

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Dee Road Infants School
Dee Road,
Connah's Quay
CH5 4NY**

School Number: 6642009

Date of Inspection: 11th June 2007

by

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Dee Road Infants 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 Dee Road Infants School took place between 11/06/07 and 13/06/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Linda Jane Williams undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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 nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a **short** 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	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Dee Road Infants School is a community school catering for children aged three to seven years. The school is situated a short distance from the town centre of Connah's Quay. Housing is a mixture of privately owned and rented property. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and the full range of ability is represented in the school. Many families have lived in the area for a relatively short time. The Local Authority (LA) controls admission to the school. Nursery children start school in the September following their third birthday. Pupils begin full-time education at the start of the academic year during which they are five.
2. There are currently 169 pupils on roll including 40 children who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Numbers have decreased since the last inspection. Children's ability on entry is slightly below the LA average.
3. English is the home language for 94 per cent of the pupils. Six per cent of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), and the first languages for these pupils are Chinese, Polish, Lithuanian and Portuguese. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language.
4. Fourteen per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs (SEN) but no pupils have a formal statement of SEN. Approximately 15 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is slightly below the county and national averages. One pupil is 'looked after' by the LA.
5. The school has received several awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Initiative and Eco-Schools Bronze and Silver Awards.
6. The headteacher was appointed in June 1996 and the school was last inspected in July 2001. No significant changes have taken place since that time.

The school's priorities and targets

The school's mission statement is: - 'A quality education in a caring environment'.

The school's main aims and objectives are: -

- to value each child as an individual and enable them to experience happiness, security and success;
- to encourage all children to give of their best and to develop a positive and healthy attitude towards their education;
- to establish and maintain effective pupil/parent/teacher relationships; and
- to provide a safe and stimulating environment.

The school's major priorities and targets for 2007-2008 include: -

- maintain the high level of attainment at the end of key stage 1;
- further develop the provision for able and talented pupils;
- develop pupils' involvement in their own work;
- continue to develop the role of subject leaders; and
- prepare for the introduction of the Foundation Phase, including developing the outdoor area.

Summary

7. Dee Road Infants is a school with many good features and achieves its aim of creating a caring environment. The inspection team agreed with the judgements made by the school in three of the seven key questions. In the areas of leadership and management the good features identified outweigh the shortcomings.

Table of grades awarded

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

8. The overall quality of 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.
9. Children start school with a wide range of skills and experiences. Their ability on entry is slightly below the LA average. Baseline assessments undertaken within the first term of entry into the reception year indicate that children progress very well during their time in nursery. The assessments undertaken as pupils move through the school show that they make good progress in each year group.
10. Analyses of National Curriculum results indicate that pupils are achieving well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In 2006 end of key stage results, the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 and above in English and science was slightly above the national averages, with results in mathematics matching the national average. However, the percentage achieving level 2 and above has decreased in all core subjects over the last three years. The results over this period have been affected by the achievement of pupils who are admitted to the school at times other than at the beginning of the year, and a high number of SEN pupils within one particular year group.

11. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 3 in the core subjects has been well above both national and LA averages in the past. However, results in all areas except reading have fallen to at or below the national average for the past two years. Results in reading, an area where the school places great emphasis, have remained consistently high.
12. When the school's results at the end of key stage 1 are compared with similar schools (on the basis of free school meal entitlement) the school was in the upper 50% for English and mathematics in 2005 but in the lower 50% for all core subjects in 2006.
13. Pupils with additional learning needs, including SEN pupils, pupils 'looked after' by the LA, EAL pupils and very able pupils, all make good progress relative to their needs and abilities.
14. Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and wider development. They have a positive attitude to work and make good progress in their learning. However, the involvement of pupils in their own learning is limited and consequently pupils do not have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses or what they need to do in order to improve.
15. Children under five and pupils in key stage 1 achieve good standards in the key skills of numeracy, bilingualism and information technology (IT). Across the school pupils' problem-solving and creative skills are developing well. Within their communication skills, pupils achieve very good standards in reading and listening, with good standards in speaking and writing.
16. Pupils are well behaved, considerate and courteous and this contributes positively and constructively to the quality of life in the school. They demonstrate respect for each other, members of staff and their school environment.
17. At 91.6 per cent the average rate of attendance for the three terms before the inspection is below the LA and national averages. Absences are caused mainly by illness and, despite the school's best efforts, the overall rate is also adversely affected by family holidays taken in term time. Punctuality is good at the start of the day.
18. Pupils' understanding of equal opportunities is good throughout the school. They demonstrate mature attitudes and recognise the need to treat everyone fairly and without discrimination.

