

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

**Argoed Primary School
Woodville Terrace
Blackwood
NP12 0AP**

School Number: 6762079

Date of Inspection: 21 November 2005

by

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The purpose of Estyn is to improve quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

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- * special schools;
- * pupil referral units;
- * independent schools;
- * further education;
- * adult community-based learning;
- * youth support services;
- * LEAs;
- * teacher education and training;
- * work-based learning;
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Argoed 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 Argoed Primary School took place between 21 November 2005 and 23 November 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Stephen Dennett undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

“There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All 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. Argoed Primary School is a small community infant and junior school situated in the village of Argoed just outside Blackwood. The area has recently been granted 'Objective One' status. There are currently 45 pupils on roll including 5 nursery children attending part time. The number of pupils at the school has risen slightly since the school's last inspection in November 1999. There are three full-time and one part-time teachers at the school.
2. Most pupils come from the immediate locality, where unemployment is high. Their social and economic circumstances are significantly disadvantaged. All pupils come from homes where English is the first language. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language. Forty per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the local education authority (LEA) and national average. Sixteen (32 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN). This percentage is above the LEA and national averages. One pupil has statements of SEN. Pupils' ability on entry is below the LEA average and national average. No pupils are looked after by the local authority. Pupils are able to start full-time education at the nursery in the term after third birthday.
3. During the time of the inspection the school was operating a restricted timetable due to health and safety restrictions imposed by the Local Health Authority because of the outbreak of an infectious disease.
4. The school has received a number of awards, including a Basic Skills Quality Mark, the ECO Silver Award and a local recycling award.

The school's priorities and targets

5. The vision of the school is *'that we all strive to ensure that all children will realise their full potential and sense of worth. That everyone has a responsibility to one another, to the school, the community and eventually to the world at large. Everyone will be given equal opportunities, irrespective of ability, background, gender or race'*. The general aim of the school is *'to realise the full potential of each child, whilst giving that child a positive sense of his/her worth'*.
6. The school aims to:
 - Foster a sense of children's awareness of their responsibilities to each other, to their school and to their community;
 - Provide quality of education which achieves standards which are equivalent or above those of the national average;
 - Encourage a sense of tolerance of people who are different, whether through colour, language, disability or culture;

- Strengthen the liaison of our school within the cluster group.
7. The general educational aims of the school are:
- To help pupils to develop lively, enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills;
 - To help pupils to acquire knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and employment in a fast changing world;
 - To help pupils to use language and number effectively;
 - To instil respect for religious and moral values and tolerance of other races, religions and ways of life;
 - To help pupils to understand the world in which they live, and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations;
 - To help pupils to appreciate human achievements and aspirations.
8. The school's current priorities, taken from its development plan, are to:
- Raise attainment and confidence in speaking and listening;
 - Develop investigation techniques in mathematics;
 - Further develop self-evaluation;
 - Become a Forest School;
 - Review provision for religious education;
 - Become recognised as a healthy school;
 - Review standards in art;
 - Improve attainment in writing skills.

Summary

9. Argoed Primary School is a good school with no significant shortcomings. An outstanding feature is the very good care, support and guidance given to pupils. During their time at the school pupils make good progress and generally achieve good standards in their work.

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

Subjects and Areas of Learning Early Years

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

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Welsh second language	3	3
Mathematics	2	2
Science	2	2
Art	2	3
Music	2	2

10. During the time of the inspection, pupils' standards of achievement in the areas of learning and subjects inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	80%	20%	0%	0%

11. Pupils with additional learning needs, including those with special educational needs (SEN), make good progress. They all work well in classes and are able

to cope well with the work they are given. Many achieve standards that are close to the national average in some subjects.

12. Pupils generally achieve good standards in their key skills. They achieve good standards in their communication and literacy skills throughout the school, although standards in speaking are very variable and some pupils have great difficulty in expressing themselves clearly. Pupils' numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good throughout the school. Pupils' bilingual skills are under-developed at all key stages. They do not routinely use words and phrases in Welsh during the course of the school day. Pupils' problem solving skills are good and they use them well in mathematics and science. Pupils' creative skills are good in key stage 1 and sound in key stage 2.
13. In national tests and teacher assessments, results are very variable, as each year group contains a very small number of pupils. In addition, as some pupils have quite significant additional educational needs, their results have a disproportionate negative affect on the schools test results.
14. At key stage 1 in 2005, only 7 pupils were assessed and therefore the results for individual subjects cannot be reported. Teacher assessments over the past three years show that standards are broadly average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
15. In the 2005 national tests at the end of key stage 2, 63 per cent of pupils achieved level 4 or above in English. In mathematics, 67 per cent achieved level 4 or better and 80 per cent pupils achieved at least level 4 in science. In comparison with similar schools¹, the school's results were in the lower 50 per cent in English, mathematics and science. In English and science, 20 per cent achieved the higher level 5 and 33 per cent achieved level 5 in mathematics. This year group contained a number of pupils with special educational needs, which adversely affected the test results. Results in the core subjects show that standards have remained broadly average over the last three years.
16. Pupils' personal, social and learning skills are good. They are well motivated in all classes and work productively. Pupils are generally helpful, polite and courteous and benefit from the good opportunities that they have to become mature and responsible. The vast majority of pupils concentrate well and work independently. The development of pupil's moral and social skills is good. Pupils' good behaviour contributes effectively to their good progress and development. No incidents of bullying or racism were seen during the inspection. No pupils have been excluded in the past academic year.
17. Attendance and punctuality are good. The average attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection for the whole school was 93.75 per cent.
18. Children in the under-fives class depend heavily on adults and show a reluctance to work independently when engaged in tasks such as craft and

¹ Similar schools: schools which have a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals.

other practical activities. However, their social skills are developing appropriately and by the time they enter year 1 they are confident and well adjusted.

19. Argoed is an equal opportunities school, where pupils are encouraged to participate in all activities. Pupils are well prepared to play an active part in the local community and are developing a sound knowledge of the cultures of Wales and the wider world promoted through *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*. They are also developing a good understanding of issues such as sustainability and recycling that affect their community.

