

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

**Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell Nedd  
Woodland Road,  
Neath.  
SA11 3AL**

**School Number: 6712168**

**Date of Inspection: 4/12/06**

**by**

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- \* primary schools;
- \* secondary schools;
- \* special schools;
- \* pupil referral units;
- \* independent schools;
- \* further education;
- \* adult community-based learning;
- \* youth support services;
- \* LEAs;
- \* teacher education and training;
- \* work-based learning;
- \* careers companies; and
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Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell Nedd 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 Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell Nedd took place between 04/12/06 and 07/12/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Luned Eleri Betts 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:

<b>Grade 1</b>	good with outstanding features
<b>Grade 2</b>	good features and no important shortcomings
<b>Grade 3</b>	good features outweigh shortcomings
<b>Grade 4</b>	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
<b>Grade 5</b>	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. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell Nedd is situated close to the centre of the town of Neath. Pupils come from the town itself and from the surrounding villages. The school notes that they come from a variety of backgrounds, some are advantaged and others disadvantaged. They receive their education completely through the medium of Welsh. There are 331 pupils on the register at present, a figure that includes 38 children in the nursery. They are taught within 13 classes.
2. Eleven per cent of pupils have the right to free school meals, a figure that is much lower than local and national percentages. The majority come from non-Welsh speaking backgrounds; around 12% come from a background where Welsh is the main language of the home. There are none from a minority ethnic background. Forty two pupils are on the register for special educational needs (SEN) but none has a statement.
3. The school is one of those chosen to be a pilot school for the forthcoming Foundation Phase; therefore children from three to seven years of age follow the Foundation Phase Draft Framework and have been disapplied from the National Curriculum (NC).
4. The school was last inspected in November 2000. It has recently been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark, has received the Eco School Green Flag in 2004 and gained two healthy school awards in 2005 and 2006. It has a new headteacher since September 2006.

### The school's priorities and targets

5. The school's main aims are to:
  - ensure each individual is successful and that each child is at the centre of learning and that each one's contribution is respected;
  - ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop emotionally, socially, morally and educationally to the limits of his/her ability;
  - establish a happy and homely atmosphere and that this ethos promotes the Welsh language and Welsh culture, and that the school environment reflects respect through high standards of display and care;
  - promote links with the local community and begin to prepare children to become responsible adults in their communities;

- aim at developing personal virtues such as perseverance, industriousness, self-expression, loyalty, honesty and self confidence in order to promote self-respect and respect for others and
- encourage each child to play a prominent and active role in school life.

6. The school's priorities for this year are to:

- continue to promote staff professional development in order to improve the performance of pupils and develop arrangements for teachers' Planning, Preparation and Assessment time;
- develop structures for monitoring curriculum provision;
- continue to promote initiatives such as Eco School and Healthy Schools;
- develop information technology including the school's web-site;
- continue to develop the Foundation Phase for children from three to seven years of age and
- develop the school site further.

## Summary

7. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell Nedd has been through a period of considerable change during the last three years because of establishing the Foundation Stage as a pilot school and a change in leadership. By now, the necessary changes for children from three to seven years of age have been successfully established and the new headteacher has shared his vision on moving the school forward effectively with parents, staff and governing body(GB). This school has a special ethos which has a significant influence on the pupils' development. They display good attitudes towards their play and work and their behaviour is outstanding.
8. The inspection team agreed with the school's self-evaluation in four key questions. They have given a lower grade than the school gave itself for the other three questions because there are some shortcomings in these questions. They believe that the changes identified above have impacted significantly on some aspects of school development.

### Table of grades awarded

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

9. In the 55 lessons inspected, pupils' standards of achievement were as follows:

Grade1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6%	81%	11%	2%	-

10. The school achieves the targets set by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) for 2007 which are that standards of achievement are at least satisfactory (Grade 3) in 98% of lessons inspected and at least good (Grade 2) in 65% of lessons seen.
11. Standards achieved by pupils in areas of learning and subjects are as follows:

### Grades for standards in areas of learning for the Foundation Phase.

Foundation Stage	Grade 2
Personal and social development	Grade 2
Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Multicultural understanding	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2

### Grades for standards in subjects inspected.

Inspection Area	
English Key Stage 2(KS2)	Grade 3
Mathematics KS2	Grade 2
Information technology KS2	Grade 2
Design and technology KS2	Grade 3
Music KS2	Grade 2
Physical education KS2	Grade 2

12. In National Curriculum (NC) teacher assessments for pupils who are seven in KS 1, pupils' results have been consistently higher than national and local percentages during the last three years, They have consistently reached the target of 80% set by the GB and in 2005, the last year in which the tests were done, all pupils had achieved level 2 (the level expected of pupils who are seven years of age.) The Core Subject Indicator (CSI), (which is the number of pupils who have achieved level 2 in the three core subjects) is therefore higher than national and local averages and those for similar schools, which are those schools with the similar number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. There is no difference between the performance of boys and girls.
13. For pupils who are eleven years of age in KS2, results in NC tests and teacher assessments during the last three years have shown an increase and have reached targets set by the GB. However the school's results do not excel to the same degree over other schools as they did during the period of the last inspection. Results are a little above national percentages in English and mathematics, are about the same in Welsh and a little lower in science. The CSI (which is the number of pupils who achieve a level 4 in three core subjects) is the same as national figures but is higher than local figures. In comparison with similar schools, the school is in the middle. However, a significant number of pupils had achieved a level 5 in the four core subjects in 2006. Generally, boys do not perform as well as girls.
14. Although results show that a significant number of pupils achieve well, not all pupils in KS2 always achieve their potential. Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) make good progress in all aspects of their development; generally they achieve their potential.

15. In key skills standards and progress in the Foundation Phase are outstanding in listening (Grade 1). They are good (Grade 2) in speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) across areas of learning.
16. In KS2 standards in listening in Welsh and English are outstanding (Grade 1), they are good (Grade 2) in speaking and good on the whole (Grade 2) also in reading and writing. Pupils in KS2 are accomplished users of ICT (Grade 2). Numeracy is a Grade 3 as pupils' use of numeracy skills across the curriculum is limited. Pupils' bilingual skills are good.
17. Pupils display positive attitudes to their work. A feature of their outstanding behaviour is the courtesy they show towards visitors and the respect they have for each other. The development of pupils' personal and social skills is good.
18. Levels of attendance are lower than national levels and average 92%. Levels for this term have improved a little with an absentee figure of 6.4%, which places the school in the lower 25% in comparison with similar schools. A small number of pupils arrive late in the morning.

### **The quality of education and training**

19. The quality of teaching, in lessons seen during the inspection, was judged as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
16%	69%	13%	2%	-

20. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Phase is good and often outstanding in Year 1 (Y1). It is more variable in KS2. For pupils with SEN it is consistently good.
21. Where teaching is good and often has outstanding features, teachers' presentations are stimulating and build well on earlier work, and the structure and pace of the lesson is appropriate. Where lessons have shortcomings, lesson introductions are too long and pupils have difficulty concentrating.
22. Across the Foundation Phase assessment is good; support staff, as well as teachers, play an active role in assessing the children on a day to day basis.
23. Work in core subjects is assessed twice yearly across KS2. Comments on pupils' progress are given at the end of the year only in foundation subjects.
24. Individual targets are provided for pupils in their language books but generally these targets are insufficiently specific to ensure consistent improvements. Evidence that these targets are reviewed and updated is limited.
25. Work is marked regularly on the whole. Comments explaining clearly and in detail how pupils can improve their work, are inconsistent. Annual reports to parents conform to statutory requirements.

