This figure is well above the national figure reported by HMCI in the Annual Report 2007/2008 (primary) where the quality of teaching was good or better (Grade 1 and Grade 2) in 83% of lessons with 16% of lessons at Grade 1. These figures are above those of the last inspection.

81. Across the school teachers plan very carefully and imaginatively with their learning support assistants (LSAs) to ensure that their lessons are stimulating, purposeful and meet the needs of all in the classes including those with English as an additional language and those who have some degree of SEN. In the early part of the Foundation Phase all staff have a very secure understanding of how to organise and provide a very wide range of suitable activities in order to foster the interests and enthusiasm of their children.

82. In the latter part of the Foundation Phase and in KS2, teachers plan rigorously so that older children and all KS2 pupils build systematically on what they already know and can do. They make the objectives of their lessons very clear and re-emphasise the skills needed to complete the task successfully. All are encouraged to find learning fun. Across the school all teachers have very high expectations of what should be achieved and always provide positive encouragement. Older children and pupils in KS2 are very successfully encouraged to show initiative and think things out for themselves.

83. In the best lessons which have many outstanding features and are found across the school, teachers and their learning assistants plan and prepare very imaginatively, for example when encouraging young children to explore their environment and to feel a sense of awe and wonder as they search for dinosaurs. All are very conscious of seizing opportunities as situations arise to develop children's skills, for example in the use of incidental Welsh and in working independently. Activities are very thoughtfully organised so that all children have appropriate opportunities to make choices for themselves as well as to take part in specific tasks which teachers have thoughtfully assembled.

84. Across the school older children and pupils in KS2 are given a very clear picture of what they should aim to achieve during a lesson and their progress is carefully reviewed at its end. Teachers question very effectively to encourage pupils to think things out for themselves. They support and encourage warmly and move the lesson on swiftly and smoothly from task to task, for example in a physical development session in the Foundation Phase.
85. Teachers invariably show very secure subject knowledge, for example in a science lesson about how joints function in the human body. They make very good links between different subjects and cleverly recognise and re-emphasise elements which relate to their own area and to pupils' Welsh heritage and very successfully promote incidental Welsh in their lessons. They show infectious enthusiasm for what they are teaching and make subjects come to life, for example when encouraging older pupils to write persuasively.
86. In many of the best lessons teachers systematically review what has been taught and use that information at the beginning of the next lesson to ensure that all pupils have a firm basis to learn more. They systematically increase the level of challenge and encourage pupils to explain what they have learnt and to evaluate constructively their own efforts and those of others. All teachers are very mindful of the needs of those who have English as an additional language and they ensure that they are fully involved in the lesson and receive very good support.
87. Assessment procedures are in line with recent developments and meet statutory requirements. Baseline assessments, reliable tests and NC assessment information are used effectively by class teachers to monitor individual progress and to plan for systematic learning which builds on what is already understood. A computerised tracking system is used effectively by senior teachers to monitor and evaluate progress. The information it provides is clear and concise and used well by class teachers to make adjustments to how and what is taught, with implications for teaching and learning highlighted. Class teachers' records are manageable and are of good quality overall with outstanding recording of progress for children in the Foundation Phase.
88. Internal and external arrangements to agree standards with other neighbouring schools including the secondary school to which most pupils transfer have led to the creation of effective collections of pupils' work to indicate the standards which should be reached in all subjects.
89. Teachers assess pupils' achievements and progress very well. There is a clearly defined marking strategy within a detailed policy. All work is marked regularly and includes evaluative as well as diagnostic comments. Oral and written feedback includes the next step for pupil learning. Self assessment is developing well with pupils having challenging individual targets in English and mathematics. An outstanding example of this is the use of personal evaluation sheets in KS2. As a result these pupils are developing successfully their understanding of the purpose of assessment and how well they are doing.
90. Reports to parents are comprehensive, informative, consistent in format and meet statutory requirements. They include information about current achievements and targets for improvement. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss their children's

progress and the content of the annual reports and have two formal consultations a year.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

91. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
92. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and ensures coherence by building systematically from year to year on what pupils know and can do and what they need to learn next. It meets in full statutory requirements of the NC. Provision for EAL pupils is an outstanding feature. This includes an impressive new arrivals programme which helps new pupils quickly feel part of the school.
93. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils very well and is equally accessible to all.
94. The provision of very high quality learning experiences for the Foundation Phase is outstanding. Lessons are planned in accordance with the Framework for Children's Learning for three to seven year olds and there is an excellent balance of regular activities across the seven areas of learning, using inside and outdoor learning very effectively. Very good cross curricular links are made where appropriate between different subjects.
95. Curriculum policies, schemes of work and mid term units of work have been rigorously reviewed, with the Foundation Phase, Curriculum 2008 and Skills Framework in mind. However, the reviews of the arrangements for the systematic teaching of the key skills necessary for successful learning are incomplete. Schemes and units of work indicate what pupils will learn from year to year and are of very good quality. There are explicit learning and teaching opportunities for each year group to build on systematically to existing knowledge, understanding and skills.
96. The quality of teachers' planning is very good in the Foundation Phase and good in KS2. Short term plans take account of what has gone on before and perceptive ongoing evaluations allow for changes to the future planning. Lesson plans outline learning and teaching activities, the levels of challenge for different abilities, resources and set out skills pupils will need to be good learners.
97. Key skills are carefully integrated into lesson plans. Those being developed are indicated clearly. The long term skills continuum in Foundation Phase is outstanding. There is also a coherent guide for developing the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT for KS2, which is used alongside the programme. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark, renewed in February 2009. The recently introduced 'Building Learning Power' initiative to develop pupils' thinking skills as resourceful and resilient learners is beginning to have a significant impact.

98. Topics are carefully planned on a two year cycle. Mathematics and English activities are planned effectively, mainly during the morning sessions with 'short burst' Welsh sessions for KS2 and reading activities effectively planned at other times. This contributes significantly to helping to develop pupils' bilingual skills. All older pupils in KS2 benefit from arrangements for specialist teaching in art and music.
99. An outstanding aspect of the learning experiences is its enrichment by an impressive range of cultural and extra-curricular activities. These complement and extend the curriculum and contribute towards the standards pupils achieve and their personal and social development. The school makes very good use of the extensive school grounds, including the conservation area, as well as nearby places to provide rich and exciting learning experiences.
100. There is a very broad range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils both at lunchtimes and after school include educational, cultural and sporting activities. These are very popular and are taken up by a large number of pupils from across the school. The eco-committee meets regularly and works hard in order to help the school achieve and maintain Green Flag status. Older pupils also benefit from residential visits to develop an understanding of Welsh culture and to experience a range of adventurous activities. Many pupils benefit from keyboard, guitar, woodwind and percussion instrument lessons by peripatetic teachers.
101. Visits to places of interest in the locality and beyond significantly enhance learning and pupils' knowledge of their Welsh heritage, for example the River Ogmore, the local bank, the National Museum of Wales, the local retail stores, Llancaiach Fawr, the Big Pit at Blaenavon and the Roman remains at Caerleon. Visitors to school make learning interesting and enjoyable, for example as part of this professional rugby players and XL Wales develop pupils' collaboration and problem solving skills.
102. A strong programme for personal and social development permeates all aspects of school life, reflecting the school's inclusive school ethos. PSE is promoted through a variety of ways, including religious education, discussion time, pupils taking on different positions of responsibility, cultural focus days and the example set by staff.
103. Very detailed and effective arrangements for pupils' social development are integrated effectively across all aspects of the school. Pupils are encouraged to think and have opinions. The school council is effective in decision making, for example, with regards their recommendation for improvements to the school grounds. Pupils also take up positions of responsibility such as house captains, monitors and helpers.
104. There is very good provision for pupils' cultural development, using the rich resource of the school's families. Pupils are encouraged to consider important issues linked to their own experiences, not only through the formal curriculum, but also through reflection about and appreciation of the Welsh culture and other cultures. The culture of Wales is regularly celebrated in various ways, for example through an Eisteddfod and on St David's Day. There are also 'cultural focus' days when the cultures of the different families represented in the school are celebrated

105. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' spiritual development is very effective and provided for in many ways. Across the school all are given very good opportunities to reflect and feel a sense of awe and wonder at the world around them. Provision for moral development is an outstanding feature. The pupils know the difference between right and wrong, values of honesty, fairness and truthfulness. These are evident in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; all pupils are very polite. Pupils take part in significant charity fundraising events. The school's mission statement and aims are reflected in class rules, with a variety of strategies used to promote positive behaviour, effort and achievement.
106. Partnership with parents is a good feature of the school. As indicated at the pre-inspection parents' meeting and questionnaires parents feel very positive about all aspects of school life. They feel fully involved with the life of the school, for example, evening meetings have been held to promote reading and outline the changes to the way their children are taught. There is a 'Friends of St Mary's' which is very supportive and raises money for school resources. Parents are also actively involved in helping in school activities, such as in reading. An outstanding initiative is a Polish Club for parents to improve their basic skills so that they can support their children's learning. Parents feel welcomed, valued and appreciated. They are also surveyed on specific matters and there is effective communication with them through the prospectus, newsletters, consultation evenings, annual reports and the school web site.
107. Links with the local community are good as are links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer and neighbouring schools. The school regularly provides placements for students from local further and higher education institutions.
108. The provision of work-related education is an outstanding feature of the school. Each class has a business relationship, which supports a topic the class is studying. For example, the youngest children link up with a market gardener to help them with the growing and selling of their own vegetables. The oldest pupils are working with a national bank to understand the principles of personal finance.
109. An integral part of the school's mission is to support everyone of its pupils, irrespective of their backgrounds, to achieve to the best of their abilities. This is an outstanding feature. It actively seeks to provide appropriate levels of support for those who are at a social disadvantage and tackles stereotyping by and promotes gender equality rigorously.
110. The school provides a good insight into the world of work. From an early age children know about the jobs which some people do to help us. While older pupils visit places of work locally. The school is making outstanding provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship. The eco-committee, which consists of staff, a governor, and pupils, operates a wide range of initiatives for ensuring waste minimisation, energy saving and recycling. These include making sketchbooks from scrap paper, using recycled paper products for everything from hand towels to exercise books and saving water through various system controls. It also carries out regular audits of classrooms and makes an eco-class award at the end of each half-term. The commitment to biodiversity within the school grounds is

particularly impressive with the development of a marshy area, log pile, flower and vegetable planters and a conservation area.

111. Learning experiences provided for pupils make an outstanding contribution to the development of the entrepreneurial skills they will need in their future working lives. They are involved in a range of initiatives, such as making and selling cakes and table decorations for the Christmas Fayre. Most impressive, however, is the annual project where each class designs, makes and sells a product or service which is then sold from stalls at the annual fete. The key skills of working with others, problem solving and decision making are also developed well during lessons.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

112. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
113. The systems through which the school plans, manages and provides for the care, support, guidance and well being of its pupils are good and have many outstanding features. The school is meticulous in ensuring the specific needs of individual pupils are identified throughout their life in the school. It then seeks to address these through tailored programmes involving the headteacher, teaching and non-teaching support staff.
114. The school works well with its parents in providing the right level of care for their children. Those, whose views were obtained during the inspection, were very appreciative of this. They also felt that their views were sought and valued by the school. Pupils also make a good contribution to the school's decision making process through the school council which is a very active body whose views are carefully considered by the headteacher and governors. This gives pupils a good understanding of the democratic process.
115. The provision of personal support and guidance for pupils is of a very high quality. A particular strength is the very successful way those new to the school and sometimes newly arrived in the country are encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school for their first day in school. The help and support for those with EAL and their parents is outstanding and very effective.
116. The school has very thorough arrangements for ensuring children settle in well when they join the nursery. Good links are established with their parents and there is a series of half-day sessions when children acclimatise themselves to life in school. At the same time, teachers build up detailed individual profiles of them by talking to their parents. Pupils who arrive at other times, often from abroad are introduced to the school in a sensitive manner and allocated a classroom buddy.
117. Monitoring of attendance and punctuality is good and enables the school to identify and work with those pupils who have difficulties in these areas.

