

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

**Ferndale Infants School
North Road
Ferndale
Rhondda Cynon Taff
CF43 4PS**

School Number: 6742115

Date of Inspection: 26-28 September 2005

by

**Mrs C Llewellyn
78272**

Date: 28 November 2005

Under Estyn contract number: T/067/05

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Ferndale Infants School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents more information about their child's school. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of Ferndale Infants School took place between 26-28 September 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mrs C Llewellyn undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This summary report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a standard inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The national curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Ferndale Infants School is a local authority maintained school situated in the ex-mining community of the small town of Ferndale in the upper part of the Rhondda Fach. The present building replaced the old school in 1983.
2. The area is considered to be economically disadvantaged, but most of the pupils are said to come from backgrounds that are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. Numbers on role have been maintained since the last inspection and there are 90 boys and girls on role aged between three and seven, including 23 full-time nursery children. Children join the nursery when they are three years old and move to the reception class in the September following their fourth birthdays. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals has fallen this term from 27 to 20 per cent, which is below the average for the Rhondda Cynon Taff area but slightly above the whole of Wales figure of 18.8 per cent.
3. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need [SEN], but 18 pupils, 20 per cent, have been identified as needing additional support. Overall attainment upon entry is average, but includes the full range of ability. The school indicates that speech problems upon entry are becoming more noticeable.
4. All pupils are white and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language or from Welsh speaking homes; Welsh is taught as a second language. Three pupils are in the care of the local authority. No pupils have been excluded in the last twelve months.
5. The school has gained the Investors in People, the Quality Mark for Basic Skills and the Eco School awards since it was last inspected.
6. The school was last inspected in November 1999 and since that time there has been a change of headship. The present head teacher was appointed from her role as deputy head teacher in the school in June 2005 and a new deputy head teacher is yet to be appointed. During the inspection, a temporary member of staff was teaching in year 1 until this appointment is made.

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school's main aims and objectives are:
 - to develop a friendly orderly environment where children feel happy, secure and valued;
 - to develop independent, creative learners who are able to make choices and solve problems;
 - to help the children understand the world we live in, to value our local community;
 - to promote high standards of behaviour, including politeness, respect, care and consideration for others;
 - to promote high standards of attainment;
 - to develop tolerance of others at all sorts of levels;

8. The school's priorities for development in 2005-2006 are:
 - to raise standards in the quality of teaching and learning in English, Information Technology and Design and Technology;
 - to review the role of subject leaders;
 - to implement the Welsh Assembly Government Initiatives, including Foundation Stage, workforce remodelling, Eco Schools and Healthy Schools;
 - to improve procedures in assessment, recording and reporting;
 - to develop a whole-school approach in planning for the development of the key skills across the curriculum;
 - to improve attendance.

Summary

9. Ferndale Infants School is an inclusive school that provides well for the all-round education of its pupils. They are well cared for and make good progress in their academic and personal development. The head teacher provides good leadership and she is well supported by the staff and school governors. There is a close match in the judgements made in the school's evaluation report to those made by the inspection team.

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

Subjects and/or Areas of Learning Early Years, if appropriate

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

10. The overall quality of the provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and they make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
11. In key stage 1, standards of achievement in the subjects identified for inspection are:

Subject	Key Stage 1
Subject 1 English	2
Subject 2 Science	2
Subject 3 Design and technology	3
Subject 4 Music	2
Subject 5 Religious Education	2

12. Standards of achievement in all lessons observed were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	76%	16%	4%	

13. These are slightly under the 2007 Welsh Assembly Government targets for 98 per cent of lessons to be grade 3 or above, but exceed the target of 65 per cent of all lessons to be grade 2 or above.
14. All pupils, regardless of their backgrounds and including those with special educational needs [SEN], make good progress and achieve good standards.
15. In key skills, standards in listening are good with no important shortcomings throughout the school. This is a notable feature. Skills in speaking are more variable. In nursery and year 1, good features outweigh shortcomings; many children and pupils have a limited vocabulary. In reception and year 2, standards are better and show good features with no important shortcomings.
16. In reading, good features outweigh shortcomings in nursery but in reception and key stage one standards are good with no important shortcomings. Standards in writing in nursery and reception are good overall, but children do not develop their skills of independent writing sufficiently. In year 1, standards in writing are good with some shortcomings. Pupils in year 1 do not develop their emergent writing sufficiently. However, pupils make good progress and standards in year 2 are good with no important shortcomings, although workbooks inhibit independent writing.
17. In numeracy, standards throughout the school have good features that outweigh shortcomings. Pupils do not develop their skills sufficiently across the curriculum and have insufficient experience in consolidating and applying number skills and problem solving in other subject areas.
18. Standards in information and communication technology [ICT] are good with no important shortcomings. Under-fives and pupils in key stage 1 show confidence and good skills in using the interactive white board. On computers they develop good word processing skills and can handle a range of programs.
19. Pupils' bilingual skills develop well. Across the school they show a good understanding of instructions and the incidental use of the language.
20. The under-fives make good progress and achieve good standards in their creative and problem solving skills. They demonstrate the capacity to work independently. This good start is not sustained in key stage 1 as very adult-directed activities limits pupils' ability to apply their knowledge and skills in new situations. Pupils make insufficient progress in their ability to work independently.
21. In the 2005 end of key stage teacher assessments, pupils achieving level 2 or above slightly exceeded the 2004 Rhondda Cynon Taff [RCT] and Wales

average in English, with a higher proportion achieving this level in mathematics and science. At the higher level 3, pupils exceeded the Wales' and Local Education Authority [LEA] figures by 12 per cent in English, 18 per cent in mathematics and 24 per cent in science.

22. There was a significant margin between the performance of boys and girls, in favour of boys, in the English and science assessments. However, there were far fewer girls than boys in the cohort and nearly a half of these had special educational needs and were at School Action Plus. There was no gender difference in the mathematics assessments.
23. When compared with similar schools [on the basis of free school meal entitlement], the results place the school in the top 25 per cent for maths and science and close to the top 25 per cent for English and the core subject indicator [the percentage of pupils achieving at least level 2 in the three core subjects]. Of the 19 pupils assessed at this time, 12 were on the SEN register.
24. The school has maintained its good standards in the core subjects, having regularly exceeded the LEA figures since the last inspection. Good standards in the foundation subjects inspected have been retained except in design and technology where they are judged to be good with some shortcomings.
25. Pupils have good personal and learning skills. Attitudes towards work and learning are generally positive, especially where activities are exciting and challenging. Pupils are usually very well behaved. Foundations of good behaviour are laid effectively in the nursery. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils work and play together harmoniously and relate well to adults. Pupils know and understand the rules they help to devise.
26. The school makes good provision for social and moral development and pupils achieve good standards. Although social development is sometimes inhibited by lack of independent learning, pupils develop social skills appropriately as they work and play together well. Moral issues are discussed in circle time and in collective worship; pupils are aware of what virtues are important in life. Spiritual development is less effective as pupils do not always have time to reflect on messages conveyed in collective worship.
27. Pupils' cultural development is good. *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* features prominently; pupils are aware of Welsh music, Welsh folk tales and aspects of life in Wales today and in the past. They are also introduced appropriately to cultural diversity through books, stories and artefacts.
28. Attendance statistics for the last three terms before the inspection show an average of 91 per cent, which is below the Wales average.