The quality of education and training

19. In the 20 lessons observed the quality of teaching was judged as follows

Grades for teaching

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
25%	45%	30%	0%	0%

20. Teaching in the majority of lessons is good with no important shortcomings. In a quarter of lessons observed teaching has outstanding features. The quality of teaching is slightly below the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her annual report for 2005-2006, where the quality of teaching in primary schools was grade 1 or 2 in 79% of lessons.
21. Outstanding features of teaching and learning include extremely well planned lessons, delivered with great pace and imagination; the use of stimulating resources and many challenging questions with pupils encouraged to demonstrate, explain and solve problems.
22. In lessons where teaching is good, clear learning objectives are shared with pupils; the lessons are well-structured with good pace; well-considered questions are posed which challenge pupils' thinking; and pupils' own experiences and contributions are incorporated effectively into the lesson.
23. Shortcomings in teaching include the use of a limited range of strategies which do not maintain pupils' interest; occasions when the objective of the lesson is not clearly communicated to pupils; and lack of effective and consistent classroom routines which ensure that pupils understand exactly what is expected of them.
24. Assessment of pupils' progress and the marking of pupils' work are undertaken regularly across the school. However, assessment and marking are insufficiently focused on what pupils need to do in order to improve.
25. The school responds well to pupils' learning needs and provides equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum. It successfully meets the needs and ability range of all pupils. The curriculum is continuous between the under fives and key stage 1. The curriculum is enhanced by visits and visitors to the school. Good use is made of the locality and frequent visits to local places of interest complement and extend the curriculum.
26. The importance of regular homework is increasingly emphasised as pupils progress through the school. The focus of homework on developing pupils' reading skills is particularly effective.
27. The school has strong links with parents supported by the school's 'open door' policy. The school ensures parents are well informed both in relation to ongoing events and in relation to their children's progress. Induction arrangements for pupils entering the school are good.
28. The school has clear and well documented procedures that contribute to pupils' well-being when in the schools' care. The school promotes pupils' well-being through its effective programme of personal and social education and through its participation in the Health Schools Initiative.
29. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Pupils with additional needs are identified early and the school makes full and effective use of support services.

30. Individual education plans (IEPs) are prepared for SEN pupils. All IEPs provide suitable targets for pupils, which are reviewed regularly with parents. SEN pupils and the most able are provided for through appropriate teaching, including very good support when they are withdrawn from mainstream classes to work in small groups.

Leadership and management

31. All staff work hard to promote the main aims and objectives of the school. They succeed in promoting a caring ethos which supports equal opportunities and racial equality. The headteacher shows great commitment to the school and has played a lead role in developing the good standards of care and strong links with parents. However, leadership lacks a clear sense of direction in relation to maintaining and improving standards. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher.
32. Curriculum leaders are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility and undertake appropriate training to develop their expertise. They monitor their subjects through a range of activities and, in a limited number of instances, the information is used effectively to raise standards and support development of subject areas.
33. Governors are supportive of the school. They meet their statutory and legal requirements. However, the governing body is not effectively involved in evaluating whole school strategies and the quality of the provision.
34. The current self-evaluation report is comprehensive but insufficiently based on first hand evidence obtained through systematic monitoring. The school development plan is a three year strategic document with specific targets for improvement but lacks a focus on raising standards in the curriculum. The process of self-evaluation is not fully embedded in strategic planning. Overall, the direction of the school's work lacks a focus on promoting and sustaining improvements in subject areas.
35. The school's involvement in national priorities is good and the school works closely with other providers of education.
36. The inspection team agree with the school's self-evaluation in three of the seven key questions. In the areas of leadership and management the good features identified outweigh shortcomings. In one key question awarded grade 1 by the school no outstanding features were identified. In the other key question awarded grade 1 by the school two outstanding features were identified but there were insufficient of them for the team to award a grade 1.
37. The school is adequately staffed for the number of pupils on roll. Support staff make a valuable contribution to the school's work. Teachers' planning and preparation time is well organised but evaluating the effectiveness of these arrangements is at an early stage.

38. The school is a welcoming, safe, secure and well ordered environment. The quality of the learning environment is enhanced by attractive displays of children's work. Outside the school building, the hard surface play areas provide suitable space for a range of games and activities. The outside play area for the nursery children has improved significantly since the last inspection and is well used, thus impacting on raising standards of achievement.
39. The quality and quantity of resources throughout the school is good. Financial contributions from parents provide valuable support for the purchase of new equipment. The high quality of reading books available has impacted significantly in maintaining high standards in the key skill of reading.
40. The financial management of the school is good. The headteacher and governors are prudent in their spending and monitor the school's budget regularly to ensure cost effectiveness.
41. The school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to improve the current good standards, staff and governors should:

- R1** Develop pupils' involvement in their own learning so that they clearly understand what they need to do to improve.***
- R2** Improve the quality of teaching and learning by developing the use of assessment and marking to identify clear learning targets for pupils.
- R3** Further develop the role of the curriculum co-ordinator to fully impact on standards of teaching and learning.***
- R4** Set clear targets for improvement which are firmly embedded within strategic planning.
- R5** The governing body should develop strategies for them to review, monitor and improve performance.

