

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

**Oakfield Primary School
Green Willows
Oakfield
Cwmbran
Gwent NP44 3DU**

School Number: 678/2205

Date of Inspection: 6 - 8 June 2005

by

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W267/78911**

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Under Estyn contract number: T/241/04/P

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

The inspection of Oakfield Primary School took place between 6th and 8th June 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Stephanie James 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 |

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. Oakfield Primary School is a community school lying at the heart of a large housing estate on the outskirts of Cwmbran in South East Wales. The housing is mainly terraced and semi-detached, with few flats or detached houses. The area is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged, but there are a few pockets of deprivation. Historically it is a stable neighbourhood, but there has been some mobility in recent years and the number of pupils in the school has therefore slightly increased.
2. The school caters for pupils from three to eleven years of age. There are 169 pupils on roll in six classes. A further 45 children attend the nursery class part-time. Children are admitted to nursery at the start of the term following their third birthday. 98 per cent of pupils are of white ethnic origin and come from English speaking homes. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language. 2 per cent of pupils speak another European language, in addition to English. Fourteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals.
3. Eighteen per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN). On the site there is also a resource base for pupils with SEN from other schools in Torfaen and Monmouthshire, but these pupils are not on the role of Oakfield Primary School. Information from baseline assessments shows that pupils' attainment on entry to nursery is average overall, but a significant number of children have poor speech and language skills.
4. There have been a number of changes since the last inspection in June 1999. The head teacher is on secondment as an advisory teacher in the Local Education Authority (LEA). His deputy has been acting head teacher since January 2004 and a senior teacher is the current acting deputy head. There are seven full-time teachers in addition to the head, three of whom have been appointed since 1999. A new computer suite and facilities for an after-school club have also been built. The school was accredited with the Basic Skills Quality mark in July 2004. During the week immediately prior to the inspection, a new play area outside the nursery and a sensory garden outside the reception class have also been constructed.

The school's priorities and targets

5. The main aim of the school is:

"to develop all pupils' abilities to the highest standards possible so that they are intellectually, emotionally, morally, physically and spiritually able to care for themselves and contribute towards the welfare and needs of others".

6. The school's main priorities for the current academic year are to:
- review policy and improve provision for the development of speaking and listening skills, handwriting, mathematics, science, use of information and communication technology, design and technology, geography and music;
 - improve standards in the identified subjects;
 - improve use of the outside environment to create learning opportunities;
 - improve and develop the school's self-evaluation procedures.

Summary

7. Oakfield Primary School is a good and improving school. Since the last inspection in 1999 it has successfully addressed the shortcomings identified and achieved outstanding improvement in the standard of pupils' behaviour, which is now consistently good. The inspection team agreed with all the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

Table of grades awarded

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

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

Standards

9. Standards are good with no important shortcomings. Standards in the lessons in the six subjects observed during the inspection are:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	83%	14%	0%	0%

10. Pupils' overall standards of achievement in the six subjects inspected are as follows:

Subjects

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Subject 1: English	2	2
Subject 2: Science	2	2
Subject 3: Design and Technology	2	2
Subject 4: Geography	2	2
Subject 5: Music	2	2
Subject 6: Religious Education	2	2