The quality of education and training

29. The grades awarded to teaching in lessons observed during the inspection are:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
11	52	26	7	4

30. The quality of teaching in the under-fives unit is consistently grade 3 or above, with 80 per cent being grade 1 or 2. This is above the national picture, where 72 per cent of teaching is graded 1 or 2. In key stage 1, 75 per cent of teaching was grade 3 or higher. The good quality of teaching by the permanent staff has been sustained since the last inspection, with 80 per cent of teaching being grade 1 or grade 2 on this occasion.
31. The best teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge, the sharing of clear lesson objectives with pupils, exciting activities undertaken at a lively pace and good quality open questioning.
32. Procedures for assessment and recording are good overall. The pupil tracking system is used effectively to deploy staff and consider support strategies. Assessment opportunities, identified mainly in core subject planning, are predominantly by observation. There is a lack of consistency in assessment of the foundation subjects.
33. When marking pupils' work, positive and supportive comments are made, but suggestions for improvement are not recorded. Annual reports to parents make clear comments on what pupils can do, particularly in core subjects; aspects where parents can help are identified.
34. The school generally provides a broad and relevant curriculum both for its under-fives and pupils in key stage 1. However, curricular provision for key stage 1 does not comply fully with statutory requirements; it is not balanced as insufficient time is allocated in the timetable for physical education. However, the school is aware of the imbalance and is planning changes. Although the current curriculum for pupils in nursery and reception is appropriate and balanced and often presented through exciting and stimulating activities, there is no system in place to guarantee this on a long-term basis.
35. Visits to places of interest in the area promote a sense of belonging to the community and visits further afield enrich learning; this is an outstanding feature of the school's provision. A wide range of visitors, such as musicians, extends pupils' experiences and makes a substantial contribution towards their progress in subject knowledge and understanding. After school clubs, which include gardening, science activities and games, further extend pupils' learning effectively.
36. The school has made a start on the provision of key skills, across the curriculum as opportunities where they can be addressed are identified in schemes of work and short-term planning. However, there is no whole-school

overview to ensure their development through the curriculum in a meaningful and systematic way. The school has identified this as an area for improvement in the current school development plan [SDP].

37. Partnerships with parents and the community are good and the school pays good attention to national priorities for lifelong learning and community regeneration. The provision of a whole day Family Numeracy group is an outstanding feature of this relationship that enables parents to help their children with their learning. Pupils in turn see their parents as life long learners. Parents are well informed about the life and work of the school. In a pre-inspection meeting and questionnaire, parents expressed their satisfaction with the school.
38. Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported. The school has an effective personal and social education policy that permeates all aspects of school life. Support programmes are carefully integrated into the school's work so that they meet the needs of the pupils and ensure equality of opportunity. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy: risk assessments are systematic and all staff are alert to issues relating to the well being of pupils. Child Protection arrangements are effective and in line with LEA guidelines.
39. The school gives good support for pupils with additional needs. They are identified early from observations and formal assessments in the under-fives classes. All staff are involved in planning for the needs of pupils with SEN. The individual education plans [IEPs] are produced termly, are of a good quality and are monitored regularly by the special educational needs co-ordinator [SENCo]. Documentation fulfils statutory requirements and support services are used effectively.
40. The school strongly promotes equality of access and opportunity for all and is robust in its efforts to tackle social disadvantage. Pupils, irrespective of their social backgrounds, gender, disability or ethnicity are positively included in all activities.
41. Pupils' understanding of sustainable development is very well developed: this is an outstanding feature. They have good knowledge of how to care for the environment and are involved in a recycling programme from an early age. The school has achieved Green Flag status.

Leadership and management

42. The head teacher, recently promoted from within the school, has established good relationships at all levels and ensures the school offers a safe, happy and secure environment. Her leadership is at an early stage, but she has identified development issues related to sustaining and further improving the provision and standards within the school. The head is supported well by the senior teacher while awaiting the appointment of a deputy head next term.

43. Whole-school targets have been identified that provide suitable challenge to improve provision and standards. The school takes good account of national and local priorities and is fully involved in local cluster and partnership arrangements. At the last inspection, the key issues concentrated upon maintaining standards and reviewing registration procedures. Both have been successfully carried out, except for standards in design and technology. The school has moved forwards and successfully implemented a number of initiatives since the last inspection, including Investors in People, Basic Skills Award 2003 and Eco School status.
44. The governing body is very supportive of all aspects of the school. It meets regularly and undertakes its duties conscientiously, but does not formally monitor standards in all subjects. It ensures regulatory and legal aspects are met.
45. The school is making sound progress towards developing a more analytical approach to self-evaluation. Teaching and non-teaching staff were fully involved with the production of the self-evaluation document, but parents and pupils were not given the opportunity to contribute towards its findings. The inclusion of all interested parties in the self-evaluation process has been identified by the school as an aspect requiring improvement.
46. There are sufficient qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. All teaching staff are appropriately qualified. Accommodation is adequate, but not generous, for the number of pupils on roll. Very good use is made of the outside areas to supplement the teaching space. The provision of learning resources is good. The school makes efficient use of its finances to support teaching and learning and gives good value for money.

Recommendations

47. In order to improve further, the school needs to:
- R1 address shortcomings identified in design and technology in order to raise standards*
 - R2 share the existing good practice to ensure consistency of teaching to a high standard in all classes
 - R3 review planning in order to provide a balanced and progressive curriculum across the school and ensure that provision complies fully with requirements
 - R4 allow pupils more opportunities to learn for themselves and make their own decisions and choices in order to become more independent in their learning
 - R5 put in place a structured programme for the development of key skills across the curriculum*
 - R6 continue to develop whole school assessment strategies in the foundation subjects*

* already identified as areas of priority in the current school development plan.

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

Standards

Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

48. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.

49. Standards of achievement in the lessons observed were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	76%	16%	4%	-

50. These are slightly under the 2007 Welsh Assembly Government targets for 98 per cent of lessons to be grade 3 or above, but exceed the target of 65 per cent of all lessons to be grade 2 or above.

Area of Learning	Nursery	Reception
Language, literacy and communication	3	2
Personal and social development	2	2
Mathematical development	2	2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	2	1
Creative development	2	2
Physical development	2	2

Subject	Key Stage 1
Subject 1 English	2
Subject 2 Science	2
Subject 3 Design and technology	3
Subject 4 Music	2
Subject 5 Religious Education	2

51. The overall quality of the provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and they make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

52. All pupils, regardless of their backgrounds and including those with SEN, make good progress and achieve good standards.

53. In key skills, standards in listening are good with no important shortcomings throughout the school. This is a notable feature. Skills in speaking are more variable. In nursery and year 1, good features outweigh shortcomings; many children and pupils have a limited vocabulary. In reception and year 2, standards are better and show good features with no important shortcomings.

54. In reading, good features outweigh shortcomings in nursery but in reception and key stage one standards are good with no important shortcomings. From

an early age in the reception class, pupils handle books well and know the written word carries meaning; by the end of the key stage, pupils read a variety of texts and know the purpose of books. Standards in writing in nursery and reception are good overall, but children do not develop their skills of independent writing sufficiently. In year 1, standards in writing are good with some shortcomings. Pupils in year 1 do not develop their emergent writing sufficiently. However, pupils make good progress and standards in year 2 are good with no important shortcomings; although workbooks inhibit independent writing, pupils engage fully in an appropriate variety of writing tasks across subjects.

55. In numeracy, standards throughout the school have good features that outweigh shortcomings. Pupils do not apply their mathematical skills sufficiently across the curriculum and have insufficient experience in consolidating and applying number skills and problem solving in other subject areas. Standards in ICT are good with no important shortcomings. Under-fives and pupils in key stage 1 show confidence and good skills in using the interactive white board. On computers they develop good word processing skills and can handle a range of programs; they use computers well for designing T-shirts and creating graphs at the upper end of the school.
56. In the 2005 end of key stage teacher assessments, pupils achieving level 2 or above slightly exceeded the 2004 Rhondda Cynon Taff and Wales average in English, with a higher proportion achieving this level in mathematics and science. At the higher level 3, pupils exceeded the Wales' and LEA figures by 12 per cent in English, 18 per cent in mathematics and 24 per cent in science.
57. There was a significant margin between the performance of boys and girls, in favour of boys, in the English and science assessments. However, there were far fewer girls than boys in the cohort and nearly a half of these had special educational needs and were at School Action Plus. There was no gender difference in the mathematics assessments.
58. When compared with similar schools [on the basis of free school meal entitlement], the results place the school in the top 25 per cent for maths and science and close to the top 25 per cent for English and the core subject indicator [the percentage of pupils achieving at least level 2 in the three core subjects]. Of the 19 pupils assessed at this time, 12 were on the SEN register.
59. The school has maintained its good standards in the core subjects, having regularly exceeded the LEA figures since the last inspection. Good standards in the foundation subjects inspected have been retained except in design and technology where they are judged to be good with some shortcomings.
60. Pupils acquire new knowledge quickly and are constantly reminded of the need that to progress it is important to perfect their skills. They listen well when teachers share the learning objective and to the support provided during their activities and therefore show a good understanding of what they are doing.