(Those recommendations marked *** have already been identified by the school as areas for development.)

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 with no important shortcomings

42. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 1 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. No outstanding features were identified by the inspection team in relation to this key question.
43. The overall quality of 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.
44. Children start school with a wide range of skills and experiences. Their ability on entry is slightly below the LA average. Baseline assessments undertaken within the first term of entry into the reception year indicate that children progress very well during their time in nursery. The assessments undertaken as pupils move through the school show that they make good progress in each year group.
45. Pupils with additional learning needs, including pupils with EAL, pupils 'looked after' by the LA and very able pupils, achieve good standards. Pupils with SEN achieve well against the targets set for them in their IEPs. Pupils, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background, make good progress and are well placed to move on to the next stage in their learning. Generally, there are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls.
46. National Curriculum assessment results at the end of key stage 1 (2006) show that 87.8 per cent of pupils achieved level 2 or above in English and mathematics, with 90 per cent achieving level 2 or above in science. The results for English and science were slightly above the national average, with the result in mathematics matching the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were above both the national and LA averages. The results over this period have been affected by the achievement of pupils who are admitted to the school at times other than normal admission times, and a high number of SEN pupils within a particular year group.
47. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 3 in the core subjects has been well above both national and LA averages for a number of years in the past. However, results in all areas, except reading, have fallen to at or below the national average for the past two years. Results in reading, an area where the school places great emphasis, have remained consistently high. In 2006 the percentage of pupils achieving level 3 in reading was 8 per cent above the national figure.

48. When the school's results at the end of key stage 1 are compared with similar schools (on the basis of free school meal entitlement) the school was in the top 25 per cent for English and mathematics in 2004, the upper 50 per cent in 2005 and in the lower 50 per cent in 2006. In science, the school was in the upper 50 per cent in 2004 and the lower 50 per cent in 2005 and 2006.
49. Across the school, the under-fives and pupils in key stage 1 make good progress and attain very good standards in the key skills of listening and reading. Pupils of all ages and ability listen carefully to each other and to adults. They respond quickly to instructions and carefully consider different contributions to a lesson. Standards in speaking and writing are good.
50. Throughout the school, pupils are competent in their IT skills and they achieve good standards when using these skills to support their work in a range of curriculum areas. They use their word-processing skills to produce work of a good standard and competently use digital cameras to record their findings when they visit a local place of historical interest in preparation for a national competition. Numeracy skills are good in all age groups.
51. Across the school, pupils' problem-solving skills and creative skills are good. In the reception class children successfully make bridges for the Three Billy Goats Gruff and year 1 pupils successfully discuss and draw up a list of rules that they have to consider when visiting a place of worship.
52. Pupils' bilingual competence in English and Welsh is good. Pupils respond well to greetings and instructions given in Welsh and occasionally remind each other, in Welsh, of the teacher's request. Pupils' knowledge of Welsh culture and heritage is also good.
53. Children under five and pupils in key stage 1 respond well to the range of learning opportunities available. They readily acquire new knowledge and build successfully on the skills they have.
54. During lesson times, when working without adult support, the vast majority of pupils understand clearly what they are doing. At times when pupils are working on teacher-led activities, there is an over reliance on adult guidance and pupils understanding of what they are doing is less clear.
55. The involvement of pupils in their own learning is limited. They do not have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses or what they need to do in order to improve.
56. The vast majority of pupils are well motivated and show a good level of enthusiasm for their learning and related activities. They maintain their concentration and interest during lessons. Occasionally, when the focus of an activity is unclear to them, a small minority of pupils become restless and inattentive.
57. Pupils are well behaved, considerate and courteous and this contributes positively and constructively to the quality of life in the school. They

demonstrate respect for each other, members of staff and their school environment. At the start of the morning and afternoon sessions, pupils enter and move around the school in an orderly and purposeful manner, settling into their classrooms quickly. Pupils' developing self-confidence helps them take an increasing degree of responsibility for their own behaviour and attitudes.