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

12. In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress and achieve good standards in their knowledge, understanding and skills in the six subjects that were focused on in the inspection. Pupils with additional learning needs, including those with special needs, make good progress relative to their abilities.
13. Children under five make good progress and achieve good standards in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing and in their use of numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) through their activities in all six areas of learning.
14. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 build well on this sound foundation and continue to make good progress and achieve good standards, with no important shortcomings, in the key skills of speaking, listening and reading, although the ability of older pupils in Key Stage 2 to read and research independently to gain information is not so well developed.
15. Although there is evidence of good standards achieved in writing in English and history and in work on display, the quantity and quality of pupils' writing in their books in other subjects is variable.
16. Pupils' application of mathematical skills and their use of ICT to support their work in other subjects are good.
17. Pupils are developing a good knowledge and understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales. Children's bilingual skills are promoted very effectively in the nursery. As they move through the school, however, pupils experience problems with pronunciation and overall, their bilingual competence is under-developed.
18. The school's results in English, mathematics and science in the three years up to and including 2004 have, with the exception of science at Key Stage 1, been consistently below the average for both the Local Education Authority (LEA) and that of Wales as a whole. They have also, historically, been below the average performance of schools with a similar socio-economic profile. The performance of boys lagged behind that of girls until 2004. However, as a result of the school's very successful strategy to improve the standard of pupils' behaviour, and improvements in the overall quality of teaching, standards are steadily rising, including those of boys. Pupils are achieving well in relation to their starting points and meet or exceed the targets set for them by the school.
19. After a very good start in the nursery, pupils continue to make good progress in their personal and learning skills and in their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. They show an interest in their work in the vast majority of lessons and are keen to discuss it. Pupils of all ages show respect for diversity in society, appropriate to their age and by the end of Key Stage 2 have a strong sense of fairness and equality.
20. Pupils' behaviour in all classes and throughout the school day is consistently good. They move around the school quietly and in an orderly manner, play

happily together and display courtesy and consideration to one another and to adults. This good standard of behaviour is clearly having a very positive impact on the school as a community, on the progress made in lessons and on the standards pupils achieve in their work.

21. Whatever their ability or background, pupils take an active part in school life. They are developing a very good understanding of their local community and their place within it. However, their preparation for participation in the workplace is not as well developed.
22. Attendance is broadly in line with the LEA and Wales average. There is minimal unauthorised absence. However, despite the school's efforts, too many families take holidays during term time and this number is increasing. Almost all pupils are punctual.

The quality of education and training

23. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6%	73%	21%	0%	0%

24. At 79 per cent, the percentage of good and very good teaching is well above the Welsh Assembly Government's target that 50 per cent of teaching should be good or better.
25. Throughout the school, teachers use a wide variety of techniques to stimulate pupils' interest in the topics they are studying. Their use of drama is particularly good in maximising pupils' involvement in lessons. The quality of teaching in the nursery has some outstanding features. Excellent provision is made for children's imaginative play and there is a very good balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities.
26. The quality of the relationships between both teaching and non-teaching staff and the pupils is an outstanding feature of the school. Teachers consistently make clear their expectations of good behaviour and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and liking between pupils and teachers.
27. All teachers demonstrate secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, with the exception of Welsh, where their confidence in advancing pupils' bilingual skills in their work across the curriculum is variable. Subject leaders show particular expertise in teaching the subjects they lead and are very good role models for their colleagues.
28. In most lessons, teachers cover a good amount of material in the time available and all pupils are fully involved. Occasionally, however, groups of pupils have to observe while others carry out the main task, for example in some music lessons, which sometimes leads to decreased levels of concentration and a little restlessness.

29. Overall, teachers' planning is good. They share lesson objectives with pupils and give clear explanations and demonstrations so that pupils understand what they are expected to do. However, there are some missed opportunities in upper Key Stage 2 for pupils to develop their independent reading and research skills.
30. In the main, high quality support enables most pupils to achieve well. However, tasks provided for pupils, with the exception of work in English and mathematics, do not consistently meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers' expectations of the quantity and quality of pupils' written work in science and the foundation subjects is variable. Some pupils could attempt more challenging, extended tasks, whilst others sometimes need more initial support in their work.
31. Children under five are carefully assessed and the information obtained is used effectively to plan activities to meet their needs. There is a well-established system for assessing pupils' achievements in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 that helps teachers to plan effectively for further work. However, information from assessment is not so effectively and consistently used in science and the foundation subjects to inform teachers' planning for the full range of abilities. Teachers also sometimes miss opportunities in different subjects to develop pupils' self-evaluation skills.
32. The curriculum provided is broad and balanced and offers equality of access for all pupils. It provides continuity and progression within both key stages, although there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop and refine their designing skills in design and technology in Key Stage 2.
33. There is very good provision for extra curricular activities. The wide range of extra curricular activities offered includes art, drama, football, guitar, country dancing and choir and pupils visit theatres, museums and other places of interest.
34. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The acting head teacher, staff and governors are very successful in creating a caring ethos built on mutual respect and consideration for others.
35. An outstanding feature of the school's work is its links with parents, the local community, other schools and training institutions, which are very good. It plays an important role in tackling social disadvantage by running courses for parents and other adults. It also provides work placements as a stepping-stone towards gaining full-time employment.
36. There are strong links with several local businesses that have a positive impact on pupils' standards of achievement but, the school does not have a planned strategy to develop pupils' awareness of the world of work through a variety of opportunities, including visits.
37. The school promotes sustainable development very effectively and pupils are very aware of environmental issues and of their role as citizens of the world.