The quality of education and training

20. The quality of teaching observed in lessons during the inspection is as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
13%	60%	27%	0%	0%

21. Outstanding teaching was observed in a number of lessons, notably in mathematics. These lessons were well paced, interesting and well matched to the needs of pupils. An outstanding feature of all teaching is the good working relationships teachers and support staff have with pupils. This helps pupils to learn effectively and make good progress.
22. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and a good understanding of recent educational initiatives. Learning support assistants (LSAs) are equally well trained and this enables them to become integrated fully into the staff team, generally giving good support to teachers and learners. However, occasionally in the under-fives class, adults take responsibilities and choices away from children. Teachers plan effectively and have high expectations for their pupils. They use a good range of strategies and resources to stimulate and challenge pupils.
23. Basic and key skills are taught well and relevant links are made in subjects right across the curriculum. Teachers have recently focused on improving the presentation of pupils' work and scrutiny of written work shows some recent improvement. However, the teaching of bilingual skills is less effective and receives insufficient emphasis throughout the school, especially in the development of pupils' oral skills.
24. Systems for assessment are good and all formal assessment requirements are fully met. There have been several improvements from the time of the previous inspection, particularly in the quality of teachers' own assessments.
25. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that fully complies with statutory requirements and meets the needs of the pupils well. The educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

26. Several opportunities exist for pupils to engage in a wide range of extra-curricular and out-of-hours activities. Pupils benefit from a wide range of visits to theatres, museums and galleries but currently they do not have the chance to take part in over-night visits.
27. The school's provision for pupils' personal development has good features and no important shortcomings. Collective worship makes a valuable contribution towards pupils' spiritual development.
28. The way in which the school promotes pupils' bilingual skills and their understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales has good features that outweigh some shortcomings. The school effectively promotes *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* in subjects such as history and geography but insufficient attention is paid to Welsh cultural heritage in other subjects such as music and art. Pupils have some understanding of Welsh sporting achievements. However, the school is in the very early stages of developing pupils' bilingual skills. As yet, the impact of work undertaken is not obvious in the school.
29. The school has established a range of effective partnerships. There are close links with local schools including the secondary school. Teaching staff have benefited from work experience and work related visits to local industries. The school successfully promotes the awareness of sustainable development effectively. The pupils' awareness of global citizenship is evidenced in personal and social education (PSE) lessons, talks by visitors to the school and through the fundraising efforts of the pupils.
30. The quality of care, support and guidance pupils receive is an outstanding feature. There is a strong and well-structured pastoral system within the school. Induction for new pupils is very good. There are three parents evenings each year and these are generally well attended. Parents also meet teachers at the beginning of each term to discuss their child's progress.
31. Good quality personal support and guidance is provided at the school through its PSE programme, which is taught across the curriculum. Pupil's attendance, punctuality, behaviour and performance are carefully monitored.
32. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding. There are very effective systems for diagnosing educational needs at an early stage. Each pupil with additional learning needs has a detailed individual education plan (IEP), which has specific short-term targets that are achievable and appropriate to the specific needs. Teachers and support staff use IEPs very effectively to plan pupils' work. The special need co-ordinator (SENCo) is extremely effective and has ensured that all teachers have good quality, up-to-date training in special education needs.
33. There is a very strong community ethos within the school with an extensive range of links with the local community and this enhances pupils' educational experiences. Working with the parents association, the school has ensured that there is equipment in the school.

Leadership and management

34. The head teacher provides good leadership. There are high expectations that members of staff share even though all teachers are on temporary contracts. There are clear aims and policies for all aspects of school life that promote shared values about learning and behaviour. A positive ethos exists in the school and there is a genuine sense of 'team work'.
35. Subject leaders co-ordinate several areas and subjects and this leads to high levels of involvement at a strategic level by all teachers. They manage their responsibilities well and work closely with colleagues on a formal and informal basis to ensure continuous improvement. One of the school's strengths is the very good way it takes account of local and national initiatives. It is involved in a large number of schemes particularly for such a small school.
36. Governors meet their responsibilities well. Governors have a good understanding of their responsibilities. They act as 'critical friends' and help to set the strategic development of the school. Members of the governing body regularly monitor the quality of provision during their visits to classes and their contribution to the school's self-evaluation is outstanding. Governors have a very good view of the school because of their close association with all its activities.
37. The head teacher has a good overview of the school and its work and is well supported by subject leaders. Subject leaders have a good overview of planning and resources in their particular areas of responsibility. The school's self-evaluation process is effective.
38. The school improvement plan is based on a thorough audit of the current situation. The resulting priorities and actions that are derived from this audit are appropriate to the school's context. The school sets specific timescales for the achievement of objectives and resources are realistically allocated from the school's budget.
39. Priorities set in previous action plans have been met and have had a positive effect on the school's progress. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress and all the issues raised have been addressed. There has been a year-on-year improvement on the generally good standards observed during the last inspection, especially in mathematics. The quality of assessment of key skills has also improved.
40. The school is very generously staffed and class sizes are small. This has a positive effect on standards. Overall, the range, quantity and quality of resources in the school are good. The accommodation has good features that outweigh some shortcomings. Overall, there is adequate space for the number of pupils on roll. However, the accommodation for the under-fives is limited and it does not have direct access to the outdoors. Both the indoor and outdoor spaces for physical education are small and there is no water in all classes, which leads to difficulty when teaching practical subjects such as

art and science. There are some minor health and safety issues that have been brought to the attention of the school.

41. The head teacher and governors make effective use of the resources available and at all times they work hard to ensure that the school is cost effective. All members of staff are deployed effectively. Financial resources are regularly checked and reviewed and spending is closely matched to the school's priorities. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

- R1 Further improve provision and raise standards in Welsh second language and bilingual skills by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their oral skills and use the language in everyday situations around the school.
- R2 Continue to develop pupils speaking skills as identified in the school's development plan.
- R3 Further raise standards in art and address the shortcomings in the other subjects inspected.
- R4 Address the accommodation and health and safety issues raised with the school during the inspection.

