

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

**Abertillery Primary School  
Newall Street  
Abertillery  
Blaenau Gwent  
NP13 1EH**

**School Number: 6772165**

**Date of Inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

**by**

**Dr. Jim Hewitt  
79243**

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

The inspection of Abertillery Primary School took place between 05/02/07 and 08/02/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Dr Jim Hewitt undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Grade 1</b> | good with outstanding features                          |
| <b>Grade 2</b> | good features and no important shortcomings             |
| <b>Grade 3</b> | good features outweigh shortcomings                     |
| <b>Grade 4</b> | some good features, but shortcomings in important areas |
| <b>Grade 5</b> | many important shortcomings                             |

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Abertillery Primary School was founded in 1846 and has the longest history of educational provision in the Abertillery area. The school serves a mixed catchment area of council estates, traditional valley terraced housing and a few newer developments. It is a 'Communities First' area and, although having many features of economic disadvantage, is a close and caring community.
2. The school caters for pupils between three and eleven years of age. Baseline assessment, shows that levels of attainment of pupils on entry, is varied although there is an increasing number with communication and language difficulties. There are currently 338 boys and girls on roll who are organised into 14 mixed-ability classes. The school has a two-form entry structure with children taking up full-time placement in the reception class at the start of the academic year in which they are four. There are also two nursery classes, one for 21 children who attend mornings and one for 15 children who attend in the afternoons. Intake is on a termly basis. Overall, the total number of pupils on roll has been declining steadily over the past four years.
3. Overall, 99 per cent of pupils have English as their first language. One per cent of pupils come from families of mixed ethnic origin or non-white British backgrounds. There are two pupils for whom English is taught as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language.
4. A quarter of the schools' population is entitled to free school meals. This is below local authority, but above national, averages. No pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority and none have been excluded in the past 12 months. The school identifies 82 pupils (24 per cent) as having special educational needs (SEN) which is above the national average; of these, six pupils have a statement outlining their needs. The National Curriculum is not modified for any pupil and none are disapplied from it. Three pupils are withdrawn from acts of collective worship.
5. The school has received several awards including the *ECO Schools* Bronze Award, 2002; the *Basic Skills* Quality Mark for the third time in 2006; and the *Healthy Schools* Award for the fourth consecutive year also in 2006.
6. The school was last inspected in March 2001.

## The school's priorities and targets

### 7. The school aims to:

- create an interesting and stimulating environment which reflects its values and promotes a sense of community as well as an individual sense of self-worth;
- develop a community of lifelong learners where access to knowledge is a right and recognised achievement;
- provide learning experiences that will allow all pupils equal opportunities to develop their thinking and creative skills; and
- promote social, cultural, moral and spiritual development, preparing pupils to be responsible citizens.

### 8. A summary of the targets identified in the school improvement plan for 2006/7 are as follows:

- Curriculum:
  - to implement the new scheme of work in English across both key stages;
  - to develop speaking and listening skills across the key stages; and
  - to implement further the new information and communications technology scheme of work.
- Leadership and management:
  - to target groups across the school according to data in order to implement the RAISE (Raising Attainment and Individual Standards in Education in Wales) grant initiative;
  - to target any underachievement of boys; and
  - to further implement/embed key skills across the curriculum;
- Community and environment:
  - to develop further the outdoor areas of the school using community-focussed schools grant.
- Building maintenance
  - to continue to refurbish classroom furniture; and
  - to develop the school allotment.

## Summary

9. Abertillery Primary School is a good and improving school at the heart of its local community. The school provides a wide range of learning experiences and has a passionate concern for the care, support and guidance of its pupils. This has ensured that, since the previous inspection, standards have continued to rise and pupils are increasingly better prepared to meet the challenges of their next phase of learning and for adulthood. The school's success is based on the drive, enthusiasm and commitment of the head teacher and the team he has built around him.

The inspection team judged the school's work as follows:

### 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? | 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?                           | 2                |
| 7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?   | 2                |

### Grades for standards in subjects inspected

10. In key stages 1 and 2, standards in the subjects inspected are as follows:

| Inspection Area       | Key Stage 1 | Key Stage 2 |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| English               | 2           | 2           |
| Welsh second language | 2           | 3           |
| Science               | 3           | 2           |
| Geography             | 2           | 2           |
| Music                 | 2           | 2           |
| Physical education    | 2           | 2           |

### Standards

11. Pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons observed and subjects inspected were as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9%      | 68%     | 23%     | 0%      | 0%      |

12. These percentages are higher than the Welsh Assembly Government's all-Wales targets for 2007 and show good improvement on the grades given at the previous inspection.
13. The overall quality of educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. They make good progress and achieve good standards in using the key skills of speaking, listening, early reading, writing, numeracy and information and communications technology in their activities in the six areas of learning. Their early bilingual skills are also developing well. Their personal and social development is outstanding.
14. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 make good progress and achieve good standards in using the key skills of speaking, reading and numeracy. Good features outweigh shortcomings in their listening and writing skills and in their use of information and communications technology across the subjects. Standards in bilingual competence also have some good features but there is insufficient progress and development in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of *y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is good across both key stages. Use of creative skills to enhance learning in other subjects is also good.
15. In 2006, the school's results in end of key stage national assessment tests show continuing steady improvement and are above local authority averages in both key stages; although progress has been less marked in key stage 1 science. The school is below national averages in the three core subjects at key stage 1. At key stage 2, results are slightly above the national average in mathematics and science, but below average in English. When compared to similar schools in Wales (based on the number of pupils receiving free school meals) the school is in the upper 50 per cent in English at both key stages and the lower 50 per cent at both key stages in mathematics and science.
16. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher level 3 at key stage 1 is well below national averages in all three subjects. At key stage 2, the percentage of pupils gaining the higher level 5 matches national averages in mathematics but is below them in English and science. Girls consistently outperform the boys in all three subjects, the difference is particularly marked in key stage 1.
17. The majority of pupils make good progress towards fulfilling their potential and moving on to the next stage of learning. In conjunction with the local authority, the school sets challenging targets for pupils to attain at the end of key stage 2, which the school regularly exceeds. Pupils with SEN or those who have English as an additional language generally attain well in relation to their age and ability. Pupils make good progress overall in both core and foundation subjects and have a clear understanding of what they are doing, how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. However, in some lessons, teaching activities and strategies do not cover the full range of ability leading some more-able pupils achieving modestly in terms of their real potential and some less able pupils becoming unsettled and distracted.

18. Overall, however, pupils have positive attitudes to their work and to learning. They sustain concentration well and enjoy working together in pairs and in groups.
19. Behaviour is generally good and older pupils are supportive of younger ones. The school is a caring orderly community in which pupils take their responsibilities seriously. Their awareness of equal opportunity issues and respect for the diverse cultures, beliefs and backgrounds of others is an outstanding feature.
20. Pupils make good progress in their personal, social and wider education and they enjoy participating in philosophical discussions, which broadens their understanding of social and moral issues. Assemblies and extra-curricular activities further extend their awareness of the wider world although their spiritual development is sometimes limited by the lack of opportunity for reflection.
21. The school places a high priority on attendance and punctuality but, despite its considerable efforts, attendance rates remain just below expected levels for primary schools.

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

22. 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> |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 11%            | 61%            | 28%            | 0%             | 0%             |

23. Overall, teaching is good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The quality of the teaching for children under five is consistently good. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively as teams, and the relationship between staff and pupils is highly productive. Teaching assistants are a valuable resource. Lessons graded as having outstanding features are marked by excellent organisation, high expectations, intuitive questioning, constructive feedback and an infectious enthusiasm, which highly motivates the pupils.
24. The quality of teaching and support for pupils with SEN and for those with English as an additional language is good. Class teachers have a good understanding of the needs of pupils in both these categories, and in most lessons, provide work that is well suited to them.
25. Generally, teachers plan thoroughly and prepare appropriate tasks for all pupils. They make effective use of resources and have a comprehensive knowledge of the subjects they teach. The pace of lessons is good and teachers ensure that pupils are aware of lesson objectives. Teachers meet the language needs of pupils from differing language backgrounds well. However, teachers fail to plan appropriately for the development of pupils' bilingual skills. This is a shortcoming. The promotion of equality of

opportunity by staff for all regardless of gender, race or disability is an outstanding feature of teaching.