61. Pupils are becoming more aware of how they are progressing but are not yet fully aware of what they need to do improve. The majority fulfil their potential especially at the upper end of the key stage; the more able do not always extend their skills and understanding sufficiently.
62. Pupils' personal and social skills are good. They work and play together harmoniously and relate well to adults. Attitudes towards work and learning are generally positive, especially where activities are exciting and challenging.
63. Pupils are very well behaved and relationships throughout the school are very good. The foundations of good behaviour are laid effectively in the nursery. Children happily leave their parents and settle very quickly into school life at this early stage of the year.
64. Pupils show respect for each other, for all school staff and for visitors. They are polite and friendly and respond well to instructions and requests. Pupils know and understand the rules they help to devise. They move around the school in an orderly manner and demonstrate good self-discipline and a consideration to others. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour.
65. The under-fives make good progress and achieve good standards in their creative and problem solving skills. They demonstrate the capacity to work independently. In key stage 1, however, the good start is not sustained and pupils make insufficient progress in the application of their creative and problem solving skills across the curriculum. Very directed activities and the desire to produce work with no mistakes limits pupils' progress in their ability to apply their knowledge and skills in new situations.
66. Attendance statistics for the last three terms before the inspection show an average of 91per cent, which is below the Wales average. Most absences are due to childhood illnesses. In such a small school the frequent short absences of a small number of pupils and family holidays in term time have a disproportionate effect on the overall average attendance. A small number of pupils in both classes and the nursery arrive late at the start of the day. This often disrupts the class and these pupils miss the important parts of the first lesson of the day, which impacts on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.
67. Pupils show a good understanding of social and moral issues. They have respect for the values and beliefs of others and, relative to their ages, have a good awareness of the significance of equality of opportunity.
68. Pupils make a valuable contribution to the local community and enjoy visits to places, some linked to the world of work. Occasions such as singing with the male voice choir and raising funds for local charities ensure pupils make good progress in their understanding of the contribution they make to the local community.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

69. The inspection team's findings differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report as the school judged this question a grade 2.

70. During the inspection, the grades awarded for the quality of teaching were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
11	52	26	7	4

71. The quality of teaching in the under-fives unit is consistently grade 3 or above, with 80 per cent being grade two or one. This is above the national picture, where 72 per cent of teaching is graded 1 or 2. In key stage 1, 75 per cent of teaching was grade 3 or higher, which is below the average. The good quality teaching by the permanent staff has been sustained since the last inspection, with 80 per cent of their teaching being grade 1 or grade 2 this time. At the time of inspection, one class was being taught by a temporary teacher.

72. Relationships that foster good learning have outstanding features in the under-five unit and are good in key stage 1. Short term planning is generally detailed and includes appropriate learning outcomes. However, differentiation is not a consistent feature of planning; this is mainly done by the outcome of task or amount of adult support. Teachers identify key skills that will be used in lessons, but there is no means of ensuring their development across the curriculum in a systematic way. This is being addressed in the current school development plan [SDP].

73. In lessons that have no important shortcomings, the good features include:

- o good subject knowledge;
- o clear objectives that are shared with pupils;
- o exciting activities that are stimulating and challenging for pupils of all ability;
- o a lively pace with a good range of teaching techniques employed;
- o clear instruction and good quality open questioning.

74. In lessons where less effective teaching occurs, the shortcomings include:

- o initial presentations that are too long and the pace is too slow;
- o inadequate management of pupil behaviour;
- o activities that are insufficiently challenging to engage and extend some pupils;
- o over-direction of pupils and an over-reliance on prepared worksheets, which limit opportunities for independent learning;

75. Teachers regularly evaluate how successful their lessons have been and use the information to guide their forward planning. However, on occasions, a

lack of flexibility in key stage 1 results in lessons that are insufficiently linked to the needs of individual pupils.

76. All adults ensure that each pupil, irrespective of background or gender receives equality of opportunity to participate in all aspects of the school's life. Issues of gender stereotyping are actively addressed through, for example, the provision of a football club led by a female coach and visits from the local, female, vicar.
77. Frequent use of Welsh in the classroom is effective in consolidating pupils' bilingual skills; they understand and respond readily to simple instructions given in Welsh.
78. Procedures for assessment are good. Children who enter school on their third birthday are assessed within a few weeks of admission. They are assessed formally according to the LEA baseline in the early weeks of attending the reception class. Parents are kept informed of assessment outcomes. This leads to a pupil tracking system, which is used effectively to employ staff and consider support strategies.
79. In key stage 1, teachers know their pupils well. Assessment opportunities identified mainly in core subject planning are usually by observation; references are made to issues which arise in teachers' planning evaluations. When marking pupils' work, positive and supportive comments are made, but suggestions for improvement are not recorded. Assessment strategies in the foundation subjects are less consistent across the key stage.
80. The school carries out a number of standard tests during the key stage; these results, as well as reading progress, are fully recorded.
81. Long-term targets are set for individual pupils and the school has made a start on setting small measurable targets in literacy and numeracy for groups of pupils. Pupils are not yet involved in self-assessment but a system of 'traffic light' marking recently adopted informs them when they can move on in their learning.
82. Pupils have good quality individual Record of Achievement Files, which contain records and selected examples of their work.
83. Subject profiles in core subjects include examples of work that are annotated and levelled. These provide teachers with good guidance on levelling pupils' work in accordance with National Curriculum levels; however, not all teachers are experienced in levelling work. Subject profiles in many foundation subjects have recently been created but as yet they are not effective in providing guidance on National Curriculum levels.
84. Reporting to parents and carers more than fulfils statutory requirements. Parents are invited to school twice annually to discuss their child's progress; parents of those with individual education plans [IEPs] are invited for a further visit. Annual reports to parents make clear comments on what pupils can do

particularly in core subjects; aspects where parents can help are suitably identified.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

85. The inspection team's findings differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report as the school judged this question a grade 1. Shortcomings in the curriculum balance and inconsistencies in long and short-term planning account for differences in grades awarded.
86. The school generally provides a broad and relevant curriculum both for its under-fives and pupils in key stage 1. However, curricular provision does not comply fully with statutory requirements in key stage 1; it is not balanced as insufficient time is allocated in the timetable for physical education. The school is aware of the imbalance in the provision and is planning changes.
87. Although the provision for pupils in nursery and reception is appropriate and is often presented through exciting and stimulating activities, long term planning is not sufficiently specific to ensure a consistently balanced curriculum.
88. A curriculum map provides a clear overall picture of what is being taught in key stage 1. Schemes of work for all subjects of the national curriculum and religious education are in place. They vary in quality and effectiveness. Many are commercial and LEA produced schemes and not all have been matched completely to the needs of the school. The interpretation of some schemes of work leads to an imbalance within subjects.
89. Short term planning is generally detailed and includes appropriate learning outcomes. However, differentiation is not a consistent feature of planning; this is frequently done by the outcome of task or amount of adult support. Continuity and progression in key skills across the key stage is not always evident and provision sometimes does not provide extended activities for the more able pupils. Curricular provision for pupils with SEN is good especially in year 2 where small groups of pupils are withdrawn for extra support.
90. The school has started to identify relevant key skills in the schemes of work and lesson planning, but there are no means of ensuring their development through the curriculum in a systematic way. The school has identified this as an area for improvement in the current SDP.
91. Homework provided enhances the curriculum. Provision includes a variety of reading and spelling tasks, activities to support learning in mathematics and researching for further information on class topics.
92. After school clubs, which include gardening, science activities and games, further extend pupils' learning effectively.

