

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

**Abernant Primary School
Richmond Terrace
Abernant
Aberdare
CF44 0SF**

School Number: 6742053

Date of Inspection: 8-10 November 2005

by

**Margaret Morgan
WO49/5542**

Date: 10 January 2006

Under Estyn contract number: T/61/05P

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Abernant Primary School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose 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 more information about their child's school. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of Abernant Primary School took place between 8 – 10 November 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Margaret Morgan 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. This summary report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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 past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection 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 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 attain the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who attain the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The national curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Abernant Primary School is situated in the village of Abernant near to Aberdare in the Cynon Valley. The area surrounding the school is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. At the time of the inspection there were 118 pupils attending the school including 12 nursery age children. This number has increased by 32 since the time of the last inspection. Nursery children are admitted full-time to the school in the September following their third birthday.
2. All pupils come from English speaking homes and 97 per cent are from Welsh family backgrounds. The remaining three per cent come from other white and Asian families. Approximately eight per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. This is a reduction of three per cent from the last academic year and is below the Local Education Authority (LEA) and national averages. Pupils' ability on entry is below LEA and neighbouring authorities' averages. There are 19 pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN) and no pupils have a statement of SEN. This figure is also below local and national averages. The National Curriculum is not modified or disapplied for any pupil. During the inspection, the school was operating a limited timetable due to health and safety restrictions imposed by the Local Health Authority because of an outbreak of an infectious disease.
3. The permanent head teacher has been seconded for two years and an acting head teacher was appointed in September 2005. There are an additional three full-time and two part-time teachers and also three teaching assistants. There have been a number of staff changes very recently. The school has received several awards over recent years including 'Investors in People', 'Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark' and 'Dyslexia Friendly School' status.

The school's priorities and targets

4. The school's mission statement is 'Every person in Abernant Primary School will be given the opportunity to maximise their full potential in a culture that encourages respect for others'. This statement is under-pinned by a series of aims that focus on the development of children's personal, social and moral skills, their academic achievement and their sense of belonging to the school and wider community.
5. Shorter-term priorities outlined in the school development plan include reference to improving standards and the ethos of the school, reviewing teaching and assessment processes, catering appropriately for equal opportunities and ensuring pupils' welfare. Other issues include strengthening links with parents and education business partnerships, reviewing self-evaluation and performance management procedures, developing the role of governors and enhancing accommodation.

Summary

6. Abernant Primary School is a good school with no important shortcomings. Pupils are well adjusted; they make good progress and are confident and ready for the next stage of their education.

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

Subjects

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Mathematics	3	2
Science	2	2
Welsh (second language)	2	2
Information Technology	2	2
Art	2	2
Physical Education	3	2

7. Pupils' standards of achievement during lessons in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	81%	19%	0%	0%

8. The overall quality of provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Pupils with SEN achieve well relative to their age and ability and those pupils with the capacity to achieve higher standards also maximise their potential. The vast majority of pupils achieve the targets set for them at the end of key stages 1 and 2 as a result of close monitoring and tracking of their progress by teachers. This is an outstanding feature.
9. Under-fives achieve good levels in the acquisition of communication, mathematical and information and technology (ICT) key skills. They also

make good use of bilingual words and phrases during their daily routines. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils' bilingual competence is good and there are no important shortcomings; their listening, reading and mathematical skills are also well developed. However, there are good features that outweigh some shortcomings in their speaking, writing and ICT skills.

10. Numbers in cohorts are comparatively small making statistical analysis based on individual year groups insecure. In 2005, key stage 1 standard assessment results were above local and national averages in English and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, (those school with a similar percentage of pupils known to be entitled to receive free school meals) it was in the top half of schools for both subjects and in the lowest quarter for science. A significantly large percentage of pupils gain the higher than expected level 3 most years. Overall trends, based on figures for three year time periods indicate continued improvement. In each of the core subjects, a greater percentage of pupils now attain the expected level 2 or higher than in 2001.
11. At key stage 2, results in statutory assessment tests (SATs) in 2005, were not as good as in previous years mainly due to very low numbers in the cohort and a high proportion of SEN pupils. They were above local and national averages in mathematics, below in English and similar in science. A significant proportion of pupils achieve the higher than expected level 5 most years. Trends at key stage 2 indicate high standards that continue to improve over three or four year time period. At key stage 2, girls have achieved better than boys over recent years.
12. As they progress through the school, pupils are keen to learn. They make good progress towards fulfilling their potential. However, even though pupils have targets set for them by teachers they are unclear about them. They are not able to talk confidently about how well they are progressing and what precisely they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
13. Pupils' attitudes to their work and school are good with no important shortcomings. When given the opportunity, pupils organise and plan their own work well. Behaviour is good with no important shortcomings, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils clearly understand the school's expectations regarding acceptable behaviour.
14. Attendance is below the Wales and LEA average. Long-term absences by pupils have affected attendance levels over the previous year. A significant number of families take holiday during the term time; this also impacts on the overall figures. Whilst the majority of pupils arrive on time, a small minority often arrive late.
15. Pupils' progress in their personal, social, moral and wider development overall is good. Pupils' moral and social awareness is good and has a positive impact on helping them develop self-discipline and confidence. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of equal opportunities and the diversity of other cultures.

The quality of education and training

16. The quality of teaching during the inspection is as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	56%	39%	0%	0%

17. In most lessons, teachers successfully stimulate and challenge pupils to do well. This is particularly so in the under-fives class and the end of key stage 2 where pupils describe learning as being fun. Occasionally, in some classes, the pace of lessons is inappropriate; teachers expect pupils to spend too long on some tasks.
18. All adults, teachers and assistants establish good relationships with pupils. They use a range of strategies to ensure pupils' attention and interest. The planning and organisation in the under-fives class is exemplary.
19. In key stages 1 and 2, activities are well organised but occasionally there is too much emphasis on the use of pre-prepared worksheets and pupils are not always allowed the opportunities to organise their own ideas and develop their work accordingly. Homework is set regularly and pupils and their parents fully understand what is expected of them.
20. All pupils are treated equally and teachers make good efforts to challenge stereotypical views. Teachers effectively promote the positive advantages of bilingualism and regularly use Welsh during lessons and at other times during the school day. The needs of all pupils are carefully considered and work for pupils relates to targets set including those in individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils with additional learning needs.
21. The school has developed a detailed and effective system for assessing and tracking pupils' academic and personal progress from the time they start school. In particular, the system for tracking the progress of under-fives is highly detailed and an outstanding feature.
22. In key stage 1 and 2, results from numerous tests and teachers' assessments in English, mathematics and science are analysed carefully. In other subjects, teachers' knowledge and understanding of pupils' progress and subject skills have good features that outweigh shortcomings. Teachers do not yet have a comprehensive method of tracking pupils' knowledge and understanding in all subjects. Some pupils have recently been given targets in English, but targets are not yet used consistently to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve. The school has a good system for reporting and recording pupils' achievements that fully comply with statutory requirements.
23. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that fully complies with statutory requirements and meets the learning needs of pupils well. Schemes of work are detailed and ensure that pupils' skills in the mixed age classes are progressively developed. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by pupils.