26. The curriculum for children under seven years of age provides opportunities for children to learn through play and discovery. The provision is balanced across the seven areas of learning and often stimulating links between these areas provide opportunity to consolidate learning. The provision is still developing especially at the upper end of the stage.
27. Pupils in KS2 receive enriching experiences across the key stage; the curriculum provided is relevant and meets statutory requirements. Planning, however, is not always sufficiently refined for the needs of the school; insufficient attention is given to providing work adapted to suit the different needs of learners especially the more able ones. Although key skills are included broadly in planning, provision for them in classes is not prominent or effective at all times. Curriculum provision for pupils with SEN is good.
28. The cwricwlwm Cymreig and Welsh culture is an outstanding feature of the school's provision especially in history and geography. Provision is good, especially in the Foundation Phase for pupils to develop their awareness of other cultures, and pupils in Y5 and Y6 enjoy their weekly experiences of learning French. Provision for promoting bilingualism in KS2 is good.
29. Pupils receive numerous opportunities to take part in extra curricular provision in a variety of sports and music. Provision ensures that no stereotyping or social disadvantage occurs.
30. Although the school does not provide formal sessions for personal and social education, these experiences are integrated throughout the school day. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding.
31. The school makes good use of its partnerships with other schools and parents to enrich curricular experiences. Links with trade and industry are not sufficiently developed.
32. Experiences provided for pupils to develop an awareness of healthy eating and sustainability are outstanding. Pupils contribute to charitable causes and this effectively develops them to be global citizens.
33. The school plans effectively and provides a welcoming and caring environment to enable pupils to play and learn. Pupils are looked after and guided and supported well.
34. Arrangements for helping children settle into the nursery class are good; transition arrangements with the secondary school are good and ensure that pupils are eager to start on the next stage of their education.
35. The school conforms with statutory requirements for ensuring good attendance and is aware of the need to improve attendance levels. Absences, where no reason is provided, are not followed through sufficiently.

36. Pupils' health and safety are a high priority for the staff and GB and the school has a wide range of effective measures for the well being of staff and all pupils. A health and safety matter was discussed with the headteacher and GB during the inspection.
37. Clear policies and arrangements are in place for dealing with matters of child protection.
38. The school's promotion of fair play, equal opportunity and tolerance is evident and consequently pupils have a good and sound relationship with their peers and teachers. Purposeful measures are in place to ensure that there is no oppression, including discrimination on racial grounds or bullying.

### **Leadership and Management**

39. The school has agreed aims and values. The headteacher has a clear vision for establishing a school community where everyone's opinion and contribution count.
40. As part of the national pilot for the Foundation Phase in Wales over the last three years, the school has benefited from the thoughtful leadership of the previous headteacher.
41. The School Development Plan (SDP) records the developments needed for developing staff, the curriculum and the site over three years with a year- on-year focus. It is not a sufficiently clear or detailed document in its present form, as it does not record in enough detail the spending entailed in developments.
42. A policy and programme for performance management have been established which give a direction to professional staff development, which aims to respond to the needs of priorities identified in the SDP.
43. Although good standards have been maintained in a number of subjects since the last inspection and have risen substantially in information technology, standards in English have fallen and marking and refining schemes of work remain as recommendations in this inspection. Progress since the last inspection has been a Grade 3.
44. The self-evaluation report has good features but developments in the Foundation Phase are not evaluated sufficiently.
45. The role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring their subjects and their contribution to the self-evaluation process has not developed sufficiently and although the GB is very supportive of the school, their contribution to the self-evaluation process is limited.
46. The school compares its performance regularly with similar schools and with local and national percentages. Targets set by the GB have not been sufficiently challenging during the last three years.

47. The school is appropriately staffed with teachers who have qualifications and experience. The school has successfully increased the number of support staff to promote the Foundation Phase and they are used well.
48. Performance management reviews identify staff training needs well and identify responsibilities. They are closely linked with the SDP.
49. Overall, the school has a good supply of resources which are used effectively to enrich pupils' learning experiences.
50. The school occupies a number of different buildings which causes problems especially in bad weather. Space for whole school activities is limited.
51. The budget is managed effectively by the headteacher and GB finance committee. The school provides good value for money.

## Recommendations

In order to move the school forward, staff and GB need to:

- R1 raise standards in English and design and technology in KS2 and respond to shortcomings identified in other subjects and areas of learning in the report;
- R2 develop assessment systems across KS2 including improving the quality of the marking;
- R3 continue to develop the Foundation Phase for children of three to seven years of age;
- R4 review schemes of work and teachers' short term planning in order to give specific attention to key skills, work adapted to suit the different needs of learners and raise the standard of boys' performance, especially in KS2;
- R5 develop the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators and the GB in order to set more challenging targets and to improve the quality of the SDP and the self-evaluation process;
- R6 improve attendance percentages;

A health and safety matter was discussed with the headteacher and GB during the inspection.

Recommendations R3 and R5 are already prioritised in the SDP.

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 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

52. The inspection team's findings match the grade given by the school in its self-evaluation report.

53. In the 55 lessons inspected, pupils' standards of achievement were as follows:

Grade1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6%	81%	11%	2%	-

54. The school achieves the targets set by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) for 2007 which are that standards of achievement are at least satisfactory (Grade 3) in 98% of lessons inspected and at least good (Grade 2) in 65% of lessons seen.

55. Standards achieved by pupils in areas of learning and subjects are as follows:

#### Grades for standards in areas of learning for Foundation Phase

Foundation Stage	Grade 2
Personal and social development	Grade 2
Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Multicultural understanding	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2

#### Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	
English KS2	Grade 3
Mathematics KS2	Grade 2
Information technology KS2	Grade 2
Design and technology KS2	Grade 3
Music KS2	Grade 2
Physical education KS2	Grade 2

56. On the whole, children in the Foundation Phase and pupils in KS2 make good progress in acquiring skills, understanding and new knowledge and achieve the agreed learning aims. Results of the baseline assessments for children under five years of age indicate that they have generally good skills when they start school. In the Foundation Phase classes, children make good progress when

investigating and discovering things for themselves. Across the school pupils succeed regardless of their social background.

57. Pupils with SEN make good progress in every aspect of their development and on the whole they achieve their potential.
58. In NC teacher assessments for pupils who are seven in KS1, pupils' results have been consistently higher than national and local percentages during the last three years, They have consistently reached the targets of 80% set by the GB and in 2005, the last year in which the tests were done, a 100% of pupils had achieved level 2 (the level expected of pupils who are seven years of age.) The Core Subject Indicator (CSI), (which is the number of pupils who have achieved level 2 in the three core subjects) has therefore been higher than national and local percentages and those for similar schools, which are those schools with the similar number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. A significant number of pupils had attained level 3 in speaking and reading but the number was substantially lower in writing. In mathematics also a number had attained a level 3 but none had done so in science. There is no difference between the performance of boys and girls.
59. For pupils who are eleven years of age, results in NC tests and teacher assessments in KS2 during the last three years have shown an increase and have reached targets set by the GB. However the school's results have not excelled to the same degree over other schools, as they did during the period of the last inspection. Results are a little above national percentages in English and mathematics, are about the same in Welsh and are a little lower in science. The CSI (which is the number of pupils who achieve a level 4 in three core subjects) is the same as national figures but is higher than local figures. In comparison with similar schools, the school is in the middle. However, a significant number of pupils had achieved a level 5 in the four core subjects in 2006. Generally, boys do not perform as well as girls.
60. Although results show that a significant number of pupils achieve well, not all pupils in KS2 always achieve their potential.
61. In key skills standards and progress in the Foundation Phase are outstanding in listening (Grade 1). They are good (Grade 2) in speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and ICT across areas of learning.
62. In KS2 standards in listening in Welsh and English are outstanding (Grade 1), they are good (Grade 2) in speaking and good on the whole (Grade 2) also in reading and writing. Standards in these skills vary a little between classes. Pupils in KS2 are accomplished users of ICT (Grade 2). Numeracy is a Grade 3 as pupils' use of numeracy skills across the curriculum is limited.
63. Pupils bilingual skills are good. Pupils develop into individuals who are completely comfortable when expressing themselves in both languages. They make effective concurrent use of both languages in a number of contexts and a number make good progress in reading in English as a result of the Esteem project for pupils in KS2.