93. Visits to places of interest in the area promote a sense of belonging to the community and visits further afield enrich learning; this is an outstanding feature. Pupils benefit from working with a wide range of professionals such as theatre groups and musicians, road safety and environmental agencies. These experiences make a substantial contribution towards pupils' progress in subject knowledge and understanding. Visits, for example to a power station and museums, as well as local shops and visitors from the community make a good contribution towards pupils' understanding of the world of work both past and present.
94. Pupils' cultural development is good. *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* features prominently; pupils are aware of Welsh music, Welsh folk tales and aspects of life in Wales today and in the past. They are also introduced appropriately to cultural diversity through books and artefacts.
95. Provision for the development of pupils' bilingual skills is good. Opportunities to experience the Welsh language are integrated into a variety of activities. For example, pupils sing and say prayers in Welsh and read Welsh books, which consolidates their language patterns; they show a good understanding of instructions and the incidental use of the language.
96. Overall, the school makes good provision for social and moral development. Although social development is sometimes inhibited by lack of independent learning, pupils develop social skills appropriately as they work and play together well. Provision for moral development is good. Issues are discussed in circle time and in collective worship; pupils are aware of what virtues are important in life. Spiritual development is less effective as pupils do not always have time to reflect on messages conveyed in collective worship.
97. Partnerships with parents and the community are good. A number of parents and other adults help in class. The provision of a whole day Family Numeracy group is outstanding and is attended by a good number of parents who work alongside their children. Parents are well informed about the life and work of the school through letters, a school prospectus and annual report from the chair of governors, which conform to statutory requirements. In a pre-inspection meeting and questionnaire, parents expressed their satisfaction with the school.
98. Links with the community are good and include strong links with the local church and supermarket. Pupils often take part in community events such as when they sing with the local male voice choir. They are involved in several environmental initiatives with RCT and collect for a good variety of local and world wide charities.
99. Links with the local junior school and with its other feeder infant school are good. The school receives trainee teachers from a local university, childcare students from a local college and students on placements from the local comprehensive school. Links with industry are good and staff are involved with Education Business Partnership initiatives.

100. The school strongly promotes equality of access and opportunity for all and is robust in its efforts to tackle social disadvantage. Pupils, irrespective of their social backgrounds, gender, disability or ethnicity are positively included in all activities. For example, the Eco Committee includes representatives from both classes and the early years. Their responsibilities include reporting back to the whole school.
101. Pupils' understanding of sustainable development is very well developed: this is an outstanding feature. The school has achieved Green Flag status. The school grounds and visits to a local environmental centre are used extensively to enhance the curriculum. These experiences successfully raise pupils' awareness of sustainable development and environmental issues. Pupils have good knowledge of how to care for the environment and the effects of litter, for example, on pond life. Pupils are involved in a recycling programme from an early age including producing compost for the school garden.
102. Pupils learn about business through role-play and the occasional sale of plant pots in the summer fete. Although one teacher has previously undertaken industrial placements and another has recently been trained in the Dynamo project, the development of pupils' entrepreneurial skills has yet to be addressed.
103. The school attends well to national priorities for lifelong learning and community regeneration. It runs family literacy and numeracy courses to enable parents to help their children with their learning. Pupils in turn see their parents as life long learners.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

104. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
105. Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported. Support programmes are carefully integrated into the school's work so that they meet the needs of the pupils and ensure equality of opportunity. Staff liaise effectively with a wide range of support services. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and pupils feel valued, happy and secure.
106. Teachers know pupils and their parents very well and have developed effective partnerships with parents, carers and the community. A number of adults provide good quality assistance in class as well as with after school clubs and educational visits. Relationships between teachers and parents are good and there are effective arrangements to keep parents informed about school life and to answer any concerns they may have.
107. Transitional arrangements from home to school are carefully planned and implemented. The school's flexible arrangements enable the youngest

children to settle very quickly into school life. There are effective arrangements for pupils who join the school later in the year and for the well-established transition for year 2 pupils.

108. The school provides good quality personal support and guidance to pupils and their families. The school has an effective personal and social education policy that permeates all aspects of school life. The Eco Committee helps “to make the school a better place to live”. The Link Up group for parents and pre-school age children is well supported and beneficial, and is effective in ensuring children’s smooth transition into school.
109. There are effective policies and procedures to monitor pupils’ attendance, punctuality and behaviour. Most teachers apply policies for behaviour management consistently. All adults are involved in the reward system. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or any other forms of unacceptable behaviour. Attendance and punctuality are carefully monitored. Pupils with almost perfect attendance are rewarded termly and at the year-end. A home/school contract is in place.
110. The adults in the school are well aware of pupils with particular needs and are knowledgeable about procedures in the event of accidents or emergencies such as how to help pupils with identified allergic reactions. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy: risk assessments are systematic and all staff are alert to issues relating to the well being of pupils. However, procedures for recording evacuation drills do not fully meet regulations.
111. The school participates in the Healthy School initiative and provides a number of health promoting activities for pupils. Pupils are encouraged to eat fruit at break-times and staff organise a range of fun and fitness clubs as well as a gardening club that promote healthy exercise. Older pupils benefit from specialist football coaching.
112. There is an effective policy and well-established procedures for child protection. The head teacher is the designated person; teachers and support staff are very aware of their responsibilities.
113. The school has well-planned and documented procedures for dealing with race equality and equal opportunities. All pupils are encouraged and enabled to take part in the activities provided by the school. Circle Time is used effectively to discuss any concerns they have and pupils devise their own rules. Where issues arise they are dealt with in a sensitive manner.
114. The school has appropriate arrangements to ensure any disabled pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to all school activities. An ongoing programme to ensure that all the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act are met is in place.
115. There is good representation of diversity in the curriculum and pupils know about the importance of respect and tolerance. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for respect for others.

116. Pupils with SEN are identified early from observations and formal assessments in the under-fives classes. Appropriate in-class support is provided for less able pupils across the key stage. Although many children in year 1 are identified as having speech problems, specialist withdrawal support is restricted to year 2 where some pupils receive reading support on a weekly basis and those who are eligible benefit from 'Catch Up' sessions.
117. All staff are involved in planning for the needs of pupils with SEN. The IEPs are produced termly, are of a good quality and are monitored regularly by the special educational needs co-ordinator [SENCo]. Documentation fulfils statutory requirements and support services are used effectively.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

118. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
119. The head teacher, recently promoted within the school, has established good relationships at all levels and ensures the school offers a safe, happy and secure environment. Her leadership is at an early stage, but she has identified development issues related to sustaining and further improving the provision and standards within the school. She is supported well by the senior teacher while awaiting the appointment of a deputy head next term.
120. The school has agreed aims, values and policies, which are understood and shared by staff and governors. All pupils are included in every aspect of the school's life. The school day proceeds effectively and efficiently.
121. The school takes good account of national and local priorities. It is fully involved in local cluster and partnership arrangements. Since the last inspection, the school has gained the Investors in People, the Quality Mark for Basic Skills and the Eco School awards. The SDP is closely linked to Rhondda Cynon Taff's strategic plan and the priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government.
122. The head teacher has a suitable planned programme for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in the core subjects. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science is firmly established, but systematic evaluation of the foundation subjects is under-developed and insufficiently focused in monitoring standards achieved.
123. Assessment information is scrutinised carefully and used to set challenging, but realistic, end of key stage targets in the core subjects. Group targets have recently been set for the first time, and individual target setting is planned for development this year.
124. Performance management procedures are well established in the school and successfully promote teachers' continuous professional development. In-service training and staff development are suitably matched to the requirements of the school's development plan and to the needs of the individual.
125. The governing body is very supportive of all aspects of the school. It meets regularly and undertakes its duties conscientiously. Termly written reports made by the head teacher ensure governors are fully informed of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Visits and in-class support are helping some governors to gain a greater awareness of life and work within

the school, although governors do not formally monitor standards in all subjects.