24. The school makes good provision for personal and social education and for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils.
25. The school plans and manages care and support arrangements well and works closely with parents and carers. Child protection procedures are secure and well documented and known to all that work in the school. There are clearly written policies and procedures to ensure everyone's health, safety and welfare.
26. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs including those with SEN is good. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are sensitively and effectively supported. Pastoral support is highly effective.

Leadership and management

27. A clear sense of direction exists in the school. A suitable set of aims and objectives underpin school life and the school continues to develop and improve. Staff, governors and pupils have shared values and expectations and the ethos of the school is positive. Leaders and managers set challenging targets for individual pupils, for members of staff and for the school as a whole. These targets are generally met.
28. The governors meet regularly and all statutory requirements are met. They are very supportive of the school and are aware of the school's role in the local community. The governors rely heavily on the advice of the head teacher and their part in the strategic development of the school is at an early stage of development.
29. Leaders and managers are well informed about the areas for which they are responsible. Processes for self-evaluation are firmly established in the school. Priorities set in recent years have been appropriate and subsequent actions have ensured an ongoing improvement in standards. The school has made good progress overall from the previous inspection. The self-evaluation report prepared for the inspection identified similar areas for development to those identified by the inspection team. The grades allocated by the school matched those of the inspection team in every key question.
30. All members of staff feel valued members of the school team and have opportunities to contribute to the continuing development of the school. Parents are consulted about their views and, through the School Council, pupils make valuable suggestions for improving their opportunities and environment.
31. The school has a suitable number of qualified teaching and support staff and they are deployed effectively. The many students on work placements in the school enhance provision. Resources are good overall.
32. Teachers make very good use of every available space in the school and attractive displays serve to make an attractive learning environment.

Nevertheless, the school accommodation has important shortcomings in important areas that severely restrict learning opportunities. Expenditure on resources and staffing is closely monitored. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

33. In order to maintain the current good standards, the school needs to:
- R1 Address the shortcomings identified in the subjects of mathematics, science, Welsh (second language), information technology, art and physical education.
 - R2 Increase pupils' understanding of how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. **
 - R3 Further develop the role of the governing body as “critical friends” in order to ensure they take a more proactive role in the strategic development of the school. **
 - R4 Work with the LEA to improve the accommodation in order that all aspects of the curriculum can be fully delivered.

Those recommendations marked with an asterisk have already been identified as requiring action by the school in its development plan.

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.

34. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this key question.
35. Overall, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic backgrounds, pupils achieve well in Abernant Primary School and there are no important shortcomings. Standards in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Mathematics	3	2
Science	2	2
Welsh (Second Language)	2	2
Information Technology	2	2
Art	2	2
Physical Education	3	2

36. Pupils' standards of achievement during lessons in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	81%	19%	0%	0%

37. The overall quality of provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Children in the nursery and reception class settle into school quickly and enthusiastically engage in a wide range of well-planned and carefully organised activities.
38. Pupils with SEN achieve well relative to their age and ability and those pupils with the capacity to achieve higher standards also maximise their potential particularly in English and mathematics. The vast majority of pupils achieve the targets set for them at the end of key stages 1 and 2 as a result of close monitoring and tracking of their progress by teachers. This is an outstanding feature.
39. Under-fives achieve good levels in the acquisition of communication, mathematical and information and technology (ICT) key skills. They also make good use of bilingual words and phrases during their daily routines. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils' bilingual competence is good and there are no important shortcomings; their listening, reading and mathematical skills are also well developed. However, there are good features that outweigh some shortcomings in their speaking, writing and ICT skills. Too often, pupils do not give extended responses in speaking and writing and their use of ICT is limited, frequently because of accommodation issues that restrict access to computers.

40. Numbers in cohorts are comparatively small making statistical analysis based on individual year groups insecure. In 2004, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level 2 or above in key stage 1 statutory assessments was below both local and national averages. When compared with similar schools (those with a similar percentage of pupils known to be entitled to receive free school meals), the school was in the lowest quarter. However in 2005, results improved and were above local and national averages in English and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, it was in the top half for both subjects and in the lowest quarter for science. Generally, boys' and girls' results are similar but in 2005, girls did better than boys. A significantly large percentage of pupils gain the higher than expected level 3 most years. Overall trends, based on figures for three year time periods, indicate continued improvement. In each of the core subjects, a greater percentage of pupils now attain the expected level 2 or higher than in 2001.
41. At key stage 2, results in statutory assessment tests (SATs) in 2004 were above both local and national averages. All pupils achieved at least the expected levels. When compared with similar schools, the school was in the top 25 per cent for all three core subjects. However, in 2005, results were not as good mainly due to very small numbers of pupils and a high proportion of pupils with SEN. They were above local and national averages in mathematics, below in English and similar in science. A significant proportion of pupils achieve the higher than expected level 5 most years. Trends at key stage 2 indicate high standards that continue to improve over three or four year time periods. At key stage 2, girls have achieved better than boys over recent years.
42. As they progress through the school, pupils are keen to learn. In the under-fives class and at the end of key stage 2 particularly, they quickly acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding. They make good progress towards fulfilling their potential. However, even though pupils have targets, they are unclear about them. They are not able to talk confidently about how well they are progressing and what precisely they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
43. Pupils' attitudes to their work and school are good with no important shortcomings. They enjoy their lessons, especially when work is challenging and exciting. Almost all pupils sustain concentration and remain focussed on their tasks. Occasionally, however, a small minority of pupils become restless; this is when teachers' expectation of the work they are to do is not high enough.
44. When given the opportunity, pupils, work well independently. Many older pupils are able to organise and plan their own work. Pupils throughout the school happily carry out the responsibilities provided for them by their teachers. However, the skills for life long learning are not developed systematically across the school and pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to become independent. Their skills in these areas are underdeveloped.