118. The headteacher regularly reviews the school site to check for any health and safety concerns and is supported in this by the constant vigilance of staff. However, limited records are kept of such audits. Risk assessments are in place for educational visits and there are suitable arrangements for the provision of first aid.
119. The school is helping to raise pupils' awareness of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle through a range of initiatives. These include only allowing fruit for snacks at break times, providing water bottles in the classrooms and encouraging pupils to grow their own fruit and vegetables. The importance of regular exercise is promoted very well through physical education lessons and a range of sports clubs.
120. The school has good arrangements for ensuring the protection of its children. Two teachers are fully trained designated persons for child protection who administers a system in line with recommended good practice and local guidance. All staff receive regular update training on what to look out for and the action to take should the need arise.
121. The school's provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good with outstanding features. Early identification of pupils with SEN in the school ensures very purposeful support. The policy of early intervention is extremely successful and the school's SEN policy and procedures comply with the code of practice and the framework of inclusive education.
122. Each pupil with SEN has a detailed individual education plan (IEP) which forms the basis of their learning programme. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) in consultation with the class teacher writes the IEPs as they become necessary. Well focused and achievable targets are set and the progress pupils make towards these targets are closely monitored. When targets are achieved new ones are drawn up. This maintains momentum and the rate at which pupils make progress. IEPs are regularly reviewed by the SENCo and class teachers.
123. Pupils are involved in reviewing their targets on a regular basis and agreeing their next set of targets. All relevant parents are shown copies and advised on areas where they can offer support. The SENCo and class teachers are proactive in encouraging parents to work with the school in support of their children.
124. The SENCo regularly monitors the quality of provision and offers advice to teachers and LSAs on how to adopt lessons appropriately for pupils with SEN through strategies, tasks, support and resources. The school also makes very effective use of external agencies such as the educational psychologist, the behaviour support service, and the motor and sensory impairment services
125. Specific training is provided for LSAs to enable them to carry out programmes of work with targeted pupils. For example, guided reading sessions are held daily involving teaching and support for pupils who have emotional, social and behavioural issues. This greatly enhances the school's provision for these pupils.
126. In class support is provided in a flexible way by both teachers and LSAs. Work is well planned to provide an appropriate challenge for those of all abilities, including more able and talented pupils.

127. Positive behaviour management is used very effectively to reinforce good behaviour throughout the school. It contributes strongly to the outstanding standards of pupils' behaviour evident in all classes and in all activities. It ensures that all pupils get on with their learning tasks without disruption. This is an outstanding feature of the school. Positive behaviour management is firmly embedded in school life.
128. Overall, the school has outstanding provision for ensuring pupils have an equal opportunity to learn irrespective of their social, educational or ethnic background. The cultural diversity of pupils' backgrounds is recognised and celebrated and their heritage is regularly shared with others in the school during lessons and in assemblies. Pupils with EAL make a full contribution to the life of the school as do several of their parents.
129. The principle of gender equality is embedded in the life of the school with boys and girls having equal access to all activities. PSE teaching, and the examples set by adults in the school and visitors, encourages them to challenge gender stereotypes, which they may encounter in later life.
130. The school actively promotes good race relations amongst its own pupils as well as with others in the wider community. Its success in achieving this can be seen in the way pupils from different ethnic backgrounds work and play very happily together.
131. There are also good measures in place to eliminate oppressive behaviour in the school. Any incidents identified as involving suspected bullying are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Pupils and their parents, who expressed an opinion on this during the inspection, were very appreciative of the school's efforts in this area.
132. The school is very aware of the need to treat all pupils equally. It generally provides very well for them. There has been a thorough review of the site to assess its accessibility for the disabled and there is a detailed accessibility plan. However, while there are currently no disabled pupils at the school, the designated disabled toilet is cluttered, unattractive and unsuitable for wheelchair users. Travel for the disabled between the Foundation Phase classrooms and the main school involves a lengthy journey around the perimeter of the building.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