38. Pupils are well looked after in a happy, caring environment and the school gives good attention to their support and guidance. Pupils are well known to all adults within the school. It is these secure relationships that underpin the school's work and give pupils the confidence to seek help if they need it.

Leadership and management

39. The school has a clear mission statement and aims. The acting head teacher provides clear direction to a dedicated and enthusiastic team of teaching and non-teaching staff. There is a tangible team spirit amongst the staff and a unity of purpose that has a very positive impact on the ethos of the school as a whole.
40. All staff have agreed job descriptions and the school has good arrangements for monitoring the performance of teachers and developing their professional expertise.
41. The governing body is very supportive and well-informed and individual governors are actively involved in the school. However, there are several new governors who, although very supportive, have yet fully to develop their role in helping to set the school's strategic direction. The governing body fulfils the vast majority of legal duties placed upon it. However, although Race Equality and Accessibility policies are in place, it does not have action plans to monitor their implementation.
42. The school is developing effective and comprehensive self-evaluation processes. Leaders and managers have a very good overview of performance in the areas for which they are responsible and are committed to raising standards. The acting head teacher knows the school well and has been particularly effective in bringing areas for development forward in a constructive and efficient way.
43. The School Strategic Plan (SSP) is a working document that correctly identifies issues that need to be addressed. It is sufficiently detailed to enable governors and managers to plan and evaluate the progress of initiatives the school has identified as priorities. However, it does not include sufficiently robust evaluations of the extent to which previous priorities have been addressed or regular monitoring of current objectives.
44. Subject leaders have a good understanding about standards and the quality of provision in the subjects for which they are responsible. The senior management team has focused on supporting leaders in the core subjects and now seeks to extend the good practices developed here to other subjects. The school is developing good procedures for obtaining the views of all those with an interest in the school such as parents, pupils and governors.
45. The overall quantity and quality of staffing is a strength of the school. There is a very good blend of youth and experience in the team. The school administrator conducts daily routines and other responsibilities efficiently and effectively. Caretaking, cleaning and mid-day supervisory staff play a major role in the daily life of the school.

46. The school has been resourced appropriately and systematically so as to maximise educational opportunities and achievement for all age ranges and subject areas.
47. The overall quality of the accommodation is good, although there are some shortcomings. The under-fives have a safe, secure outdoor area, which has very recently been substantially improved. The school grounds and outdoor play areas are well maintained and clean, although the exterior appearance of the school building is not immediately appealing. However, the school is planning to remedy this through the involvement of an artist-in-residence. Inside the school, attractive displays celebrating pupil achievement do much to brighten up the fabric of the building.
48. Most classrooms are spacious and the school is steadily improving access to the building for disabled people. However, the area for older pupils in Key Stage 2 on the first floor is small and the fact that many windows cannot be opened safely means that classes can become very warm, stuffy and not conducive to learning.
49. Spending decisions are matched well to the school's priorities identified in the SSP so that, overall, the school gives good value for money.

Recommendations

To improve further the school now needs to:

- R1 Raise the standard and quantity of pupils' written work in science, design and technology, geography and religious education;
- R2 Improve the quality of bilingual teaching and raise the standard of pupils' bilingual competence;
- R3 Ensure work is more consistently and effectively matched to the needs and abilities of pupils;
- R4 Attend to the health and safety issue brought to the attention of the head teacher and governing body;
- R5 Ensure all regulatory and statutory requirements are met.