45. Behaviour is good with no important shortcomings, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils clearly understand the school's expectations regarding acceptable behaviour and know there are consequences if they do not follow them. Pupils are friendly towards visitors. Their relationship with each other and with their teachers is good. Pupils confirm that bullying or any form of harassment is rare. There have been no exclusions.
46. Attendance is below the Wales and LEA average. Long-term absences by pupils have affected attendance levels over the previous year. Also, a significant number of families take holiday during the term time; this also impacts on the overall figures. Whilst the majority of pupils arrive on time, a small minority often arrive late. There is a slow start to the morning in the nursery and reception class with several parents still bringing their children into the class at 9.10am.
47. Pupils' progress in their personal, social, moral and wider development overall is good. Pupils' moral and social awareness is good and has a positive impact on helping them develop self-discipline and confidence.
48. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of equal opportunities and the diversity of other cultures. They respect the values and beliefs of their classmates whose cultural traditions and values are different from their own. However their understanding of life in a multi-ethnic society is less well developed. Pupils' spiritual awareness is quite limited because opportunities to appreciate and reflect quietly on important issues are not consistently promoted throughout the school.
49. Pupils are developing a good understanding of their place in the community. Their awareness of the working world is less secure.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

50. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this key question.
51. During the inspection, the quality of teaching in the lessons observed is as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	56%	39%	0%	0%

52. In most lessons, teachers successfully stimulate and challenge pupils to do well. This is particularly so in the under-fives class and the end of key stage 2 where pupils describe learning as being fun. Lessons are generally well paced. Teachers give pupils appropriate lengths of time to complete their activities; they empathetically support those pupils who are unclear about what is required. Occasionally, in some classes, the pace of lessons is inappropriate; teachers expect pupils to spend too long on specific tasks; pupils consequently lose interest and become inattentive.
53. All adults, teachers and assistants establish good relationships with pupils. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together. They use a range of strategies to ensure pupils' attention and interest. Most sessions begin with an appropriate introduction; they are followed by an activity session and finally, teachers bring pupils together to conclude the lesson effectively.
54. Teachers show a good awareness of the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. They are aware of current issues in education and they successfully introduce new techniques into their teaching for the benefit of their pupils. For example, recently the school has introduced a new programme for teaching phonics and this is having a positive impact on pupils' understanding of language.
55. Teachers generally plan lessons well. Plans are clear and detailed. The planning and organisation in the under-fives class is exemplary. It is comprehensive and clearly indicates the varying activities for groups of children and also there is reference to the roles of adults. Occasionally, in other classes, insufficient attention is given to describing the activities planned for different groups of pupils. All lessons have clear objectives that are usually carefully explained to pupils who are then given indications of the amount of time they have available to complete their work.
56. Activities are well organised and teachers make good use of the wide range of resources available to make lessons more interesting for pupils. Teachers effectively organise the role of assistants, students and volunteers to ensure pupils benefit from their presence in classes. However, on the whole, there is

too much emphasis on the use of pre-prepared worksheets and pupils are not always allowed the opportunities to organise their own ideas and develop their work accordingly. Sometimes, because of the large number of adults in classes, there is a tendency to undertake tasks for pupils rather than allowing them time to develop their own skills. For example, adults tidy up after lessons rather than encouraging pupils to become responsible for the learning environment. Homework is set regularly and pupils and their parents fully understand what is expected of them.

57. All pupils are treated equally and teachers make good efforts to challenge stereotypical views. Teachers effectively promote the positive advantages of bilingualism and regularly use Welsh during lessons and at other times during the school day. The needs of all pupils are carefully considered and work for pupils relates to targets set including those in individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils with additional learning needs. More able pupils are given opportunities to work with older age groups to extend their knowledge and understanding.
58. The school has developed a detailed and effective system for assessing and tracking pupils' academic and personal progress from the time they start school in the nursery. In particular, the system for tracking the progress of under-fives is highly detailed and an outstanding feature. It owes much to the hard work and dedication of the early years teacher who has a wealth of data at her fingertips with which to plan activities and inform parents of their children's progress in all the areas of learning. In key stage 1 and 2, results from numerous tests and teachers' assessments in English, mathematics and science are analysed carefully. This information is used well to set whole school and class targets and to identify those pupils who require more support and those who need to be challenged further by moving to an older year group for English and mathematics work.
59. In other subjects, teachers' knowledge and understanding of pupils' progress and subject skills have good features that outweigh shortcomings. Teachers do not yet have a method to track pupils' knowledge and understanding in relation to national curriculum levels of attainment as they move through the school. This limits the opportunity for teachers to modify activities and match them more carefully to the different abilities in their classes. Portfolios of samples of levelled work have begun to be collected and these have the potential to provide a useful tool to aid teachers in their planning.
60. Teachers do not consistently ensure pupils know and understand how well they are doing, but the school recognises that this requires further development. Some pupils have recently been given personal learning targets in English, but these are not yet used to help pupils understand what specific subject skills they need to work on to improve. In addition, the marking of work does not always show pupils what they need to work on and, at the moment, does not make reference to their targets. In some classes, incorrect work is marked as being correct and pupils are praised for work that is untidy or incomplete; this does not aid learning.

61. The school has a good system for recording and reporting pupils' achievements that fully comply with statutory requirements. Annual reports to parents are informative and provide information about the next steps that pupils need to make. Short interim reports, regular meetings and an 'open door' policy ensure that parents are well informed about their children's progress and how they can help them learn.

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.

62. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this key question.
63. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that fully complies with statutory requirements and meets the learning needs of pupils well. Schemes of work are detailed and ensure that pupils' skills in the mixed age classes are progressively developed. However, some lessons on the timetable, such as Welsh, are too long and pupils' become distracted. Throughout the school, pupils' basic skills are developed well, although planning for the development of other key skills are at an embryonic stage.
64. Despite limited internal and external space, the school makes good efforts to ensure effective delivery of the curriculum in all subject areas. However, accommodation limitations restrict the delivery of practical subjects such as physical education and science. The school has successfully adapted its curriculum to meet the requirements of the Health Authority because of an outbreak of an infectious disease.
65. The educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. The curriculum for the under-fives is based on a good understanding of how young children learn best and a wealth of interesting practical activities are planned.
66. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by pupils. After-school and lunchtime clubs, such as the School Newspaper and Bays Science Club together with a number of sporting and musical activities, have a positive impact on the pupils' personal development.
67. The school uses off-site facilities effectively to enrich learning and, in part, compensate for the limited accommodation. For example, partnerships such as those with the local high schools and the golf club (through the Education and Business Partnership) have helped learning in science and design technology. Links with local schools and colleges aid the smooth transition of pupils into secondary education and contribute to staff development. The many students on work placements in the school significantly enhance

learning. Overall, the school is regarded positively in the community and its involvement with the local and wider area is good.