26. Teachers work closely together to ensure continuity in curriculum content and lesson planning. Planning for the delivery of the key skills is currently being incorporated into this, although its application in practice is inconsistent. The school has also identified the need to extend their key skills framework document to include aspects of the common requirements such as problem-solving skills and to ensure that, in practice, there is greater progression and continuity in learning.
27. Assessment procedures are good and are helping to raise standards across all subjects. Rigorous, consistent, and comprehensive procedures are now in place to record and track pupils' progress from the time they start school. The quality of moderated portfolios of pupils' work, the use of constructive marking and feedback for pupils and the involvement of pupils in their own self-evaluation is developing well although not yet consistent.
28. The quality of learning experiences provided by the school to meet the needs and interests of learners is good with some outstanding features. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that fully meets the statutory requirements of the national curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. It meets the needs of pupils well including those with special educational needs, newly arrived ethnic minority pupils or those who are new to English. Through its effective schemes of work, it builds systematically on what pupils know and can do.
29. The school makes outstanding provision for out-of-school activities and enrichment of the curriculum through a very good range of clubs, sporting activities and cultural events. The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
30. The school's partnerships with parents, the local community, other schools and higher education institutions are outstanding and greatly enrich the life and work of the school and enhance pupils' learning experiences. The curriculum reflects national priorities well. Awareness and understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship is good and pupils' entrepreneurial skills are developing well. The commitment of the school to social inclusion, to promoting equal opportunities and in its celebration of diversity is exemplary. At the heart of the local community, the school lays strong foundations for lifelong learning and community regeneration. This is an outstanding feature.
31. The quality of care, support and guidance the school provides is good with some outstanding features. The school places a high priority on pastoral care and staff, provide outstanding guidance and support for all pupils in their educational progress, social development and personal welfare. Induction and transition procedures for pupils joining and leaving the school are highly effective. The quality of relationships is exemplary and contributes significantly to pupils' confidence, positive behaviour and self-esteem.

Additionally, pupils have access to an effective and comprehensive programme for their personal and social development.

32. Clear policies and procedures are in place to promote health and safety and healthy living. Child protection arrangements are effective and clearly understood by all with training regularly updated.
33. Overall, the quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Systems for assessment and arrangements for providing in-class support or withdrawal groups are well managed and effective. Practical arrangements for reviews, the production of individual educational programmes, and support for pupils displaying disruptive behaviour are good.

### **Leadership and management**

34. The head teacher provides very strong leadership and gives a clear sense of direction to the school. His leadership and the shared sense of purpose he has developed amongst staff have resulted in outstanding improvements since the previous inspection. The deputy head teacher and senior management team provide very committed and effective support and, as part of their responsibilities, continually seek to find ways of raising standards. Subject leaders contribute significantly to this process through their monitoring, planning, evaluation and feedback procedures.
35. The head teacher places a great deal of emphasis on the professional development of all members of staff. The setting of appropriate targets at all levels has had a very positive impact on improving provision and raising standards. Good account is being taken of local and national priorities. However, the school has identified the need to do more to promote bilingualism.
36. The school improvement plan is a very effective and comprehensive working document to which all members of staff contribute and which plans carefully for strategic development.
37. The governing body is highly supportive of the school and makes a good contribution to its success. Governors fully understand their responsibilities and contribute effectively to strategic planning. They fulfil their budgetary and statutory responsibilities well.
38. The head teacher and deputy head teacher have a good overview of the school and its work based on effective monitoring of pupils' progress, evaluation of subject provision, and secure procedures for obtaining information from staff, pupils and parents. The school's own self-evaluation report is comprehensive and accurate and matches the inspection team's view in all seven key questions. Areas identified for development also closely match the team's judgements.
39. The school is suitably staffed with well-qualified and trained teachers and teaching assistants, who are deployed to very good effect and good use is

made of particular areas of expertise staff. Good support is provided by administrative, catering and caretaking. Resources and accommodation are good and constantly reviewed. The external environment provides good opportunities for learning and access to further local resources is readily available. Financial management is careful, considered and effective. Spending accords with the priorities set by the governing body in the school improvement plan. The school provides good value for money.

## Recommendations

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

- R1 Raise standards in those subjects where shortcomings have been identified.
- R2 Continue to improve boys' attainment in the core subjects.
- R3 Continue to improve standards in the key skills and bilingualism.
- R4 Ensure that teaching consistently engages and challenges all learners.

Note: The school has already identified R2 and R3 in its own self-evaluation report and school improvement 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

40. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
41. During the time of the inspection, pupils standards of achievement in the lessons observed and subjects inspected were as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9%      | 68%     | 23%     | 0%      | 0%      |

42. These percentages are higher than the Welsh Assembly Government's all-Wales targets for 2007 and show good improvement on the grades given at the previous inspection.
43. In key stage 1 and key stage 2, standards of achievement in the subjects identified for inspection are as follows:

| Inspection Area       | Key Stage 1 | Key Stage 2 |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| English               | 2           | 2           |
| Welsh second language | 2           | 3           |
| Science               | 3           | 2           |
| Geography             | 2           | 2           |
| Music                 | 2           | 2           |
| Physical education    | 2           | 2           |

44. The overall quality of educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
45. Baseline data indicates that children's skills on entry is varied but generally matches county averages. However, an increasing number of pupils are being identified as having difficulties with language and communication.
46. Children under five make good progress and achieve good standards in using key skills in activities within the areas of learning. They confidently take part in creative play activities, which effectively promote their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They develop their numeracy skills well through a range of practical activities and investigations. Children show increasing confidence in their use of information and communications technology and their bilingual skills are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Personal and social development is outstanding.
47. Overall, in key stages 1 and 2, pupils' standards in key skills have good features that outweigh shortcomings. Pupils in both key stages achieve good

standards in their speaking skills and they use appropriate language in different situations. They speak clearly and audibly when responding to questions, expressing opinions and explaining ideas. However, pupils' listening skills across the school are variable. They demonstrate good listening skills when effectively engaged but a minority of children have difficulty in listening attentively to their teachers and to their peers.

48. Reading skills are good and pupils make good progress in both key stages. Pupils read from a wide variety of sources and they show a good understanding of texts in different subjects. Pupils writing skills across the curriculum have good features, which outweigh shortcomings. There are many good examples of written work and often these are well presented but skills vary between classes and standards are uneven. There are many examples of good quality written work in English but in other subjects such as Welsh, extended writing is limited.
49. Mathematical skills are well developed in both key stages and good standards are achieved. Pupils make good use of their numerical skills to measure and calculate accurately in design technology and in science, for example, and they use data-handling skills very well to record the results of investigations and surveys. The application of information and communications technology skills for use in other subjects is currently a focus of the school improvement plan. Examples of good standards in work across the curriculum were observed during the inspection; particularly in year 6 where pupils use their skills to effectively promote learning in their art work when studying William Morris and Laura Ashley, and when using persuasive writing in their work on the Blitz. However, use of information and communications technology by pupils is not consistent across the school.
50. Children's experience of Welsh in the early years provides a good foundation for future development. However, pupils' skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing in Welsh are underdeveloped because they are not used consistently and regularly across the school. Opportunities for pupils to respond to their teachers in both languages and to practise their skills in lessons, other than Welsh, are limited. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of *y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* shows a good understanding of modern and traditional Welsh culture. Pupils' creative skills are well developed and used to good effect to enhance work in other subjects.
51. Pupils are making good progress in the development of their thinking and problem-solving skills. They use the Internet confidently to find information and carry out independent research in preparation for 'PowerPoint' presentations. However, across the school, opportunities to extend and apply their skills are sometimes missed.
52. In 2006, the school's results in end of key stage 1 national assessment tests matched local averages in science and were above them in English and mathematics. The core subject indicator (the number of pupils gaining level 2 in all three subjects) was also above the local average.