64. Children in the Foundation Phase understand clearly what they are doing. Support and consistent comments from adults ensures this. Observations made by these adults also ensure that children under seven understand how they can improve.
65. In KS2 pupils use their awareness of the aim of the lesson well to guide them in their work. However, individual targets set for them are not specific enough and these are not always clearly identified in their books to remind them consistently of them. Because comments when marking do not always reflect the aim of the lesson or the target set, pupils do not know in detail how they are doing and what they can do to improve.
66. Pupils show positive attitudes to their work; they show interest in the tasks given to them and concentrate for extended periods.
67. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are courteous to strangers and respect each other. They show a sound awareness of school rules and what is expected of them. Children in the Foundation Phase display outstanding features when working independently and the majority of pupils in KS2 do so as well.
68. The development of pupils' personal and social skills is good. Pupils develop good skills when working and playing together and this prepares them for working conditions and community life.
69. Levels of attendance are lower than national levels and average 92%. Levels for this term have improved a little with an absentee figure of 6.4% which places the school in the lower 25% in comparison with similar schools. A small number of pupils arrive late in the morning.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

70. The inspection team's findings match the grade given by the school in its self-evaluation report.
71. The quality of teaching in lessons seen during the inspection was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
16%	69%	13%	2%	-

72. The focus of the teaching and learning policy is to provide an opportunity for every pupil to succeed, and the outstanding working relationship between teachers, support staff and pupils is a sound basis for ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils. Teachers have expectations for appropriate behaviour on the part of pupils and this is reflected in pupils' attitudes to their work.
73. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Phase is good and often outstanding in Y1. It is more variable in KS2. Varied and stimulating activities are effectively structured, and the work of teachers and support staff is planned carefully and purposefully.
74. The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN is consistently good, and effective support is provided for groups of pupils who are withdrawn and within classes.
75. Where teaching is good and often displays outstanding features:
- teachers' knowledge of subjects is sound;
  - introductory and plenary sessions are well planned;
  - the learning intention of the lesson is shared clearly with pupils;
  - teachers' presentations are stimulating and build well on previous work;
  - clear and concise instructions are given which encourage pupils to do their best;
  - the structure and pace of the lesson is appropriate and ensures that pupils keep on task;
  - lesson activities are supported purposefully in order that pupils complete tasks;
  - ICT is used meaningfully to enrich learning and
  - support staff play a full part in the teaching and assessment process.
76. Where teaching shows shortcomings:
- the learning intention is unclear;
  - the lesson introduction is too long and pupils find it difficult to concentrate;

- no specific time limit is given to complete the task, and because of lack of pace pupils do not always do their best;
  - activities are not adapted to suit the different needs of learners in order to provide challenge for pupils of different abilities;
  - group/pair work is not well structured or managed well and
  - opportunities provided for pupils to evaluate their own work and each other's work is limited.
77. The quality of baseline assessment undertaken in the reception class is good, and provides a basis for planning for the development of each individual child. Assessment is carried out twice, at the beginning and end of the year in order to measure progress.
78. Emphasis is placed on formative assessment throughout the Foundation Phase which reflects the teaching philosophy. Assessment is good. Support staff, as well as teachers, take a proactive role in assessing children's development on a daily basis. Their comments on progress in the seven areas of learning, are transferred on a separate summary sheet which becomes a record of children's progress and a basis for further planning.
79. Across KS2 work in core subjects is assessed twice yearly, in the autumn and summer terms. NC levels are placed on examples of work and copies of these are kept in pupils' individual profiles. Comments on pupils' progress in foundation subjects are made at the end of the year only, which is the basis for the judgement given on reports to parents.
80. A number of standardised tests are given in mathematics and reading to pupils from Y2 to Y6, and English tests for pupils from Y3 to Y6 at the end of the academic year. Results are collated on a computer program by the headteacher and transferred to subject co-ordinators. They are used to record pupils who will need further support. Evidence that this information is used to direct planning in the long and short term is limited. Reading records are kept for each pupil.
81. Pupils with SEN are identified early. Arrangements for assessing further needs are developing, although the assessment of individual needs by outside agencies such as the educational psychologist are detailed and useful. Detailed records are kept and links with parents are effective.
82. There is no documentation that tracks and records individual pupils' progress in KS2, but the school is aware of the need for such a summative document and have included this in their short term SDP.
83. On the whole, pupils' work is marked regularly. Positive comments are often made consistently on work in core subjects. However, comments which explain clearly and in detail how pupils can improve their work are inconsistent, and efforts to ensure that pupils give consideration to these comments are also inconsistent.

84. Individual targets for pupils are noted in their language books, but on the whole these targets are not sufficiently specific to ensure consistent improvement. Evidence to suggest that these targets are reviewed and updated is limited.
85. Although there are some examples of pupils in KS2 evaluating their own work, pupils' proactive role in the process of assessing their work and setting personal targets is insufficiently developed.
86. There are no collections of levelled work in line with NC criteria of core subjects in school portfolios in order to standardise teacher assessments and provide examples of good practice. Collections have been produced providing evidence of pupils' work in some of the foundation subjects, such as physical education, as a record of standards achieved.
87. Copies of teacher assessments of pupils' work are kept in pupils' personal profiles as well as copies of the end of year reports to parents.
88. Annual reports to parents conform with statutory requirements; they give detailed comments on achievements and opinions on standards of work. They include targets which show the way forward to pupils. Parents have opportunities to discuss their children's progress in meetings held twice yearly, and to write personal comments on the reports.

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

**Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.**

89. The inspection team's findings do not match the grade given by the school in its self-evaluation report as the school had awarded themselves a grade1 for this question.
90. Although the inspectors considered that there are obvious strengths in the experiences received by pupils, there are shortcomings in planning which impedes the provision for individuals and the certainty of progression in pupils' skills especially in KS2.
91. The curriculum for children under seven years of age, in line with the philosophy of the Foundation Phase, provides opportunities for children to learn through play and discovery. Provision across the seven areas of learning is balanced and there are often stimulating links between these areas, which provide opportunity to consolidate learning.
92. Although the planning for the Foundation Phase is not always done in the same amount of detail across classes and although strategies for the new philosophy are not fully developed in some classes, experiences provided are broad and flexible. In Y1 they provide a world of adventure for children.

93. Although the outdoor areas are limited in size and are not situated in the most ideal positions, the provision enriches the experiences of children in the Foundation Phase.
94. Pupils in KS2 receive enriching experiences across the key stage and the curriculum provided is relevant and meets statutory requirements. Planning, however, is not always sufficiently refined for the needs of the school; insufficient attention is given to providing work adapted to suit the different needs of learners, especially the more able ones. Although key skills are included broadly in planning, provision for them in classes is not prominent or effective at all times.
95. Curriculum provision for pupils with SEN is good. However, provision is impeded a little as there is no permanent room for their use.
96. The school's emphasis on providing visual experiences for children under seven years of age and pupils in KS2, by going on visits, is a strength of the provision. Visits at the start of learning about a subject are used very effectively in a number of classes. Pupils remember visits to the National Botanical Gardens and the Big Pit at Blaenafon well.
97. The school uses the community of Neath effectively in order to promote experiences for pupils of all ages. The school often receives invitations to perform in community events and the dance team performs in the Welsh festival in Paris annually. Older pupils receive other residential experiences.
98. The cwricwlwm Cymreig and Welsh culture is an outstanding feature of the school's provision, especially in history and geography. Provision is good, especially in the Foundation Phase, for pupils to develop their awareness of other cultures, and pupils in Y5 and Y6 enjoy their weekly experiences of learning French. Provision for promoting bilingualism in KS2 is good with pupils showing flexibility when using texts in both languages.
99. A number of music peripatetic teachers visit the school weekly. Since brass instrumental lessons have started in September, a substantial number of pupils in KS2 have taken advantage of the opportunity and this has further complemented the school's aim of creating equal opportunities for all pupils.
100. Pupils receive numerous opportunities to take part in extra-curricular events linked to sport and musical experiences. The provision ensures that no stereotyping or social disadvantage occurs.
101. Although the school does not provide formal sessions for personal and social education, these aspects are integrated into subjects in classes, through whole school collective worship where the value of friends is discussed, for example, and by visitors to school, such as the nurse and police officer who contribute to pupils' experiences.
102. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Pupils consider collective worship as an occasion where the special environment

gives them an opportunity to learn morals. The celebration assembly is also an occasion which promotes personal and social development as pupils praise others for their achievements; the school council provides opportunities for promoting social development.