126. The school has identified whole-school targets that provide suitable challenges to improve provision and standards. They are presented to and discussed by the governors who give support by the provision of appropriate resources. Scope exists for governors to be even more involved in the decision-making processes.
127. The governors ensure regulatory and legal requirements are met.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

128. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
129. The self-evaluation report, produced by the school before the inspection, addresses the seven key questions of the inspection framework. In each key question, strengths and areas for improvement were identified. The inspection team agreed with five of the seven grades awarded by the school, with lower grades given for key questions 2 and 3. The discrepancy in grades awarded for teaching were due to the shortcomings identified in the class with the temporary teacher and the imbalance in the curriculum. However, the school is aware of the imbalance in the provision for physical education and is planning changes.
130. Teaching and non-teaching staff were fully involved with the production of the self-evaluation document, but parents and pupils were not given the opportunity to contribute towards its findings. The governing body, though not involved with the initial compilation of the self-evaluation document, was consulted and held critical discussions regarding its content. The inclusion of all interested parties in the self-evaluation process has been identified by the school as an aspect requiring improvement. The school is making sound progress towards developing a more analytical approach to self-evaluation.
131. The school development plan is an effective document. It is compiled by the head teacher and staff, and takes note of an annual review of subjects. The development plan covers the years 2005-2008, with the current year set out in detail under appropriate headings with costings, realistic timescales and criteria for success. Initiatives undertaken are backed by the necessary resources, such as inter-active whiteboards, which have made a substantial impact upon the quality of provision.
132. Subject leadership is good in the core subjects and the monitoring is good. In the foundation subjects, monitoring is less formal, but due to the size and

nature of the small school, leaders generally have a sound understanding of provision and standards.

133. The head teacher and staff study the results of core subject assessments to identify areas that require further development. Additional information comes from the tracking of pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school and appropriate targets are set in the core subjects.
134. At the last inspection, the key issues concentrated upon maintaining standards and reviewing registration procedures. Both have been successfully carried out, except for standards in design and technology, which are now judged to have good features with some shortcomings. The school has moved forwards and successfully implemented a number of initiatives since the last inspection, including Investors in People, Basic Skills Award 2003 and Eco School status. [Green Flag Award].

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

135. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
136. The building and grounds provide a suitable and pleasant setting for teaching and learning.
137. The accommodation for under-fives is attractive and used well to include both nursery and reception children. A large and small room are time tabled appropriately to enable pupils in both groups to have appropriate experiences across the areas of learning. However, opportunities for children to practise large physical skills, such as balancing, climbing and crawling, are restricted because the lack of space limits the use of suitable equipment on a daily basis.
138. Although teaching areas for the two key stage 1 classes are small and offer limited space for practical and creative activities, a shared area between the year 1 and year 2 classes is used well for these activities. Storage areas are used effectively to ensure resources are readily at hand.
139. The foyer of the school is well organised to provide a welcoming ethos to visitors. The main hall is used well both for a range of pupil activities and for a project involving parents one day a week. A garden area within the school building enhances the environment and is used very well to further pupils' awareness of environmental issues and gardening skills.
140. The building is kept clean and tidy; attractive displays in the foyer, hall and classrooms provide a pleasant environment and community feeling throughout in the school. The accommodation is completely accessible for the disabled and is secure for all pupils.

141. There are sufficient toilets for pupils of all ages. Temporary measures have been taken to address issues of hygiene in them and the school is awaiting a more permanent solution.
142. Access to the play areas is from the back of the school. This provides maximum safety for pupils and ensures orderly entrances and exits to the school. Play areas, including a discreet one for under-fives, are small but well marked with a variety of games. A grassed area is used very well for a variety of curricular activities.
143. The school has sufficient appropriately qualified teaching staff for the number of pupils. Although responsibilities are well matched to experience and qualifications, the head and a senior teacher have vast responsibilities. The school is aware of the need to share responsibilities further when the new management structure is in place. Effective use is made of a part time teacher.
144. The school has a number of support staff that are generally well placed and used effectively. Examples were seen during the inspection of outstanding contributions by support staff. The school secretary plays a very active and efficient part in the daily life of the school. The lunchtime supervisors, kitchen and cleaning staff and caretaker all make valuable contributions to the smooth running of the school.
145. The school is well resourced for teaching and learning. Equipment is in good condition and effective use is made of resources in most lessons. There is a good supply of interactive white boards, which are used extremely effectively by staff. The school has a plentiful supply of books, an exciting range of musical instruments and interesting historical artefacts. Effective use is made of resources in the local environment.
146. Expenditure is monitored effectively and the school provides good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Subject 1: Early Years

Under-fives – Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

147. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs, and they make a good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Children make good progress in the six areas of learning.

Good features

Language, literacy and communication skills

148. Despite a good number starting from a low standard upon entry to school, by the end of the reception year, standards of achievement are good.
149. In the nursery, children learn to listen very well to adults and to other pupils. Those who have been in school for a while show good progress and respond well to adults' questions and are starting to ask pertinent questions. Most listen carefully to stories and are developing an understanding that pictures and words carry meaning. They handle books with respect and older children know how to turn pages correctly.
150. In the reception class, children usually make themselves understood and contribute well to discussions in lessons. When learning about dinosaurs, they use the correct names with pride and enthusiasm, relishing in their ability to remember and repeat the long words. They enjoy stories, realise what contributions the writer and illustrator makes and can relate their favourite part of a story. When handling books they show enjoyment and start to identify the sounds represented by the written letters. Many write their own names without help, using mostly correctly formed letters that are legible and of a good size. Children make a good start to learning Welsh; they respond accurately to simple questions and occasionally, without being asked, answer an English question in Welsh.

Personal and social development

151. Children make good and often very good progress in the development of their personal and social skills. Standards of achievement are good in both classes.
152. A number of children are new to the nursery this term; they have settled into school routines well and their behaviour is very good for their age. Older children in the nursery are well behaved and are starting to learn the importance of taking turns either in small groups or whole class. On occasions, they help each other and willingly share their resources. Most children listen carefully to adults and then concentrate well on the given tasks.

153. In the reception class, children behave well and concentrate for increasing lengths of time. They are very keen learners and respond to the exciting and challenging activities with great enthusiasm and confidence. When required, children realise the need for assistance and ask adults for their help or permission politely, using suitable language. Examples were observed of children initiating support and help for their peers who were experiencing difficulties with their work.

Mathematical development

154. Children make good progress and achieve good standards in their mathematical development.
155. Children in the nursery learn mathematical language in a good variety of activities. For example, they sort toy dinosaurs by given characteristics and count them when sorted. They enjoy learning simple number rhymes and counting games, which they join in with increasing confidence. During activities, younger children sort and match by, for example, colour and size, while older children count confidently to six or beyond.
156. In the reception class, children show confidence in their sorting, matching, sequencing and counting activities. They count confidently to ten or beyond and can name familiar shapes, such as squares and triangles. Children are developing a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary, such as long and short, big and small, above and below, through practical, meaningful activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

157. Children sometimes demonstrate excellent attitudes towards their learning about the world about them and achieve good standards, sometimes with outstanding features in the reception year.
158. In the nursery, children are curious and keen to explore the world about them. They eagerly collect materials from outside and match their colours to charts. When learning how to plant bulbs, they are interested, show wonderment at the different sizes of bulbs and begin to learn about life processes. They handle the materials correctly and show good standards of understanding.
159. In the reception class, children explore and recognise features of their environment when, for example, they follow a code of mathematical shapes when searching for 'escaped dinosaurs'. They talk about their observations excitedly and ask relevant questions. Children demonstrate a very good knowledge about caring for the environment and the process of recycling natural materials. They begin to develop their technological skills when they operate the computer mouse independently and accurately and use the interactive white board with confidence during group sessions. They can talk about the weather and know the different parts of the day. In their technology, children explore a good range of materials and constructional apparatus, selecting and joining them to make a good range of articles. They join in

readily with a range of simple Welsh phrases and respond appropriately to simple instructions in Welsh.

