

**Inspection under Section 10 of the  
Schools Inspections Act 1996**

**Ysgol Abercaseg  
Bethesda  
Gwynedd  
LL55 3PL**

**School Number: 6612126**

**Date of Inspection: 27/02/06**

**by**

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67644**

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- \* secondary schools;
- \* special schools;
- \* pupil referral units;
- \* independent schools;
- \* further education;
- \* adult community-based learning;
- \* youth support services;
- \* LEAs;
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- \* work-based learning;
- \* careers companies; and
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Ysgol Abercaseg 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 Abercaseg took place between 27/02/06 and 01/03/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Wil Williams 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 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 Abercaseg is located in the village of Bethesda and the pupils come from the village and surrounding hinterland. The area is a stronghold of the Welsh language and culture and almost two thirds of pupils speak Welsh at home.
2. There are 106 full-time pupils on the school register, together with 32 part-time nursery children. They are taught by six full-time and two part-time teachers, two nursery assistants and four learning assistants.
3. The area is described as being economically and socially disadvantaged. Twenty nine per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, a figure that is higher than county and national averages.
4. According to the Baseline Assessments, pupils' levels of attainment vary greatly when they are first admitted to school and a significant number have low attainment levels. Eleven per cent of pupils have additional learning needs, which is lower than the national average, four of whom have a statement of Special Educational Needs.
5. Since the last inspection in January 2000, there has been a significant increase in pupil numbers. The headteacher was appointed to her post in January 2000.

### **The school's priorities and targets**

6. The school's priorities and targets for the period 2005-2006 include:
  - Building on the high standards that already exist at the school;
  - Developing further the use of information and communications technology as a key skill;
  - improving the standards of written work to very good;
  - arranging for the appropriate specialists to conduct risk assessments of the school site.

## Summary

7. The findings of the school in its self-evaluation report matched the judgement of the inspection team in all seven Key Questions.

### Table of grades awarded

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

### Standards

#### Grades for standards in subjects inspected

8. The standards achieved in the lessons inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

9. The standards achieved by the under-fives are as follows:

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

10. The standards achieved in the areas of learning and subjects inspected are as follows:

<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Key Stage 1</b>
Welsh	Grade 2
Mathematics	Grade 1
Information technology	Grade 1
Geography	Grade 1
Music	Grade 2

11. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
12. The progress made by the pupils during their time at school is outstanding. The pupils with additional learning needs make good progress within their age and ability.
13. The standards achieved by the under-fives and Key Stage 1 pupils in the key skills in language and communication, mathematics and information and communications technology are outstanding.
14. Pupils' bilingual skills are good. By the end of Year 2, Welsh learners come to be confident users of the language and the pupils who speak Welsh as a first language show good progress in their mastery of English.
15. At the end of Year 2 in 2005, pupils' attainments in the National Curriculum core subjects were considerably higher than the national average. In relation to similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils receiving free school meals, the school's performance was in the upper 25%.
16. Pupils make outstanding progress in their learning and in their personal and social skills. The vast majority work hard in their lessons, they concentrate intensely on their tasks and use their time effectively.
17. The creative skills of pupils of all ages are outstanding.
18. Standards of behaviour in all classes are outstanding and pupils behave responsibly and courteously and considerately to each other. This makes a major contribution to creating a pleasant learning environment that gives every pupil the opportunity to flourish.
19. Pupils' average levels of attendance over the year were 93%, and this is slightly below local and national averages. The punctuality of the vast majority of pupils is good, although a small core arrive a little late in the mornings.
20. Pupils' awareness of equal opportunity issues is good. Their knowledge of diversity in society together with the respect and empathy they display towards people from cultural and religious backgrounds that are different to their own are outstanding.

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

21. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
52%	48%	0%	0%	0%

22. There are close relationships between teachers and pupils. The teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subjects they teach and they plan their lessons in detail, ensuring that appropriate activities are provided to satisfy the needs of each individual pupil.
23. The detailed joint planning that is undertaken between teachers and assistants makes a significant contribution to the high quality of teaching.
24. The teaching in the withdrawal sessions for pupils with additional learning needs is highly effective.
25. Where there are outstanding features to the teaching, the teachers' presentations are interesting and stimulating, and the tasks instil a high degree of interest and motivation amongst pupils. There are high expectations in terms of achievement and behaviour, and there is a strong commitment to promoting good quality and extended forms of language.
26. There are outstanding procedures for assessing all National Curriculum subjects and for recording pupils' achievements.
27. The personal targets set for every pupil in Key Stage 1 lead to higher achievement levels and they promote pupils' ability to self-assess their work.
28. The quality of the annual reports to parents is good.
29. The school responds very well to pupils' needs and offers access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced by a considerable number of extra-curricular activities and educational visits.
30. The school's commitment to improving key skills through Language and Play schemes, and Family Literacy and Numeracy schemes is an outstanding feature of its provision.
31. The provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, and makes a major contribution to improving their achievements and creating a pleasant ethos at the school.
32. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is promoted effectively across the curriculum and the school is particularly successful at developing the pupils' bilingual competence.
33. There are very effective links with parents and the school takes full advantage of community resources in order to expand and extend the pupils' learning opportunities. There are outstanding links with Ysgol Pen-y-Bryn and good co-operation with other catchment schools.