133. The findings of the inspection team did not match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
134. The grade awarded to this key question was one below that given by the school and one grade below that awarded to Key Question 1 and Key Question 7. This is because while the relatively recently appointed headteacher has put in place several important initiatives, there has not been sufficient time to judge their full effect. Additionally, two of the senior management team including the deputy headteacher

have been absent for lengthy periods. As a result the overall impact of the complete senior management team on the development of the school has yet to be proved.

135. The headteacher provides a thoughtful and effective lead, pragmatically building on the school's well established strengths and has a very clear vision for the future needs. He has been very instrumental in extending teachers' professional development including the teaching of the skills of 'how to learn to be successful learners', expectations of himself and of the rest of the teaching and non-teaching staff are very high. All work together very effectively.
136. The school has a very positive and outgoing ethos where relationships between all adults and adults and pupils are very constructive. There is a strong commitment to teamwork and shared values. All staff are conscious of their responsibilities and the need to ensure that all pupils have equal access to what is taught and make at least good progress in all aspects of their life in school.
137. The headteacher and remaining assistant headteacher work closely together to review the impact of the decisions made and to provide well focused support.
Curriculum
138. Curriculum co-ordinators have carried out detailed reviews of their areas of responsibility and work closely with other staff to help to provide high quality teaching and learning. The Foundation Phase is particularly well managed and despite the significant staff disruptions it provides an outstanding education for children who attend it. The progress children make is very carefully reviewed. A particular strength is the way in which decisions made about how to teach older children and the standards they should achieve have been very successfully followed through.
139. There are detailed arrangements in place to assess pupils' long-term progress, to compare the progress of different groups of pupils and to identify under achievement. Across the school and particularly in the Foundation Phase this information is very well used to ensure that standards are high and that all pupils achieve well. These procedures and also those for managing and providing for pupils with English as an additional language are well used to provide help where it is needed on a regular basis.
140. The school takes very careful account of national priorities and local initiatives. The breakfast club is well supported. The Foundation Phase has been introduced very successfully and extended very effectively to include Y1 and Y2.
141. There is a detailed system for the senior management team to observe teaching and learning. Recent initiatives have strengthened links between the school's performance management arrangements and this process. The targets set are very clearly focused on teachers' professional development and empowering all staff to see themselves as leaders.
142. There are appropriate arrangements in place to support newly qualified teachers and teachers who are new to the school.
143. The governing body is well led and is supportive of the professional staff. It meets all of its statutory duties. It is well aware about what is going on in the school. Many

governors visit school regularly and there are good curriculum links between the professional staff and governors. For example, governors were very involved in relatively new initiatives relating to the introduction of a skills based curriculum. Governors are well informed of the school's longer-term needs and of the strategic decisions they need to make in order to support teaching and learning.