103. The school makes good use of partnerships to enrich curricular experiences. The school's links with other schools feeding the local secondary school are good as are the links with the secondary school itself. Partnership with parents is good and their dedication to raise money is a great help for the school. Many parents in the pre-inspection meeting voiced their sense of pride in belonging to the school community. Partnerships with trade and industry are not sufficiently developed.
104. Although the school has received training on developing entrepreneurial skills and possesses newly-published resources, this aspect is insufficiently developed. In the Foundation Phase, children's awareness of the world of work is good; it is less evident in the provision for KS2.
105. Experiences provided for pupils to develop an awareness of healthy eating and sustainability is outstanding. Re-cycling is a prominent feature of every day life and the school clearly puts into practice its policy for healthy eating. These aspects guide pupils to becoming influential citizens within their community. Pupils contribute towards charitable causes and this develops them effectively for becoming global citizens.

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

##### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

106. The inspection team's findings do not match the grade given by the school in its self-evaluation report as the school had awarded themselves a grade 1 for this question. The team judged that there were no outstanding features in the provision to merit a grade 1.
107. The school plans effectively and provides a welcoming and caring environment for pupils to learn and play. Pupils are cared for and guided and supported well. Staff know their pupils well and are sensitive to their needs.
108. Pupils receive good pastoral advice. Adults are good role models and the caring values and ethos are evident in the way pupils care for each other and respect adults. Pupils find it easy to bring any concerns to staff or to the school council. In addition, close links have been established with outside agencies to support pupils who may be experiencing problems in their lives or have SEN. The school acts promptly upon any advice received.
109. The school has an effective working partnership with parents and carers. The views of parents are taken into account and they are well informed about their children.

110. Arrangements for helping children settle into the nursery are good. The youngest children understand classroom routines and quickly become confident members of the school community. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in this process. Arrangements to ensure that new pupils settle into school life when entering at a later stage are also good. Transition arrangements with the comprehensive school are good and therefore pupils say that they are eager to start the next stage of their education.
111. The school conforms with statutory requirements for ensuring good attendance. Detailed scrutiny of attendance is made through the aid of a computer program. The school is aware of the need to improve attendance figures and makes arrangements to remind parents of their responsibilities to ensure good attendance. Good and timely use is made of the Local Education Authority Welfare Officer in cases where needed, but absences where no reason is provided are not followed up sufficiently.
112. The health and safety of pupils is a high priority for the staff and GB and the school has a wide range of effective measures for the well-being of all staff and pupils. A number of staff have been trained in first aid and there are good procedures in place to deal with pupils who are unwell or who have an accident. Risk assessments are undertaken before any educational visit or activities. A matter of health and safety was brought to the attention of the headteacher and GB during the inspection.
113. Policies and procedures are in place to deal with child protection issues. The headteacher is the named person, the deputy has been trained and staff members are fully aware of the school's procedures. Links are good with all outside agencies.
114. Provision for pupils with SEN is good and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for Wales. Children's needs are identified and assessed early, and appropriate targets set in their Individual Learning Plans (IEPs). The school works positively to make sure that pupils and parents are involved in these IEPs. The quality of record keeping is good and so is the quality of assessment by external professionals or specialist teachers for pupils with specific additional needs such as sensory impairment. Purposeful arrangements are in place to include children with disabilities within this school community.
115. Provision for the relatively small number of pupils with additional needs is good. Children and pupils benefit from the specialist teaching support both in class and in small groups. The teacher has a good understanding of a wide range of additional needs. Pupils respond well to the experience and expertise of the teacher and make good progress in their basic skills.
116. Inappropriate behaviour or bullying is not tolerated by the school and bullying is considered a serious matter. The school has well developed strategies to deal with pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress. The Behaviour Support Team provides effective support for pupils with complex behaviour difficulties.

117. The school clearly promotes fairness, equality and tolerance and as a result pupils get on well with their classmates and have secure, stable relationships with their peers and teachers. Pupils have equal opportunities to take part in all activities and receive appropriate support which takes into account their social, linguistic or ethnic background. The school has policies that are implemented.
118. There are effective measures to eliminate oppressive behaviour including racial discrimination and bullying. The school succeeds in raising pupils' understanding of Welsh culture and the diversity of other cultures.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

119. The inspection team's findings match the grade given by the school in its self-evaluation report.
120. The school has agreed aims and values which are reflected in the quality of life at the school.
121. The newly appointed headteacher has a clear vision for establishing a school community where everyone's opinion and contribution counts, which has been shared by staff, parents and GB. He advocates the importance of the pupil being central to teaching and learning, and the promoting of high standards resulting from continuous improvements. He wants to ensure that the school continues to provide equal opportunities for every pupil and fosters a caring ethos based on trust and respect. The headteacher is supported by an experienced deputy.
122. As part of the national project for the Foundation Phase over the last three years, the school has benefited from the thoughtful leadership of the previous headteacher. She took on the challenge of developing a new curriculum which reflects the philosophy for developing each individual child, and the managing of a vast number of extra support staff that this initiative brought about, effectively.
123. The school gives effective consideration to national priorities such as the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school has been awarded the Green Flag in recognition of its status as an Eco-school, it is identified as a Healthy School and shows its dedication to sustainable development education.
124. Partnership with a teacher training college is an effective initiative and means that students come for teaching experience annually and pupils from secondary school and a further education college come for periods of work experience.

125. The SDP records strategies needed for developing staff, the curriculum and site over three years, with a year-on-year focus. The document in its present form is insufficiently detailed and clear as it does not record sufficiently the spending that is linked to developments.
126. A policy and programme for performance management has been established providing a direction for staff professional development, which aims at responding to the needs of priorities identified in the SDP. Challenging and relevant aims are set, but evidence of evaluating improvements in sufficient detail to analyse the direct effects on learning and teaching is limited.
127. Newly qualified teachers are mentored in line with requirements. On the whole, effective arrangements have been made for teachers' Planning, Preparation and Assessment time including providing a room where they can work.
128. A monitoring system for learning and teaching, which gives a key role to the headteacher and the Senior Management Team, has been established which includes lesson observation, scrutinising pupils' work and informal discussions with staff, pupils and parents. Although subject co-ordinators make an important contribution to school management, their role has not been developed sufficiently. However, a new monitoring programme has been established this term which is beginning to develop their role further. Following the retirement of the previous head who lead and managed the Foundation Phase, the role of individuals in the management of these classes has not been clearly defined.
129. The GB meets regularly and is very supportive of school management. Many of the members are relative new comers and their role is developing. They are kept well informed by the headteacher about the life and work of the school, and have a good knowledge of problems caused by the buildings and health and safety matters, but their contribution in relation to monitoring the curriculum has not developed sufficiently.
130. Day-to-day arrangements are managed effectively and efficiently.

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

**Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.**

131. The findings of the inspection team do not match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report as the school had awarded itself a Grade 2 for this question. The team was of the opinion that there were shortcomings in the self-evaluation process as it had not been sufficiently established across the whole school.
132. When judging that the school were worthy of a grade 3 the team has considered the many changes the school has experienced recently and have

received sufficient evidence that the process has moved forward considerably with the new headteacher.

133. The inspectors have awarded the school a lower grade than it had awarded itself in three key questions but has agreed with the majority of grades given to subjects by subject co-ordinators.
134. A purposeful action plan was drawn up in response to the findings in the report for the last inspection. It identifies responsibilities and the time allocation for accomplishing targets. Although good standards have been maintained in a number of subjects and have improved considerably in information technology, standards in English have dropped and marking and refining schemes of work is still a recommendation this time. Progress since the last inspection is a Grade 3.
135. There are good features to the self-evaluation report. It is effectively laid out and provides comments on elements within the seven key questions, it refers to evidence and identifies aspects to be developed. However, it is not sufficiently analytical and does not include a detailed enough evaluation of the Foundation Phase, for example. The link between the self-evaluation process and the priorities in the SDP are unclear.
136. The school compares its performance with similar schools and local and national percentages regularly. However there is no evidence to show that the school has analysed why the results have not risen to the same degree in KS2 as have national figures. Targets set by the GB have not been challenging enough over the last three years.
137. Since September the new headteacher has restructured the monitoring process to include subject co-ordinators and has advised them effectively as they undertake the task of monitoring their subjects and writing subject reports. Although these reports are not an integral part of the self- evaluation document they provide a valuable appendix to it. Comments made by a number of co-ordinators show that they know their subjects well and are eager to move them forward.
138. As a result of the many recent changes to the membership of the GB, their role in the self-evaluation process is limited. However, in the pre-inspection meeting they were beginning to show a clear awareness of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve.
139. Parents have received questionnaires asking their opinions on the school for some time. This term they have responded well to a very detailed questionnaire. Time has not allowed these to be analysed as yet. In the pre-inspection meeting, parents were confident that the school paid attention to their comments.
140. The school council is well established and voices opinions confidently on a number of matters related to healthy eating and playtime arrangements in the

yard for example. Members of the school council contribute very positively and practically to the quality of school life.