34. Good attention is given to pupils' awareness of sustainable development. The school is working towards achieving bronze Green School accreditation.
35. There is outstanding provision for developing pupils' enterprise skills. They receive opportunities to buy and sell goods and to record the expenditure, income and profit on a simple spreadsheet.
36. Appropriate emphasis is placed on nurturing pupils' independence as learners, but they receive few opportunities to plan and manage their own learning.
37. There are outstanding features to the school's care and support arrangements. The school is a happy and caring community where pupils feel that they are valued and supported. They are happy to approach staff for advice and guidance.
38. Pupils' personal and social development is promoted effectively through activities such as Ysgol Dina, circle time and the School Council. The voice of pupils is accorded due status and the needs of individual pupils receive a high priority.
39. There are effective procedures to ensure that all aspects of the school are safe. Pupils are carefully supervised during school hours.
40. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good, with outstanding features. The school identifies pupils' additional needs at an early stage and intervenes as and when required.
41. Issues such as fairness and equal opportunities for all are a very strong feature at the school. All pupils are fully integrated into the life and work of the school.

### **Leadership and management**

42. The enthusiastic and purposeful leadership of the headteacher gives a clear sense of direction to the school. She is well supported by hard-working staff and conscientious governors who all work effectively as a team and share common expectations and values.
43. As a result of implementing the Webster Stratton programme, there has been a significant improvement in pupils' attitudes towards learning and in the overall standard of their behaviour.
44. The governors fulfil their responsibilities thoroughly. They know the school well and work closely with the headteacher. They undertake their monitoring and evaluation responsibilities to particularly good effect.
45. There are comprehensive self-evaluation arrangements at the school. The evaluations are thorough and searching and they clearly identify which issues require further attention.

46. The School Development Plan is a useful document for setting a strategic direction to the work of the school.
47. Effective and efficient use is made of all the school's human and financial resources. There is an adequate number of suitably qualified teachers to teach all aspects of the curriculum and there is a good supply of learning resources. The buildings are in good condition and are used effectively by teachers and pupils.
48. There is tight financial management and the school operates effectively within its budget. It provides good value for money.
49. The school has made good progress in addressing the Key Issues identified in the Spring 2000 Report. The standards in the six areas inspected have improved since the last inspection.

## **Recommendations**

- R1: Build on the good standards in Welsh and music by addressing the shortcomings identified.
- R2: Continue with the current efforts to raise pupils' levels of attendance.
- R3: Continue to develop pupils' ability to work independently and increase the opportunities available to them to plan and manage their own learning.

**The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.**

## Standards

### Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

50. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

51. The standards achieved in the lessons inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

52. The standards achieved by the under-fives are as follows:

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

53. The standards achieved in the areas of learning and subjects inspected are as follows:

Areas of learning	Key Stage 1
Welsh	Grade 2
Mathematics	Grade 1
Information technology	Grade 1
Geography	Grade 1
Music	Grade 2

54. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

55. The progress made by the pupils during their time at school is outstanding. They succeed regardless of their social or linguistic background, and the vast majority achieve the targets set for them. The pupils with additional learning needs make good progress within their age and ability.

56. The standards achieved by the under-fives and Key Stage 1 pupils in the key skills in language and communication, mathematics and information and communications technology are outstanding.

57. Throughout the school, the pupils listen attentively in their lessons and they express their ideas orally with confidence. They have a very sound grasp of

the technical terms of the various subjects; they use their reading skills effectively in order to gather information and are able to write for different purposes.