58. In discussion, pupils indicate that they understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and agree that good behaviour is encouraged, recognised and rewarded. Nearly all pupils respond positively to these expectations. There are very few reports of recent incidents of bullying or inappropriate behaviour and no pupil exclusions during the last 12 months.
59. The level of attendance has fallen over recent years and over the last three full terms whole school attendance has averaged 91.6 per cent. This is below the national average for similar schools (based upon free school meals entitlement) and below national and local averages for all schools. There are no significant or unexplained variations in attendance levels across the school or throughout the year. Absences are caused mainly by illness and, despite the school's best efforts, the overall rate is also adversely affected by family holidays taken in term time. Punctuality is good at the start of, and throughout, the day allowing sessions to start promptly without interruption or delay.
60. The school takes appropriate account of the requirements of National Assembly of Wales Circular 3/99 that sets out the requirements for recording absence.
61. The good relationships with staff enable pupils to become secure and confident in their learning. They make good progress in developing their moral, social and cultural skills. As pupils progress through the school they become increasingly sensitive to the needs of others and develop their awareness of the need to care for those less fortunate. Staff and pupils enthusiastically support a range of charities. Pupils show fair play and consideration for others and have good moral values. Pupils are developing a good understanding of right and wrong.
62. Pupils' understanding of equal opportunities is good throughout the school. They show a developing awareness of the diversity of beliefs, religions and cultures present in today's society. During discussion, they adopt mature attitudes and recognise the need to treat everyone fairly and without discrimination.
63. Pupils become involved in the community by supporting local ceremonies and events, mainly associated with the church. The development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the workplace is helped by occasional visits to locally based industry. Overall, pupils' understanding of the world of work is underdeveloped.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings

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

65. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
25%	45%	30%	0%	0%

66. The quality of teaching in the school is good and there are no important shortcomings. In a quarter of lessons observed teaching has outstanding features. The quality of teaching is slightly below the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her annual report for 2005-2006, where the quality of teaching in primary schools was grade 1 or 2 in 79% of lessons.

67. In lessons that were judged grade 1, teachers generate a high level of pupil interest and involvement; lessons are extremely well planned; they are delivered with great pace and imagination through the use of stimulating resources and challenging questions; pupils are encouraged to demonstrate, explain and solve problems through practical work; and pupils are given opportunities to work independently and collaboratively at a level appropriate to their knowledge and ability.

68. Where teaching is good: -

- teachers plan in detail and utilise a range of resources which are appropriate to pupils' age and ability;
- learning objectives are made clear at the outset and teachers consolidate them during the lesson;
- teachers use well considered questions to challenge thinking;
- clear instructions and explanations are given which provide positive feedback to pupils;
- teachers deliver effective, well structured lessons with good pace to maintain interest and involvement;
- support staff are deployed well to keep pupils focussed and on task;
- pupils' own experiences and contributions are incorporated effectively into the lesson; and
- assessment is used to inform planning.

69. Shortcomings in teaching include the use of a limited range of strategies which do not maintain pupils' interest; occasions when the objective of the lesson is not clearly communicated to pupils; and lack of effective and consistent

classroom routines to ensure that pupils understand exactly what is expected of them.

70. Where teachers' planning is of a good standard, it provides a consistent focus and identifies achievable learning objectives and outcomes. In lessons judged to be outstanding, the teachers explain these to all pupils at the start of lessons and in the best practice pupils discuss the outcomes in the plenary sessions with increased confidence. However, on occasions teachers do not give precise targets for pupils' learning in lessons or enough time for specific learning activities. This has a negative impact on pupils' progress.
71. Teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They effectively use both their specialist knowledge and the resources available to enhance the quality of the lessons. Bilingual skills are taught well through formal planning and through staff taking advantage of incidental opportunities as they arise.
72. The planning and teaching of *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is good. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to acquire a wide experience and knowledge of Welsh life and culture. Throughout the school, teachers treat all pupils equally, consistently and fairly and ensure that everyone has access to all opportunities and experiences offered. Teachers actively promote equal opportunities and make effective use of opportunities to tackle stereotypical views.
73. The schools' arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' attainment and progress meet statutory requirements. Teachers regularly gather information in the core subjects, and periodically in the foundation subjects, in order to track pupil's progress. The assessments provide an accurate overview of pupils' achievement. Assessment of nursery children is particularly effective. However, assessment is used inconsistently to focus on identifying clear targets for pupils.
74. Marking is undertaken regularly across the school usually during lesson times in order that feedback can be provided for pupils. However, the written comments made are insufficiently focused on what pupils need to do in order to improve and discussions with pupils do not sufficiently involve them in planning their own progress and improvements.
75. Information from the school's assessment procedures leads to good reports for the parents on their children's progress. These reports meet statutory requirements and are appreciated by the parents. The school holds regular meetings for parents to talk to teachers about their children's progress.