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

42. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this question.
43. During the time of the inspection, standards of achievement in the lessons observed were as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	80%	20%	0%	0%

44. Children's ability on entry to the school is variable, but generally below the national and LEA average. Children's baseline scores confirm this. However, by the end of key stage 2, pupils generally achieve good standards in most subjects and in their basic and key skills. Most pupils make good progress during their time at the school.
45. The overall quality of educational provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and they are making good progress towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes for Children's Learning. By the end of the reception year, children are well adjusted to school life, settle quickly to tasks and work hard with good levels of concentration.
46. In the early years, standards in the areas of learning inspected are as follows:

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

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

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Welsh second language	3	3
Mathematics	2	2
Science	2	2
Art	2	3
Music	2	2

48. Pupils with additional learning needs, including those with SEN, make good progress. They all work well in classes and are able to cope well with the work they are given. Many achieve standards that are close to the national average in some subjects.

49. Pupils generally achieve good standards in their key skills. They achieve good standards in their communication and literacy skills throughout the school, although standards in speaking are very variable and some pupils have great difficulty in expressing themselves clearly. Pupils' numeracy and ICT skills are good throughout the school. Pupils' bilingual skills are under-developed at all key stages. They do not routinely use words and phrases in Welsh during the course of the school day. Pupils' problem solving skills are good and they use them well in mathematics and science. Pupils' creative skills are good in key stage 1 and sound in key stage 2.
50. In national tests and teacher assessments, results are very variable, as each year group contains a very small number of pupils. In addition, as some pupils have quite significant additional educational needs, their results have a disproportionate negative affect on the schools test results.
51. At key stage 1 in 2005, only 7 pupils were assessed and therefore the results for individual subjects cannot be reported. Teacher assessments over the past three years show that standards are broadly average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
52. In the 2005 national tests at the end of key stage 2, 63 per cent of pupils achieved level 4 or above in English. In mathematics, 67 per cent achieved level 4 or better and 80 per cent pupils achieved at least level 4 in science. In comparison with similar schools², the school's results were in the lower 50 per cent in English, mathematics and science. In English and science, 20 per cent achieved the higher level 5 and 33 per cent achieved level 5 in mathematics. This year group contained a number of pupils with special educational needs, which adversely affected the test results. Results in the core subjects show that standards have remained broadly average over the last three years.
53. Pupils' personal, social and learning skills are good. Pupils are well motivated in all classes and work productively. They are eager to participate in the many aspects of school life on offer. Pupils are also keen to learn because they are interested in their lessons. Pupils have a good grasp of what they are doing and also what they need to do to improve their work.
54. Pupils are generally helpful, polite and courteous and benefit from the good opportunities that they have to become mature and responsible. Pupils know their views are taken into account because the decisions made by the school council are considered seriously. The vast majority of pupils concentrate well and work independently. They sort out their own work, because they have good organisational skills. They work well together and give good support to each other in their group activities.
55. Children in the under-fives class depend heavily on adults and show a reluctance to work independently when engaged in tasks such as craft and other practical activities. However, their social skills are developing

² Similar schools: schools which have a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals.

appropriately and by the time they enter year 1 they are confident and well adjusted.

56. The development of pupil's moral and social skills is good. Pupils' good behaviour contributes effectively to their good progress and development. All pupils are well aware of right and wrong and the school is a well-ordered environment. There are positive relationships throughout the school and this helps pupils to build their self-esteem.
57. Attendance and punctuality are good. The average attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection for the whole school was 93.75 per cent. The school had no unauthorised absences in the three terms prior to the inspection. The school is aware that some parents take pupils out of school in school term time for family holidays and this is discouraged by the school and addressed in parents meetings assemblies and letters.
58. Pupils say the school is a friendly place. No incidents of bullying or racism were seen during the inspection. Pupils say they are very rare and school staff deal with them promptly when they do occur. No pupils have been excluded in the past academic year.
59. Argoed is an equal opportunities school, where pupils are encouraged to participate in all activities. Pupils understand the need to be friendly to all pupils regardless of gender, disability or race. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all school activities.
60. Pupils are well prepared to play an active part in the local community and are developing a sound knowledge of the cultures of Wales and the wider world promoted through *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*. They are also developing a good understanding of issues such as sustainability and recycling that affect their community.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
13%	60%	27%	0%	0%

63. Outstanding teaching was observed in a number of lessons, notably in mathematics. These lessons were well paced, interesting and well matched to the needs of pupils. An outstanding feature of all teaching is the good working relationships teachers and support staff have with pupils. This helps pupils to learn effectively and make good progress.
64. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and a good understanding of recent educational initiatives. They are keen to continue with their professional development. Learning support assistants (LSAs) are equally well trained and this enables them to become integrated fully into the staff team, generally giving good support to teachers and learners. However, occasionally in the under-fives class, adults take responsibilities and choices away from children. They do not give pupils enough opportunity to use their own imagination or to work independently. Some areas in classrooms are cluttered making it difficult for pupils to make choices and select the required equipment.
65. Teachers plan effectively and have high expectations for their pupils. They use a good range of strategies and resources to stimulate and challenge pupils. Some teachers share learning objectives carefully and thoroughly so pupils are clear what they need to do. However, occasionally this does not happen and pupils are confused as to what they have to do as a result.
66. Teachers plan effectively for and monitor the needs of individual pupils, including those with additional learning difficulties, but also to challenge more able pupils. The pace of lessons is generally good, therefore, most pupils can get on with their work. Teachers evaluate lessons regularly to ensure progression in pupils' learning.
67. Basic and key skills are taught well and relevant links are made in subjects right across the curriculum. Teachers have recently focused on improving the presentation of pupils' work and scrutiny of written work shows some recent improvement. However, the teaching of bilingual skills is less effective and

there is insufficient emphasis throughout the school, especially in the development of pupils' oral skills.