58. From the Reception Class onwards, the pupils use their numeracy skills with increasing accuracy, particularly so when engaged in practical activities such as measuring length. They are confident when using information and communications technology resources to support their learning.
59. Pupils' bilingual skills are good. By the end of Year 2, Welsh learners come to be confident users of the language and the pupils who speak Welsh as a first language show good progress in their mastery of English.
60. At the end of Year 2 in 2005, pupils' attainments in the National Curriculum core subjects were considerably higher than the national average. In relation to similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils receiving free school meals, the school's performance was in the upper 25%.
61. The school's rolling results over a three-year period are consistently good, with girls and boys achieving equally good standards.
62. Pupils make outstanding progress in their learning and in their personal and social skills. The vast majority work hard in their lessons, they concentrate intensely on their tasks over an extended period. They use their time effectively and work productively. They are alert to asking questions and they respond enthusiastically to new challenges. They are able to recall prior learning effectively and can use it in new situations.
63. Standards of behaviour in every class are outstanding, with the pupils behaving responsibly and courteously and considerately to each other. They exhibit high levels of self-discipline and self-control and they are very happy to help each other. This makes a major contribution to creating a pleasant learning environment that gives every pupil the opportunity to give of their best to their work.
64. Pupils work easily together as they discuss their tasks and share resources. They show respect and care towards each other and they take responsibility for their actions and their work.
65. Pupils' ability to work independently by organising their own work, solving problems and improving their own learning is developing appropriately. With the guidance of teachers, they are able to evaluate the strengths and shortcomings of their work, although they lack assuredness when suggesting how to improve it.
66. The creative skills of pupils of all ages are outstanding. They produce artwork of high quality; they show a lively imagination when engaged in role-play and create interesting movements and shapes in dance lessons.

67. Pupils' average levels of attendance over the year were 93%, and this is slightly below local and national averages. The punctuality of the vast majority of pupils is good, although a small core arrive a little late in the mornings. The school fully conforms to the requirements for recording pupils' attendance and punctuality.
68. Pupils' awareness of equal opportunity issues is good. Their knowledge of diversity in society together with the respect and empathy they display towards people from cultural and religious backgrounds that are different to their own are outstanding.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

69. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
70. The quality of teaching was judged to be as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
52%	48%	0%	0%	0%

71. Good and outstanding teaching was seen in all classes and in most subjects. The close relationships between the teachers and pupils have a positive impact on pupils' achievements.
72. The teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subjects they teach and of the Desirable Outcomes for teaching under-fives. Lesson planning is detailed, pupils build effectively on their prior knowledge and understanding and care is taken to ensure that appropriate activities are provided to meet the needs of each individual pupil.
73. A high degree of support is provided for pupils in their lessons and their work is carefully monitored by teachers.
74. The detailed joint planning that is undertaken between teachers and assistants makes a significant contribution to the high quality of teaching.
75. The teaching in the withdrawal sessions for pupils with additional learning needs is highly effective and prepares them for participating successfully in whole-class activities.
76. Where there are outstanding features to the teaching, the teachers' presentations are interesting and stimulating and the tasks instil a high degree of interest and motivation amongst pupils. Interesting resources are used, the questioning is skilful and a range of teaching strategies are employed. There is good balance between oral, written and practical

activities, the teachers have high expectations in terms of achievement and behaviour, and there is a strong commitment to promoting good quality and extended forms of language.

77. There are no important shortcomings in the teaching.
78. The quality of assessment is good with outstanding features. There are clear procedures for assessing all National Curriculum subjects and for recording pupils' achievements. Effective use is made of the assessments in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning and moving the pupils forward. There are effective arrangements for tracking the progress of individual pupils and showing them the way forward.
79. There are comprehensive arrangements for assessing the progress of the under-fives. The assessments provide a clear picture of the progress made by each individual and facilitate the forward planning for each pupil.
80. The comprehensive subject portfolios are an effective tool for moderating teachers' judgements and raising standards across the school.
81. The personal targets set for each pupil in Key Stage 1 lead to higher achievements and promote pupils' ability to self-assess their work.
82. The standard of marking of pupils' work is good. The teachers' comments are encouraging and provide good guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.
83. The quality of the annual reports to parents is good and meets the statutory requirements. They outline pupils' achievements and skills in every subject and provide other relevant personal observations.

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

**Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

84. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
85. The school responds very well to pupils' needs and offers access to a broad and balanced curriculum that conforms to legal requirements.
86. The teachers' detailed planning leads to continuity and progression in all subjects and ensures that the learning experiences provided are interesting and differentiated.
87. Appropriate opportunities are provided to ensure that pupils gain the basic skills and key skills. Good emphasis is placed on nurturing good quality language across the curriculum and there are effective arrangements for

providing additional attention and resources for pupils whose attainment levels are low in the basic skills.