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

Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings

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

77. The school responds effectively to pupils' learning needs and provides equal access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum. Overall, the curriculum is relevant to the needs of all pupils, including pupils with SEN, pupils with EAL, very able pupils and those who are 'looked after' by the LA. The curriculum is interesting, particularly when it includes a range of practical experiences, which have a very positive effect on pupil's learning. The school meets all statutory requirements.
78. The overall quality of 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.
79. The provision for the development of pupils' basic and key skills is appropriate. Key skills are referred to in all subjects and areas of the school's work. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark on two occasions.
80. The school makes good use of its strong links with the immediate locality and frequent use of local places of historical interest such as Erddig and Wepre Hall. Visitors to the school bring a great relevance to subjects and develop the pupils' understanding of the world of work, their social and cultural experiences. The provision of extra curricular activities is limited but the football club has a positive effect on raising standards and pupils participate enthusiastically. These activities complement and extend the curriculum effectively.
81. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A significant contribution to this development is the emphasis the school places on consideration, courtesy and respect for all members of the school community. The school promotes moral values through well established codes for good behaviour and conduct. Pupils' cultural development is well supported by planned opportunities to learn about customs and cultures from other countries. Occasions for pupils to reflect and develop spiritually are not as well embedded in the curriculum.
82. The school succeeds in providing good opportunities to develop pupils' bilingual skills progressively as they move through the school. *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is well integrated across the curriculum in order to develop pupils' understanding of the culture of Wales. Good emphasis is given in geography, art and history to the heritage of Wales.
83. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is good and is promoted through well planned learning opportunities identified across the curriculum.
84. Links with parents are good. Overall, parents have a high regard for the quality of education provided. In particular, they appreciate the sessions available to them to understand their child's progress and support their learning. The range of sessions designed to develop parents' involvement in their child's learning, for example; 'language and play' and 'learning families',

are well attended. Parents are kept informed through regular newsletters and they support the school through fundraising activities.

85. Links with neighbouring schools, and in particular the local junior school, are good. The school has developed both pastoral and curricular links with the school to which the majority of pupils transfer at the end of key stage 1. A transition project based on the pupils' work as they move from key stage 1 to key stage 2 effectively ensures that their education continues unhindered.
86. Strong links exist with local colleges and the school regularly provides placements for students, which are mutually beneficial. The school also benefits from community links, for example, a community involvement grant has supported the recent development of the outside garden area.
87. A few vocational topics contained in the school's personal and health education (PSE) programme help develop pupils' understanding of the world of work. However, the school has yet to incorporate appropriate learning experiences into the curriculum to develop pupils' entrepreneurial skills.
88. Overall, there are very few partnerships or formal links with employers or local industries and the current provision of effective work-related education experiences is limited. No teachers have recently undertaken one day visits to other organisations, or been involved with industrial/commercial placements and used their experiences to enrich the curriculum.
89. The school has high expectations of its pupils and strongly promotes equality of access to everything it offers. Opportunities to challenge stereotyping are planned within the curriculum. Policies for promoting and practising equality of access, equal opportunity and racial equality are formally adopted and effectively implemented. The school recognises, respects and celebrates diversity.
90. The school successfully promotes pupils' awareness of sustainable development. This is achieved through their personal, social, health and geography education. In addition there are recycling bins around the school and a compost bin. The school has additional plans for energy saving initiatives. The school has been awarded the bronze and silver Eco-School awards and is working towards the Green Flag award. The "green team" committee is very enthusiastic and active.
91. The importance of regular homework is increasingly emphasised as pupils progress through the school. The focus of homework on developing pupils' reading skills is particularly effective. Older pupils are encouraged to be actively involved with community based activities.

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

Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings

92. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 1 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. Outstanding features were identified in the way the school plans and manages care arrangements, and the personal support and guidance for pupils. However, the outstanding features were insufficient in number to award a grade 1 to the key question.
93. The school works hard to ensure that the aim of creating a caring environment is achieved. All staff have high expectations in relation to standards of behaviour, care and relationships with pupils.
94. Care arrangements are planned and managed very effectively. The school always seeks to promote pupils' welfare and makes full and effective use of support services. This is an outstanding feature of the school's provision.
95. The strong partnership that exists with parents and carers provides regular opportunities for discussion between parents and staff, consequently staff within the school are well placed to provide appropriate support for pupils. The vast majority of parents consider pupils are very happy in school and they are very satisfied with the help and guidance provided for their children. Parents see the school as a very caring establishment with friendly staff and one which looks after pupils well.
96. Induction arrangements for pupils entering the school are good. The family atmosphere within the school helps children entering nursery to settle quickly and happily. In discussion, pupils who join the school at other times report that they settle very quickly, make friends easily and soon become part of the school community. Transition arrangements for pupils transferring to the local junior school at the end of year 2 are effective and pupils look forward to the next stage of their education.
97. Personal support and guidance for pupils is an outstanding feature. Staff know pupils very well and very positive relationships exist between staff and pupils. Very effective use is made of specialist services, for example the police and health agencies. All pupils have access to the very good quality PSE programme, which is followed throughout the school. The programme is carefully structured, takes account of the PSE framework and includes health related education.
98. Attendance is below average despite frequent reminders to pupils and parents concerning the importance of regular attendance. The vast majority of pupils arrive promptly at the start of the school day. The system for monitoring attendance and punctuality is established and is generally effective. Registers are completed appropriately and quickly at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Procedures for following up lateness or unexplained absence are established and incorporate the services of the Educational Welfare Officer.