68. Consistent and firm behaviour management is a strength of teaching, which enables all teachers to ensure that there is no inappropriate behaviour. Good use is made of an interactive whiteboard particularly in developing a multi-sensory approach, which inspires and motivates pupils.
69. All staff actively promote equal opportunities for all pupils. All school activities are open to all pupils, who are taught to respect diversity.
70. Systems for assessment are good and all formal assessment requirements are fully met. There have been several improvements from the time of the previous inspection, particularly in the quality of teachers' own assessments.
71. The quality of assessment, recording and reporting for children in the nursery and reception classes is accurate, thorough and comprehensive. This is helping teachers to plan relevant experiences for their children, and also to identify and cater for children who have special educational needs.
72. The quality of assessment across the rest of the school is also good. Assessment in English and mathematics is based on clear and valid information gathered from a wide range of sources, including LEA and national tests, school-based tests and assessment. Pupils' progress is tracked in these subjects to enable the school to analyse where they need to intervene to ensure good progress for all pupils. Generally, teachers' planning identifies suitable assessment opportunities and also shows evidence of where planning has been adapted as a result of assessment.
73. Target skills are incorporated into schemes of work for most subjects and form the basis of termly assessment. Pupils are involved in the drawing up of their own targets in English and mathematics.
74. Reporting to parents is good. Parents are informed about their children's' progress in annual written reports. They are also welcomed into the school on a regular basis to discuss progress and look at work.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

75. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this question.
76. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that fully complies with statutory requirements and meets the needs of the pupils well. The curriculum caters appropriately for pupils of all abilities, including those with SEN, and the needs of individuals are carefully considered. The school is

coping well with the adjustments it has made to the curriculum because of restrictions imposed by the Local Health Authority.

77. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and areas of learning. Teachers work closely together to ensure that there is good continuity and progression between year groups and classes. They take good account of what pupils have learnt previously and what needs to be taught next. In key stages 1 and 2, topics have been carefully audited to ensure that work is not unnecessarily repeated in mixed age classes.
78. The educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Opportunities for pupils are carefully planned and children enjoy experiences in the indoor and also the outdoor environments. Although the accommodation for the under-fives is limited, the school makes good efforts to ensure that provision for the under-fives meets their needs.
79. The school has recently undertaken a detailed review of how the key skills and common requirements of the National Curriculum are planned for and delivered. Termly plans contain references to key skills and teachers carefully monitor whether they have been implemented in practice.
80. Several opportunities exist for pupils to engage in a wide range of extra-curricular and out-of-hours activities. Even though the school is small, staff ensure that pupils are offered many different experiences. There are several clubs and activities including sporting opportunities as part of the *Dragon Sports* and *Physical Education in Schools Scheme (PESS)*. More academic clubs such as literacy, numeracy, art and IT are also available and complement the school curriculum well. Pupils benefit from a wide range of visits to theatres, museums and galleries but currently they do not have the chance to take part in over-night visits.
81. The school's provision for pupils' personal development has good features and no important shortcomings. Collective worship makes a valuable contribution towards pupils' spiritual development. On these occasions, pupils are respectful and are given time to reflect on significant issues. Pupils' moral development is promoted effectively. Adults in the school provide good role models and pupils have a comprehensive understanding of honesty, fairness and respect. School rules, reward systems, the school council, the '*Eco-Committee*' and opportunities for older pupils to be prefects all contribute effectively to social development. As a result, pupils develop a good understanding about living in a community. The school makes good efforts to promote pupils' cultural development. For example, under-fives are taught how people from various cultures greet each other and older pupils are given opportunities to work with artists, authors and other performers.
82. The school has established a range of effective partnerships. There are close links with local schools including the secondary school that have led to high school teachers visiting Argoed to provide specialist lessons. Transfer arrangements to the secondary school are good. The school is very much

part of the community. The school has developed close links with parents and communication between school and home is effective. Parents are very supportive of the school.

83. The way in which the school promotes pupils' bilingual skills and their understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales has good features that outweigh some shortcomings. The school effectively promotes *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* in subjects such as history and geography but insufficient attention is paid to Welsh cultural heritage in other subjects such as music and art. Pupils have some understanding of Welsh sporting achievements. However, the school is in the very early stages of developing pupils' bilingual skills. As yet, the impact of work undertaken is not obvious in the school.
84. Teaching staff have benefited from work experience and work related visits to local industrialists and the Cardiff Millennium Centre. Education Business Partnership funding has been successfully utilised to enable the early years teacher to attend the '*Forest School Initiative*' course. The benefits of the gained experience and the developed links have been brought back into school for the benefit of the pupils.
85. Visits by the school to places of interest such as the Rhondda Heritage Park, Cilfynydd, Welsh Water's treatment works, Millennium Stadium, Techniquest, Big Pit and St Fagans help to broaden pupils' understanding of the world of work.
86. The school successfully promotes the awareness of sustainable development in partnership with Caerphilly County Borough Council as well as in lessons covering personal and social education (PSE). Over the last eighteen months the school has won prizes under the Caerphilly recycling scheme. Sustainability is apparent in the recycling bins around the school as well as the energy saving initiatives within the school. The school was recently awarded the '*ECO Silver Award*' and is working towards the '*Green Flag Award*'.
87. The pupils' awareness of global citizenship is evidenced in PSE lessons, talks by visitors to the school and through the fundraising efforts of the pupils.
88. Good opportunities are planned and provided for the pupils to develop their entrepreneurial and decision making skills. The recently constituted school council is an effective means of providing pupils with real problems to solve. The school council have recently opened a tuck shop and have successfully lobbied the governing body for improvements in the school. Pupils take their roles seriously and are very proud of their positions on the school council.
89. The breadth and quality of the curriculum, extra-curricular opportunities and work-related education ensures that the learning experiences reflect national priorities and lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

90. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this question.
91. Outstanding features include:
- The quality of care and support for pupils;
 - The support and guidance of pupils;
 - Provision for additional learning.
92. The school provides a happy, supportive, caring and safe environment for pupils to learn. There is a strong and well-structured pastoral system within the school and this was demonstrated by the support given to the pupils following the death of a pupil from the school last year. The school has created an award, and the pupils have been involved in establishing a small garden in remembrance of the pupil. Parents appreciate the high quality of care that their children receive. Pupils trust teachers to deal with any concerns quickly and effectively.
93. Induction for new pupils is very good. This is a strength of the school. It commences with the nursery teacher visiting the local playgroup to meet parents and future pupils. Once the new pupils attend school, pupils in year 6 are on hand to mentor them and help them settle into school. Parents had high praise of the schools induction arrangements.
94. There are three parents evenings each year and these are generally well attended. Parents also meet teachers at the beginning of each term to discuss their child's progress.
95. Good quality personal support and guidance is provided at the school through its PSE programme, which is taught across the curriculum. The school is supported in this by presentations by the Police Liaison Officer, the school nurse and representatives from other agencies.
96. Pupil's attendance, punctuality, behaviour and performance are carefully monitored. Good procedures and links exist with the Education Welfare Service should the non-attendance or behaviour of an individual pupil give cause for concern.
97. There are currently two trained first aiders at the school with a further staff member scheduled for training shortly. '*Heart Start*' training was given to the staff in the summer term. The head teacher is the designated Child Protection Officer (CPO). All staff have received some child protection training and the school is well supported by a governor who is a CPO. The school has a good policy for health and safety, which is appropriately carried out in practice. However, a number of minor health and safety issues were brought to the attention of the governors during the course of the inspection.

98. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding. There are very effective systems for diagnosing educational needs at an early stage. The process of assessment, target setting and review includes both pupils and parents at all stages. Each pupil with additional learning needs has a detailed individual education plan (IEP), which has specific short-term targets that are achievable and appropriate to the specific needs. Teachers and support staff use IEPs very effectively to plan pupils' work. The well-written SEN policy outlines all procedures and actions to be taken and is a very useful tool for teachers in planning work for different groups of pupils in mixed age classes.
99. Where appropriate, very good levels of support are provided and learning activities are carefully structured to meet individual needs. A language support teacher gives pupils excellent support in small groups of pupils with significant language difficulties. Very good support is also given in classes by LSAs, who receive clear instructions from the class teacher and the special need co-ordinator (SENCo). There is good support from the LEA and other outside agencies, particularly for pupils with special difficulties, such as hearing impairment and autism. There are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language attending the school. The SENCo is extremely effective and has ensured that all teachers have good quality, up-to-date training in special education needs.
100. There is a very strong community ethos within the school with an extensive range of links with the local community and this enhances pupils' educational experiences. This is strength of the school. Pupils are mainly drawn from immediate area surrounding the school and therefore the school is aware of the pupils' social educational, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. With this knowledge the school is able to give high quality support to the pupils.
101. The school has effective measures in place through the PSE programme to recognise and respect diversity and address race equality and equal opportunities. Effective support programmes are implemented within all classes, as well as in extra-curricular activities, to ensure the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities for all pupils.
102. The school rightly considers bullying and bad behaviour serious matters and any instances are dealt with quickly and effectively. The policy and procedures for dealing with bullying are clearly understood by pupils, staff, parents and carers and are successfully implemented.
103. The school ensures that disabled pupils at the school are not disadvantaged. Working with the parents association, the school has ensured that there is equipment in the school to support a pupil with hearing impairment and thereby enable the pupil to fully embrace the curriculum. The school has a good disability policy that summarises its disability discrimination duties.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

104. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this question.
105. The head teacher was appointed on a temporary basis four years ago and during that time has developed a sense of purpose that promotes and sustains improvements. She provides good leadership. There are high expectations that members of staff share even though all teachers are on temporary contracts. There are clear aims and policies for all aspects of school life that promote shared values about learning and behaviour. A positive ethos exists in the school and there is a genuine sense of 'team work'.
106. Subject leaders manage their responsibilities well and work closely with colleagues on a formal and informal basis to ensure continuous improvement. The school's policies and practice ensure equality of opportunity and all members of staff are familiar with procedures. They are fully involved in reviewing provision and understand the role they have to play in the school's development.
107. One of the school's strengths is the very good way it takes account of local and national initiatives. It is involved in a large number of schemes particularly for such a small school. For example, amongst other things, it is involved with the '*Forest Schools Initiative*' that is having a positive impact on the provision for the under-fives. The '*Catch Up*' support is having a good impact on improving standards in reading. The school has been involved in a number of family learning programmes and has been awarded the '*Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark*' for effective results in promoting literacy and numeracy.
108. The head teacher, staff and governors analyse data and other information carefully and subsequently set suitable targets for improvement. Targets set for individual pupils are generally achieved as are those in the school development plan.
109. Suitable staff appraisal arrangements are in place. The work of teachers and other members of the school staff is regularly monitored and individual targets are identified. The head teacher then ensures that everyone is able to access appropriate training that has a direct impact on standards such as training the planning for the teaching of key skills. Staff who are new to the school are well supported and are given good opportunities to develop their professional needs.
110. Governors meet their responsibilities well. They meet all statutory requirements and are heavily involved in the life and work of the school. They come from a variety of different backgrounds and their areas of expertise and

experience are used effectively to support the school. Governors have a good understanding of their responsibilities. They act as 'critical friends' and help to set the strategic development of the school. Members of the governing body regularly monitor the quality of provision during their visits to classes and, as a result, their contribution to the school's self-evaluation process is outstanding. Governors' visits are carefully logged and governors speak from direct experience about standards in specific areas.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

111. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this question.
112. The head teacher has a good overview of the school and its work and is well supported by subject leaders. The head teacher has good understanding of pupils' performance in statutory assessments and trends over the longer term. She uses the information gained in the self-evaluation process to identify relevant areas for development, such as the attention currently being given to the improvement of writing skills and presentation.
113. Subject leaders have a good overview of planning and resources in their particular areas of responsibility. They also have a good overview of standards through the monitoring of pupils' work in core subjects. Subject leaders produce good quality action plans and reviews that focus on key strategies to further raise standards.
114. The school's self-evaluation process is effective. Because of the good teamwork that exists in the school, all staff and governors are involved actively in the self-evaluation process. Teachers and LSAs fully understand their contribution to the need for continuous improvement. Pupils have good opportunities to make suggestions through the school council. Pupils interviewed during the inspection said that teachers always listen to their ideas sympathetically. Parents say that the school always gives serious consideration to any suggestions they make.
115. The school improvement plan is based on a thorough audit of the current situation. The resulting priorities and actions that are derived from this audit are appropriate to the school's context. The school sets specific timescales for the achievement of objectives and resources are realistically allocated from the school's budget.
116. The self-evaluation report produced for the inspection is good. It is accurate in its assessment of the school's strengths and areas for development. It provides a convincing database for the judgements made. The inspection team has agreed with this school's judgements on all seven key questions.