144. However, currently governors do not hold the professional leadership of the school constructively to account. They do not follow up with appropriate rigour the outcomes of their spending decisions and act fully as a critical yet supportive friend of the professional leadership.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

145. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
146. The self-evaluation report is clear and comprehensive. It is open and honest and identifies strengths and areas for development. The inspection team agreed with the school judgements in six of the seven key questions. The school knows itself well. The inspection team awarded a lower grade to Key Question 5. This is because although the relatively newly appointed headteacher has begun several important initiatives, these have not had sufficient time to prove their true value. In addition two senior and experienced members of staff have not been available to the school in the period leading up to the inspection.
147. Curriculum co-ordinators are well informed about quality, standards and performance in their subjects and areas for which they are responsible. This is an outstanding feature in the Foundation Phase.
148. All curriculum co-ordinators effectively contribute to the schools self evaluation process and each produces a detailed review of their areas of responsibility. The headteacher uses this information appropriately to shape the school development plan (SDP).
149. Evidence for the self-evaluation process has been gathered from a wide range of sources including planning documents, pupils' work and from first hand evidence from an on-going programme of classroom observation to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.
150. The headteacher monitors teaching carefully and has an accurate picture of the staff's many strengths with few areas for improvement.
151. Effective use is made of test and assessment data in order to set challenging but realistic targets for individuals, groups and cohorts. The tracking system gives teachers important information on the development of pupils' performance year on year.

152. The views of pupils, staff, the governing body and the LA are sought to inform its self-evaluation. The views of pupils in particular are given prominence. This is an outstanding feature. The school council and eco-council are very good forums that allow pupils' views to be heard constructively.
153. The governing body has worked closely with the head teacher and staff in the process of self-evaluation. Governors discussed the self-evaluation report in detail prior to approval. They receive regular reports from curricular co-ordinators and they have responsibilities for different areas. The school however plans to develop this aspect and has identified it as an area for improvement.
154. Effective use is made of the knowledge gained from the self-evaluation process in order to set priorities for the SDP. The document identifies clearly the steps for action, the success indicators and the allocation of appropriate resources in order to support priorities.
155. Since the last inspection in 2003 the school has made significant and measurable improvement in many areas of its work. All key issues have been effectively addressed with outstanding improvement in the support and provision for pupils with EAL. The school benefits from the contribution of the athrowes fro and the curricular co-ordinators for Welsh second language in developing the teaching of Welsh and promoting bilingualism. The school toilets are now appropriately ventilated and a new school boundary fence has been installed.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

156. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
157. The school has a sufficient number of well qualified teachers of differing experience, who have the necessary knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the school's curriculum and meet the needs of the pupils very effectively. A generous number of LSAs are employed by the school to support learning. They form a very effective team and make a very valuable contribution to classroom activities, being engaged purposefully in planning, teaching and recording pupils' progress.
158. Teaching staff and teaching assistants are very well deployed, managed, monitored and trained to a very high standard. All staff have detailed job descriptions linked to their roles and these are reviewed annually. Responsibilities for subjects and aspects are shared between members of staff. Good use is made of the instrumental peripatetic teachers to develop pupils' skills and understanding in music.
159. There are very effective and efficient administrative systems in place and the administrative staff support the head teacher and staff well. Cleaning and midday staff undertake their duties diligently and effectively. Daily routines are well established.

160. There are also well established arrangements for the performance management and continuous professional development of all staff. Training is undertaken both internally and externally and the programme is linked with the school's and national priorities. The commitment to staff development at all levels is good. Effective arrangements have been made to fulfil the requirements of teachers' workload and in extending the senior management team. The former initiative has had a positive impact on teachers' preparation, planning and assessment of pupils' learning. The time set aside for this is well used.
161. Pupils in all year groups have access to a wide range and supply of resources to support the curriculum, which generally match the demands of pupils' learning. Although there is no main library, a good range of reading books are available in classroom areas. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards but there is limited access to computers other than in the ICT suite.
162. The school makes outstandingly efficient, effective and economic use of resources, linking spending decisions to the school's priorities for development. The head teacher and the governing body review the curriculum and school needs very carefully. A recent audit was positive.
163. The accommodation consists of one building in very extensive grounds. The recently installed canopy for three Foundation Phase classes very successfully enhances provision. Other outside developments which make a very suitable setting for good learning and teaching include attractive gardens, conservation area and playing fields. Internal accommodation is generally adequate. Although classrooms are quite small but the accommodation is used very well by staff to promote learning.
164. Provision for the disabled has some limitations. These include limited toilet facilities for them and difficulties in moving between the main school and the Foundation Phase classes. Many colourful and stimulating displays enhance the learning environment throughout the school.
165. Bearing in mind the progress pupils make and the very good quality of education provided, the school provides very good value for money