53. In 2006, results in key stage 1 were below the national average in all three subjects. Generally, results have improved steadily year on year in all three subjects, although progress has been less pronounced in key stage 1 science. The number of pupils gaining the higher level 3 was well below national averages in all three subjects.
54. When compared to similar school across Wales (based on the number of pupils receiving free school meals), the school is in the upper 50 per cent in English and the lower 50 per cent in mathematics. In science, the school is in the bottom 25 per cent of similar schools. The core subject indicator places the school in the lower 50 per cent. Girls consistently outperform boys in all three subjects.
55. In key stage 2 in 2006, the school's results were above local authority averages in all the three core subjects. The core subject indicator (the number of pupils gaining level 4 in all three subjects) was also above the local average.
56. Results were just below national averages in English and just above them in mathematics, science and the core subject indicator. There is a steadily improving trend with school targets regularly exceeded. The number of pupils gaining the higher level 5 was just above national averages in mathematics and science and below them in English.
57. When compared to similar schools across Wales, the school is in the upper 50 per cent in mathematics and science and in the lower 50 per cent in English and the core subject indicator. Girls continue to outperform boys, particularly in English, but difference in attainment is now less marked than in previous years.
58. The school successfully adds value to the standards pupils achieve as they move through the school. Overall, the progress most pupils in the early years and in both key stages make towards fulfilling their potential is good. Although the progress of more-able pupils, especially in key stage 1 could be better. Pupils are well prepared and ready to move on to the next stage of their learning. The majority successfully acquire new knowledge, develop their ideas, and increase their understanding.
59. Pupils have a good understanding of what they are doing and how well they are progressing. In lessons, pupils are generally well informed and clear about what they need to do to improve their work.
60. The school is particularly successful in helping pupils to succeed regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background. Pupils benefit very well from the tailored programmes of support provided by the school and visiting specialists. Pupils with SEN respond well to the support they receive and generally achieve well in relation to their age and ability.
61. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their interest in their work are consistently good. Most pupils work hard in lessons, are eager to answer questions, take

part in discussions and engage with the task in hand. Overall, pupils sustain concentration well, particularly where the teaching captures their interest. This contributes significantly to the standards they achieve and the quality of life in school.

62. Most pupils are well behaved – they are polite, courteous and most are well mannered with a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The school functions well as a caring, orderly community and high quality relationships are evident throughout. Older pupils behave maturely, and are sensitive to the needs of the younger ones. In early years and in both key stages, pupils undertake responsibilities conscientiously. They increasingly take responsibility for their own learning as they extend their knowledge and understanding. However, in some lessons, when work is not suitably matched to pupils' needs, a small minority of pupils become unsettled and do not extend their learning.
63. Overall, pupils make good progress in their personal, social, moral and wider development. In particular, through their positive interactions with teachers, they develop a strong understanding of themselves and how they fit into the world around them. The good relationships developed are evident in the way pupils readily support and collaborate with each other when working in pairs and in small groups.
64. Pupils are keen to develop their own understanding of moral and social issues and respond well to timetabled philosophical discussion. They respond well when given opportunities for spiritual reflection and are developing a good appreciation of a wide range of subjects.
65. All pupils, irrespective of gender or social background, work and play together harmoniously. Pupils demonstrate very good awareness of equal opportunities and they have a secure respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural variation within society. Pupils' participation in specific projects, often involving visiting speakers, ensures that diversity is acknowledged and understood positively. They thoughtfully value and care for each other and others across the world. This is an outstanding feature.
66. Pupils' awareness of the world of work has many good features. Pupils are developing a strong sense of citizenship within the school and extend this through links with the local community.
67. Whole school attendance during the year preceding inspection averaged 92.4 per cent which is just below the average for primary schools in Wales with sickness being the main cause of absence. Unauthorised absence is low and, with few exceptions, pupils arrive on time. The school takes full account of the Welsh Assembly Government's guidance on attendance.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

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

69. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11%     | 61%     | 28%     | 0%      | 0%      |

70. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. The promotion of equality of opportunity by staff for all regardless of gender, race or disability is an outstanding feature of this.

71. The quality of the teaching for children under five is consistently good. Adults stimulate and challenge pupils to do well. All teachers and teaching assistants intervene effectively and provide children with a very good range of practical activities to extend their knowledge and understanding. They are fully aware of recent developments in the early years curriculum and are adapting their teaching accordingly.

72. Overall, the quality of teaching in key stages 1 and 2 is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively as teams, and the relationship between staff and pupils successfully fosters learning. As a consequence, this has led to the continued raising of standards. Teachers make their expectations regarding work and behaviour clear and they manage pupils effectively using praise and humour. There is a strong level of respect between staff and pupils.

73. In the lessons which have outstanding features, members of staff:

- are highly organised and include a range of resources and strategies to stimulate, engage and motivate all pupils;
- use well considered questions to challenge thinking for pupils of all abilities;
- provide constant constructive feedback to consolidate learning and to refine and develop pupils' skills; and
- completely engage the pupils through their own infectious enthusiasm.

74. In the majority of lessons where teaching is good, members of staff:

- use a good range of resources which are appropriate to pupils' age and ability;
- make learning objectives clear at the outset and consolidate them during the lesson and ensure that learning outcomes are consistent with the objectives ;

- build effectively on previous learning;
  - give clear instructions and explanations; and
  - deliver lessons with good pace to meet deadlines.
75. In those lessons, which have some shortcomings, teachers do not always:
- make pupils aware of the purpose of the tasks they are undertaking;
  - provide sufficiently clear instructions and explanations;
  - move the lesson along briskly providing stimulating and imaginative activities and questions to engage all the pupils; or
  - challenge all pupils sufficiently (especially the more- and less-able pupils).
76. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is effective. Teachers ensure that work provided is at an appropriate level to meet the language needs of particular pupils. Suitable input is provided by the local authority.
77. Teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, and effectively use their specialist knowledge and the resources available to enhance the quality of lessons.
78. Although teachers meet the language needs of pupils from a wide range of language backgrounds very well, there are shortcomings in the bilingual teaching of Welsh and English. Teachers fail to take advantage of incidental opportunities to develop skills as they arise or to plan situations where bilingualism could be promoted.
79. Teaching assistants have a good understanding of pupils' needs, especially those with more complex difficulties. They show good awareness of the subjects taught and generally contribute effectively to the progress that pupils make in learning, behaviour, personal development and social skills. They are a valuable teaching resource.
80. Teachers work closely together to ensure continuity in curriculum content and lesson planning. Lessons are evaluated by the teachers on a weekly basis and, depending on the effectiveness of the lesson and degree of pupil progress, subsequent planning is modified.
81. Assessment procedures have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good overall. This has been largely due to the quality of leadership in this area. A variety of different strategies are used to monitor pupils' progress including standardised tests and 'in house' assessments to identify strengths and areas for improvement. A concise assessment policy outlines clear procedures for monitoring work and for keeping accurate records of pupils' achievements. More recently, a comprehensive system has been put in place to track improvements in pupils' progress as they move through the school.
82. Work is regularly marked, with many examples of good practice, including positive comments and, in some classes, targets for further improvement. However, this approach is not yet consistent throughout the school.