Creative development

160. Children achieve good standards in their creative development. Exciting resources and a dinosaurs 'cave' enable children in the nursery to participate in good quality collaborative and imaginative play. They identify loud and quiet sounds in their music making and can name familiar instruments. Children employ a good range of resources to produce a wide range of pictures and models.
161. Children in the reception class sing a good range of songs, hymns and rhymes in English and Welsh. They sing in tune and with enthusiasm. They are eager to make creative suggestions and make very good choices to match a range of musical instruments to animal sounds they wish to make for a 'rap'. They first narrow the selection then listen to the instrument sounds before making final decisions. They are starting to evaluate their own work and make suitable comments about the quality of their results. They work with a wide range of materials and media to produce pictures of a good standard. A very large group picture of a dinosaur was a fine example of co-operative creative work.

Physical development

162. Nursery children show a good awareness of space for their age, when aiming, throwing and batting. The most co-ordinated are dextrous in their handling of different sized balls, bouncing them effectively and using bats competently to send the balls a considerable distance. Older pupils are developing good skipping skills. They show good control of three-wheeled bicycles, making them move at varying speeds at will.
163. Most children in the reception class handle small tools, such as pencils, pens and paintbrushes with good control and use small pieces of modelling and building equipment with increasing dexterity. During outdoor sessions, children generally run and play enthusiastically. They show a good awareness of space when moving and when riding bikes, steering and controlling them around the winding painted pathways.

Shortcomings

164. At this early stage of the year, several children in the nursery have difficulty in responding to questions.

Subject 2: English

Key Stage 1 – Grade 2: good features with no important shortcomings

Good features

165. Pupils across the key stage develop good listening skills in literacy sessions; the majority listen avidly to stories told and read by teachers and to questions about the things they have heard. They listen well to instructions and stories they hear from tapes and develop an increasing understanding of vocabulary and phrases.
166. In year 1, pupils respond well to a class story. The majority speak clearly with feeling when giving appropriate answers on its contents, including discussing characters, events and sequence. They relate well with the characters, can express what is happening to them in the story and can speak with empathy about the emotions conveyed by the text.
167. Pupils in year 1 read a familiar text together fluently and expressively and demonstrate a clear understanding of its contents. They use a range of learning strategies to read unfamiliar texts and apply their letter and sound knowledge effectively.
168. In year 1, pupils copy sentences and phrases correctly and understand how to use basic punctuation to form an accurate sentence.
169. In year 2, pupils can ask a variety of questions and give appropriate answers. In a session related to a well-known character from their class story, they ask imaginative questions and give relevant and expressive answers, which are structured well.
170. Skills in reading develop well in year 2. When reading aloud, pupils convey direct and indirect speech in texts effectively.
171. In year 2, pupils have a good awareness of how books work and realise that fact and fiction books differ in their format. They have a good terminology related to books and can discuss the role of an author and an illustrator. They know that stories they enjoy have a good beginning, middle and ending.
172. Pupils in year 2 have a clear understanding of the difference between questions and answers. They write regularly for different purposes; for example they compose letters to a scarecrow, prayers saying thank you and very effective poems describing the seasons and a walk in the woods.
173. Across the key stage pupils' spelling and handwriting skills develop appropriately in line with their age and ability.

Shortcomings

174. Pupils do not demonstrate sufficient progress in emergent writing in year 1 and across the key stage, pupils' creative writing skills are limited.

Subject 3: Science

Key Stage 1 – Grade 2: good features with no important shortcomings

Good features

175. Pupils make good progress in their knowledge and skills of scientific enquiry. During lessons and discussions, pupils use related scientific vocabulary with increasing confidence. They demonstrate good attitudes towards their science activities and carry them out with enthusiasm.
176. Pupils show a suitable level of understanding related to the concept of a fair test. By the end of the key stage, they have a good understanding of how to set up a test and record their findings, which they use confidently in their investigations.
177. Observations and results are recorded in a good variety of ways. For example, in year 1, pupils draw, fill in charts and write in simple sentences. By the end of the key stage, pupils include tables, labelled diagrams and computerised graphs to document their findings.
178. Older pupils use appropriate standard units of measure for length and mass, for example, with increasing accuracy.
179. Pupils have a good developing knowledge related to life processes and living things. Younger pupils learn to correctly name body parts and know the needs of living things, including plants. Older pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and the need to care for themselves.
180. Pupils in year 1 correctly name a good range of materials in the environment and categorise them according to their basic properties, which they describe using correct vocabulary. Older pupils apply their knowledge appropriately when learning about the influence of properties upon their suitability for use.
181. In year 1, pupils correctly identify natural and artificial sources of light and, in year 2, they show sound knowledge of electricity, making circuits and investigating which materials are good conductors.
182. The participation of a large number of pupils in the Bays Science Club makes a considerable impact upon the development of skills, knowledge and understanding in all aspects of their science learning.

Shortcomings

183. Higher achieving pupils do not make sufficient attempts to explain their observations or results.

Subject 4: Design and Technology

Key Stage 1 – Grade 3: good features with some shortcomings

Good features

184. Across the key stage, pupils have a good understanding of the health and safety aspects involved in the subject.
185. When preparing to make fruit kebabs, pupils in year 1 have a good understanding of the kinds of fruit that can be used. They name many countries from where fruits originate including some exotic and unusual ones. They design their fruit kebabs appropriately sequencing the fruit they use.
186. Pupils in year 1 use a range of suitable materials and skills to create attractive tablemats. They combine different colours and materials effectively and develop good weaving techniques. They use appropriate vocabulary to describe the process.
187. In year 2, pupils assemble and disassemble a range of vehicles using a variety of tools. They understand the function of each part and can explain how to attach the axle to the chassis and add wheels. When assembling and disassembling boxes they understand nets and outline them effectively.
188. Year 2 pupils use computers effectively to design attractive T-shirts and have a good understanding of tie and dye techniques.
189. Across the key stage pupils use an appropriate range of construction kits to enhance their understanding of how mechanisms work.

Shortcomings

190. In key stage 1, pupils' use of designing and making skills, are limited.
191. Across the key stage, pupils do not extend their imaginative skills sufficiently; products are often uniform as their skills in making choices are limited.
192. Across the key stage pupils' evaluating skills are underdeveloped.

Subject 5: Music

Key Stage 1 – Grade 2: good features with no important shortcomings

Good features

193. Pupils across the key stage demonstrate good skills in singing in small groups, in individual classes and as a whole school. They know and recall easily a good range of seasonal, traditional and nonsense songs in both Welsh and English, which they sing tunefully; they interpret the meaning with appropriate body movements.
194. In year 1, pupils can name a number of untuned instruments. They have a good understanding of the variety of sounds produced by these instruments and can identify which one produces a particular sound. They handle these instruments appropriately and can demonstrate the techniques involved in playing a selection of them.
195. In year 1, pupils show a good understanding of tempo and rhythm. They develop these elements well when composing accompaniments to a nursery rhyme.
196. In year 2, pupils understand that a musical composition has a structure. They can recognise the verse and chorus in *Sosban Fach*, which they can identify as a rugby nonsense song. They sing tunefully, enunciating the words well, and show a good awareness of pitch when singing in groups. When marching to the beat of its tune they develop a good sense of rhythm.
197. Across the key stage pupils develop a good musical vocabulary and use terminology such as 'high' and 'low', 'slow' and 'fast' correctly.
198. Their understanding of musical sounds and tuned instruments develops well when seeing and handling a full size concert harp played by a visiting musician.

Shortcomings

199. Pupils' skills of appraising music are limited.

Subject 6: Religious Education

Key Stage 1 – Grade 2: good features with no important shortcomings

Good features

200. Pupils are developing an appropriate understanding of the need for rules in our daily lives, including school rules, which they help to formulate at the beginning of each academic year. When talking about the importance of rules, pupils show a good understanding of their benefits and the

consequences of breaking them. Older pupils show an appropriate understanding of the rules contained within the Bible.