68. The school makes good provision for personal and social education. It successfully creates an environment where pupils develop confidence and positive self-esteem and where they feel valued as individuals. Discussions during *Circle Time* encourage honest debate and help pupils make sensible decisions.
69. Overall, the school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. Provision for social and moral development is particularly effective. Teachers ensure that pupils develop a mature understanding of right and wrong and stories in assembly highlight moral and social dilemmas well. The school is like a family where everyone helps each other. Pupils are moved by international disasters and are eager to help those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development has good features that outweigh shortcomings. While pupils are valued and they have a visible sense of self worth, opportunities are missed to let pupils reflect on issues discussed on the wonders of the world around them. Although links have been established recently with other faith groups, this aspect is at an early stage of development. There is a need to ensure that pupils are more fully equipped to take their place in a multi-cultural society. The school is sensibly developing this aspect.
70. A small number of opportunities have been provided for pupils to take part in visits to local commerce and businesses in order for them to learn about the working world, but these are arranged on an ad hoc basis. No recent staff placements within business and industry have taken place as part of the professional development programme. Overall this area of the school's work is underdeveloped.
71. The school successfully promotes pupils' bilingual skills that are developing progressively throughout the school. However, *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is not as well developed. There is insufficient reference in subjects such as art and music to Welsh cultural heritage. As a result pupils' sense of their Welsh identity is underdeveloped.
72. The school has good arrangements to help it tackle social disadvantage. All adults ensure that pupils have equal opportunity to access the curriculum offered and to take part in all aspects of school life what ever their ability or background.
73. The provision for developing pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship is in the early stages of development. Initiatives such as recycling and energy conservation have recently been introduced. The school is working towards the bronze Eco-Award. Global citizenship is suitably covered in the geography curriculum.
74. The well-established school council provides a good opportunity for pupils to be involved in decision making within the school and to learn about democratic

processes. Older pupils help to put together the school newspaper; they approach these responsibilities with maturity and enthusiasm. Overall, opportunities for pupils to improve their entrepreneurial skills are developing well.

75. The experiences pupils receive that reflect the priorities for life long learning have good features that outweigh shortcomings. On a pastoral level, transition links with the local secondary schools are good and ensure that pupils move to their next stage of education is smooth. In some classes, pupils are actively encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning but this is not consistent practice throughout the school. Across the school, there is often a lack of opportunity for pupils to make choices in relation to their own learning and to take responsibility for improving their learning.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

76. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this key question.
77. The school plans and manages care and support arrangements well. Pupils are well known to all adults within the school. Pupils confirm that they trust them and would turn to them for help if required. Good use is made of a range of specialist agencies to support and guide all pupils. The school works well with parents and carers. They are consulted about the care and support needed for their children. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents expressed the view that the school provides well for their children.
78. Arrangements to help children settle into the nursery and reception class are well organised. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in the process and this helps to establish a good working relationship with them from children's earliest days at the school. Arrangements to ensure pupils settle into school life at a later stage are also good.
79. Personal and Social Education is well planned throughout the school; suitable attention is given to sex education and substance misuse. This programme develops pupils' personal and social skills effectively as well as contributing to their awareness of citizenship. Recently pupils have been encouraged to bring healthy snacks to eat during their afternoon break. However, the school is not involved in any national or local initiatives to develop healthy lifestyles.
80. Child protection procedures are secure and well documented and known to all that work in the school. The child protection policy reflects recommended good practice. The issues raised at the time of the previous inspection have been addressed. Good systems are in place to deal with any pupils who may become unwell or who hurt themselves during the school day.
81. There are clearly written policies and procedures to ensure everyone's health, safety and welfare. The issues raised in the last inspection have been

addressed. Risk assessments are generally well undertaken. The governing body, however, does not take an active role in overseeing the school's health and safety arrangements. In addition, because the accommodation has shortcomings in important areas, these bring about problems related to welfare and safety that are not always well managed. For instance, during the inspection the very heavy rain penetrated the hall from under the door. The hall floor and surrounding area became extremely slippery but the physical education lesson continued posing a possible risk to pupils' safety.

82. Good systems have been established to monitor and address any concerns related to pupils' behaviour. Attendance and punctuality are monitored closely and there is good liaison with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who follows up the most serious cases of non-attendance. However, there are no robust systems in place to raise parents' understanding of the need to ensure that their children should have regular and prompt attendance. Pupils' performance is also monitored closely in English, mathematics and science. However, the information gained from monitoring pupils' academic progress is not consistently used throughout the school to indicate to every pupil what they need to do to improve their learning.
83. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs including those with SEN is good. The school fully meets the requirements for the Code of Practice for Wales. The detailed assessment procedures in the school ensure that pupils' learning difficulties are identified early and additional support provided quickly. Good links with outside agencies ensure that the school is able to access expert advice and additional support where necessary. A strength of the provision is the effective '*Catch Up*' programme recently established that provides individual pupils with specialist reading support that is helping them improve their reading and develop in confidence.
84. Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are detailed and match individual learning needs well. Currently the SEN co-ordinator writes all the IEPs; this is a heavy workload and a missed opportunity for teachers to become more involved in planning to meet pupils' individual needs. In addition, while some pupils are informed verbally of their targets, the written targets are worded in a complex way and are not readily understood by pupils or their parents.
85. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are sensitively and very effectively supported. Pastoral support is highly effective and well thought out strategies developed in partnership with the Behaviour Support Team ensure that pupils do not disrupt the learning of others.
86. The school values all pupils and is committed to equal opportunities so that pupils of all ages and abilities have equal access to the curriculum and all other provision. Pupils' contributions are valued and boys and girls are encouraged equally to participate in activities. The school goes out of its way to ensure that pupils with learning and other difficulties are welcomed and valued members of the school and makes any necessary adjustments in planning to accommodate their particular needs. The accommodation including toilet facilities is not suitable for pupils with physical, medical or

sensory needs but staff liase closely with parents to resolve any issues that arise.