117. Priorities set in previous action plans have been met and have had a positive effect on the school's progress. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress and all the issues raised have been addressed. There has been a year-on-year improvement on the generally good standards observed during the last inspection, especially in mathematics. The quality of assessment of key skills has also improved.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

118. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this question.
119. The school is very generously staffed and class sizes are small. This has a positive effect on standards. All teachers, including the head teacher have temporary contracts and this leads to uncertainty amongst staff. Despite this, teachers and other members of the non-teaching staff make valuable contributions to the provision in the school. All staff and regular volunteers work effectively together for the benefit of pupils.
120. Overall, the range, quantity and quality of resources in the school are good. Recent purchases, such as new reading books for the under-fives, are already helping to improve standards. However, there is a limited range and variety of art materials and resources to promote *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*. The school also makes good use of the library service, the LEA, and museums to enhance its own stock for specific projects.
121. The accommodation has good features that outweigh some shortcomings. Overall, there is adequate space for the number of pupils on roll. However, the accommodation for the under-fives is limited and it does not have direct access to the outdoors. Both the indoor and outdoor spaces for physical education are small and there is no water in all classes, which leads to difficulty when teaching practical subjects such as art and science. There are some minor health and safety issues that have been brought to the attention of the school. Despite these shortcomings the staff make good use of the space available. The caretaker works hard to ensure that the school is well maintained. Displays are used effectively to enhance the learning environment and to stimulate pupils' learning.
122. The head teacher and governors make effective use of the resources available and at all times they work hard to ensure that the school is cost effective. The school secretary provides good levels of administrative support to ensure that systems operate efficiently.
123. All members of staff are deployed effectively. The school has made suitable arrangements to ensure that all teachers have sufficient time for planning and preparation of their work. Good systems are in place to identify the developmental needs of individual members of staff in the context of the school as a whole.

124. Financial resources are regularly checked and reviewed and spending is closely matched to the school's priorities. The head teacher is very aware of the effect of current spending decisions on future developments. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Under 5s

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

125. The educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

Good features

Language, Literacy and Communication

126. The nursery children are confident talking to adults. They readily engage in conversation at a level appropriate to their age and ability. They show a genuine interest in stories and listen attentively as teachers talk and read books. The more able use books as readers. They know the difference between words and pictures and sit for long periods looking at books in the book corner. Children quickly recognise their name and begin developing their writing skills by tracing and copying adults' writing.
127. Reception children make good progress in their language, literacy and communication skills. The majority use language effectively in role-play situations or when they are outdoors using specific vocabulary relevant to the situation. Pupils show a good understanding of a range of Welsh songs and rhymes, and, as individuals, are confident using Welsh words and short phrases in response to simple questions. Children have a growing understanding of letter sounds and names. They recall key features of stories in the correct sequence and recognise individual words in the text. By the end of the reception year, the majority of pupils read simple books. They write their names independently and are confident attempting their own writing.

Personal and Social Development

128. Nursery children quickly settle into school and the majority readily join in with school routines. Some children persevere and work for long periods of time independently on self-selected activities and all play and work well together when they are in the construction or role-play areas, for example. All children show appropriate levels of independence when dressing themselves or when using the toilet.
129. Children in the reception year show a good awareness of the needs of others; they share equipment and take turns properly. When allowed, they enthusiastically help with many of the class routines such as organising equipment and tidying up at the end of sessions. They show genuine interest and concern for their environment and others in their class.

Mathematical Development

130. In the nursery year group, children are familiar with and enjoy joining in with a range of nursery rhymes and songs. With others, they count up to and down from 10 with ease and are familiar with the names of some of the most common two-dimensional shapes. They correctly sort groups of objects and name basic colours in Welsh and English. The most accurately count a given number of objects to five.
131. Through their role-play activities, children in the reception year develop a good understanding of the purpose of money and they correctly name several different coins appreciating the difference between one penny and one pound. Reception children count a number of objects to 10 and match the number counted to the right numeral. They extend their knowledge of two-dimensional shapes appropriately and begin to appreciate differences between 'bigger' and 'smaller' and 'thick' and 'thin'.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

132. In both year groups children's knowledge and understanding of the world develops well. They develop a very good understanding of the outdoor environment through their involvement with the '*Forest School Initiative*'. Nursery children take great delight in exploring and recognising living things. They accurately describe weather patterns in Welsh and English. They talk about the village of Argoed describing some of its important features.
133. The reception group appreciate fine differences between different types of leaves and plants and using appropriate language accurately describe differences between different things. They accurately sort different materials into categories. Children begin to understand changes over a period of time when they study how they have changed as individuals over the years. They also develop a good understanding of how people live in different parts of the world. They are familiar with a range of computer software and activities.

Physical Development

134. Nursery children move around the outdoor area confidently showing a good awareness of space. They handle equipment such as paintbrushes, crayons, construction materials and a computer mouse with increasing control.
135. Reception age children show good dexterity skills handling small equipment such as scissors and pencils and draw round small shapes skilfully. They move around the playground with reasonable degrees of control showing awareness of those around them.

Creative Development

136. Younger nursery children enjoy singing and playing percussion instruments to make their own musical compositions. They are enthusiastic painters and readily turn to drawing and crayoning. They develop their imagination well when engaged in role-play activities or playing with construction equipment and small toys.

137. Reception children use a range of materials and mediums effectively to create representational images. They show good levels of control to produce very good likeness of themselves using pastels and produce colourful pictures using the computer. Reception children show a developing sense of rhythm and sing tunefully.

Shortcomings

138. At times, children rely too heavily on adults and do not develop sufficient independence. For example, in their creative work, children do not make choices often enough, about colour, materials and medium to be used.
139. Pupils' use of large equipment for physical development lacks confidence and control.