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

#### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

141. The inspection findings match the school's judgement in its self evaluation report.
142. The school is appropriately staffed with qualified and experienced teachers; a number have been at the school for many years. They have a good range of specialised knowledge to address the needs of all pupils including those with SEN.
143. The school has recently successfully increased the number of non teaching staff to support the Foundation Phase and the ratio of adults to children is appropriate. Members of support staff are successfully deployed and are incorporated well into the life and work of the school. Appropriate training has been effective in ensuring that their roles have been suitably developed to impact positively on standards in the classroom.
144. Job descriptions are in place for all teaching and support staff and are updated regularly. In some cases the roles of teachers with responsibilities are well developed. The information technology co-ordinator for instance, has undertaken much training to develop her knowledge and understanding of the subject and this has been used effectively to raise standards in the subject throughout the school. Staff is used effectively on the whole to teach during Planning, Preparation and Assessment periods under arrangements for the new working conditions.
145. Performance management reviews identify teachers' training needs well and identify roles of responsibility. They are closely linked to the SDP.
146. The school clerk works efficiently and effectively to ensure that the day-to-day running of the school functions smoothly. The school is well served by its caretaker and cleaning staff.
147. Overall the school has a good stock of learning resources which are used effectively to enhance pupils' learning experiences. There are some deficiencies in resources for music and in the range of English reading books. There are insufficient books to interest boys and to provide non-fiction books is housed in a corridor.
148. The quality of displays around the school and in the classrooms is good. They are colourful, and celebrate pupils' work and achievements.
149. The school is situated in a number of different buildings which creates difficulties particularly in bad weather. Outstanding use is made of the space

available in the buildings, and staff work industriously particularly in the Foundation Phase to create a suitable atmosphere for teaching and learning. Although some improvements have been made to the school site over the years, including four new classrooms, there remain some deficiencies which affect school life and the delivery of the curriculum.

150. At times, space for whole school activities in the hall is limited and there is insufficient space to deliver the physical education curriculum. There is no suitable space for staff to teach or assess pupils with SEN, or deliver peripatetic music lessons and no place for a school library.
151. The school yard which is used for outdoor play and physical education has limited space and the surface is rough and uneven. There is no school field but the school make good use of a nearby park and local swimming pool.
152. The budget is managed efficiently by the headteacher and finance committee of the GB to ensure that the school is staffed and resourced sufficiently to teach the curriculum and meet the needs of the pupils. The parents association is very active in providing generous funding to the school for prioritised resources.
153. Priorities for spending are identified carefully and spending is closely linked to these and monitored regularly. Resources are carefully costed and matched to priorities set out in the SDP. Major purchases are carefully scrutinised and their effectiveness reported on by the headteacher. The school provides good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Foundation Stage Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

#### Personal, social development and well being.

#### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

#### Outstanding features

154. In Y1 children show exceptional confidence when investigating and experimenting in the variety of stimulating experiences provided for them.

#### Good features

155. In the nursery class children behave responsibly. They understand the need to take turns and display a good measure of self-discipline. Increasingly, they become more aware of the need to take care when climbing the stairs from one

playroom to another. They learn that they are privileged to receive help from friends and that thanking is a very important act that gives pleasure. They understand that playing fair and producing good work are aspects to be praised. Their awareness of personal hygiene is developing well.

156. Children in reception class understand the need for courtesy to others and that listening to each other's responses is an important rule. When listening to music they are self-disciplined. The majority can dress and undress themselves independently for a physical education lesson, they can role play realistically and can cope with all kinds of play. They understand the importance of having a good friend and that care has to be taken of plants and animals.
157. In Y1 children work well together with a variety of friends and make good choices. They are busy all the time. They organise themselves well, keep on task and concentrate and show an interest in their learning and play. They make their own decisions confidently. They are willing to talk about their feelings and emotions. They understand the need to dress appropriately when going for a walk and that they need to wash their hands after playing with compost and before eating. They appreciate that everyone is different.
158. In Y2 children understand that rules are important in order to improve the quality of life in class and to help whole class sessions in the hall, run smoothly. They understand the need to quieten down at times. They play by themselves and in groups contentedly. They accept that they cannot have their own choice of activity every time. They make choices confidently and display independence and perseverance when concentrating on completing an activity. They show pride when they are praised and are eager to please adults in class.

### **Shortcomings**

159. There are no important shortcomings but at the upper end of the stage children do not always make enough choices within sessions.

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

#### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.**

#### **Good features**

160. In the nursery class, children listen well to instructions in Welsh and show an understanding of them by responding accurately. They use key words and phrases confidently and they can take part in simple conversations related to their news, their families and homes. They can give correct comments describing the houses they see when going for a walk. They enunciate a simple prayer clearly as a class. They show that they understand the Christmas story and know what happens in the story 'Y Tri Mochyn Bach.' They make an effort to arrange magnetic letters on a white board and a number can recognise their own names and those of others when displayed on

cards. They begin to make marks in a number of different mediums including on paper.

161. Children in reception class can ask relevant questions and answer them sensibly; they use appropriate language when role playing in the home corner and when rearranging Sali Mali's house. They can use simple language patterns correctly when talking about people who help in the community. They can recall a number of nursery rhymes and show an understanding of them. They listen to story cassettes eagerly and understand the thrust of the story. They have a good knowledge about a number of story characters and use pictures well to interpret a story. They can label pictures correctly and are developing in their ability to write symbols on paper.
162. Children in Y1 speak confidently, expressing their opinions clearly. They choose relevant words when discussing their roles in a 'cave' and they use language which is appropriate to the varying situations in class. They discuss their visit to Gnoll Park enthusiastically. Actions and movements they make when reading stories shows their understanding of the text. They recognise sounds at the beginning and ending of words and can spell simple words correctly. They can identify words on the computer screen and can change words to form other ones. They understand how a postcard should look and they write lists of clothes needed when going to the park, They write posters for display around the school advertising that a bear has gone missing.
163. Y2 children listen well and in line with their age and ability extend their grasp of Welsh. They chat confidently about a visit to church using appropriate terminology. They express opinions and can talk extensively about their experiences and news. In groups they recite in detail the Christmas story from memory to the remainder of the class. They browse in books enthusiastically and are beginning to show confidence in the purposeful writing they undertake. They begin to behave as authors as they show an understanding of the different format needed for writing a letter and lists

### **Shortcomings**

164. There are no important shortcomings.

### **Mathematical development**

**Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.**

### **Good features**

165. Through practical activities and discussions, children in the nursery class develop a good understanding of number in a variety of contexts. They begin to establish an awareness of the symbols for them and can name numbers in the correct order. They have a sound understanding of the number three, for example when discussing the story of y 'Tri Mochyn Bach'. They understand concepts related to weighing when they use containers in water, sand and rice

and fill them 'half full' or 'full'. They can name a number of two-dimensional shapes and understand some of their features.

166. In the reception class children count confidently. They are able to apply their knowledge well as they form letters in sand and dough and with chalk and paint. They show their understanding of the value of number as they play with objects in the outside area. They place numbers in the correct order when creating a sequence of them. They recognise the shapes they see around the school. When role playing in the shop, they understand the purpose of money and have a good knowledge of the names of small coins.
167. Children in Y1 recognise even and odd numbers up to 30. They can count in tens and can arrange numbers correctly in a hundred square. They count backwards from 20 to zero correctly and can discover number bonds which make seven, for example. They have a sound knowledge of sequence in relation to the days of the week and the seasons of the year. They can discuss units of time such as the hour and half hour and understand the importance of placing objects on a number line. Their mathematical language develops well.
168. Y2 children's understanding of numbers is developing well as they recognise numbers and form them correctly. They are totally confident when arranging number bonds and understand mathematical signs when solving problems. The majority of children develop correct mathematical language in purposeful situations. They sort even and odd numbers and look for patterns successfully. Their investigations into pattern establishes a purposeful understanding of symmetry. A number of children can measure in standardised units and can discuss the time on the clock, with the more able recognising units of quarter hours and beginning to read the time on a digital clock.