87. The school closely monitors the behaviour of pupils and has a good race relations policy. Bullying and unkind behaviour of any kind is not tolerated. All staff are vigilant regarding such issues and swift action is taken if necessary. The school encourages pupils to be tolerant and sensible and is working to improve their awareness of different cultures.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

88. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this key question.
89. At the time of the inspection, the acting head teacher had been in position since the beginning of the school term. There has not been a deputy head teacher for several years but a new senior teacher was appointed from within the current staff at the beginning of the academic year. Because of staff changes and absences, subject leaders were not in place for all areas. However, a positive atmosphere exists in the school and all staff are supportive of each other.
90. The acting head teacher has developed a good overview of the needs of the school and a clear sense of direction exists. A suitable set of aims and objectives underpin school life and the school continues to develop and improve. Staff, governors and pupils have shared values and expectations and there is a positive ethos. There are appropriate policies and guidelines that are understood and implemented properly by the school staff. Both the permanent and the acting head teachers value the contributions of all members of staff and a genuine team spirit exists in the school. The senior teacher contributes well to whole school developments and subject leaders manage their responsibilities effectively. All the school's policies and practices effectively promote equality of opportunity.
91. Leaders and managers take good account of local and national priorities. For example, it is involved with Welsh Assembly Government's initiatives such as Basic Skills Quality Mark; it has gained Investors in People Award and is recognised as a Dyslexia Friendly School.
92. Leaders and managers set challenging targets for individual pupils, for members of staff and for the school as a whole. These targets are generally met. The school development plan outlines a suitable range of priorities appropriate to the current needs of the school.
93. There are effective arrangements in place to identify staff development needs. The head teacher and subject leaders monitor the performance of individual teachers and subsequently, together they set appropriate targets in order to bring about continuous improvement. Teaching assistants also benefit from professional discussions with the head teacher. As a result they have accessed professional development opportunities that have had a direct impact on improving standards such as the *Catch Up* project that has helped to improve standards in reading.
94. The governors meet at least once a term and all statutory requirements are met. They are very supportive of the school and are aware of the school's

role in the local community. The governors rely heavily on the advice of the head teacher and their part in the strategic development of the school is at an early stage of development.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

95. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this key question.
96. Leaders and managers are well informed about the areas for which they are responsible. Processes for self-evaluation are firmly established in the school. Senior managers and subject leaders routinely monitor the quality of provision. They talk knowledgeably about strengths and shortcomings in provision in individual classes and subjects.
97. Senior managers carefully track trends in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science over periods of time to ensure that standards are maintained. Along with governors, they are very aware that in a small school statistics and data must be carefully analysed in order to identify the correct priorities. They have started to use the information gained to identify areas that require development. However, in some subjects, self-evaluation processes are at an early stage of development. For example, even though there have been some recent preliminary discussions, there is no precise overview of the whole school actions required to bring about improvement.
98. All members of staff feel valued members of the school team and have opportunities to contribute to the continuing development of the school in both formal and informal ways. Parents are consulted about their views and, through the school council, pupils make valuable suggestions for improving their opportunities and environment.
99. Priorities set in recent years have been relevant to the needs of the school and subsequent actions have ensured an ongoing improvement in standards. Timescales set for bringing about improvement have been appropriate and adequate resources have been allocated to ensure successful completion.
100. The school has made good progress overall from the previous inspection. The self-evaluation report prepared for the inspection identified similar areas for further development to those identified by the inspection team. The grades allocated by the school matched those of the inspection team in every key question.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

101. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this key question.
102. The school has a suitable number of qualified teaching and support staff. The many students on work placements in the school enhance provision. Resources are good overall but there are gaps in computer software and this has a negative impact on learning. The use of specialist staff from a local sports company and also specialist music teaching ensures that all teachers have management and preparation time. However, increasing pupil numbers have led to one particularly large year group. The school ensures that more able pupils from this class (and others) are taught for English and mathematics with older pupils but it remains difficult to teach other subjects.
103. Teachers make very good use of every available space in the school and colourful displays serve to make an attractive learning environment. Nevertheless, the school accommodation has shortcomings in important areas that severely restrict learning opportunities:
 - Pupil and staff toilets are small and unsuitable despite the hard work of cleaning staff.
 - The head teacher, the school secretary and staff all share one room and space for lesson preparation is limited.
 - The head teacher does not have a private area to hold confidential meetings.
 - Classrooms are small and too cramped for the growing number of pupils. This makes the provision of practical activities very problematic.
 - One class is accommodated in an outside demountable building but it is too small for the number of pupils.
 - The school has adapted one small hall into a computer suite and small library area, but the other hall doubles as a dining room as well as gymnasium. It is far too small to accommodate a full class for physical education and the flooring is unsuitable and unsafe for vigorous activities. This is compounded by gaps in the outside door that let in rain
 - The playgrounds are small and unsuitable for the number of pupils.
 - The under-fives class is a thoroughfare for the school particularly on wet days and this is not a satisfactory situation as children's learning can be disrupted at times.
 - Storage space is very limited causing staff difficulty for the teaching of subjects such as design technology and physical education.
104. Teachers and support staff are deployed effectively to take account of their specialist areas. In particular, the deployment and contribution of support staff who work with less able pupils and those with reading or other learning difficulties is significant. There are good performance management procedures in place and the professional development of staff is based on their personal expectations and the needs of the school.

105. The school makes good use of its limited financial resources that are carefully managed to ensure that expenditure is closely matched to current priorities in the development plan. Expenditure on resources and staffing is closely monitored and the efficient school secretary keeps an accurate record of the school's finances and works closely with the head teacher. The school ensures fair competition in its tendering and consistently and effectively applies the principles of *Best Value* in the decisions it makes. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Subject 1: Mathematics

Key Stage 1 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key Stage 2 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

106. Throughout the school, pupils make some use of computers to extend their understanding of mathematics and key stage 1 pupils use their bilingual skills effectively to count in Welsh as well as English.
107. Key stage 1 pupils are confident talking about numbers and are familiar with numbers to 100. For example they appreciate the difference between two and single digit numbers and recognise numbers that are close to 100. They correctly count in tens from any given number. Some more able year 2 pupils quickly identify odd and even three digit numbers. They successfully add and subtract two digit numbers both mentally and in written form.
108. Year 1 pupils have a good appreciation of the early stages of measurement and quickly identify longer and shorter objects. They measure accurately using non-standard measures. By year 2, pupils know the difference between centimetres and metres and measure objects precisely using standard measures.
109. Throughout key stage 1, pupils progressively develop their understanding of two and three-dimensional shapes. More able year 2 pupils are aware of the key features of polygons and quadrilaterals and identify and correctly name a wide range of solid and flat shapes.
110. By the end of key stage 1, pupils develop an appropriate understanding of money. They successfully group sets of coins together to make a given amount and work out the change that would be needed when purchasing objects. Year 2 pupils begin to tell the time correctly using both digital and analogue clocks.
111. In years 3 and 4, pupils progressively develop their understanding of mathematics. They extend their awareness of number and confidently work with three digit figures. They further their understanding of measures and correctly convert centimetres to metres and develop a basic understanding of kilometres. They use correct mathematical language when describing two and three-dimensional shapes.
112. By the end of key stage 2, pupils have quick recall of number facts. They have a good understanding of multiplication including common multiples of numbers. Pupils logically explain their calculations using appropriate mathematical terminology.