83. Procedures for assessing pupils with SEN are good and pupil data is used effectively to target groups of pupils who require specialised support in numeracy and literacy.
84. Most teachers ensure that pupils are aware of the targets set for them in English and mathematics. There is a growing emphasis being placed throughout each year group on pupils evaluating their own achievements. Where appropriate, learners are encouraged to make brief written responses to teacher's formative comments. Peer assessment and self-assessment strategies are being developed in years 5 and 6. These strategies contribute significantly to the assessment process.
85. Portfolios of work in the core subjects provide useful guidance for teachers in assessing the standards achieved by their pupils. Staff work together to moderate pupil's work, this helps to promote consistency in standards throughout the school. Plans are currently being developed to extend the initiative to other subjects.
86. Assessment and recording procedures for the foundation subjects are at an early stage of development and are mainly informal in nature.
87. Annual reports to parents comply with statutory requirements and provide appropriate information about pupils' progress and achievements in each subject, together with guidance on ways of making further improvements. Opportunities are provided for parents to respond with their own suggestions and comments.

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

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| <b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b> |
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88. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
89. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils very well. It is equally accessible to all and is flexible enough to meet the needs of newly arrived ethnic minority pupils or those who are new to English. It also provides well for pupils with SEN.
90. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which builds systematically on what pupils know and can do. It meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school's provision for personal and social education reflects national recommendations and includes sex education, drug and substance awareness. The curriculum is very well supported by comprehensive policies and schemes of work that provide clear progression and continuity in pupils' learning. The coverage of the curriculum through

topic work is effective and thorough planning ensures coverage of all the programmes of study.

91. The overall quality of educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes. These experiences lead naturally into national curriculum programmes of study. Children have good access to planned indoor and outdoor experiences and opportunities.
92. The school has identified opportunities to develop the key skills of communication, numeracy, information and communications technology and personal and social education into each subject, but the school acknowledges this requires further development in order to ensure that, in practice, pupils consistently build on what they know and can do. The school has also identified the need to extend their framework to include *y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*, problem-solving activities and thinking skills into its key skills framework.
93. The curriculum is very well supported by a wide range of extra curricular and out of school activities, and this is an outstanding feature of provision. The local town and surrounding area are used very effectively to broaden pupils' experiences. In early years and key stage 1, for example, the children visit the river to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world and their geography skills. Pupils in key stage 2 make residential visits to an outdoor pursuits centre.
94. A wide variety of clubs are held where pupils benefit from learning French, dancing, and information and communications technology skills. They develop skills relating to gardening, wildlife and a range of sporting activities. Pupils enjoy meeting in the variety of clubs and these sessions contribute very positively to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils have visits from theatre groups and design technology workshops to support their learning. They enjoy preparing for school concerts and organising the town's carnival. A range of musical tuition is available at the school, which further extends pupils' experiences.
95. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The head teacher, teaching and support staff are successful in creating a warm, supportive ethos built on care and respect for others. The aims of the school encourage positive values and the quality of relationships throughout the school is a strength. All staff provide very good role models for pupils in their care and they ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of right from wrong.
96. Collective worship, of a broadly Christian nature, plays an important part in pupils' developing spiritual awareness. School assemblies are happy occasions that offer guidance on moral issues and a strong sense of community is evident. Children in the early years can reflect on the feelings of loneliness and the importance of friendships. However, older pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to develop spiritual awareness or to reflect quietly.

97. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal and social education through the range of planned visits and through a cross-curricular programme of activities. Pupils have many opportunities to volunteer for, and accept, responsibility. They are encouraged to become actively involved in decision-making within the school and the head teacher and staff value the contributions of the pupils on the school council and other groups. The school is very successful in celebrating cultural diversity and pupils have opportunities to learn about the social and cultural traditions of other faiths and cultures.
98. Pupils are made aware of Welsh signs and words in all areas. However, the development of bilingualism is at an early stage and Welsh is not consistently apparent in the everyday life of the school. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of *y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* through cross-curricular activities which includes visits to local museums, art galleries and to different places of interest.
99. Partnerships with parents, the local community and other educational agencies are outstanding. The links developed with parents are very strong. The school works hard to involve them in their children's education. Initiatives such as PACT (Parents and Children Learning Together) allow parents to sit in with their children in certain lessons and share in their learning process. Parents help in school, they listen to readers, and assist with sports and educational visits. The school benefits from an active 'Friends Association' which raises significant sums for additional facilities and resources.
100. The school fully involves itself with activities within the community, and makes available its facilities for general use. Visits to the local community and beyond enrich the curriculum and contribute to pupils' learning. A range of artisans and members of the community visit the school, they talk to pupils about their work and involve them in special projects.
101. Health and safety awareness is enhanced by visitors and agencies from the community such as police, fire service, and road safety. The school nurse and dentist help pupils understand the importance of healthy living and lifestyles. The school has achieved the 'Healthy Schools' status, and this has had a significant impact on pupil's general development.
102. The school is in partnership with initial teacher training institutions and regularly hosts student teachers on teaching practice and provides work experience for pupils from local secondary school.
103. The school had made efforts to broaden pupils' experience of work-related education through a range of activity both in and out of school. Pupils' involvement in mini-enterprise projects, on the school council and in helping with the tuck shop contributes well to the development of their skills in this area. Visitors from the community have talked to children about their work. Such experiences help raise awareness of the world of work. Individual members of staff have benefited from placements in various industries through the Education and Business Partnership scheme.

104. The school's arrangements for tackling social disadvantage are an outstanding feature. All pupils regardless of background or circumstance are welcomed and fully included into everything the school has to offer including extra-curricular and out-of-hours activities. The breakfast club is well supported and much appreciated by working and non-working parents.
105. Sustainable development and global citizenship are included in the curriculum and reinforced through activities within the school such as raising money for worthy causes. Conservation schemes, for example waste reduction and recycling are part of everyday life in school. Waste paper is collected for recycling and organic material saved for the compost heap. The school promotes safe routes to school and encourages parents and pupils to set up a 'walking bus'. Pupils are beginning to understand the concept of fair trade. The school's Eco club and a wild life club help raise awareness. The school has achieved the Eco Bronze award and is a participant in the 'Forest Schools' initiative.
106. The development of pupils' entrepreneurial skills is promoted well through various activities. From the early years, children through role-play begin to develop problem-solving skills and make considered decisions through their play. Older children, through the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Dynamo' project are developing their business skills. Pupils have made and sold items at the school fayre, and have successfully organised fund raising events in support of worthy causes.
107. The school is a true community school. In the evenings, numerous youth and adult groups use its facilities. Abertillery is a community first area and the head teacher very much involved in community regeneration. Pupils have been active in establishing the new 'green walk' around the parish church. The school endeavours to raise awareness of the history and heritage of Abertillery, and to preserve the roots from which the children come. These experiences positively encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, and understand the need to be flexible, enterprising and adaptable in a changing world. This is an outstanding feature.

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

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| <b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b> |
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108. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
109. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Pastoral care is given high priority and pupils say that they feel very safe and secure whilst in school. Through the personal and social education curriculum, the school provides very high quality support and guidance for pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants have strong relationships with the pupils and are fully aware of individual needs. Support services are called upon when required to help those who need specialist care.