Welsh second language

Key stage 1 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings Key stage 2 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Good features

140. Key stage 1 pupils show a reasonable degree of understanding when someone speaks to them in Welsh and they generally respond appropriately to instructions. Pupils develop a growing awareness of a range of vocabulary such as colours, numbers, animals and the weather. They use this vocabulary correctly when responding to basic questions. They join in enthusiastically with Welsh action songs and rhymes.
141. In key stage 1, pupils have a reasonable understanding of Welsh labels and signs and they read them correctly understanding what they have read. They show appropriate comprehension when reading their worksheets and write single words or short phrases correctly during their writing activities.
142. Pupils in key stage 2 are aware of some of the conventions of the Welsh language for example, the most important word comes first when combining nouns and adjectives. They extend their range of vocabulary. In speaking and listening activities, they ask each other questions and respond correctly. The most able combine two short phrases together to produce longer more interesting sentences. They add adjectives to nouns to enhance what they are saying.
143. In key stage 2, pupils read instructions and simple sentences correctly and with reasonable accents. More able older pupils read extended dialogues and scripts with growing confidence and fluency understanding what they have read. Their peers also follow the meaning of what is read. Pupils write regularly to complete worksheets; they do this accurately. Pupils develop an appropriate range of writing skills.

Shortcomings

144. Generally, pupils' oral contributions are limited throughout the school.
145. Too many pupils are hesitant and lack confidence speaking Welsh. They tend to rely too heavily on cues or adult support.
146. Not enough pupils use Welsh throughout the school day.

Mathematics

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

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

Good features

147. Throughout the school, pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects, such as science and geography. Pupils in both key stages make good use of their ICT skills to support their learning in mathematics.
148. In key stage 1, pupils make good progress. Pupils in year 2 show a good understanding of two-dimensional shapes. They correctly identify circles, squares, triangles and octagons, for example. They know that a hexagon has six sides and correctly guess that a tricycle has three wheels after identifying that a triangle has three sides. Pupils have a good mental recall of number facts up to 20 and use these to solve larger problems. Pupils add and subtract numbers up to 100 accurately, adding 2 figure numbers to 2 figure numbers. The sampling of pupils books shows that they are able to correctly convert pence into pounds and pence, measure accurately to the nearest centimetre and produce simple graphs from tables and tally charts.
149. Most pupils make good progress in key stage 2. In year 6, pupils are able to find the area of the playground using a formula. They accurately measure the lengths and breadth of the playground and then produce calculations to work out how much it would cost to surface the area. They use calculators accurately to check their results. Younger pupils in key stage 2 are able to work out the perimeter of a rectangle using several methods. They make good use of diagrams to help them answer questions. All pupils have a good mental recall of multiplication table up to 10x10.
150. The sampling of pupils written work in key stage 2 shows they have a good grasp of data handling and can produce accurate block and line graphs from a range of information. They have a good understanding of place value and multiply numbers by 10, 100 and 1,000. Older pupils can correctly use all four mathematical operations to two decimal places. They have a good grasp of negative numbers in the context of temperature.

Shortcomings

151. Throughout the school, some pupils have difficulty explaining their working as they have poorly developed speaking skills.

Science

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

152. Pupils' standards of achievement in investigative work are sound in key stage 1 and good in key stage 2. Pupils make good use of their numeracy and ICT skills to record their findings throughout the school.
153. In key stage 1, pupils make good progress. Pupils in year 2 show a good understanding of materials and their properties and use appropriate vocabulary to describe how opaque objects create shadows when placed in front of a light source. They co-operate well in groups and discuss accurately the effect a passing cloud has on shadows on the ground. They record their findings appropriately. Sampling pupils' work show they have a good understanding of plants and habitat. Standards of presentation are good and pupils have developing writing skills, which they use effectively to record their findings.
154. Most pupils make good progress in key stage 2. In year 6, pupils are able to explain that gravity is a force that acts upon objects. Pupils are able to make reasonable predictions about what may happen in an investigation and they also are good at deciding what evidence should be collected. When working in groups, pupils enthusiastically discuss with each other what they have found out and use a good range of scientific vocabulary. They make good use of their mathematical skills to work out the scales on various Newton meters, for example.
155. The sampling of pupils written work in key stage 2 shows they have a good grasp of the main functions of the human body and can name various organs. They correctly identify the various bones in a skeleton. Pupils make good use of their data handling skills to produce graphs and tables of observations. Pupils know what constitutes a healthy diet and can name various components of food, such as proteins, carbohydrates and fats.

Shortcomings

156. Some pupils have underdeveloped speaking skills, which prevent them from fully explaining their work or the processes they are undertaking.

Art

Key Stage 1 – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings Key Stage 2 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Good features

157. Pupils make appropriate use of their art and designing skills to illustrate their work in other subjects throughout the school.
158. Pupils in year 2 recognise the similarities and differences between their own work and the work of Pablo Picasso. They talk about their work with interest and describe what they think about it, using a suitable range of words, such as 'bright', 'abstract' and 'angular'. They use a wide range of materials well and make changes to their work as they go along, describing why they have made the change. Pupils are good at recording their ideas from observation and their own imagination.
159. The sampling of pupils work in key stage 1 shows they have good painting skills and they are able to combine a range of materials well in their sea collages, for example. Their sketchbooks show some good examples of first-hand observation, as well as the recording of design ideas to be developed into larger works.
160. In year 6, pupils produce appropriate designs for mosaics, showing they have a sound grasp of the principles of Roman mosaic design. They use a range of tools and materials safely. More able pupils apply their knowledge of visual qualities to their work well, carefully selecting tiles that fit in with their overall colour scheme. Pupils plan their work well and adjust their designs appropriately as their work progresses.
161. The sampling of pupils work shows that they work very well with visiting artists to produce high quality work in various styles. They also produce good pastel paintings of the locality. Their landscapes show a developing awareness of texture, colour and tone. Some pupils have also produced well-drawn pictures of plants and expressive self-portraits.