99. The school expects good standards of behaviour and does not condone bullying or inappropriate behaviour. Staff consistently implement the behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Pupils understand and adhere to the school and class rules. The school's systems, for example 'golden time' and the 'golden book', used to recognise and reward good standards of behaviour and achievement, are understood and appreciated by pupils, and are effective.
100. The school has clear and well documented procedures that contribute to pupils' well-being when in the schools' care. The school promotes pupils' well-being through its effective programme of personal and social education. Good attention is given to developing healthy lifestyles and fitness through the school's involvement in the Healthy School's Initiative. Appropriate day to day systems are in place to deal with any pupils who have specific medical needs, and to deal with those who become unwell or hurt themselves during the school day.
101. The small number of serious incidents of inappropriate behaviour are recorded appropriately. Support programmes are written for pupils who exhibit challenging behaviours. The programmes detail strategies to be used by staff and rewards to support pupils but lack clear targets for improvement.
102. The headteacher is the designated child protection co-ordinator and is supported by the deputy headteacher and a nominated governor. An appropriate child protection policy is in place and staff have received relevant training and update briefings. School staff are fully aware of the signs of possible child abuse and the specific procedures to follow. Appropriate complaint and appeal procedures are established.
103. The provision for learners with additional needs is good. Good support is offered to pupils with EAL. They receive support from the LA if necessary and all staff respond appropriately to their individual needs.
104. Early identification of pupils with SEN is made as a result of the effective use of assessments. Purposeful support is planned from an early stage. Assessment, recording and reporting procedures meet statutory requirements. The school's policy complies with the Code of Practice for SEN.
105. Pupils with SEN are offered access to all areas of the curriculum and are provided for through appropriate teaching and resources. A number of pupils receive very good support in small groups withdrawn from the main classes for short periods. The LA support teacher who works closely with school staff provides further support for a number of pupils.
106. IEPs with appropriate targets are in place for all pupils with SEN, and are reviewed regularly with parents. In the best examples, targets are stated in observable, measurable terms and progress can clearly be monitored. However, the quality of target setting within IEPs varies across the school and

in some instances targets lack sufficient detail to support careful monitoring of pupils' progress.

107. A number of key stage 1 pupils are identified as requiring support with basic skills. Individual plans for these pupils are specific and well focused with clear targets for improvement.
108. Able pupils are clearly identified by the school. In addition to the support received within mainstream classes, a small group of the most able pupils are withdrawn to work on additional activities for a short time each week. These sessions provide very good support for pupils to extend their learning.
109. The school is an inclusive community and the quality of provision for equal opportunities is good. Pupils, whatever their gender, social or ethnic backgrounds are given equal opportunity to take part in all activities. The school has clear policies and practices that actively promote gender equality and are effective in challenging stereotypes, particularly through day to day activities in the classroom and during extra curricular activities.
110. The school council contributes significantly to raising pupil's awareness of the decision making process. Council members have, for example, made decisions relating to the design of the new playground and the purchase of new playtime equipment.
111. The school works hard to secure equal access for disabled pupils with details published in its Disability Inclusion Policy. An accessibility plan is in place and all short term issues have been addressed. An action plan to support the development of a Disability Equality Scheme has been compiled with the support of the governing body but the scheme is in the early stages of development.
112. The school has high expectations in all pupil relationships and promotes topics directly related to racial equality during many assemblies. The diversity policy of the school is supported by appropriate activities planned within the curriculum. A good range of opportunities are provided to ensure that pupils value the contribution of others.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.

113. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 2 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. There are shortcomings in the role of leadership in providing a clear sense of direction for the school. However, these are outweighed by the good features, in the way in which the school

promotes its aims and objectives, including equal opportunities, and the account the school takes of national priorities.