110. The school has forged a very strong partnership with parents to provide support and guidance for the pupils and operates an effective home/school agreement. The views of parents are sought through questionnaires and through personal contact, and their views taken into account.
111. Most children begin their school at the nursery stage and the detailed and extensive induction arrangements, involving home visits, ensures a very effective settling-in process. Arrangements to help pupils settle into new classes each year are also very good; pupils are involved in devising their own classroom rules based on good manners, respect and kindness, and this gives them a sense of ownership. Newcomers feel welcome and soon settle. A very effective programme of induction activities and visits complemented by curriculum and teaching links helps smooth the transition to the secondary school. The induction programmes transfer arrangements are an outstanding feature.
112. Registration periods are administered promptly at the start of morning and afternoon sessions. The school responds immediately to any unaccounted absence. Parents understand the need to inform school should a child be unable to attend. Attendance data is uploaded onto an electronic database where trends can be mapped and individual patterns analysed. Parents and carers are continually encouraged to get their children to school on time. Punctuality has improved since the formation of the school's breakfast club. Pupils' who attend regularly and arrive on time are acknowledged during the head teacher's weekly 'Red Book' assembly. The education social worker provides the necessary additional support should the school have any concerns.
113. The school's provision for ensuring the healthy development, safety and well-being of all pupils is good, and has received the commendation of the local authority. Health and safety issues are properly addressed with fire, electrical and other equipment regularly checked. Risk assessments are completed before any visits are made. There are good day-to-day systems in place to deal with any pupils who have an accident or who feel unwell during the day.
114. Very good procedures and systems based on the local authority's guidelines are in place for child protection. The head teacher is the designated child protection officer (and in his absence, the deputy head) and ensures regular training of all staff. The school is vigilant and able to recognise the signs that a child may need protection. The school works closely with outside agencies to ensure the needs of more vulnerable pupils are very well met. This is an outstanding feature of the school's work.
115. The quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. The policy for SEN is detailed, comprehensive and fully complies fully with the recommendations of the SEN Code of Practice.
116. The two additional needs co-ordinators collaborate well to provide strong management and support for pupils with SEN. The systems for assessment are very effective and ensure that pupils entering school, both at the start of

early years and throughout the key stages, are identified very quickly. This ensures they receive the appropriate support at an early stage.

117. Teachers and support staff work very well as a team to meet the individual needs of pupils with SEN by producing good quality individual education plans. The targets in these programmes are stated in measurable terms over the short term with clearly laid out learning programmes. The involvement of pupils in the evaluation of the effectiveness of their own learning is a notable strength. The arrangements for managing the termly reviews and statementing procedures are very good and the school ensures that parents are involved in their child's learning.
118. The co-ordination, deployment and quality of the support given to SEN pupils by the school's teaching assistants and the many external agencies is very good. Both in-class support and withdrawal groups are managed flexibly to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full curriculum. However, in some class lessons, teachers do not always fully exploit the opportunities to organise their planning to match the needs of pupils with SEN.
119. The school provides effective and constructive support for those pupils whose behaviour may be disruptive. The positive behaviour and anti-bullying policies help promote an ethos of respect and consideration for others.
120. Pupils work together co-operatively on the school council and they have been actively involved in planning for the development of the school grounds.
121. The quality of the provision for equal opportunities and the high priority given to the inclusion of all pupils is an outstanding feature of the school. All relevant policy documentation relating to gender, race, bullying, and disability is in place and the general inclusive ethos of the school successfully reflects its policies. Policy is translated extremely effectively into practice throughout the school. The school celebrates the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and the staff ensure that all pupils are valued equally and are treated with respect. The guidance and support given to pupils whose first language is not English is very good.
122. The school is very effective in promoting gender equality and challenging stereotypes in pupils' choices and expectations throughout the wider curriculum. It ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to participate in all the school's activities, including, for example, residential visits and the wide range of extra-curricular clubs.
123. The school makes every effort to ensure equal treatment of disabled learners. The new building is fully accessible to disabled pupils and visitors. A comprehensive action plan for accessibility has been approved by the local authority.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

124. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
125. The grade for this key question differs from that awarded to Key Question 1 because in its judgements about the quality of leadership and management, the team identified several very strong features and took into account the outstanding progress made since the previous inspection, the effective initiatives being put into place and the consistently upward trend in both achievement and attainment by the end of key stage 2.
126. The head teacher provides outstanding professional leadership and management. He is highly committed to the school and strives for pupils to achieve their very best. He gives very clear and well-considered direction to the life and work of the school and successfully promotes shared values about learning, behaviour and relationships. In this, he is ably and fully supported by the effective deputy head teacher. Their complementary skills and strengths effectively turn policy into practice, and maintain and promote high expectations. Members of staff with leadership and management roles are well aware of their responsibilities for improving standards and the quality of provision and work well together and with their colleagues in achieving them.
127. The school's broad aims and values are very well suited to the age and abilities of the pupils and to the school's setting. They form the basis of the school's policies and are well reflected in its life and work. The school successfully promotes full equality of opportunity and monitors this closely. This is an outstanding feature.
128. The school takes effective account of national priorities such as the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies*, sustainable development and global citizenship, and healthy living. It has obtained the Welsh Assembly Government grant (RAISE) to improve pupils standards of attainment. The school is involved in the full range of local initiatives. Good links have been established with other schools, including neighbouring primary and the local secondary school. However, the school has identified the need to do more to promote bilingualism.
129. The senior management team is fully involved in the process of setting challenging, but realistic, targets and goals through its school improvement plan. It considers appropriate actions needed to attain these targets, and appropriate success criteria. It carefully monitors the achievement of its targets and subsequent evaluation leads to further planning for improvement. This is an outstanding feature.

130. The school has well established and rigorous performance management procedures for teachers and a more informal but effective system for appraising teaching assistants. Targets reflect a balance between the needs of the individual and the whole school. They are regularly reviewed with good support and training provided. The school very closely monitors improvements in performance, with particular emphasis on the impact on pupils' standards.
131. The governing body makes a good contribution to the success of the school. Governors are highly supportive of the head teacher, staff and pupils and are fully committed to the school's aims and objectives.
132. Governors fully understand their responsibilities and, through regular reports by the head teacher and staff, are well positioned to help the school in its strategic planning. Governors are linked to specific year groups and curriculum areas and many are regular visitors to the school and are well known to staff and pupils. This enables governors to have appropriate insight into the quality of provision.
133. Governors meet regularly throughout the school year, have appropriate oversight of the budget and fulfil regulatory and legal requirements. Appropriate policies are in place to meet statutory requirements and these are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

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

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| <b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b> |
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134. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
135. The head teacher, governors and staff have a good overview of the school and its work and are committed to improving standards. A positive culture of self evaluation has been developed and all staff and governors are involved in the process. Subject leaders evaluate provision in their subjects in detail clearly identifying strengths and shortcomings. The views of pupils and parents have been taken into account, and both make suggestions formally through questionnaires and less formally by discussing issues with staff. All views and opinions are given serious consideration and acted on appropriately.
136. Analysis of test results and of other significant data enables the school to identify areas for improvement and to use this information to set new targets for teachers and pupils. Information is shared fully with all staff and governors and ensures that a strong emphasis is placed on raising standards and ensuring that pupils achieve their full potential.
137. Overall, effective procedures are in place for the monitoring of standards of teaching and learning. The head teacher undertakes the majority of lesson

observation and monitors short-term planning on a weekly basis. The school recognises, however, that to strengthen the judgements made in the quality of teaching and learning, classroom observation must be extended to include the senior management team and, where appropriate, subject leaders. This has been identified as a target area for development.

138. The self-evaluation report produced for the inspection is comprehensive. It is detailed and generally accurate in its assessment of the school's strengths and areas for development. It is fully supported by a good range of evidence. It matches the grades by the inspection team in each of the seven key questions.
139. The three-year school improvement plan is a comprehensive planning document, which clearly sets out the school's priorities. The plan identifies timescales, costs, and success criteria, all targets are very well supported with an appropriate allocation of resources and progress is reviewed at regular intervals. The head teacher and governors work hard to obtain grants and funding for developments from a variety of different sources to supplement the school's allocated budget. This is an outstanding feature. The link between improvement planning and self evaluation is clearly visible and a strength of the school. The plan is clearly focused on improving standards. Purposeful aims and objectives are developed as a result of careful consideration of the school's priorities.
140. Priorities set in previous plans have been met and have had a significant positive effect on the school's progress. The school has made outstanding progress since the last inspection and all the key issues raised at that time have been extremely well addressed. There have been significant improvements in standards, learning skills, teaching and assessment and in special educational needs. An effective senior management team has been established which ensures that leadership of the school is now robust. There has been an improvement on the standards observed during the last inspection.