88. The school's commitment to improving key skills through Language and Play schemes and Family Literacy, and Numeracy schemes is an outstanding feature of its provision.
89. Personal and social education is an outstanding feature of the curricular provision. It permeates throughout all aspects of the curriculum and has a very positive impact on pupils' learning and attitudes.
90. The provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Through a range of curricular activities and regular periods such as the sessions of collective worship, circle time and the School Council, pupils receive good opportunities to practise their skills and to discuss issues of importance to them. These experiences make a major contribution to improving their levels of achievement and create a pleasant ethos at the school.
91. A considerable number of extra-curricular activities are provided for pupils. A high percentage of pupils benefit greatly from participating in activities such as gymnastics, a computer club and a French club.
92. The curriculum is enhanced by a variety of educational visits and by visitors to school. These experiences are used effectively to reinforce different aspects of the curriculum.
93. There is outstanding provision for developing the pupils' bilingual competence. There is purposeful planning to ensure that Welsh learners cope with the language at an early stage and that the English language skills of all pupils develop increasingly throughout the key stage. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is promoted effectively across the curriculum.
94. There are outstanding features to the links and co-operation between the school and parents. This was reiterated by parents in the questionnaires and during the pre-inspection meeting with the inspectors. The parents are very supportive of the school's work and activities, and through the Friends of the School they raise considerable sums of money to purchase learning resources. Through regular curricular evenings, parents are kept well informed about the latest educational developments that affect their children.
95. The school has effective arrangements for communicating with parents. There is a formal home-school agreement and the school handbook contains useful information for parents. All statutory requirements are fulfilled.
96. The school takes full advantage of community resources in order to expand and extend the pupils' learning experiences. A considerable number of local visits are undertaken, and members of the local community come to school to share their experiences with pupils.

97. The school benefits greatly from the good co-operation between catchment primary school headteachers and the local secondary school. There are outstanding links with the local junior school and this secures continuity and progression in the pupils' learning experiences as they transfer from one school to the other at the end of Year 2.
98. There are appropriate links with employers. The school visits local workplaces, and in lessons such as geography, they learn about some of the area's main industries.
99. There is outstanding provision for developing pupils' enterprise skills. They receive opportunities to buy and sell goods and to record the expenditure, income and profit on a simple spreadsheet.
100. There is a clear equal opportunities policy and it is reflected in a number of aspects of the life of the school. The teachers' actions ensure that every child receives the same educational opportunities and that they achieve to the best of their ability.
101. The pupils display a good awareness and understanding of sustainable development in a local and global context. This is done through visits, thematic work and use of the school's recycling system. The school is currently working towards gaining bronze Green School accreditation.
102. Pupils' learning experiences across the curriculum enable them to gain a range of valuable skills for developing positive attitudes and lifelong learning skills. These include bilingualism, competence in information and communications technology, numeracy and personal and social skills. Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing pupils' independence as learners, but they receive few opportunities to plan and manage their own learning.

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

**Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

103. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
104. The standard of the school's planning and management of its care and support services is outstanding. When required, the school makes effective use of the services of the Local Education Authority and other relevant agencies. The teaching staff and the support staff ensure that the school's arrangements are operated effectively.
105. The school works closely and effectively with parents on issues relating to the pupils' health and well-being. Parents appreciate the school's open door policy that gives them the opportunity to discuss any issues of concern with the headteacher and staff.

106. New children in the nursery class settle in quickly and feel safe at school. There are good arrangements for transferring to Ysgol Pen-y-bryn at the end of Key Stage 1.
107. The personal support and guidance offered to pupils are outstanding. The school is a happy and caring community where pupils feel that they are valued and supported. They are happy to approach staff for advice and guidance.
108. Pupils' personal and social development is promoted effectively through activities such as Ysgol Dina, circle time and the School Council. The voice of pupils is accorded due status and the intellectual, physical and emotional needs of individual pupils receive a high priority. This is an outstanding aspect of the provision, and it makes a key contribution towards the family ethos generated throughout the school.
109. There are sound arrangements for monitoring attendance and punctuality.
110. There are effective procedures to ensure that all aspects of the school are safe. Vehicular access to school grounds has been restricted and the school organised a joint campaign with parents to raise awareness of aspects of road safety. Pupils are carefully supervised during playtime and the lunch break.
111. There are detailed policies for child protection, racial equality, supervision and sex education and they are implemented effectively. There are sound procedures in place for conducting risk assessments.
112. All members of staff are familiar with the child protection arrangements and they deal appropriately with any concerns about pupils' personal welfare.
113. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good with outstanding features. It fulfils the requirements of the Code of Practice.
114. The school identifies pupils' additional needs at an early stage and intervenes as and when required. The teachers make every effort to ensure that the assessments are accurate and that the provision for each individual child is effective.
115. The support provided in classes closely matches the needs of individual learners. The learning assistants make a major contribution in this regard.
116. Small groups of pupils receive literacy and numeracy support through daily morning withdrawal sessions. The planning and teaching in these sessions are outstanding features of the school's provision.
117. The Individual Education Plans produced for each pupil with additional learning needs are of good quality and they give clear guidance to class teachers and learning assistants.