113. In years 5 and 6, pupils correctly interpret data presented in a variety of different forms such as graphs and frequency tables. They fully understand the relationship between fractions and decimals and successfully convert metric measures to imperial.
114. Years 5 and 6 pupils use their previous learning effectively to help them solve problems. They present and check their work in a logical manner allowing them to identify emerging mathematical patterns.

Shortcomings

115. Key stage 1 pupils are slow in recalling basic number facts.
116. When recording their mathematics, some key stage 1 pupils reverse their numerals and are subsequently confused by what they have written.
117. In key stage 1 and lower key stage 2, pupils lack confidence using different approaches and methods to solve their mathematical problems. They find difficulty in developing their own ideas.

Subject 2: Science

Key Stage 1 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

118. Most pupils in key stage 1 have a good understanding of the differences between living and non-living things and easily distinguish between plants and animals. Most pupils know seeds need light, food and water to thrive and with support describe the changes that happen to plants as they grow, recording their observations in pictures and words. They begin to recognise healthy foods and plan a healthy meal with support.
119. Most pupils quickly recognise the properties of different materials and know that heating changes some materials. They understand that chocolate and ice melt when warm and bread can be turned into toast. The most able understand that some materials, such as the bread that has been toasted, cannot be changed back.
120. By the end of year 2, most pupils are familiar with the safe use of electricity and name items that use electricity correctly. The most able describe sensibly how a simple circuit is set up. They know that a force can be represented by a push, for example, when pushing a toy, or a pull, as when opening a door.
121. In key stage 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding of life and living things is developed very well. By year 6, all pupils are familiar with the major organs of the body and their functions. For example, they know the heart pumps blood to supply the muscles with oxygen and that the pulse rate increases during

strenuous exercise. Most pupils recognise that a healthy diet is a pre-requisite of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are confident naming the major parts in a flower. They understand the life cycle of flowering plants and the role of roots, stems and leaves in the transport of water in plants. All pupils have a good understanding of habitats and the interdependence of plants and animals and the most able identify the consumers and producers in a food chain correctly.

122. By the end of year 6, pupils have a good grasp of materials and their properties and are secure in their knowledge that the state of some materials can be changed and this can be irreversible. Most explain the process of evaporation and have a good understanding that solids such as salt, which have been dissolved, can be recovered by evaporation.
123. Older pupils understand physical processes well and many recognise the difference between simple and parallel circuits and the effect that this has on the brightness of bulbs in the circuits.
124. Year 6 pupils have an appropriate understanding of fair testing, make accurate measurements and observations and draw simple but logical conclusions from the data.

Shortcomings

125. Pupils' skills of scientific enquiry, particularly independent investigations, are under-developed. They do not confidently pose their own questions or fully understand how an answer can be found through experimentation or investigation.

Subject 3: Welsh (Second Language)

Key Stage 1 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

126. Throughout the school, pupils frequently use Welsh throughout the school day when undertaking familiar routines. Under-fives and key stage 1 pupils, in particular, are confident using Welsh and enjoy creating opportunities to do so. Pupils' pronunciation of Welsh is reasonably good.
127. Key stage 1 pupils join in with Welsh songs enthusiastically understanding the content of what is being sung. They have a quick recall of a range of vocabulary such as colours and clothes. They respond correctly in Welsh using short sentences and phrases to questions they are asked. Throughout the key stage, pupils demonstrate good levels of understanding when adults speak to them. They enjoy taking part in role-play activities.

128. In both years 1 and 2, pupils read words and simple phrases correctly, understanding what they have read. They label their drawings using familiar words and write short phrases correctly in response to basic questions.
129. Pupils in key stage 2 progressively develop their range of Welsh vocabulary. They confidently engage in simple dialogues and ask and answer questions correctly. They successfully adapt familiar phrases for different situations. By years 5 and 6, pupils extend their spoken Welsh by adding descriptive words to their sentences or joining two short phrases together to make a longer sentence.
130. Pupils read their written work accurately. They also read posters and simple phrases understanding what they have read. They follow the main theme of a Welsh story and correctly translate the meaning of individual sentences.
131. Younger key stage 2 pupils complete short sentences and write familiar oral patterns with a reasonable degree of accuracy. By the end of the key stage, they confidently write simple dialogues and descriptions independently. Years 5 and 6 pupils also collate information logically to create tables and charts following discussion with their peers.

Shortcomings

132. A few key stage 2 pupils are reluctant and hesitant when speaking Welsh as individuals.

Subject 4: Information Technology
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Key Stage 1 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

133. By the end of year 2, pupils have a good understanding of how to use the facilities in the computer suite and are confident to log on and off from the school's network of computers. The most able use the icons on the screen properly to save and print their work. With guidance, key stage 1 pupils competently change the size of the fonts, use the mouse to click and drag and use the space bar and return key to change the appearance of the text in a simple word processing program.
134. Key stage 1 pupils are familiar with a range of computer programs; they enjoy information technology lessons and are confident computer and interactive whiteboard users.
135. Pupils develop their word processing skills progressively as they move through the school. All older pupils are confident amending and presenting information and are skilled in combining text with graphics, resizing if

necessary to aid their presentations. More able year 6 pupils effectively insert hyperlinks into the web pages they are designing for their own web sites.

136. In key stage 2, pupils confidently use the Internet to find information and know how to refine their searches through the use of more specific key words.
137. By year 6, pupils are competent using presentation software and use it to produce good quality slide shows based on book reviews. They add notes to enhance the presentation to the class using the interactive whiteboard.
138. Year 6 pupils explain in detail how software for spreadsheets can be used to work out numerical problems using particular formulae. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the value of a spreadsheet in calculating mathematical tasks, such as their holiday expenditure, quickly and effectively.

Shortcomings

139. Key stage 2 pupils have limited skills controlling external devices and e-mailing.

Subject 5: Art

Key Stage 1 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

140. In both key stages, pupils make good use of sketchbooks to create their initial designs. They show detailed observational skills in their drawings. Throughout the school, pupils use different techniques successfully to represent similar objects and images. For example, they produce portraits using pencils, pastels, paints and collage materials.
141. Pupils respond positively to the work of great artists and they base their own efforts on the methods and ideas of others such as Cezanne and Giacometti. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite artists such as Monet describing some of the key features of his work. They develop appropriate critical skills as they discuss their own work and that of others using correct artistic terminology.
142. Throughout both key stages, pupils use a range of skills and techniques well to produce their own pieces of artwork. The majority control equipment successfully to create good quality efforts. For example, key stage 1 pupils use large and small paintbrushes effectively in order to produce different effects in their work. By the end of key stage 2, pupils have a well-developed sense of line, pattern, form and space.
143. The majority of pupils are confident producing two and three-dimensional pieces and they have good control using computer programmes to create

interesting designs. The creative and technical quality of pupils' work is good throughout the school.