### **Shortcomings**

169. There are no important shortcomings.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

**Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.**

### **Outstanding features**

170. The curiosity of children in Y1 as they begin to understand how the world works is infectious. As a result of their walk to Gnoll Park, the relating of their adventures is a very exciting and serious matter. They can identify the human resources in the park and detail the natural features there. They understand which animals could be hiding in the trees. They understand that wearing suitable footwear for investigating in order to discover objects in the park is essential. They can name the different kinds of houses they see in the streets around the school and begin to understand the difference between a semi-detached, terraced and detached house. They understand that there are different materials and that some change when folded and stretched.

## **Good features**

171. In the outside play area, nursery children show amazement at the power of the wind which enables bubbles to be blown in every direction and how the shapes of the clouds change as they look at them. They understand that some materials can change and experiment with materials such as dry and wet flour. They make 'snow' from flour and know how ice is formed. They use a number of materials and media to build a house for the three little pigs in their story. As a result of their walk around the school they realise what kind of buildings are to be found in the area and can name some of their important parts when looking at pictures in class.
172. In the reception class children can discuss the changes in the weather on a day to day basis. They understand that some objects float, while others sink in water and that things often have a different smell. They understand that people, such as the police, have different jobs within the community. Within the school community, they can identify the jobs of people around them. They know that they can accomplish a number of tasks when using the computer and are learning quickly how the parts of the computer work, such as how the cursor can be controlled and how things can be moved around the screen. They also know how a microwave oven works.
173. In Y2 children show great interest when visiting the church and understand that it is a place where they are expected to be quiet and show respect. They understand that the vicar is an important person in the church and they are able to compare two nearby churches and learn about the artefacts in them. They understand that there is a range of different toys and that they can be used in different ways. When visiting the park, they begin to understand the life cycle of the frog as they collect tadpoles. They use words like 'rhaeadr' (waterfall) to describe what is in the park and their rubbings of tree bark show that they realise what tree trunks look and feel like.

## **Shortcomings**

174. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Multicultural Understanding**

### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.**

## **Good features**

175. In the nursery class children become aware of their own culture and develop a good understanding of the celebrations which are part of Christian life. They can identify some characters that are central to the Christmas festival. They send Teddy on holiday with friends and when looking at photographs of this, learn that landscape, food and dress differ from place to place. They record Sali Mali's journey to India.

176. Children in reception class sing a song saying 'Hello' in many languages. They learn how the Christmas festival is celebrated in Norway and compare these customs with what they know about Christmas celebrations in Neath. They can work out the difference between a house in that country and those in their locality. They understand the importance of patterns and bright colours in African countries and display enjoyment and curiosity when tasting the fruits of that continent such as 'paw paw'.
177. In Y1 children understand how other people live in different conditions and that everyone must be respected whatever the colour of their skin and dress. They understand that some live near the North Pole and begin to realise how the landscape affects their lives and why therefore their homes and animals are different from ours. They understand also that the lives of Kabo in Africa and Jakata in India are very different from their own lives. They know that it is possible to find these countries on a globe and on a map. They use stories well to consolidate their understanding. Visits, such as one they have made to an Italian café, inform them about foods in countries that are closer in Europe.
178. In Y2 children understand traditions that are part of a Christian's life and many customs linked to Christian festivals especially Christmas. Their visits to a local church consolidates their understanding. They understand that life in China is very different and that there are basic differences in the way they eat and how they communicate on paper. They use the story of Rama and Sita purposefully to understand life in India and create hand patterns and make Divali lamps to effectively understand more of that culture.

### **Shortcomings**

179. There are no important shortcomings.

### **Physical development**

#### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

180. Classes in the Foundation Phase develop good physical skills in the outside areas. They develop a good awareness of space when moving around their activities. They use their bodies well to control and steer bicycles of different sizes. They jump successfully from one tree trunk to another in the circle of tree trunks arranged on the yard, and handle digging tools carefully and industriously.
181. Children in the nursery class establish good skills when undertaking physical activities in the hall. They use space sensibly and can control their walking, running and jumping movements when travelling in different ways. They use their bodies effectively to emulate leaves and snowflakes falling. They develop skills in handling large and small blocks increasingly effectively and are confident when kneading dough and when handling small pieces in tabletop

games. They use pouring and filling equipment in the water and rice tubs effectively and can handle painting equipment effortlessly when building houses from cardboard. Their skills in handling a variety of writing equipment develops well when drawing pictures and making marks.

182. In the reception class, children build with blocks, sew with laces, complete jigsaws and cut with a scissors effectively. They make junk models displaying good handling skills when working industriously. They succeed in making marks representing a number of symbols when holding a variety of pencils and crayons. They follow instructions correctly in the hall and begin to realise that physical exercises has an effect on their muscles and breathing. They can move on different levels emulating the movements of a variety of animals. They can vary the shape of their bodies succeeding in changing into high and low shapes. Their skills in throwing a ball develop well as they establish hand and eye co-ordination.
183. In Y1 children move carefully in formal physical development lessons displaying a good awareness of the need for safety. They develop good control over their bodies when creating slow and quick, low and high movements. They use different parts of their bodies to travel along the floor strengthening the muscles in their arms, legs and backs, They change the shape of their bodies effortlessly. They begin to create a sequence of shapes linked together smoothly. Their skills in throwing, bouncing and receiving balls develop effectively. The majority are confident when putting on shoes and appropriate clothing to go for a walk and can dress up on their own as bears when role playing. They handle small equipment when working busily with compost and leaves skilfully and their control over their writing and drawing equipment is striking.
184. In Y2 children use a scissors well to cut shapes from catalogues and they glue them effectively. They handle a variety of writing equipment purposefully and small equipment linked to tabletop games, successfully. They know which muscles are working when they are travelling; they bend and straighten their legs on different levels and can show tension in their bodies. They change direction when running in the hall successfully. They understand the importance of safety when climbing on equipment in the hall and can work independently or in small groups on them and demonstrate their movements to others confidently. They develop good balancing skills. They understand that physical exercise affects their breathing and heartbeat.

### **Shortcomings**

185. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Creative development**

### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

186. In the nursery class children can sing a number of songs including seasonal and Christmas ones, traditional ones and songs consolidating language patterns. They enunciate clearly, keep in tune well and make suitable body actions in order to interpret a nursery rhyme and song. They handle musical instruments purposefully and correctly. They work in a number of media and enjoy using paint when making a home for the 'Three Little Pigs' and when creating realistic portraits of themselves to display in the class art gallery. They dress up and role play sensibly.
187. In the reception class, children use paint well and understand the possibilities that can happen when mixing colours. They create a number of lovely patterns when emulating African patterns and choosing bright colours. They use a sponge effectively when painting and handle a variety of thick and thin brushes to create attractive pictures. Their pictures of people who help them are very realistic. They experiment enthusiastically with junk to make a police car. A number experiment adventurously with colour and shape on their interactive white board.
188. Y1 children investigate colour by using different media and mix colours purposefully; they paint a story on a long strip of paper conveying the sequence in the story. They experiment with computer programs effectively to create pictures and make choices. They role play effectively in the class 'cave' and use their voices and bodies well to act out the story of 'Hela'r Arth'. They recreate pictures from the story effectively in the sand tub and create footprints as they become immersed in the story of finding the bear. They create an effective mural reminding themselves of their visit to the National Botanical Gardens. They create realistic pictures of aeroplanes, buses and trains and glue natural materials from the environment to make striking pictures. They sing a number of songs enthusiastically
189. In Y2 children paint effectively. They enjoy using a range of materials to make a manger from boxes and create realistic pictures of items linked to Christmas. They create attractive coloured windows and colourful Divali lamps. They develop a good understanding of dynamics and choose instruments appropriately to create music to accompany a Christmas carol. They have a good understanding of what movements are needed to play them; they beat and shake then appropriately. They compose interesting scripts to convey the Christmas story and role play well when performing confidently in front of friends

#### **Shortcomings**

190. There are no important shortcomings but children in Y2 do not make enough choices for themselves when engaged in creative work.