118. There is a close partnership with parents and they receive regular information about the targets set for their children and about their general development. The school has good links with external agencies.
119. The additional learning needs co-ordinator provides effective support for her colleagues. An outstanding feature of the work is the careful monitoring and the comprehensive records kept in order to improve pupils' achievements.
120. Issues such as fairness and equal opportunities for all are a very strong feature at the school. Boys and girls are treated equally. All pupils are fully integrated into the life and work of the school. This view was supported by pupils during their discussions with inspectors.
121. The school has responded effectively in order to ensure that pupils with physical disabilities are treated as favourably as able-bodied pupils, in terms of the opportunities and support they receive. Parts of the building are unsuited to those with physical disabilities.

## Leadership and management

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

122. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
123. The enthusiastic and purposeful leadership of the headteacher gives a clear sense of direction to the school and has a direct impact on the quality of provision and on the educational standards achieved by pupils. She is well supported by hard-working staff and conscientious governors who all work effectively as a team and share common expectations and values about learning, behaviour and inter-relationships.
124. Staff undertake their leadership and management responsibilities with great diligence. They fulfil a prominent role as curriculum leaders and provide good support to their fellow teachers.
125. Clear management policies are operated effectively by staff and Governors. Equal opportunities are promoted for all.
126. This is a progressive school that gives due prominence in its programme of work to local and national priorities. It has gained the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark accreditation and has organised a number of schemes in order to raise the literacy and numeracy standards of pupils and parents. It is working towards its first Healthy Schools accreditation and the Green School bronze award.
127. The school has played a prominent role in developing the Webster Stratton programme. As a result of implementing the programme, there has been a

significant improvement in pupils' attitudes towards learning and in the overall standard of their behaviour.

128. The arrangements for reducing teachers' workload and securing non-contact time for them for planning, preparation and assessment have been planned in detail and are having a positive impact on pupils' levels of achievement and on the effectiveness of its teaching.
129. There are detailed arrangements for tracking pupils' progress and setting end of key stage targets for them. The targets are ambitious and provide teachers and pupils with clear aims.
130. There are detailed arrangements for implementing Performance Management requirements. The performance of individual pupils is regularly monitored, clear improvement targets are set and any further training needs are agreed.
131. The governors fulfil their responsibilities thoroughly. They know the school well and work closely with the headteacher in setting the strategic direction of the school's development. They are very well informed about the school's performance and are aware of the importance of their role as a critical friend to the headteacher. They undertake their monitoring and evaluation responsibilities to particularly good effect.
- 132 They fully meet their legal responsibilities.

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

**Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

- 133 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 134 The school is well informed about its performance and uses the information effectively in order to promote further improvements. The findings of the school in its self-evaluation report matched the judgement of the inspection team in all seven Key Questions.
- 135 The school's self-evaluation arrangements are comprehensive and effective. They draw on direct evidence from numerous sources, such as the standard of pupils' work and the quality of teaching and learning. Good use is made of the information to make further improvements.
- 136 The curricular leaders play a key role in the self-evaluation arrangements. The evaluations they conduct are thorough and searching and they clearly identify the aspects that require further attention. They provide written reports to the governing body on the outcomes of the evaluations.

- 137 Effective use is made of National Curriculum assessment data and of standardised tests in order to provide comparative information about the school's performance.
- 138 Through the School Council, good consideration is given to pupils' views and parents' views are collated by sending a questionnaire to every home.
- 139 The concise self-evaluation report presented prior to the inspection is clear and readable and is a good quality document. It contains strong evaluation elements and focuses clearly on pupils' standards of achievement.
- 140 The school has made good progress in addressing the Key Issues identified in the Spring 2000 Report. The standards in the six areas inspected have improved since the last inspection, the quality of curricular planning at the school is now good and there is a much higher percentage of good and outstanding teaching. The governors now fulfil all their responsibilities thoroughly and their annual report to parents fulfils the statutory requirements.
- 141 The school makes effective use of the information collected through the self-evaluation arrangements in order to determine priorities in the School Development Plan. The plan contains clear action steps together with success indicators, and it allocates appropriate resources in order to support the priorities. During the school year, a detailed appraisal is undertaken of the impact of the Development Plan on standards of achievement and on the educational provision.