Shortcomings

162. Pupils have a limited understanding of Welsh artists and designers throughout the school.
163. Pupils in key stage 2 have limited observational drawing skills and tend to stick to well-rehearsed stylised patterns when drawing people, trees and building, rather than drawing what they actually see. They have a limited visual vocabulary.
164. Some pupils do not understand the purpose of what they are doing and as a consequence do not adequately reflect on their work in progress.

165. Pupils limited speaking skills mean that they find it difficult to explain what they are doing or how they could improve their work.

Music

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

166. Throughout the school pupils have good posture when singing and consequently they sing well and in tune. Pupils engage in singing activities enthusiastically. They sing with appropriate expression showing an awareness of the occasion. In both key stages, pupils use technology effectively to help them enhance the quality of their work.
167. In key stage 1, pupils sing competently both accompanied and unaccompanied correctly following the conductor's instructions. They keep in time with the music and show genuine empathy for the theme of the music. Pupils maintain a steady beat in clapping exercises and are aware of the impact of silence in music. They play a wide range of percussion instruments correctly and are very aware the different types of sounds different instruments can produce.
168. Using instruments, pupils in key stage 1 co-operate effectively to create a desired effect in their musical compositions. They listen attentively to each other's efforts and make appropriate comments about the quality of work produced and sensible suggestions for improving each other's work.
169. Key stage 2 pupils have a good range of technical musical vocabulary that they use correctly in their music lessons. With support, they sing in 'rounds' maintaining both the tune and the rhythm well. As they sing, pupils accompany themselves effectively using tuned percussion instruments. After listening to music, they correctly identify key features and discuss the musical qualities in a mature manner. They are aware that different cultures produce different styles of music.

Shortcomings

170. In both key stages, pupils have a limited knowledge of the work of great musicians and also music from Wales.
171. Pupils' skills in appraising music are less well developed than in other areas of the subject.

School's response to the inspection

The governing body, staff and pupils welcome and celebrate the findings of the inspection team which has identified the success and achievements of children, staff and parents associated with Argoed School.

We are pleased that the report recognised that an outstanding feature is the very good care, support and guidance given to pupils. Also that during their time at Argoed school, pupils make good progress and achieve good standards in their work and that provision for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding. In addition, we are also pleased that our commitment to equal opportunities, to pupils' strong sense of citizenship, to their awareness of the global community and their sound understanding of sustainable development are areas that feature strongly in the report.

The report also stated that priorities set in previous action plans have been met and have had a positive effect on the schools progress. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress. There has been a year-on year improvement on the generally good standard observed during the last inspection.

They are also pleased to note that there is a very strong community ethos within the school with an extensive range of links with the local community being a strength of the school. Another of the school's strengths is the very good way it takes account of local and national initiatives. It is involved in a large number of schemes particularly for a small school. A positive ethos exists in the school and there is a genuine sense of teamwork.

The inspection team recognised that the self-evaluation report was good and is accurate in its assessment of the school's strengths and areas for development. It provides a convincing database for the judgements made. It was heartening to find that the inspection team has agreed with this school's judgement on the seven key questions.

The school would like to thank the inspection team for their professionalism and the courteous way in which they undertook the inspection. Their preparation and overall approach ensured that there was a thorough and rigorous examination of all aspects of the school, tempered with good humour and positive feed back. It was a positive experience that has benefited the whole of the community that is Argoed Primary School.

Staff and Governors will devise an action plan based on the recommendations, in particular improving standards of bilingual skills and Welsh second language, art and to continue to develop speaking skills. Where it is possible to do so, staff and governors will start to address these before the end of the current school year. A copy of the school's action plan will be sent to all parents.

Appendix A

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Argoed Primary School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Woodville Terrace Argoed Blackwood
Postcode	NP12 0AP
Telephone number	01495 224847

Head teacher	Mrs Patricia Walters
Date of appointment	March 2001
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs Frances Thompson
Registered inspector	Mr Stephen Dennett
Dates of inspection	21/11/05 to 23/11/05

Appendix B

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	5	8	5	9	5	8	1	4	45

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	3	1	3.7

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	12:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	15
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of School
Autumn 2004	92.37	92.65	94.11
Spring 2005	92.90	94.30	94.71
Summer 2005	91.30	93.20	92.22

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	40%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

Appendix C

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2005	Number of pupils in Y2	7
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 was greater than four but fewer than 10, overall performance indicators only are included		

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	57	In Wales	80

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

National Curriculum Assessment Results
End of Key Stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2005			Number of pupils in Y6					15				
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	7	7	67	20	
		National	1	0	0	0	1	5	16	46	30	
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	7	20	53	20	
		National	1	1	1	0	0	4	12	37	0	
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School										
		National										
	Test/Task	School										
		National										
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	33	33	
		National	0	0	0	0	1	3	17	46	24	
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	33	33	
		National	1	1	1	0	0	3	15	43	36	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	47	47	
		National	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	50	37	
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	60	20	
		National	1	1	0	0	0	1	8	51	39	

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	87	In the school	60
In Wales	72	In Wales	72

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

Appendix D

Evidence base of the inspection

- A team of three inspectors spent a total of 6 inspector days at the school.
- Pre-inspections meetings were held with staff, parents and governors.
- Nineteen questionnaires were returned by parents and analysed.
- The school's self-evaluation report and a comprehensive range of other documents were examined.
- The head teacher acted as nominee and provided additional information as required.
- Fifteen lesson observations were undertaken.
- Samples of pupils work from across the age and ability ranges were examined.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and listened to them read.
- Inspectors visited the school council and ECO council, lunch times and break times.
- Inspectors attended daily acts of collective worship.
- Post-inspection meetings were held with the staff and the governing body.

Appendix E

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Stephen Dennett Registered Inspector	Summary, Context, Recommendations and Appendices Contributed to: Key Question 1 Key Question 2 Key Question 4 Key Question 6 Mathematics Science Art
Reginald Cawthorne Lay Inspector	Contributed to: Key Question 1 Key Question 3 Key Question 4
Margaret Morgan Team Inspector	Contributed to: Key Question 3 Key Question 5 Key Question 7 Early Years Welsh Music

The contractor was:

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