201. Pupils in year 1 show great interest in the Christian custom of baptism and develop a sound understanding of the principal personnel and artefacts involved in the ceremony.
202. Pupils talk confidently about experiences they value and start to appreciate the importance of festivals and celebrations as special times. They display enthusiastic interest in the customs of Christianity and Judaism, and show respect for the right of individuals to follow different faiths.
203. In year 2, pupils are making good progress in their ability to compare religious festivals, such as Harvest and Sukkot, identifying similarities and differences.
204. Pupils in both year groups acquire relevant knowledge about religious beliefs and practices from a good range of sources including visits to the local church and to a synagogue.
205. Pupils show very good knowledge gained from the visits to the places of worship, recalling them with clarity and in detail. Older pupils are very familiar with some of the visual features found in a synagogue and are respectful of the beliefs held by members of the Jewish faith.

Shortcomings

206. A few older pupils are insufficiently knowledgeable about the reasons for celebration at major Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter.

School's response to the inspection

The governors and staff of Ferndale Infants are pleased that the inspection findings recognise that the school has maintained its good standards in the core subjects, having regularly exceeded the LEA figures since the last inspection. It also recognises that the school has moved forwards and successfully implemented a number of initiatives since the last inspection, including Investors in People, Basic Skills Award 2003 and the Eco Schools Award.

The report also identifies the following outstanding features:

- visits to places of interest in the area to promote a sense of belonging and visits further afield which enrich learning.
- Pupils' understanding of sustainable development is very well developed
- The provision of a whole day Family Numeracy Group, as an example of the school attending well to national priorities for lifelong learning and community regeneration.

We are also pleased that the report recognises that pupils have good personal and learning skills, that pupils are usually very well behaved, that good provision is made for social and moral development, and that pupils' cultural development is good with *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* featuring prominently.

The inspection report also acknowledges that the governing body is very supportive of all aspects of the school.

An action plan will be put in place to address the recommendations in the report. We feel confident that we can address the recommendations, as some of the issues identified are already areas of priority in our school development plan.

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

We will continue to develop and use our self-evaluation processes to continually raise standards and fulfil the aims of our school.

Appendix A

Basic information about the school

Name of School	Ferndale Infants School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3-7 years
Address of School	North Road Ferndale Rhondda Cynon Taff
Post-code	CF43 4PS
Telephone number	01443 755858
Head teacher	Mrs Rhian Rees
Date of appointment	01.06.05
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Alwyn Davies
Registered inspector	Mrs Christine Llewellyn
Dates of inspection	26-28 September 2005

Appendix B

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	23	18	27	22					90

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	4	.4	4.4

Staffing information	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	15 : 1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	7 : 1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	22
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1.1 : 1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Whole School
Summer 2005	88.5	90.5	88.9
Spring 2005	89.8	93.9	90.8
Autumn 2004	93.7	95.1	93.76

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	20
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; National figures 2004			Number of pupils in Y2					19
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
English:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	16	53	32	0
		National	0	4	13	63	20	0
En: reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	16	42	42	0
		National	0	3	11	63	23	0
En: writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	11	58	32	0
		National	0	5	14	69	11	0
En: speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	11	47	42	0
		National	0	4	14	55	26	0
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	58	42	0
		National	0	2	11	63	24	0
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	11	42	47	0
		National	0	2	10	65	23	0

D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements

W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Appendix D

Evidence base of the inspection

A team of three inspectors were present at the school for six inspector days and met as a team before the inspection. In addition, a peer assessor and the head teacher, as the nominee, worked with the team during the inspection.

Before the inspection:

- meetings were held with the head teacher, staff, parents and the governing body to discuss the life and work of the school;
- questionnaires were distributed to all parents and the fifteen returned were analysed;
- school documentation, including the self-evaluation document, was scrutinised.

During the inspection:

- twenty-seven lessons or part lessons were observed;
- other observations included assemblies, registration and extra-curricular activities;
- pupils' behaviour was observed during break periods, at lunchtimes and at the beginning and end of the school sessions;
- discussions were held with the head teacher, class teachers, support staff and non-teaching staff about their roles and responsibilities;
- discussions were held with pupils about their work and life in school;
- pupils' work on display and a sample of their work from each year group was scrutinised.

After the inspection:

post inspection meetings were held to give oral feedback to the head teacher, staff and the governing body.

Appendix E

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mrs C Llewellyn Registered Inspector	Context Summary and Recommendations Key Questions 1,2 5 and 6 Early Years Science Religious Education
Mrs E Betts Team inspector	Key Questions 3, 7; Contributions towards Key Questions 1 and 4 English Design and Technology Music
Mrs C Lewis Lay Inspector	Key Question 4 Contributions towards Key Questions 1,2 and 3

The contractor was:

Evenlode Education Ltd
8 Fisher Close
Duxford
Cambridgeshire
CB2 4XU

Acknowledgement

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

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

**Ferndale Infants School
North Road
Ferndale
Rhondda Cynon Taff
CF43 4PS**

Summary for Parents

School Number: 6742115

Date of Inspection: 26-28 September 2005

by

**Mrs C Llewellyn
78272**

Date: 28 November 2005

Under Estyn contract number: T/067/05

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Basic information about the school

Name of School	Ferndale Infants School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3-7 years
Address of School	North Road Ferndale Rhondda Cynon Taff
Post-code	CF43 4PS
Telephone number	01443 755858

Head teacher	Mrs Rhian Rees
Date of appointment	01.06.05
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Alwyn Davies
Registered inspector	Mrs Christine Llewellyn
Dates of inspection	26-28 September 2005

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	23	18	27	22					90

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	4	.4	4.4

A SUMMARY REPORT FOR PARENTS

Ferndale Infants School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents more information about their child's school. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. **The full report can be obtained from the school.**

The inspection of Ferndale Infants School took place between 26-28 September 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mrs C Llewellyn undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a standard inspection.

Summary

Ferndale Infants School is an inclusive school that provides well for the all-round education of its pupils. They are well cared for and make good progress in their academic and personal development. The head teacher provides good leadership and she is well supported by the staff and school governors. There is a close match in the judgements made in the school's evaluation report to those made by the inspection team.

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

Subjects and/or Areas of Learning Early Years, if appropriate

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

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

In key stage 1, standards of achievement in the subjects identified for inspection are:

Subject	Key Stage 1
Subject 1 English	2
Subject 2 Science	2
Subject 3 Design and technology	3
Subject 4 Music	2
Subject 5 Religious Education	2

Standards of achievement in all lessons observed were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	76%	16%	4%	

These are slightly under the 2007 Welsh Assembly Government targets for 98 per cent of lessons to be grade 3 or above, but exceed the target of 65 per cent of all lessons to be grade 2 or above.

All pupils, regardless of their backgrounds and including those with special educational needs [SEN], make good progress and achieve good standards.

In key skills, standards in listening are good with no important shortcomings throughout the school. This is a notable feature. Skills in speaking are more variable. In nursery and year 1, good features outweigh shortcomings; many children and pupils have a limited vocabulary. In reception and year 2, standards are better and show good features with no important shortcomings.

In reading, good features outweigh shortcomings in nursery but in reception and key stage one standards are good with no important shortcomings. Standards in writing in nursery and reception are good overall, but children do not develop their skills of independent writing sufficiently. In year 1, standards in writing are good with some shortcomings. Pupils in year 1 do not develop their emergent writing sufficiently. However, pupils make good progress and standards in year 2 are good with no important shortcomings, although workbooks inhibit independent writing.

In numeracy, standards throughout the school have good features that outweigh shortcomings. Pupils do not develop their skills sufficiently across the curriculum and have insufficient

experience in consolidating and applying number skills and problem solving in other subject areas.

Standards in information and communication technology [ICT] are good with no important shortcomings. Under-fives and pupils in key stage 1 show confidence and good skills in using the interactive white board. On computers they develop good word processing skills and can handle a range of programs.