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

50. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
51. Standards in the lessons in the six subjects observed during the inspection are:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	83%	14%	0%	0%

52. Pupils' overall standards of achievement in the six subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	2	2
Science	2	2
Design and Technology	2	2
Geography	2	2
Music	2	2
Religious Education	2	2

53. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
54. In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress and achieve good standards in their knowledge, understanding and skills in the six subjects that were focused on in the inspection, regardless of their background. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress relative to their abilities.
55. Children under five make good progress and achieve good standards in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing and in their use of numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) through their activities in all six areas of learning. In the nursery they apply these skills particularly well in the stimulating role-play areas provided for them, such as the 'under sea' and 'tea shop' corners. They are developing bilingual competence well and use Welsh quite naturally for greetings, during registration and for counting.
56. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 build well on the sound foundation laid in the early years and continue to make good progress and achieve good standards, with no important shortcomings, in the key skills of speaking, listening and reading, in their application of mathematical skills and in their use of ICT. Good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' use of writing across the curriculum.

57. In Key Stage 1, both boys' and girls' confidence in speaking has been boosted by their engagement in role-play activities based on historical themes such as Samuel Pepys' diary, or in interesting imaginary settings such as a space ship or an enchanted forest. In Key Stage 2, pupils further develop their speaking and listening skills effectively through drama and opportunities to engage in formal discussions on a wide variety of topics.
58. As a result of effective intervention strategies and good support, standards in reading are good and most pupils' reading skills are sufficiently developed to enable them to cope with the reading demands of subjects across the curriculum. However, the ability of older pupils in Key Stage 2 to read and research independently to gain information is not so well developed.
59. Although there is evidence of good standards achieved in writing in English and history and in work on display, the quantity and quality of pupils' writing in their books in other subjects is variable. Even pupils of higher ability occasionally produce a fairly small amount of writing; the work of others is sometimes incomplete and the standard of presentation spoiled by the overuse of worksheets.
60. Pupils use their mathematical skills well in other subjects. In science, for example, they measure with a trundle wheel to see how far a sound will travel and in geography they display the results of their investigations in the form of graphs. They use ICT effectively to communicate results in science, to support their designing skills in design and technology and to word process some of their writing in English.
61. Children's bilingual skills are promoted very effectively in the nursery. As they move through the school, however, pupils have problems with pronunciation and overall their bilingual competence is under-developed.
62. The school's results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in the three years up to and including 2004 have, with the exception of science at Key Stage 1, been consistently below the average for both the Local Education Authority (LEA) and that of Wales as a whole. They have also, historically, been below the average performance of schools with a similar socio-economic profile. The performance of boys lagged behind that of girls until 2004. However, as a result of the school's very successful strategy to improve the standard of pupils' behaviour, and improvements in the overall quality of teaching, standards are steadily rising, including those of boys.
63. Provisional results of pupils' performance in National Curriculum (NC) tests and assessments for 2005 at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 show a marked improvement in English, mathematics and science, particularly in Key Stage 2, and to a lesser extent in Key Stage 1. Standards of this year's cohort of pupils are now close to the national average in Key Stage 1 and above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are, therefore, achieving well from their starting points and meet or exceed the targets set for them by the school.