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

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| <b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b> |
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141. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
142. The school is very well staffed with an effective team of qualified teachers and a wide range of appropriately qualified teaching assistants. They are effectively managed and deployed to enhance teaching and learning. Teaching assistants have a clear understanding of their roles.
143. Staff are well trained and take part in relevant and appropriate professional development. Teachers undertake in-service courses to improve their

knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Newly-qualified teachers are supported well.

144. Training is appropriately linked to areas of school development and performance management. Teaching assistants have benefited from accredited courses of various kinds.
145. The school organises planning, preparation and assessment time well using its own teachers and assistants together with outside providers for lesson coverage. This is carefully monitored by the head teacher. The management of this has had a positive effect on the development of music and Welsh in the school. Staff use their released time effectively and access whole school planning in all subjects on their computers.
146. The school administrators carry out the daily routines effectively and efficiently. The canteen staff, midday supervisors, cleaner and caretaker all make valuable contributions to the efficiency of the school and to the sense of community.
147. The school has a wide range of good resources. Purchases are in line with school priorities and are suited to the age, ability and educational context of the pupils. Displays in classrooms and corridors are used effectively in some classes as a teaching resource. Very good use is made of human resources outside the school in the form of theatre groups, storytellers and other visits. Similarly, the interesting locality with its places of cultural interest is used to good effect.
148. The school has adequate accommodation for the number of pupils on roll. Despite the difficulties of having three buildings on different levels, staff make imaginative use of space. The classrooms generally provide a bright stimulating environment and the three hall areas provide spacious areas for dining, assemblies, and physical education. The buildings themselves are generally well maintained and attractive. However, some areas, both within the school and outside, need repainting and the flooring and the toilet blocks in key stage 2 is in need of upgrading. The school has identified these as areas for improvement and it has a rolling programme in place for such work.
149. The outside school environment provides stimulating and enjoyable surroundings for the pupils. Early years children have very good quality resources, including a multi-gym, which are effective in promoting physical development. The outside area is an extension of the classrooms and used successfully to help promote development in the six areas of learning. Playground space is thoughtfully used and the climbing and play equipment are effective in developing pupils' physical skills. Access to an enclosed community recreational area and the nearby swimming pool further add to the very good range of facilities.
150. The school uses its available resources in a careful but effective manner with the finance committee, in conjunction with an officer from the local authority, providing prudent budgetary control.

151. Spending in the school accords with the priorities set by the governing body in the school improvement plan. Very careful attention is paid to matching resources to priorities. There is a strong link between medium-term and long-term plans and priorities for improvement. All resources, including staffing, are kept under constant review by senior managers and governors who seek to provide maximum impact on teaching and learning and so ensure that high standards are achieved.
  
152. The school provides good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### English

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

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

#### Good features

153. In key stage 1, pupils listen well in whole class situations; they show a clear understanding of what they are being taught by their teachers and what their peers have to say. Most respond confidently and appropriately in a variety of contexts by describing, explaining or asking questions. They share their ideas and opinions enthusiastically. They use appropriate descriptive terms to paint a vivid picture, speaking clearly and with a good range of vocabulary to articulate their ideas.
154. Pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in reading. They enjoy reading familiar stories aloud in unison. Pupils recount stories and books they have read, keeping to the correct sequence and adapting their language very effectively to suit different situations and occasions. They generally apply their skills in matching letters to sounds effectively when they meet an unfamiliar word. By the end of key stage 1, pupils read accurately and with good expression to convey emphasis. They clearly understand what they have read and make sensible predictions about what is likely to happen in the remainder of the story.
155. Younger pupils in key stage 1 are beginning to write simple sentences using capital letters and a full stop. By the end of the key stage, many pupils' writing is organised, clear and contains some good ideas, with sentences correctly structured. Pupils are effectively developing a good vocabulary of increasingly complex words to use in their writing. More-able pupils use a range of punctuation marks and connectives accurately in their written work and use a variety of sentence structures to enhance the impact of it. Year 2 pupils' handwriting is generally legible.
156. Pupils skills in speaking and listening in key stage 2 are developing well and, by the end of the key stage, pupils express their considered views confidently and precisely. They listen with interest when others are speaking and evaluate what has been said before responding. Conversations with some of the pupils are frank, lively and informative.
157. The majority of key stage 2 pupils read correctly and with good understanding. They use appropriate strategies to gain meaning and read with obvious enjoyment in group reading sessions. Pupils across the key stage display more advanced reading skills as they search for information from books and the Internet and use dictionaries and search engines effectively. By the end of the key stage, reading is accurate, fluent and expressive. Pupils talk with

enthusiasm about books they have read and identify the reasons for enjoyment of particular books. They read aloud with clear voices and appropriate expression and characterisation. They read for different purposes and know that books are both a source of information and an enjoyable pastime.

158. Pupils in key stage 2 write for a good range of purposes in an increasingly wide variety of styles. They produce lively play scripts, character sketches, reports, instructions using different tenses. They write in the style of a particular author and produce lively openings and endings to well-structured pieces. They plan and organise their work well and use connective words effectively. More-able pupils write increasingly more complex and extended pieces of work. Pupils successfully use appropriate vocabulary, develop valid opinions and display sensitivity in their descriptions.
159. In key stage 2, pupils' knowledge of grammar and spelling is generally good. They have a good understanding of the use and purpose of punctuation and use it appropriately in their own work. Some pupils enhance the quality of their written work through neat handwriting and good presentation. Consistent and focused intervention using story maps and schemes such as 'VCOP' has been very effective in improving pupils' writing skills, and generate interest and focus for the boys.
160. In-class support and withdrawal for focussed lessons has enabled pupils with additional needs to make good progress relative to their abilities and to the literacy targets set for them. Similarly, input from specialist teachers and careful planning has enabled those who have English as an additional language to develop their skills in social communication and gain access and understanding to the whole of the curriculum. In particular, it has enabled them to develop their skills in oracy, reading and writing.

### **Shortcomings**

161. There are no significant shortcomings but some pupils' writing skills at key stage 1 are under-developed.

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| <b>Welsh second language</b> |
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| <b>Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b><br><b>Key Stage 2 - Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings</b> |
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### **Good features**

162. In both key stages, the majority of pupils understand familiar questions asked by their teacher and they can respond in words, phrases and sentences. They use Welsh quite naturally in some aspects of their daily routines. They listen to adults and to each other, working collaboratively to ask and answer questions when working in groups or pairs.

163. In key stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of basic Welsh responses and readily follow simple instructions. They reinforce their understanding through a range of activities and ask simple questions of each other in role-play situations in the shop. They use basic vocabulary well appropriate to their age and understanding. They respond confidently to questions about how they feel and they use mime and drama to good effect, demonstrating their understanding of the different situations. All pupils sing a range of simple Welsh rhymes and songs with confidence.
164. Pupils listening skills are good and they respond well to stories. Pupils make good attempt to read flash cards and they are able to play board games, using their reading and oracy skills. They count and know the colours in Welsh and they apply this when playing their games. They read question and answer card about health topics with good pronunciation. The majority of pupils are beginning to use their knowledge of simple sentence patterns and vocabulary to write their own sentences.
165. In key stage 2, pupils continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of phrases linked to the weather and to their likes and dislikes. The majority recall simple questions and use simple language patterns to communicate with their partners. They know the parts of the body and can describe famous people's main characteristics. Pupils in years 3 and 4 know the days of the week and some months of the year. They are beginning to tell the time in Welsh and can devise timetables to show what happens throughout the day. Pupils read increasingly complex worksheets as they progress through the school and use phrases displayed in the classroom in their work. Pupils read a variety of fiction and non-fiction work and write simple book reviews.
166. Pupils are beginning to create short dialogues and in year 6 they follow and accurately read and understand some simple texts about countries around the world when designing posters. The majority write simple paragraphs about themselves and about famous Welsh people. Pupils make good use of dictionaries to find words and check spellings.