<b>English KS2 Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.</b>
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### **Good features**

191. Pupils display outstanding listening skills and respond appropriately. They succeed in asking and answering questions and show understanding. They speak clearly and correctly, and contribute confidently to discussions in pairs, groups and class. They can voice their opinions and present knowledge or ideas well.
192. Pupils across KS2 develop well as readers. They can read a variety of texts, with a high level of correctness and relevant expression in line with their age and ability. The majority use effective skills when decoding words and self-correcting when reading unfamiliar words.
193. Across KS2 pupils have a good understanding of the difference between reference books and fiction, and are familiar with the conventions of books. The majority can discuss characters and events in a story effectively, and can predict the likely events in the plan. They can give their opinion on favourite characters.
194. Pupils in each class across KS2 write for a variety of purposes and audiences, and use a range of different formats effectively. They have a good understanding of what is required when writing a letter, story, diary, newspaper article, a descriptive piece and an essay stating their opinion.
195. The majority of pupils in Y3 and Y4 can write a non-chronological report in orderly and meaningful paragraphs, using the knowledge collected from a spider diagram.
196. In Y5 and Y6 pupils succeed in writing drama scripts in contemporary language based on 'Macbeth' or the story of 'Pandora's Box'. They show a good awareness of the sequence of events and the conventions of the format.
197. Across KS2 pupils show confidence when composing poetry emulating types of poems like acrostic, haiku and cinquain. In Y5 pupils understand the requirements of a 'kenning' format.

### **Shortcomings**

198. A number of pupils in KS2 do not have a sufficient knowledge of phonics to enable them to decode unfamiliar words and to spell correctly.
199. Evidence of pupils' extended writing is limited.
200. Skills in re-drafting, handwriting and presentation of work have not developed sufficiently across the key stage.

## **Mathematics KS2 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

### **Good features**

201. Pupils make good progress in the development of their mathematical skills with many showing high levels of interest in their work. Generally, they use mathematical vocabulary increasingly well, explaining their work and methods of calculation clearly. Often they work quickly and accurately, with many recording their work neatly. Generally, they make good progress in applying their knowledge and understanding when solving written problems.
202. Pupils at the lower end of the key stage confidently use the four rules of number and apply them correctly when solving problems. They have a good idea of place value and the majority use their increasing knowledge of tables when dividing and multiplying.
203. Younger pupils know about units of time and the relationship between them. The majority know how to convert simple values between analogue and digital clocks.
204. Younger pupils know and use appropriate vocabulary to describe properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. They have a sound understanding of symmetry and identify lines of symmetry in two-dimensional shapes well.
205. At the upper end of the school pupils are developing a good knowledge of shape and measure. They use various non-standard units to measure length and weight competently and begin to use standard measures accurately. In Y5, pupils of all abilities measure carefully and accurately using standardised units. They have a good understanding of the properties of complex two and three-dimensional shapes, and have a good understanding of the relationship between decimals, fractions and percentages.
206. Older pupils of all abilities have a secure understanding of the perimeter of a simple shape. The majority can calculate the perimeter of complex shapes, working out their own formulae and applying it very effectively. They confidently use and interpret co-ordinates drawing two-dimensional shapes in different orientations on grids.
207. Pupils at the upper end of the key stage investigate and collect information on pupils' houses and represent data using graphs and diagrams and interpret their findings appropriately in bar graphs, pictograms or line graphs. They use ICT well to show their findings. In some classes, pupils make very good use of their ICT skills to enhance their understanding of mathematical concepts and mental skills.

### **Shortcomings**

208. There are no important shortcomings but in some classes, pupils' strategies to use and apply maths in practical investigation tasks are underdeveloped.

<b>Information technology KS2</b> <b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.</b>
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### **Good features**

209. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities demonstrate positive attitudes to this subject and they apply their skills well in a number of contexts.
210. Pupils have a good understanding of how to save their work in individual folders. They create attractive best copies of their work, by using a range of fonts and other features. Younger pupils input digital camera photographs in their text well.
211. Pupils use and can explain correctly the many features on the Windows program. They highlight, edit, cut and paste competently, experimenting to create illustrated text of stories, poems and prayers in a range of fonts and colours. The more able have well-developed keyboard skills, ensuring that they input text quickly. Y4 use their skills effectively to produce best copies of stories such as 'The Baker's Cat'. Older pupils use publishing software effectively to produce an interesting newspaper style commentary in the 'Margam Mail' importing pictures and other images into their text.
212. Older pupils competently and confidently create a database. They sort information according to various criteria and produce bar graphs and pie charts to illustrate their work. In their investigational work on houses they display their findings well, incorporating pictures from the internet easily and independently. Pupils use the LOGO program competently to explore patterns with interesting results. They explain their decision making and the attractive results of their modelling work well.
213. Pupils use Textease software very effectively for their art work. Year 3 pupils create very attractive pictures of the Helwick lightship following their visit to the Waterfront Museum. They create colourful pictures of Gnoll Park and attractive patterns. Older pupils use a paint program with Windows and Clipart to produce work in the style of Andy Warhol. They manipulate the repeating pattern into different forms, effectively changing shape and colour.
214. Older pupils use e-mail confidently to correspond with a school in the locality as well as with other classes in the school. They also communicate with visitors to the school such as Theatre Na' Nog before and after their visit.
215. In some classes pupils show a good understanding and appreciation of the interactive white board. They are skilled in using it and enjoy doing this independently or with others to solve mathematical problems for instance.

## Shortcomings

216. There are no important shortcomings

<b>Design and technology KS2 Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.</b>
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### Good features

217. Pupils across KS2 use equipment safely, and are aware of risks and dangers.
218. In classes where the best practice is seen, pupils develop independent working skills, becoming increasingly confident in the process of designing, making, testing, evaluating and suggesting improvements.
219. Pupils in Y3 and Y4 display good evaluating skills when describing the process of making lamps. They record their design brief, their investigation of ideas, their collections of materials and equipment, and the designing and making process. They evaluate the finished product and suggest improvements.
220. Pupils in Y3 succeed in designing a sandwich and a wrapper appropriate for the purpose. They are aware of the importance of hygiene and safety when cutting and mixing the ingredients and discuss the taste and product enthusiastically.
221. In Y4 pupils develop good creative skills when designing containers for money. They use fabrics with different features and choose a variety of joining and decorating techniques. They evaluate the finished products in order to discover whether they are suitable for the purpose.
222. Pupils in Y5 and Y6 use good investigative and designing skills when creating models of shelters. They make appropriate use of information technology to collect ideas, and succeed in creating a prototype from straw in order to evaluate shape, strength and the best construction. They use the strength of the jinx method of linking materials and choose an appropriate method to decorate their shelters. They evaluate their models in order to discover which ones can withstand best the weight of one kilogram, the force of air from a hair dryer for 30 seconds and of pouring 200 millilitres of water on the roof.
223. As part of their work on sound, pupils in Y5 design musical instruments that can produce two notes. They develop an awareness of the features of materials and their effect on the sound produced.
224. Pupils in Y6 use appropriate materials and techniques when designing slippers for members of the school staff. They develop a good awareness of the importance of the aesthetic appearance of the finished product as well as its practical value.

## Shortcomings

- 225. Pupils' experiences in control and developing mechanisms are limited.
- 226. Pupils' skills in working with a range of materials, techniques and equipment, and in taking things apart in order to investigate them are limited.
- 227. The use of standardised measurements when designing and making is not consistent across the key stage.