114. The school has clear values, aims and objectives, which are promoted well by all staff, including non teaching staff, and by the governors. These ensure a very caring ethos and a commitment to equal opportunities and racial equality, which is evident in the life of the school.
115. The headteacher shows great commitment to the school and has played a lead role in developing the good standards of care and strong links with parents. However, leadership lacks a clear sense of direction in relation to maintaining and improving standards.
116. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher who is allocated appropriate time each week to undertake her management duties. This time is used effectively and with a clear focus on raising standards through, for example, the compiling of basic skills action plans for individual pupils.
117. Curriculum co-ordinators are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility and have undertaken appropriate training to develop their expertise. They maintain subject records, including policies and schemes of work, efficiently. In the best examples, curriculum leadership is effective in supporting colleagues in raising and maintaining standards. However, the quality of curriculum leadership is inconsistent. Overall, the direction of the school's work lacks a focus on promoting and sustaining improvements in subject areas.
118. The school takes good account of national priorities. It has achieved a number of national awards, which support the development of basic skills, promote the importance of healthy lifestyles and develop pupils' knowledge of sustainable development. The school is successfully working towards introducing the Foundation Phase and provides good opportunities to support the development of pupils' bilingual skills.
119. There are strong working links with local colleges. The school works closely with the consortium of local schools and headteachers of similar schools. Partnerships are effective in developing areas of the school's work, for example, school transition projects and the moderation of standards achieved by pupils.
120. Targets are set for all teaching staff as part of the performance management process, which is well established. The use of formal classroom observations with specific feedback to staff is limited to aspects of the performance management process. Staff are given appropriate support and training to meet their targets. However, the impact of targets on standards achieved is not fully evaluated.
121. Informal monitoring of other staff takes place but the process of target setting at all other levels is underdeveloped. This is an important shortcoming.

122. All staff, including support staff, have clear areas of responsibility appropriately outlined in job descriptions. There are effective procedures for identifying development needs and all staff undertake appropriate training in order to develop their expertise and knowledge of current initiatives. In some instances, the school makes good use of training undertaken, for example through the enhanced role of nursery nurses. However, in other instances training does not have sufficient impact across the school.
123. Governors are generally supportive of the school and are provided with a range of information about the school's operations by the headteacher, prior to each governors' meeting. They agree the school's strategic direction each year and have had an opportunity to comment on the current whole school self-evaluation report. Only a small number of governors visit the school regularly.
124. Some governors have very recently adopted subject and curriculum area interests. However, the governing body is not effectively involved with fully evaluating the success of whole school strategies and the quality of provision.
125. Governors meet regularly as a full governing body at least once every term and satisfy statutory and legal requirements. Appropriate committees have been established and they also meet at least once every term. The proceedings at all governors' meetings are correctly recorded.
126. All statutory policies, documents and procedures have been adopted and implemented.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.

127. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 2 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. There are shortcomings in the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluating performance, and in planning for improvement. However these are outweighed by the good features identified within the key question.
128. The inspection team agreed with the school's self-evaluation in three of the seven key questions. In the areas of leadership and management the good features identified outweigh shortcomings. In one key question awarded grade 1 by the school no outstanding features were identified. In the other key question awarded grade 1 by the school, two outstanding features were identified but there were insufficient of them for the team to award an overall grade 1 to the key question.

129. Currently standards in many areas remain good but strategic planning is insufficiently focused on maintaining or improving standards across the curriculum.
130. The senior management team monitor performance closely by careful analysis of data. They also undertake monitoring activities which provide further information on standards, for example listening to readers and monitoring pupils' work. The information gained is insufficiently used as a basis on which to set targets for improvement.
131. Curriculum co-ordinators undertake a range of activities as part of their monitoring duties, including sampling of pupils' work, exchange of classes and working with small groups of pupils from other classes. These activities provide useful information in relation to standards and the coverage of curriculum areas. However, the information is only used effectively in a limited number of instances to raise standards and support the development of subject areas.
132. The current self-evaluation report is comprehensive and systematic but insufficiently based upon the monitoring of teaching and learning by senior managers and subject leaders. It includes judgements on trends over time. Appropriate areas for development are identified but these lack a focus on the effectiveness of planning for improvement. The process of self-evaluation is not fully embedded in strategic planning.
133. All staff and governors are involved in the process of self-evaluation, although specific input from curriculum co-ordinators is limited. The school council successfully provides a voice for pupils within the school but their involvement in self-evaluation is at an early stage. The views of parents are sought informally, a system which is supported by the open-door policy of the school. However, no formal processes are in place to ensure that the views of all parents and the community are taken into account.
134. The school development plan (SDP) is a three year strategic document which identifies actions and costs for each target but lacks success criteria based on specific outcomes required. Appropriate resources are allocated to ensure that targets are achievable. The majority of targets within the current SDP have a focus on pastoral issues, curriculum enhancement or support for small groups of pupils, for example, the very able. Targets are not appropriately aimed at raising standards achieved by all pupils. This is an important shortcoming.
135. Curriculum co-ordinators produce subject action plans as part of the SDP. The majority of plans focus on ensuring policies and schemes of work remain up to date but lack a focus on raising standards in specific areas.
136. Actions taken as a result of work on targets have had a positive effect on enhancing the curriculum and supporting pupils but have not led to measurable improvements in standards. Two areas for further development identified by the inspection team were the same as those identified by the school in its self-evaluation document.