64. In the nursery class children make very good progress in their development of personal, social and learning skills. In the reception class they make good progress in this respect. Nursery children happily leave their parents or carers, respond with enthusiasm to new experiences, concentrate extremely well and are developing an ability to take turns. Although a few do not concentrate well and are easily distracted from their task, most children in reception are not fazed by the unexpected absence of their usual teacher, settle quickly to class routines and are confident in approaching adults.
65. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 continue to demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are interested in their work in the vast majority of lessons and are keen to discuss it with visitors. They sustain concentration and collaborate very well in shared tasks. They have a good understanding of what they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They show independence and perseverance when given the opportunity to use their problem-solving skills.
66. Pupils' behaviour in all classes and throughout the school day is consistently good. They move around the school quietly and in an orderly manner, play happily together at playtime and display courtesy and consideration to one another and to adults. They understand the unhappiness caused by bullying and use the 'bully box' to inform staff of any incidences of aggressive or unkind behaviour. This good standard of behaviour is clearly having a very positive impact on the school as a community, on the progress made in lessons and on the standards pupils achieve in their work.
67. They make good progress in their personal, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils of all ages show respect for diversity in society, appropriate to their age. By the end of Key Stage 2 they have a strong sense of fairness and equality. One boy in year 6 succinctly expressed the view of pupils when he said, "Despite how we look or where we come from we are all the same".
68. Whatever their ability or background, pupils take an active part in school life. They are developing a very good understanding of their own local community and their place within it. However, their preparation for participation in the workplace is not as well developed.
69. Attendance is broadly in line with the LEA and Wales average. There is minimal unauthorised absence because parents readily provide a reason why their children are absent from school. However, despite the school's efforts, too many families take holidays during term time and this number is increasing. Almost all pupils are punctual. The school takes suitable account of the National Assembly for Wales circular 3/99.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

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

71. The inspection team observed lessons in six of the NC subjects in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, in a range of areas of learning for children under five, and in personal, social and health education (PSE) throughout the school. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6%	73%	21%	0%	0%

72. At 79 per cent, the percentage of good and very good teaching is well above the Welsh Assembly Government's target that 50 per cent of teaching should be good or better.

73. Throughout the school, teachers use a wide variety of techniques to stimulate pupils' interest in the topics they are studying. Their use of drama is particularly good in maximising pupils' involvement in lessons. They use materials, resources, visual aids and artefacts very well to gain and maintain pupils' interest in lessons.

74. The quality of teaching in the nursery has some outstanding features. The teacher is expert at developing children's confidence and willingness to participate in all activities, including those with additional learning needs. Excellent provision is made for children's imaginative play and there is a very good balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities, ably supported by the class assistant.

75. The quality of the relationships between both teaching and non-teaching staff and the pupils is an outstanding feature of the school. Teachers consistently make clear their expectations of good behaviour and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and liking between pupils and teachers, which has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes towards their work, their teachers and one another. Teachers deal swiftly and efficiently with any incidences of misbehaviour.

76. In most lessons teachers cover a good amount of material in the time available and all pupils are fully involved. Occasionally, however, groups of pupils have to observe while others carry out the main task, for example in some music lessons, which sometimes leads to decreased levels of concentration and a little restlessness.

77. All teachers demonstrate secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, with the exception of Welsh, where their confidence in advancing pupils' bilingual skills in their work across the curriculum is variable.

78. Subject leaders show particular expertise in teaching the subjects they lead and are very good role models for their colleagues. For example, in an outstanding lesson in religious education in Key Stage 2, the teacher used an imaginative range of resources and activities that included drama, music, reading aloud from the Bible and examination of religious artefacts, as well expert exposition, to enable pupils to gain a very good understanding of the key features of the religions they were studying.
79. Overall, teachers' planning is good. They share lesson objectives with pupils and give clear explanations and demonstrations so that pupils understand what they are expected to do. Planned lessons build well on pupils' previous learning. However, there are some missed opportunities in upper Key Stage 2 for pupils to develop their independent reading and research skills. The quality of planning in the nursery is outstanding, as it seamlessly includes elements from all six areas of learning. In the themes explored activities are very well matched to children's needs, interests and stage of development.
80. In the main, high quality support enables most pupils to achieve well. For example, because of good classroom support and the use of a range of focused strategies, pupils experiencing difficulties with literacy make good progress. However, classroom observations and examination of pupils' books revealed that work provided, with the exception of work in English and mathematics, does not consistently meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers' expectations of the quantity and quality of pupils' written work in science and the foundation subjects is variable. Some pupils could attempt more challenging, extended tasks, particularly in writing in subjects other than English, whilst others sometimes need more initial support in their work, rather than completing the same work as the rest of the class.
81. Throughout the school, teachers treat all pupils equally, consistently and fairly and ensure that everyone has access to all the opportunities and experiences offered.
82. The school's policy for assessment and record keeping is clear, concise, well organised and effectively implemented. It meets statutory requirements for assessing and reporting on pupils' attainments in relation to the NC. The head teacher regularly reports the results of assessments, and the extent to which whole school targets have been met, to the governing body.
83. Children under five are carefully assessed and their achievements recorded on the baseline profile. This information is used effectively to plan activities to meet their needs.
84. There is a well-established system for assessing pupils' achievements in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 that helps teachers to plan effectively for further work. However, information from assessments is not so effectively and consistently used in science and the foundation subjects to inform teachers' planning for pupils with a range of abilities.
85. The quality of feedback that teachers give to pupils about their work is generally good. Criteria for marking pupils' work have been established and