Shortcomings

- 144. Some key stage 1 pupils lack confidence sketching initial drawings.
- 145. Pupils have a limited knowledge of art and artists from Wales.

Subject 6: Physical Education

Key Stage 1 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key Stage 2 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 146. Only games and swimming lessons were observed during the inspection.

Good features

- 147. In key stage 1, more able pupils have a good awareness of space and move around with good levels of control. They travel in different ways and successfully transfer their weight when balancing. They develop good hand-eye control when throwing and catching beanbags.
- 148. In key stage 2, all pupils have a good awareness of the need to warm up and cool down before and after exercise and know and understand the effect of exercise on their bodies. Pupils are developing keen competitive skills and accurately pass and receive balls.
- 149. Older pupils evaluate their own and their peers' performances well and point out how they can be improved. They listen carefully to the coaching points made by the specialist coach and as a result, are becoming increasingly skilled at refining and improving their performance.
- 150. By the time pupils leave for secondary schools, practically all are competent swimmers and many pupils have good life saving and personal water survival skills.

Shortcomings

- 151. Many key stage 1 pupils do not move with control or show awareness of each other in the space available.
- 152. Key stage 1 pupils are unaware of how to improve their performance.

School's response to the inspection

The inspection findings recognise that, in most respects, we have maintained high standards since our last inspection and improved standards in subjects such as information technology and art. We are pleased that the inspectors found that pupils' attitudes to their learning, the interest they show in their work and their ability to sustain concentration are good. In addition, the care and support systems we have in place and that underpin our curricular provision are recognised as appropriate and effective. The skill and dedication of teachers and the care and talent of support staff are duly acknowledged. Most importantly, the inspection report makes clear the elements that make our school what it is. In particular, the report confirms that we are achieving our aim to make our school a happy and secure place in which pupils grow in confidence and independence.

An action plan will be put in place to address the recommendations in the report. Continuing to improve our curriculum planning for pupils' key skills, continuing to make use of benchmark data to compare ourselves with similar schools and increasing pupils' understanding of how they are progressing are aspects that we believe we can confidently address. Staff and governors have already started to address these issues identified in the report.

Where it is possible to do so, staff and governors will address the recommendations before the end of the school year. Raising pupils' standards of achievement in aspects of mathematics, science, Welsh and PE will be a major priority for us. We will make sure that these subjects continue to be included in our school development plan. In addition, we will provide more opportunities for staff to improve their knowledge and skills in these curriculum areas so that they can help pupils achieve higher standards in these subjects. Pleasingly, inspectors identified many elements and procedures in the school that will help us address some shortcomings by sharing good practice more widely.

A copy of the school's action plan in response to the inspection recommendations will be sent to all parents. The governors' annual report to parents will report on the progress we are making on the inspection recommendations.

Appendix A

Basic information about the school

Name of School	Abernant Primary School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3 – 11 years
Address of School	Richmond Terrace Abernant Road Abernant Aberdare
Post-code	CF44 0SF
Telephone number	01685 871597
Acting head teacher	Mrs S Little
Date of appointment	September 2005
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs P Williams
Registered inspector	Margaret Morgan
Dates of inspection	8-10 November 2005

Appendix B

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	12	19	12	23	12	16	11	13	118

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	4	2	5

Staffing information	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	26.5 : 1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	6 : 1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	26.5
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.25 : 1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Whole School
Autumn 2004	83.6	90.1	94.8
Spring 2005	88.8	94.8	91.2
Summer 2005	90.0	91.2	92.4

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	8.47
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 KS1 Results 2005			Number of pupils in Y2					13	
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	W	1	2	3	4	
English:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	8	54	38	0	
		National	0	4	13	63	20	0	
En: reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	15	46	38	0	
		National	0	4	14	55	27	0	
En: writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	15	77	8	0	
		National	0	3	11	63	23	0	
En: speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	8	54	38	0	
		National	0	5	14	69	11	0	
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	8	54	38	0	
		National	0	3	14	63	20	0	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	8	15	38	38	0	
		National	0	2	10	65	24	0	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	76.9	In Wales	80.9

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

As there are only six pupils in the year group and there is a possibility of identifying individual pupils, it is not appropriate to publish the detailed key stage 2 results for 2005.

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language)	
By Teacher Assessment	
In the school	66.7
In Wales	72

- 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 D

Evidence base of the inspection

Three inspectors spent a total of 6 inspector days in the school. A peer assessor was also part of the inspection team. A team meeting was held prior to the inspection.

Inspectors visited:

- 23 lessons or part lessons
- All classes
- Acts of collective worship
- A range of extra-curricular activities

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- Staff, governors and parents before the inspection began
- Senior managers, teachers, support and administrative staff and groups of pupils during the inspection

The team also considered:

- The school's self evaluation report
- 29 responses to the parents'/carers' questionnaire
- A comprehensive range of documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection
- A range of pupils' work

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

Appendix E

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Margaret Morgan Registered Inspector	Summary Recommendations Appendices Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 Mathematics Welsh (second language), Art
Denise Shields Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4
Julia Coop Team Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 2, 3, 4, 7 Science Information Technology Physical Education

The contractor was:

Evenlode Education Ltd
8 Fisher Close
Duxford
Cambridgeshire
CB2 4XU

Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, head teacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.

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

**Abernant Primary School
Richmond Terrace
Abernant
Aberdare
CF44 0SF**

Summary for Parents

School Number: 6742053

Date of Inspection: 8-10 November 2005

by

**Margaret Morgan
WO49/5542**

Date: 10 January 2006

Under Estyn contract number: T/61/05P

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Number of teachers	4	2	5

A SUMMARY REPORT FOR PARENTS

Abernant Primary School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose 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 more information about their child's school. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. **The full report can be obtained from the school.**

The inspection of Abernant Primary School took place between 8 – 10 November 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Margaret Morgan undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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 past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a standard inspection.

Summary

Abernant Primary School is a good school with no important shortcomings. Pupils are well adjusted; they make good progress and are confident and ready for the next stage of their education.

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

Subjects

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Mathematics	3	2
Science	2	2
Welsh (second language)	2	2
Information Technology	2	2
Art	2	2
Physical Education	3	2

Pupils' standards of achievement during lessons in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	81%	19%	0%	0%

The overall quality of provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Pupils with SEN achieve well relative to their age and ability and those pupils with the capacity to achieve higher standards also maximise their potential. The vast majority of pupils achieve the targets set for them at the end of key stages 1 and 2 as a result of close monitoring and tracking of their progress by teachers. This is an outstanding feature.