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

**Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

- 142 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 143 There is an adequate number of suitably qualified teachers to teach all aspects of the curriculum. Good use is made of staff expertise by exchanging classes, and responsibility for aspects and subjects are shared equitably amongst the teachers.
- 144 It can be seen that in service training has a positive impact on aspects of learning and teaching. The teachers' professional development is closely related to the priorities identified in the School Development Plan.
- 145 Effective and efficient use is made of all the school's human resources and there is a good supply of learning resources. The nursery assistants and the learning assistants work to very good effect in classes and they promote the progress of the pupils in their care.

- 146 The practice of employing a teacher with expertise in music in order to release teachers for their planning, preparation and assessment period provides good value for money and leads to higher standards.
- 147 The learning resources are of good quality and are conveniently accessible for pupils' use. They ensure that pupils receive full access to all National Curriculum subjects.
- 148 The recent additions and adaptations made to the building have considerably increased the space available for learning and teaching and have secured an improved working environment for pupils. The buildings are in good condition and are used effectively by teachers and pupils.
- 149 The classrooms and other areas are welcoming, and they contain attractive and interesting displays of pupils' work. They are a valuable learning and teaching resource for pupils and teachers.
- 150 There is tight financial management and the school operates effectively within its budget. The School Development Plan is used as a tool for future budget planning and the headteacher and governing body monitor expenditure to very good effect. The school provides good value for money.

## **Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning**

### **Under fives**

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

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

##### **Good features**

- 151 A good number of children give clear answers to questions and they use complete sentences when expressing their ideas, during role-play or when talking to their peers. Their effective listening skills enable them to complete their tasks successfully.
- 152 They recognise characters in books, they make good use of clues in pictures and are able to recount stories in appropriate detail. A small number are competent readers.
- 153 From the outset, the children are engaged in a wide range of marking activities to nurture hand-eye co-ordination. By the Reception Class, they form their letters correctly, and a good number are able to write their names independently.

##### **Shortcomings**

- 154 Oracy standards are uneven, and a small minority of children have difficulty in trying to convey their ideas clearly.

#### ***Personal and social development***

## **Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

155 The nursery and reception children are completely at ease in class and are able to concentrate for increasing periods as they take part in the various activities. They behave well and complete their work with genuine enthusiasm and understanding. During the 'Ysgol Dina' sessions, they relate well to each other and discuss their feelings with ease.

### **Good features**

156 The children work and play together in a friendly manner. They are very happy to share and take their turn when using resources and they listen carefully to each other.

### **Shortcomings**

157 There are no important shortcomings.

## ***Mathematical development***

## **Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

158 The children use practical mathematics with particular success as an integral part of several activities, such as playing in the Wendy house, playing with building equipment and experimenting with sand and water.

159 The number awareness of a considerable number of the children is outstanding. They count confidently up to a minimum of 20, and recognise, form and work confidently with these numbers, and the best are able to handle larger numbers. They understand the concept of written addition and subtraction. They are able to swiftly place the numbers in their correct order.

### **Good features**

160 The children's recognition of basic two and three-dimensional shapes is sound. They use appropriate mathematical language when matching objects according to their size, colour and shape. They develop a good understanding of the function and value of money. They have a sound understanding of concepts such as 'more than', 'fewer than', 'longest' and 'tallest'.

### **Shortcomings**

161 There are no important shortcomings.

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

## **Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

162 Through a number of purposeful, appropriate experiences, the children come to develop a very good understanding of appropriate clothing, how to wash

them, and how to dress appropriately for different weather conditions. The enthusiastic discussions and sharing of experiences that follow these experience make a considerable contribution towards the thorough knowledge the children have of their locality.

### **Good features**

163 The children are well informed about the changes that they have undergone since their infancy. They have a sound knowledge of the names and features of animals that live in the jungle, and animals that live on the farm. They can explain the life cycle of the butterfly and are well informed about what happens to trees and animals during the autumn season. In their scientific experiments, they are able to differentiate between timber, plastic and metal objects. They know the names of different parts of the flower and they understand that seeds must be planted for flowers to grow; all children are given the opportunity to do this in a hands-on fashion.

164 They make confident use of the mouse when moving images on-screen.

### **Shortcomings**

165 There are no important shortcomings.

## ***Physical development***

### **Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

#### **Outstanding features**

166 The children's physical work in physical education lessons is outstanding. They follow instructions and move confidently with increasing control. During dance sessions, they strive to very good effect to emulate their teacher's movements, they use their bodies energetically and they respond creatively to music.