School's response to the inspection

166. The whole school community welcomes this report and the many outstanding features that it identifies in the life of the school. In particular, we note that the very high percentage of lessons having outstanding features reflects accurately the skill, talent and commitment of the school's staff. It is pleasing to note the close match between the school's self evaluation judgements and those made by the inspection team. This indicates that the school knows itself well. This is a key factor in relation to its ability to continue to improve, from this very impressive base, in the future.
167. The three recommendations included in the report will now form the basis of our Post Inspection Action Plan, which will be the result of the work of staff and governors. The plan will then be distributed to all parents upon completion.
168. The school would like to thank Mr Mathias and his team for the professional and courteous manner in which the inspection was conducted.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	St Marys Catholic Primary School
School type	Voluntary – Primary including Foundation Phase
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Llangewydd Road Bridgend
Postcode	CF31 4JW
Telephone number	01656 815560

Headteacher	Mr Lyndon Watkins
Date of appointment	1 st September 2008
Chair of governors	Mrs Monica Rumbul
Registered inspector	Mr Peter Mathias
Dates of inspection	6 th -8 th July 2009

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y 1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	31	27	28	34	29	26	26	39	240

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	9	3	10.6

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	23.75:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	8:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	26.1
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Summer 2008	89.2%	90.3%	93%
Autumn 2008	85.4%	90.6%	94.6%
Spring 2009	88.8%	92.6%	94.5%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	7.5%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of key stage 1:

Because this school was part of the initial pilot for the Foundation Phase and has continued the Foundation Phase until the end of Y2, no data is available relating to National Curriculum assessments for KS1 in 2008.

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of key stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2008			Number of pupils in Y6		34				
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	3	0	0	3	6.1	57.6	30.3
		National	0.4	0.4	0.6	3.6	16.3	49.7	28.8
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	3	0	0	3	6.1	57.6	30.3
		National	0.4	0.4	0.5	3	15.3	50.4	29.9
Science	Teacher assessment	School	3	0	0	3	9.1	48.5	36.4
		National	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.8	12.2	52.5	32.4

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science and English by teacher assessment			
In the school	81.8%	In Wales	74.1%

D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Four inspectors plus the school's nominee and a peer assessor spent the equivalent of nine inspector days in the school and met as a team before the inspection. The headteacher was the school's nominee and attended all team meetings.

The inspectors visited:

- twenty-nine lessons or part lessons ;
- registrations, assemblies and acts of collective worship; and
- a range of extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- staff, governors and parents before the inspection;
- senior managers, teachers, support and administrative staff;
- groups of pupils representing each year group;
- the school council; and
- representatives of organisations associated with the school.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- ninety-two responses to a parents' questionnaire of which a very high percentage were positive;
- documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- a wide range of pupils' past and current work; and
- samples of pupils' reports.

After the inspection, the team held meetings with the staff, senior managers and governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Peter Mathias (Registered Inspector)	Context Summary and recommendations Contributions to Key Question 1 & 2 Key Question 5 Appendices
Mr Ted Tipper (Lay Inspector)	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3 & 4
Mr Mike Thomas (Team member)	Contributions to Key Question 2, 3 & 7
Mr David Beaumont-Morgan (Team member)	Contributions to Key Question 4 Key Question 6
Mr Lyndon Watkins (Headteacher/Nominee)	Attended meetings School's response Provided information
Mrs Susan Jones (Peer Assessor)	Contributions to all Key Questions

Acknowledgement

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

Contractor:

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