### **Shortcomings**

167. Pupils make insufficient progress in key stage 2. They lack confidence in using the language and their recall of learnt vocabulary and phrases is often slow and insecure.
168. Reading skills for the majority of pupils at the end of key stage 2 are under developed.

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| <b>Science</b> |
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| <b>Key Stage 1 - Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings</b><br><b>Key Stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b> |
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### **Good features**

169. Across both key stages, pupils generally make good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding of programmes of study.
170. Key stage 1 pupils' recall of previous work is generally good. With prompting, pupils discuss work undertaken on the human body, they identify healthy foods and talk about the importance of regular exercise. They accurately recognise and explain the differences and similarities between living and non-living things.
171. By the end of key stage 1, pupils are beginning to understand the concept of fair testing. Some older pupils determine and effectively apply criteria in order to group a set of materials. They make predictions, a few with logical reasons, and enthusiastically carry out investigations with help. They include correct scientific vocabulary when presenting their findings in a variety of suitable ways, such as drawings, writing and tables, and sometimes use ICT.
172. In key stage 2, pupils show good understanding, through their investigational work, of friction as a force between surfaces that slows moving objects. Pupils understand that forces act in a particular direction and that they can speed things up, slow them down or make them change direction.
173. In lower key stage 2, pupils talk confidently about previous investigations. They offer sound reasons for their hypotheses and work purposefully to test out their ideas. They record their findings accurately in diagrams, tables and charts. For example, pupils in a year 3 class put forward with certainty, their ideas when classifying materials as an insulator or a conductor and explore their ideas through simple experiments.
174. In years 5 and 6 pupils, have good recall of knowledge gained from previous science work to underpin their electricity investigations. In Year 6, pupils use everyday problems to launch into scientific investigations. On such occasions, pupils use their problem solving skills effectively. Most pupils have good knowledge of series and parallel circuits. This enables them to design electrical circuits which ensure consistency in the strength of light emitted from two bulbs in separate bulb holders.
175. Throughout key stage 2 pupils use information and communications technology confidently to communicate their findings.

### **Shortcomings**

176. In key stage 1, pupils understanding and use of scientific terminology is limited.

## Geography

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

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

177. There is a clear progression throughout the school in the development of pupils' geographical knowledge and enquiry skills. Pupils in both key stages effectively use photographs and maps as sources of information. They successfully use maps to illustrate patterns, for example, when studying land use, and use atlases to gain a wider geographical understanding of their situation in the wider world.
178. Year 1 pupils successfully identify and describe the main features of their classroom, the school and the immediate environment. They develop their mapping skills well by making good attempts at drawing a plan of the park and by recording the main features observed on the way to school on a simple map.
179. Through their study of Penarth, pupils in year 2 are able to identify the main features of a seaside town and make good comparisons with Abertillery. They successfully identify the main differences and list the advantages and disadvantages of life in their own locality.
180. Younger key stage 2 pupils develop a fuller understanding of their own area and community through studying the facilities available in the town. They ask appropriate questions when carrying out a survey to find out the shopping facilities in Abertillery and make sensible conclusions as to whether local needs are met.
181. Pupils have a good understanding of the distinctive physical and human features of an Indian village. They show a good awareness of the differences between their own lives and that of Babu, a child in the village. They show a secure ability to interpret information and make judgements when comparing the climate, transport and home life of the two localities.
182. Through their study of Cardiff Bay, older key stage 2 pupils in year 5 are able to recognise the ways in which people affect the environment through urban development. They investigate land use in Abertillery and have a good understanding how development is related to the physical and human features.
183. When studying rainforests, year 6 pupils, develop a good understanding of the ways in which people attempt to look after the present and safeguard the future environment through sustainable development. They begin to recognise that people have different views about changes made to the environment.

### Shortcomings

184. There are no important shortcomings but, because of an over-reliance on worksheets, pupils' writing and presentational skills are not fully developed.

## Music

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

### Good features

185. In key stage 1, pupils competently clap a steady beat, sustain it throughout a song and have a good understanding of rhythm.
186. Older key stage 1 pupils, use body movements to accompany a piece of music and perform short pieces by responding to simple symbolic music notation. They successfully re-arrange these symbols to improvise their own composition.
187. Key stage 1 pupils listen carefully to pieces of music and readily identify specific phrases as described by the teacher. They sing well and in tune and enjoy performing and appraising each other's work.
188. Pupils are beginning to appreciate the versatility of the human voice and its ability to replicate sounds. Younger key stage 2 pupils are beginning to understand that in music, time is represented graphically by notes of different length, they understand and use musical terms such as, ostinato, dynamics, tempo with confidence.
189. Towards the end of key stage 2, pupils know the notes in a scale and sing them accurately in unison. They interpret music quite well and make sensible suggestions as to how they might improve their performance of a song. For example, they change the volume according to the words being sung. Standards of singing across the key stage are good and pupils contribute significantly to assemblies and whole school celebrations.
190. Pupils in year 5 and 6 have a good understanding of musical notation. They name notes accurately and know their value in beats. They understand that there are a prescribed number of beats to a bar and that these are noted at the start of a piece of music. They 'read' music correctly when playing the xylophone.
191. Throughout the school, pupils have a developing knowledge of various examples of Welsh music and Welsh composers.
192. All pupils in key stage 2 have the opportunity to play a musical instrument and this opportunity contributes significantly to standards in music. At present 19 pupils benefit from playing violin, clarinet and brass instruments.

### Shortcomings

193. There are no significant shortcomings.

## Physical education

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

### Good features

194. All pupils have a good and developing knowledge of the effect of exercise on their bodies and of the need to participate in appropriate warming up and cooling down activities. Throughout the school, pupils have a good awareness of health and safety issues with regard to exercise; for example, they handle and move equipment carefully and sensibly. All pupils and staff wear appropriate clothing for activities.
195. Year 1 pupils have a good awareness of space in gymnastic activities. They develop good throwing and catching skills when using hoops and quoits and show good self-control when attempting more challenging exercises. By Year 2, pupils move smoothly to change direction in order to avoid collisions when exploring different pathways of movement they show increasing control and co-ordination and understand the need to stretch the body in order to improve a balance or movement. They plan and repeat simple sequences of actions.
196. Older key stage 1 pupils work well in pairs and small groups and perform basic techniques with a good level of consistency. Pupils describe their own performance and that of others and are beginning to understand what would be required to improve.
197. Younger key stage 2 pupils in years 3 and 4 are enthusiastic about physical education. They understand and identify symmetry and asymmetry in creating balanced body shapes and show good variation in speed and level when moving between balances. They persevere to refine and improve the quality of their work and transfer their skills well to the apparatus. In games, they develop good ball handling skills and use these skills effectively when keeping the ball from the opposition and passing to team mates. They co-operate successfully when developing small-sided versions of invasion games using the space available well.
198. Older pupils in key stage 2 practise and perform with control and accuracy an increasingly complex range of balances and actions needed for sequences. They understand the use of terms such as 'mirroring' and 'momentum' in relation to their sequences. They work very effectively in pairs demonstrating consistent accuracy when performing sequences. Pupils make constructive critical observations about their own and others' performances.
199. Key stage 2 pupils receive swimming instruction during the school year and the vast majority, achieve the required standards by the end of the key stage.