#### **Good features**

167 The children make skilful use of their fine physical skills when handling appropriate apparatus. When playing with the large toys, they exhibit good control of their large physical skills, such as climbing, pedalling, pushing and pulling.

168 They have increasing control of writing equipment as they practise letter patterns with thick paint and sand. When playing on the yard, they exhibit a good awareness of safety and make sensible use of space.

#### **Shortcomings**

169 There are no important shortcomings.

## ***Creative development***

### **Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

- 170 The children sing a range of appropriate songs from memory, their phrasing is clear and they produce a tuneful sound. They understand the difference between loud and quiet when performing.
- 171 They name a good number of instruments and realise that it is possible to create different effects when playing strongly or softly. The majority keep to a very good beat when singing and playing instruments.

### **Good features**

- 172 The children make good use of their imagination when engaged in role-play in different situations. They work confidently with paint and other media. The children produced particularly impressive work when painting on silk and when emulating the patterned work of a famous artist.

### **Shortcomings**

- 173 There are no important shortcomings.

<b>Welsh</b>
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## **Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

### **Outstanding features**

- 174 Pupils' oracy standards are good with outstanding features. A good majority of pupils use rich, descriptive language when dealing with specific aspects of their themes. In class situations and when questioning each other in pairs, they speak freely and to a good standard. They read their own work clearly and confidently.

### **Good features**

- 175 Pupils listen attentively to each other and to their teachers. They display a good understanding through their willingness to ask and answer questions and follow instructions. They talk enthusiastically about their work and experiences with fellow pupils and adults. The learners come to understand and use the Welsh language effectively in a short period of time.
- 176 There is clear progress in pupils' writing during Key Stage 1. The older children have a firm grasp of basic punctuation and are able to vary and extend their sentences. They spell familiar words correctly, and a good number write pieces such as stories and dialogues, in an extended and interesting manner.
- 177 Pupils make good progress in their reading skills and they employ appropriate strategies to read unfamiliar texts. The vast majority read with appropriate understanding and expression, according to their age and ability. When reading and discussing together, they speak with interest about the events and characters.

### **Shortcomings**

- 178 A small number of pupils lack appropriate expression and fluency when reading.

## Mathematics

### Key Stage 1 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

#### Outstanding features

- 179 Pupils handle numbers very confidently on paper and mentally, and a good number of them are able to read, write and arrange whole numbers up to 1000. They are able to swiftly recall addition and subtraction facts up to 20.
- 180 They select and use a good variety of strategies to solve mental problems, explaining clearly their methods of working in appropriate mathematical language.
- 181 Pupils in Year 2 have a sound understanding of the importance of accuracy when measuring the length of objects.

#### Good features

- 182 Pupils' understanding of non-standard and standard measures is good. They make sensible estimates of the size of objects and they make skilful use of a yardstick when making detailed measurements. They are able to confidently name and describe the characteristics of two and three-dimensional shapes and they use an appropriate range of graphs and tables when handling data.

#### Shortcomings

- 183 There are no important shortcomings.

## Information technology

### Key Stage 1 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

#### Outstanding features

- 184 A considerable number of pupils make skilful and confident use of information technology equipment and software such as a floor turtle and a digital camera for a number of different purposes. They become increasingly independent in selecting and using information technology.
- 185 They make purposeful use of e-mail for sending messages and pictures to another school.

#### Good features

- 186 The pupils produce pieces of written work independently on-screen, modifying the text according to requirements. They can independently save their work, retrieve and modify it before printing it.
- 187 They show good mouse control in order to move images on-screen. They make effective use of art packages to create highly skilful pictures and

patterns and they produce a good range of graphs. They are able to effectively control and direct the cursor on-screen.

### **Shortcomings**

188 There are no important shortcomings.

## **Geography**

### **Key Stage 1 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

#### **Outstanding features**

189 Pupils have a very sound grasp of geographical terms, which they use skilfully to describe and name the geographical features of their locality.

190 Pupils are very well informed about the geographical features of their locality.

191 They produce outstanding work when studying another part of Wales that contrasts with the area in which the school is located. They can discuss in detail the elements that are similar and contrasting in both areas.

192 They make highly effective use of atlases and globes to indicate the geographical and physical features of countries and continents that are outside their personal experiences.

#### **Good features**

193 The pupils confidently handle a wide range of maps and photographs; they have a good understanding of the meaning of symbols on a map and make correct use of co-ordinates to indicate locations on a grid.