137. The school has worked systematically to address issues raised in the previous inspection and has made good progress. As a result, nursery children have access to safe and stimulating outdoor play, which has been effective in raising standards, and the monitoring duties of curriculum leaders have been developed. However, the impact of monitoring continues to be underdeveloped.

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

Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings

138. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
139. The school is adequately staffed with appropriately qualified teachers. All teachers have good subject knowledge that is relevant and current. All support staff make a valuable contribution in classes and are effectively deployed. The contribution of support staff in the early years is very good. The school secretary, caretaker and midday staff make valuable contributions to school life as part of their normal duties.
140. The school's arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment times are good. However, the school is at an early stage of evaluating the full effect of these arrangements. Good induction arrangements for newly qualified staff have been introduced ensuring very good support and guidance. The school is allocating and using resources provided for workforce remodelling effectively.
141. The quality and quantity of resources throughout the school is good. The high quality of reading books available has impacted significantly in maintaining high standards in the key skill of reading. Resources are effectively located and are appropriately accessible to pupils and staff.
142. The school is a welcoming, safe, secure and well ordered environment. The classrooms are colourful with displays that enhance and stimulate learning. Outside the school building, the hard surface play areas provide suitable space for a range of games and activities. The outside play area for the nursery children has improved significantly. The soft play area is secure but freely accessible to the children.
143. The school hall is large and provides sufficient space to accommodate whole school assemblies, lunches, school events and the full range of indoor physical education (PE) lessons. Storage space within the school is adequate and good use is made of what is available. The premises are well maintained by the caretaker and kept in a clean and tidy condition.
144. The headteacher and the governors frequently review the finances of the school. They are prudent in their spending and seek best value for money. Timely and appreciated financial advice on managing the school budget is provided by the LA. The parent-teacher organisation is very active, providing generous funding to the school for prioritised resources. The school gives good value for money.

School's response to the inspection

The staff, governors and children wish to thank the inspection team for their courteous and professional manner in which they conducted our inspection.

We are delighted that the personal support and guidance we provide for our children has been recognised as an outstanding feature of our school, alongside the recognition that we are achieving our aim of creating a caring environment and a family atmosphere within our school.

The team's finding that we achieve high standards in the key skill of reading reinforces the great emphasis we continue to place on the teaching of reading throughout the school.

An action plan to address the recommendations in the report will be drawn up and incorporated into our development plan. The recommendations will enable us to build on our strengths and to address those areas we need to improve further in order to at least maintain our current good standards.

We will keep parents fully informed of our action plan and its progress through newsletters and the governors' annual report to parents.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Dee Road Infants School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3-7 years
Address of school	Dee Road, Connah's Quay Deeside
Postcode	CH5 4NY
Telephone number	01244 812983

Headteacher	Miss S. Jones
Date of appointment	June 1996
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Cllr. J. B. Attridge
Registered inspector	Mrs. L. J. Williams
Dates of inspection	11 th - 13 th June 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	20	39	34	55	0	0	0	0	148

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	1	7.4

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	20:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	10:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	0
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	26
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.07:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Spring 2007	80%	92%	93%
Autumn 2006	87%	92%	94%
Summer 2006	91%	89%	91%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	15%
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:					41
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	10	73	15	
		National	0	4	12	64	20	
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	10	54	34	
		National	0	4	14	56	26	
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	5	12	80	2	
		National	0	5	14	69	12	
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	7	73	17	
		National	0	2	11	64	23	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	10	63	24	
		National	0	2	10	63	24	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	10	71	20	
		National	0	2	9	65	24	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English according to teacher assessment			
In the school	85.4	In Wales	80.6

W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors, including the lay inspector, over a period of six inspector days.

The headteacher was the nominee and played a supporting role during the inspection.

Pre-inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, parents, staff and governing body.

The inspectors met as a team prior to the inspection.

Twenty six questionnaires were returned, analysed and summarised.

Discussions including post inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, teaching staff and support staff.

Discussions were held with pupils and members of the school council and the eco council about their work in the school.

All documentation submitted by the school, prior to and during the inspection, was analysed and discussed, including the school development plan, policy and curriculum documents and teachers' planning files.

Pupils were observed as they arrived and departed from the school and during the midday and other breaks.

Pupils' behaviour was observed at various times in the school day.

Samples of pupils' work, practical and written, from across the ability range in each age group, were examined.

Twenty lessons or parts of lessons were observed.

Inspectors attended assemblies.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mrs Linda Jane Williams Registered Inspector	Context Summary and recommendations Key Questions 1, 4, 5 and 6
Mrs. Carolyn Thomas Team Inspector	Key Questions 2, 3 and 7
Mr Kerry Jones Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4 and 5.
Miss Susan Jones Headteacher / Nominee	Contributions to Key Questions

Acknowledgement

The Registered Inspector and team wish to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy before and during the inspection.

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