Under-fives achieve good levels in the acquisition of communication, mathematical and information and technology (ICT) key skills. They also make good use of bilingual words and phrases during their daily routines. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils' bilingual competence is good and there are no important shortcomings; their listening, reading and mathematical skills are also well developed. However, there are good features that outweigh some shortcomings in their speaking, writing and ICT skills.

Numbers in cohorts are comparatively small making statistical analysis based on individual year groups insecure. In 2005, key stage 1 standard assessment results were above local and national averages in English and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, (those school with a similar percentage of pupils known to be entitled to receive free school meals) it was in the top half of schools for both subjects and in the lowest quarter for science. A significantly large percentage of pupils gain the higher than expected level 3 most years. Overall trends, based on figures for three year time periods indicate continued improvement. In each of the core subjects, a greater percentage of pupils now attain the expected level 2 or higher than in 2001.

At key stage 2, results in statutory assessment tests (SATs) in 2005, were not as good as in previous years mainly due to very low numbers in the cohort and a high proportion of SEN pupils. They were above local and national averages in mathematics, below in English and similar in science. A significant proportion of pupils achieve the higher than expected level 5 most years. Trends at key stage 2 indicate high standards that continue to improve over three or four year time period. At key stage 2, girls have achieved better than boys over recent years.

As they progress through the school, pupils are keen to learn. They make good progress towards fulfilling their potential. However, even though pupils have targets set for them by

teachers they are unclear about them. They are not able to talk confidently about how well they are progressing and what precisely they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

Pupils' attitudes to their work and school are good with no important shortcomings. When given the opportunity, pupils organise and plan their own work well. Behaviour is good with no important shortcomings, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils clearly understand the school's expectations regarding acceptable behaviour.

Attendance is below the Wales and LEA average. Long-term absences by pupils have affected attendance levels over the previous year. A significant number of families take holiday during the term time; this also impacts on the overall figures. Whilst the majority of pupils arrive on time, a small minority often arrive late.

Pupils' progress in their personal, social, moral and wider development overall is good. Pupils' moral and social awareness is good and has a positive impact on helping them develop self-discipline and confidence. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of equal opportunities and the diversity of other cultures.

The quality of education and training

The quality of teaching during the inspection is as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	56%	39%	0%	0%

In most lessons, teachers successfully stimulate and challenge pupils to do well. This is particularly so in the under-fives class and the end of key stage 2 where pupils describe learning as being fun. Occasionally, in some classes, the pace of lessons is inappropriate; teachers expect pupils to spend too long on some tasks.

All adults, teachers and assistants establish good relationships with pupils. They use a range of strategies to ensure pupils' attention and interest. The planning and organisation in the under-fives class is exemplary.

In key stages 1 and 2, activities are well organised but occasionally there is too much emphasis on the use of pre-prepared worksheets and pupils are not always allowed the opportunities to organise their own ideas and develop their work accordingly. Homework is set regularly and pupils and their parents fully understand what is expected of them.

All pupils are treated equally and teachers make good efforts to challenge stereotypical views. Teachers effectively promote the positive advantages of bilingualism and regularly use Welsh during lessons and at other times during the school day. The needs of all pupils are carefully considered and work for pupils relates to targets set including those in individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils with additional learning needs.

The school has developed a detailed and effective system for assessing and tracking pupils' academic and personal progress from the time they start school. In particular, the system for tracking the progress of under-fives is highly detailed and an outstanding feature.

In key stage 1 and 2, results from numerous tests and teachers' assessments in English, mathematics and science are analysed carefully. In other subjects, teachers' knowledge and

understanding of pupils' progress and subject skills have good features that outweigh shortcomings. Teachers do not yet have a comprehensive method of tracking pupils' knowledge and understanding in all subjects. Some pupils have recently been given targets in English, but targets are not yet used consistently to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve. The school has a good system for reporting and recording pupils' achievements that fully comply with statutory requirements.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that fully complies with statutory requirements and meets the learning needs of pupils well. Schemes of work are detailed and ensure that pupils' skills in the mixed age classes are progressively developed. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by pupils.

The school makes good provision for personal and social education and for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils.

The school plans and manages care and support arrangements well and works closely with parents and carers. Child protection procedures are secure and well documented and known to all that work in the school. There are clearly written policies and procedures to ensure everyone's health, safety and welfare.

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs including those with SEN is good. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are sensitively and effectively supported. Pastoral support is highly effective.

Leadership and management

A clear sense of direction exists in the school. A suitable set of aims and objectives underpin school life and the school continues to develop and improve. Staff, governors and pupils have shared values and expectations and the ethos of the school is positive. Leaders and managers set challenging targets for individual pupils, for members of staff and for the school as a whole. These targets are generally met.

The governors meet regularly and all statutory requirements are met. They are very supportive of the school and are aware of the school's role in the local community. The governors rely heavily on the advice of the head teacher and their part in the strategic development of the school is at an early stage of development.

Leaders and managers are well informed about the areas for which they are responsible. Processes for self-evaluation are firmly established in the school. Priorities set in recent years have been appropriate and subsequent actions have ensured an ongoing improvement in standards. The school has made good progress overall from the previous inspection. The self-evaluation report prepared for the inspection identified similar areas for development to those identified by the inspection team. The grades allocated by the school matched those of the inspection team in every key question.

All members of staff feel valued members of the school team and have opportunities to contribute to the continuing development of the school. Parents are consulted about their views and, through the School Council, pupils make valuable suggestions for improving their opportunities and environment.

The school has a suitable number of qualified teaching and support staff and they are deployed effectively. The many students on work placements in the school enhance provision. Resources are good overall.

Teachers make very good use of every available space in the school and attractive displays serve to make an attractive learning environment. Nevertheless, the school accommodation has important shortcomings in important areas that severely restrict learning opportunities. Expenditure on resources and staffing is closely monitored. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to maintain the current good standards, the school needs to:

- R1 Address the shortcomings identified in the subjects of mathematics, science, Welsh (second language), information technology, art and physical education.
- R2 Increase pupils' understanding of how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. **
- R3 Further develop the role of the governing body as "critical friends" in order to ensure they take a more proactive role in the strategic development of the school. **
- R4 Work with the LEA to improve the accommodation in order that all aspects of the curriculum can be fully delivered.

Those recommendations marked with an asterisk have already been identified as requiring action by the school in its development plan.

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.

Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, head teacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.