194 The pupils have a very well developed understanding of the difference between human and physical characteristics, and they describe in detail the impact of these characteristics on the environment. They express views about their locality and offer suggestions as to how to improve it.

### **Shortcomings**

195 There are no important shortcomings.

## **Music**

### **Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

196 The pupils sing tunefully, their phrasing is clear, and they display good control of breathing, dynamics and pitch. They have a good awareness of rhythm.

197 They know the names of a wide range of pitch and non-pitch instruments, they can describe the sounds they produce and are able to select appropriate instruments to create different sound effects.

- 198 By Year 2, pupils are able to compose a simple piece of music representing 'anger' and 'sadness', using a purposeful programme on the interactive whiteboard. They create a simple vocal round tune and are able to produce musical patterns by using simple notes on chime bars and glockenspiel.
- 199 They listen to their own music, music by composers and singers from Wales and famous composers and express their views on them. They describe and compare the features of the music they hear, making appropriate use of musical terms and vocabulary.

### **Shortcomings**

- 200 The level of the work undertaken by pupils is sometimes too elementary.

## **School's response to the inspection**

The staff and governors of Ysgol Abercaseg take pride in the inspection's findings that reflect the excellent work achieved by the school.

The views and observations of the team match the grades awarded by the school for the seven key questions. The inspection was wide-ranging and detailed, and care was taken to achieve a balanced and agreed judgement and where required time was taken to confirm views and judgements.

The school feels that it has received a fair and constructive inspection in terms of the comments and recommendations made. The school was allowed to play an active role in the process, and full use was made of the role of nominee. By providing a self-evaluation that is regularly validated during the inspection, the school is as a result given an effective tool for measuring its success from year to year.

The children's behaviour was praised, as was the support they receive, and the teachers' skills, the talents of the classroom assistants and the governors' commitment were acknowledged. The excellence of the planning and assessment was also recognised, and we take great pride in the high standards achieved in the Early Years and Key Stage 1.

We are very proud of our children, their efforts and achievements in all aspects of the life and work of the school.

## Appendix A

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Abercaseg
School type	Nursery and Infants
Age-range of pupils	4-7 years
Address of school	Bethesda Gwynedd
Post-code	LL55 3PL
Telephone number	01248 600194
Headteacher	Mrs Olwen Green
Date of appointment	January 2000
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Neville Hughes
Reporting inspector	Wil Williams
Dates of inspection	27 February – 1 March 2006

## Appendix B

### School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group					
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Total
Number of pupils	16	43	29	34	122

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	6	2	7

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	20:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	16:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	20:1
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Spring 2005	88.4%	92.3%	92.4%
Summer 2005	78%	91.2%	93.2%
Autumn 2005	84%	93%	94.3%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	28%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

## Appendix C

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results 2005			Number of pupils in Y2:				
			D	W	1	2	3
Welsh	Teacher Assessment	School			2	86	12
		National		2	10	63	25
Welsh: Oracy	Teacher Assessment	School				88	12
		National	1	2	11	63	24
Welsh: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School		2	7	79	12
		National	1	2	16	59	22
Welsh: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School		2	12	74	12
		National	1	3	19	66	12
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School			9	77	14
		National		2	11	63	24
Science	Teacher Assessment	School			2	68	30
		National		2	10	65	23

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	91%	In Wales	80%

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

## Appendix D

### Evidence base of the inspection

Three inspectors spent a total of seven inspector days in the school and met as a team before the inspection.

These inspectors visited:

- twenty seven lessons or part lessons;
- all classes;
- acts of collective worship; and
- a range of extra curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- staff, governors and parents before the inspection began; and
- senior managers, teachers, support and administrative staff and groups of pupils during the inspection.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- seventy responses to a parents' questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection; and

- a wide range of pupils' past and current work.

The inspection team held post inspection meetings with staff and governors.

## Appendix E

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspector	Type	Aspects	Subjects/areas of learning
Mr Wil Williams	Rgl	Context; Summary; Recommendations; Annexes; Key questions 1; 5; 6 and 7.	Mathematics; information technology; geography
Ms Lisa J Davies	Team	Key questions 2; 3; 4.	Under-fives; Welsh; music
Mr Wil Owen	Lay	Contributions to key questions 1; 3; 4 and 7	
Mrs Ann Jones		Peer assessor	
Mrs Olwen Green		Nominee	

**Contractor:** Arolygiadau Deheubarth Inspections; Afallon; Heol Llandeilo; Gorslas; Llanelli; SA14 7LU.

### Acknowledgement

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