Pupils' bilingual skills develop well. Across the school they show a good understanding of instructions and the incidental use of the language.

The under-fives make good progress and achieve good standards in their creative and problem solving skills. They demonstrate the capacity to work independently. This good start is not sustained in key stage 1 as very adult-directed activities limits pupils' ability to apply their knowledge and skills in new situations. Pupils make insufficient progress in their ability to work independently.

In the 2005 end of key stage teacher assessments, pupils achieving level 2 or above slightly exceeded the 2004 Rhondda Cynon Taff [RCT] and Wales average in English, with a higher proportion achieving this level in mathematics and science. At the higher level 3, pupils exceeded the Wales' and Local Education Authority [LEA] figures by 12 per cent in English, 18 per cent in mathematics and 24 per cent in science.

There was a significant margin between the performance of boys and girls, in favour of boys, in the English and science assessments. However, there were far fewer girls than boys in the cohort and nearly a half of these had special educational needs and were at School Action Plus. There was no gender difference in the mathematics assessments.

When compared with similar schools [on the basis of free school meal entitlement], the results place the school in the top 25 per cent for maths and science and close to the top 25 per cent for English and the core subject indicator [the percentage of pupils achieving at least level 2 in the three core subjects]. Of the 19 pupils assessed at this time, 12 were on the SEN register.

The school has maintained its good standards in the core subjects, having regularly exceeded the LEA figures since the last inspection. Good standards in the foundation subjects inspected have been retained except in design and technology where they are judged to be good with some shortcomings.

Pupils have good personal and learning skills. Attitudes towards work and learning are generally positive, especially where activities are exciting and challenging. Pupils are usually very well behaved. Foundations of good behaviour are laid effectively in the nursery. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils work and play together harmoniously and relate well to adults. Pupils know and understand the rules they help to devise.

The school makes good provision for social and moral development and pupils achieve good standards. Although social development is sometimes inhibited by lack of independent learning, pupils develop social skills appropriately as they work and play together well. Moral issues are discussed in circle time and in collective worship; pupils are aware of what virtues are important in life. Spiritual development is less effective as pupils do not always have time to reflect on messages conveyed in collective worship.

Pupils' cultural development is good. *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* features prominently; pupils are aware of Welsh music, Welsh folk tales and aspects of life in Wales today and in the past. They are also introduced appropriately to cultural diversity through books, stories and artefacts.

Attendance statistics for the last three terms before the inspection show an average of 91 per cent, which is below the Wales average.

The quality of education and training

The grades awarded to teaching in lessons observed during the inspection are:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
11	52	26	7	4

The quality of teaching in the under-fives unit is consistently grade 3 or above, with 80 per cent being grade 1 or 2. This is above the national picture, where 72 per cent of teaching is graded 1 or 2. In key stage 1, 75 per cent of teaching was grade 3 or higher. The good quality of teaching by the permanent staff has been sustained since the last inspection, with 80 per cent of teaching being grade 1 or grade 2 on this occasion.

The best teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge, the sharing of clear lesson objectives with pupils, exciting activities undertaken at a lively pace and good quality open questioning.

Procedures for assessment and recording are good overall. The pupil tracking system is used effectively to deploy staff and consider support strategies. Assessment opportunities, identified mainly in core subject planning, are predominantly by observation. There is a lack of consistency in assessment of the foundation subjects.

When marking pupils' work, positive and supportive comments are made, but suggestions for improvement are not recorded. Annual reports to parents make clear comments on what pupils can do, particularly in core subjects; aspects where parents can help are identified.

The school generally provides a broad and relevant curriculum both for its under-fives and pupils in key stage 1. However, curricular provision for key stage 1 does not comply fully with statutory requirements; it is not balanced as insufficient time is allocated in the timetable for physical education. However, the school is aware of the imbalance and is planning changes. Although the current curriculum for pupils in nursery and reception is appropriate and balanced and often presented through exciting and stimulating activities, there is no system in place to guarantee this on a long-term basis.

Visits to places of interest in the area promote a sense of belonging to the community and visits further afield enrich learning; this is an outstanding feature of the school's provision. A wide range of visitors, such as musicians, extends pupils' experiences and makes a substantial contribution towards their progress in subject knowledge and understanding. After school clubs, which include gardening, science activities and games, further extend pupils' learning effectively.

The school has made a start on the provision of key skills, across the curriculum as opportunities where they can be addressed are identified in schemes of work and short-term planning. However, there is no whole-school overview to ensure their development through the

curriculum in a meaningful and systematic way. The school has identified this as an area for improvement in the current school development plan [SDP].

Partnerships with parents and the community are good and the school pays good attention to national priorities for lifelong learning and community regeneration. The provision of a whole day Family Numeracy group is an outstanding feature of this relationship that enables parents to help their children with their learning. Pupils in turn see their parents as life long learners. Parents are well informed about the life and work of the school. In a pre-inspection meeting and questionnaire, parents expressed their satisfaction with the school.

Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported. The school has an effective personal and social education policy that permeates all aspects of school life. Support programmes are carefully integrated into the school's work so that they meet the needs of the pupils and ensure equality of opportunity. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy: risk assessments are systematic and all staff are alert to issues relating to the well being of pupils. Child Protection arrangements are effective and in line with LEA guidelines.

The school gives good support for pupils with additional needs. They are identified early from observations and formal assessments in the under-fives classes. All staff are involved in planning for the needs of pupils with SEN. The individual education plans [IEPs] are produced termly, are of a good quality and are monitored regularly by the special educational needs co-ordinator [SENCo]. Documentation fulfils statutory requirements and support services are used effectively.

The school strongly promotes equality of access and opportunity for all and is robust in its efforts to tackle social disadvantage. Pupils, irrespective of their social backgrounds, gender, disability or ethnicity are positively included in all activities.

Pupils' understanding of sustainable development is very well developed: this is an outstanding feature. They have good knowledge of how to care for the environment and are involved in a recycling programme from an early age. The school has achieved Green Flag status.

Leadership and management

The head teacher, recently promoted from within the school, has established good relationships at all levels and ensures the school offers a safe, happy and secure environment. Her leadership is at an early stage, but she has identified development issues related to sustaining and further improving the provision and standards within the school. The head is supported well by the senior teacher while awaiting the appointment of a deputy head next term.

Whole-school targets have been identified that provide suitable challenge to improve provision and standards. The school takes good account of national and local priorities and is fully involved in local cluster and partnership arrangements. At the last inspection, the key issues concentrated upon maintaining standards and reviewing registration procedures. Both have been successfully carried out, except for standards in design and technology. The school has moved forwards and successfully implemented a number of initiatives since the last inspection, including Investors in People, Basic Skills Award 2003 and Eco School status.

The governing body is very supportive of all aspects of the school. It meets regularly and undertakes its duties conscientiously, but does not formally monitor standards in all subjects. It ensures regulatory and legal aspects are met.

The school is making sound progress towards developing a more analytical approach to self-evaluation. Teaching and non-teaching staff were fully involved with the production of the self-evaluation document, but parents and pupils were not given the opportunity to contribute towards its findings. The inclusion of all interested parties in the self-evaluation process has been identified by the school as an aspect requiring improvement.

There are sufficient qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. All teaching staff are appropriately qualified. Accommodation is adequate, but not generous, for the number of pupils on roll. Very good use is made of the outside areas to supplement the teaching space. The provision of learning resources is good. The school makes efficient use of its finances to support teaching and learning and gives good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, the school needs to:

- R1 address shortcomings identified in design and technology in order to raise standards*
- R2 share the existing good practice to ensure consistency of teaching to a high standard in all classes
- R3 review planning in order to provide a balanced and progressive curriculum across the school and ensure that provision complies fully with requirements
- R4 allow pupils more opportunities to learn for themselves and make their own decisions and choices in order to become more independent in their learning
- R5 put in place a structured programme for the development of key skills across the curriculum*
- R6 continue to develop whole school assessment strategies in the foundation subjects*

* already identified as areas of priority in the current school development plan.

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

Acknowledgement

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