<b>Music KS2 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.</b>
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## Good features

- 228. Pupils across KS2 listen purposefully to music consistently. They develop an awareness of well known music and can identify the composer, as music is often played as a background for their activities and in collective worship.
- 229. Pupils' musical listening and appreciation skills develop further when they are an audience for pupils who are talented musically, who perform in collective worship.
- 230. Pupils across the key stage sing tunefully; they display sound intonation and good dynamics. They sing a variety of songs; their performance is disciplined. Public performances in the community extends pupils' skills significantly.
- 231. At the lower end of the key stage, pupils give a confident rendering of 'cerdd dant'. They all, especially the older ones, emphasise the accent correctly, sing smoothly and keep together well. They succeed in keeping to their own counter melody when singing to a harp accompaniment.
- 232. Pupils' instrumental skills across the key stage develop further when given the opportunity to play a musical instrument. A good number of pupils have the opportunity to play a string or brass instrument. Their skills are used well to develop the musical awareness of all pupils.
- 233. At the lower end of the key stage pupils have a good understanding of rhythm. They can name some notes and when clapping a rhythm, show an understanding of their values and the effect of a rest in a musical phrase. They are able to work in small groups effectively, to create rhythmic patterns; they evaluate and discuss their compositions.
- 234. At the upper end of the key stage, pupils understand musical terms such as 'accompaniment' and 'melody' and know the names of a range of instruments. They understand that repetition is an important element in music. When composing an accompaniment for a Christmas carol, they work well in pairs and evaluate each others' compositions purposefully.

235. At the upper end of the key stage pupils listen to the music 'Toccatà Alla Danza' by William Mathias. Following this, they compose their own similar musical phrases. Older pupils have a good understanding of musical rap.

### **Shortcomings**

236. There are no important shortcomings but pupils' skills in composing and evaluating do not always show progression across the key stage.

### **Physical education KS2**

#### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.**

237. No dance, swimming or athletics lessons were seen during the inspection. The policy and the school's scheme of work suggests that pupils receive a balanced programme that conforms to NC requirements.

### **Good features**

238. Pupils across KS2 know the benefit on health of exercising the body, and they have a good awareness of safety in physical education lessons. They take appropriate care when taking out and returning any equipment used in a range of activities.
239. Pupils in Y3 move energetically and confidently in their games' activities on the yard. They have good ball handling skills, and send and receive balls effectively. They work well with partners and in groups of three. They display a good awareness of space.
240. In gymnastic lessons, pupils in Y4 succeed in moving smoothly to create sequences, travelling backwards and forward, rolling and balancing on the large and small parts of their bodies. They understand how to evaluate and improve their own performances and each other's, by increasing body tension and finishing off a series of movements with a defined shape.
241. Pupils in Y5 and Y6 develop good skills in games. They have a good awareness of the importance of warming and cooling down the body, and work energetically individually, in pairs and groups to practise sending and receiving a ball, shooting and marking. They transfer their skills effectively to a netball game situation.
242. Pupils in KS2 all receive swimming lessons for half a term each year in the local swimming pool. Evidence suggests that the school follows a structured programme which includes life saving and fulfils the requirements of the NC. The school has a significant measure of success in swimming competitions outside school.
243. Pupils in KS2 benefit from training by specialist staff from Neath rugby club to improve their rugby and ball handling skills and of an LEA scheme to improve skills in athletics. They develop good games' skills as a result of a full and

balanced Dragon Sports scheme that includes rugby, football, net ball, hockey, cricket, tennis and athletics.

244. A significant number of pupils in KS2 develop additional skills in extra curricular clubs after school hours, such as folk and clog dancing club, netball and rugby clubs and physical education activities with the Urdd. The school achieves consistent success locally and nationally when competing in these activities.

### **Shortcomings**

245. There are no important shortcomings.

## School's response to the inspection

246. The findings of the Inspection acknowledge that this school has a special ethos which has a significant influence on the pupils' development. We take pride in the fact that the Inspectors have recognised that one of the school's best features is pupils' outstanding behaviour, which is highlighted by the courtesy they show towards visitors and the respect they have for each other. The report refers to the positive attitude displayed by learners to their work. It is reported that the percentage of good standards achieved by pupils in the lessons observed is considerably higher than the targets set by the Welsh Assembly Government for 2007. There is an acknowledgement of the successful features of a high percentage of lessons observed, such as stimulating presentations, teachers developing previous work effectively as well as appropriate structure and pace. The report gives deserved praise to the skills and commitment of the teachers and to the care and ability of the classroom assistants. We are extremely pleased that the inspection team judged that standards and progress in the Foundation Phase and at KS2 in listening are outstanding, and that pupils with Additional Learning Needs make good progress in all aspects of their development.
247. An action plan will be drawn up that will address the recommendations made in the report. Priority will be given to developing our assessment procedures across KS2, refining our self evaluation processes, raising standards in English and design and technology and improving attendance percentages.
248. The Senior Management Team, the governing body and the staff have already started the process of implementing the changes and improvements recommended in the report. It will be necessary to focus on specific aspects of the work, which will include improving the quality of the marking, careful planning for the development of key skills and developing the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators and the governing body.
249. We will also ensure that our School Development Plan will be reviewed in order to reflect these issues. We feel confident that the procedures already established in the school will enable us to develop further, in accordance with the recommendations of the report.
250. All parents will receive a copy of the school's action plan that responds to the inspection's recommendations, and the governing body's annual report to parents will comment on the progress made.
251. We thank the inspection team for their thorough and fair assessment and for their professionalism during the inspection.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol G.G. Castell Nedd
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Heol Woodland, Neath
Postcode	SA11 3AL
Telephone number	01639 637701

Headteacher	Mr Tudur Jones
Date of appointment	September 1 <sup>st</sup> 2006
Chair of governors	Mr H. Isaac
Registered inspector	Mrs Eleri Betts
Dates of inspection	December 4 <sup>th</sup> –7 <sup>th</sup> 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	38	49	50	51	41	43	41	37	331

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	14	1	14.8

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	24.4
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	4.8:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	26
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of School
Autumn 2005	87.0%	90.0%	93.1%
Spring 2006	84.1%	86.0%	90.9%
Summer 2006	87.2%	92.7%	90.9%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	11%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results 2005			Number of pupils in Y2:		45		
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	68.9	31.1
		National	0	2	8	64	26
We: oracy	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	71	29
		National	0	1	10	64	25
We: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	73	27
		National	0	2	15	60	22
We: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	96	4
		National	0	2	18	66	13
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	84.4	15.6
		National	0	2	10	63	24
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	100	0
		National	0	2	9	65	24

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	100%	In Wales	80.9%

- 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 2006			Number of pupils in Y6		22						
Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.2	36.4	45.5
		National	0	0	1	0	1	4	15	47	32
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	22.7	31.8	45.5
		National	1	0	0	0	1	4	17	50	26
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	13.6	40.9	45.5
		National	0	0	1	0	1	3	15	47	32
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.2	45.5	36.4
		National	0	0	1	0	0	2	11	51	35

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	75%	In the school	-
In Wales	74.3%	In Wales	-

- 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  
F 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 was carried out by a team of four inspectors who were present at the school for three and a half days, a total of 12 inspector days. In addition to the inspectors a peer assessor was present and the headteacher was the nominee;
- pre-inspection meetings were held with parents and GB discuss the life and work of the school;
- a self-evaluation report was received from the school which formed the basis for pre-inspection discussions;
- 75 questionnaires were completed by parents, were analysed in detail and 97% of the responses were positive;
- school documentation was scrutinised;
- 55 lessons were observed as well as parts of teaching sessions and collective worship and after school clubs were visited by the inspectors;
- a range of pupils' work was inspected and discussions took place with pupils about their work and school life and a number of children were heard reading;
- pupils' behaviour in lessons was inspected as well as on the yard and in collective worship;
- post inspection meetings were held with staff and GB.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mrs Eleri Betts Registered Inspector	Summary The context of the school Recommendations Key Questions 1/3/6 Foundation Stage Music KS2
Mr Gwilym Davies Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1/3/4/7
Mrs Rhiannon Harries Team Inspector	Key Questions 2/5 English KS2 Design and Technology KS2 Physical Education KS2
Mrs Delyth Parris Team Inspector	Key Questions 4/7 Mathematics KS2 Information technology KS2
Mrs Helen Jennings Peer Assessor	Observing classes and contributing to team discussions
Mr Tudur Jones Headteacher Nominee	Attending team meetings

### Acknowledgement

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their willing cooperation.

### Contractors

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