### Shortcomings

200. There are no significant shortcomings.

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

The Head teacher, staff and governors at Abertillery Primary School welcome the Estyn report following our inspection in February 2007. The inspection report fully supports the school's own self evaluation report and acknowledges the outstanding progress made since the last inspection and has highlighted many outstanding features of the school.

We are particularly pleased with the progress made in the quality of teaching and learning and that the commitment, dedication and enthusiasm of teaching and support staff is given due recognition.

We strive to be a community school in every respect and the report recognises the high priority placed upon the relationship between parents, pupils the community and school. We are also very proud of our 'passionate concern for the care, support and guidance of our pupils'.

The inspection team recognises that the leadership of the school is an outstanding feature and that leadership at school has contributed to the outstanding progress made since the last inspection. This has been achieved through their drive, enthusiasm and commitment.

The Head teacher, staff and governing body will put together a plan to address the recommendations made in the report and will inform all stakeholders in the school in due course.

The school would like to thank the inspection team for their professionalism throughout the week of the inspection.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Name of school      | Abertillery Primary School             |
| School type         | Nursery and Primary                    |
| Age-range of pupils | 3 – 11                                 |
| Address of school   | Newall Street,<br>Abertillery<br>Gwent |
| Postcode            | NP13 1EH                               |
| Telephone number    | 01495 212684                           |

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Head teacher                                 | Mr Dean Taylor           |
| Date of appointment                          | September 2000           |
| Chair of governors/<br>Appropriate authority | Councillor Nigel Daniels |
| Registered inspector                         | Dr Jim Hewitt            |
| Dates of inspection                          | February 5 – 8 2007      |

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

| Number of pupils in each year group |         |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
|-------------------------------------|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Year group                          | N (fte) | R  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 | Y6 | Total |
| Number of pupils                    | 18      | 38 | 42 | 50 | 52 | 51 | 46 | 59 | 356   |

| Total number of teachers |           |           |                            |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
|                          | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time equivalent (fte) |
| Number of teachers       | 17        | 5         | 19.4                       |

| Staffing information   |      |
|--|------|
| Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes) | 18.4 |
| Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes                        | 7:1  |
| Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes                        | n/a  |
| Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes          | 24.1 |
| Teacher (fte): class ratio   | 1.3  |

| Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection |      |      |                |
|--|------|------|----------------|
| Term   | N    | R    | Rest of School |
| Autumn 2006  | 86.9 | 89.7 | 93.9           |
| Summer 2006  | 76.3 | 88.3 | 92.0           |
| Spring 2006  | 84.0 | 88.8 | 91.3           |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals             | 24% |
| Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection | 0   |

## Appendix 3

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

| National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2006 |                    |          | Number of pupils in Y2: |   |    | 50 |    |
|---|--------------------|----------|-------------------------|---|----|----|----|
| Percentage of pupils at each level              |                    |          |                         |   |    |    |    |
|   |                    |          | D                       | W | 1  | 2  | 3  |
| English:  | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                       | 6 | 12 | 74 | 8  |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 4 | 12 | 64 | 20 |
| En: reading                                     | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                       | 6 | 12 | 62 | 20 |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 4 | 14 | 56 | 27 |
| En: writing                                     | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                       | 6 | 16 | 78 | 0  |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 5 | 14 | 69 | 12 |
| En: speaking and listening                      | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                       | 4 | 12 | 76 | 8  |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 2 | 11 | 64 | 23 |
| Mathematics                                     | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                       | 6 | 12 | 80 | 2  |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 2 | 10 | 64 | 24 |
| Science   | Teacher Assessment | School   | 0                       | 4 | 18 | 78 | 0  |
|   |                    | National | 0                       | 2 | 9  | 66 | 24 |

| Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment |    |          |    |
|---|----|----------|----|
| In the school   | 76 | In Wales | 81 |

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

Because some percentages have been rounded up or down, they may not always total 100%.

National percentages are derived from 2005 data.

**National Curriculum Assessment Results**  
**End of Key Stage 2:**

| National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2006 |                    |          | Number of pupils in Y6 |   | 64 |   |   |   |    |    |    |
|---|--------------------|----------|------------------------|---|----|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| Percentage of pupils at each level              |                    |          |                        |   |    |   |   |   |    |    |    |
|   |                    |          | D                      | A | F  | W | 1 | 2 | 3  | 4  | 5  |
| English   | Teacher assessment | School   | 3                      | 0 | 0  | 0 | 0 | 2 | 19 | 56 | 20 |
|   |                    | National | 0                      | 0 | 2  | 0 | 1 | 4 | 15 | 46 | 31 |
| Welsh   | Teacher assessment | School   |                        |   |    |   |   |   |    |    |    |
|   |                    | National |                        |   |    |   |   |   |    |    |    |
| Mathematics                                     | Teacher assessment | School   | 3                      | 0 | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 47 | 33 |
|   |                    | National | 0                      | 0 | 2  | 0 | 1 | 3 | 15 | 47 | 32 |
| Science   | Teacher assessment | School   | 3                      | 0 | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9  | 61 | 27 |
|   |                    | National | 0                      | 0 | 2  | 0 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 51 | 34 |

| Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language) |    |               |  |
|---|----|---------------|--|
| by Teacher Assessment   |    | by Test       |  |
| In the school   | 73 | In the school |  |
| In Wales  | 74 | In Wales      |  |

- D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
- A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
- F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
- W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Because some percentages have been rounded up or down, they may not always total 100%.

National percentages are derived from 2005 data.

## Appendix 4

### **Evidence base of the inspection**

A team of five inspectors spent a total of 11 inspector days in the school. The head teacher attended team meetings and acted as nominee on the inspection team. Additionally, a peer assessor took a full part in the process during the inspection period.

The inspectors observed:

- 36 lessons or part lessons, covering all classes;
- acts of collective worship;
- pupils throughout the school day including break-times, lunch-times and when entering and leaving school; and,
- extra-curricular activities.

The team considered:

- a wide range of pupils' past and present work;
- comments from the pupils about their school;
- 119 responses to the parents'/carers' questionnaire; and,
- the school's self-evaluation report, development plans, policy documents, schemes of work and other documentation.

Before and during the inspection the team held discussions about the life and work of the school with:

- parents of pupils at the school;
- the head teacher and staff;
- the governing body; and,
- representatives of agencies linked to the school.

The team reported back to the staff and the governing body following the inspection.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

| Team member                        | Responsibilities  |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Jim Hewitt<br>Registered Inspector | Context, Summary, Recommendations, Appendices,<br><u>Contributions to:</u><br>Key Question 1, Key Question 2, Key Question 5<br>English, Physical Education |
| Cliff Brace<br>Team inspector      | <u>Contributions to:</u><br>Key Question 4<br>Geography   |
| Jeff Beecher<br>Team Inspector     | <u>Contributions to:</u><br>Key Question 1, Key Question 2, Key Question 6<br>Science, Music  |
| Alyson Roberts<br>Team Inspector   | <u>Contributions to:</u><br>Key Question 1, Key Question 3, Key Question 7<br>Welsh Second Language   |
| Charles Brentnall<br>Lay Inspector | <u>Contributions to:</u><br>Key Question 1, Key Question 3, Key Question 4<br>Key Question 5  |
| Gaynor Peregrine<br>Peer Assessor  | Observing lessons<br>Examining pupils' work<br>Contributing to team meetings  |
| Dean Taylor<br>Nominee             | Supplying information for the inspection team<br>Attending team meetings  |

The contractor was:

Evenlode Education Ltd.,  
Little Garth,  
St John's Close  
Friars Court  
Hawarden, Flintshire  
CH5 3QJ

### Acknowledgement

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