teachers' marking usually identifies strengths and gives pointers for improvement.

86. Pupils are given targets for improvement in English and mathematics, which they understand and which are written in their books to serve as a reminder of what they can do better. Older pupils know which level of the NC they are working on and what they need to do in order reach the next level. Parents and pupils are involved in the target setting process during consultations in October of each year. Pupils are becoming more involved in evaluating their own learning, but teachers sometimes miss opportunities to develop pupils' self-evaluation skills.
87. The school's system for tracking pupils' progress is manageable and accessible and identifies any pupils who reach a plateau in their work. This enables the school to call on additional support from outside agencies where a special need is identified.
88. Annual written reports to parents give a good picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and clear indications of how they can progress in their learning. Parents are very happy with the quality of reports and think they are thorough and individual. Reports meet statutory requirements.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

89. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
90. The curriculum provided in both key stages meets statutory requirements, offers equality of access for all pupils and meets their needs and interests. Pupils are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced and provides continuity and progression within both key stages, although there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop and refine their designing skills in design and technology in Key Stage 2.
91. The schemes of work in all subject areas include appropriate emphasis on the development of pupils' key skills and common requirements. They are sufficiently detailed and organised to support effective medium and short term planning.
92. There is very good provision for off-site and extra curricular activities. The wide range of extra curricular activities offered as after school and lunchtime clubs include art, drama, football, guitar, country dancing and choir. Peripatetic music teachers visit the school to develop pupils' talents and pupils visit theatres, museums and other places of interest to support their work.

93. The school takes part in many community events such as the Community Choral Festival, Gwyl Plant Dancing Festival and a variety of local quiz competitions. There are good links with the local church and with the local hospice. The school regularly supports local, national and international charities and has recently supported St. Anne's Hospice, the Tsunami Appeal and Comic Relief.
94. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The acting head teacher, staff and governors are very successful in creating a caring ethos built on mutual respect and consideration for others. School assemblies foster a sense of belonging in the school and a responsibility for the community in general. They make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. School assemblies celebrate pupils' achievement in all areas.
95. Links with parents and other interested parties are very good. Parents are active in supporting reading, language and intensive phonics in the school. There is a growing but active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the school offers a range of training aimed at developing parenting skills.
96. There are very good links with the local schools and college. The school is part of the partnership scheme for Initial Teacher Training with the University of Newport and Nursery Nurse training and NVQ training with Coleg Gwent. It offers work placements for Career Wales students. Llantarnam Comprehensive School students are provided with regular work experience placements.
97. The school has good links with Careers Wales. As a result, several teachers have benefited from industrial and business placements as part of the school's professional development strategy. These placements have had a positive impact on developments in the school. There are strong links with several local businesses that support the school through the provision of donations; these have enabled the school to purchase resources such as outdoor benches and printers for the computers. There are good links with business in the community and representatives come into the school each week to hear pupils read. This has a positive impact on these pupils' standards of achievement. However, the school does not have a planned strategy to develop pupils' awareness and understanding of the world of work through a variety of opportunities, including visits.
98. Opportunities for pupils to develop entrepreneurial skills and those required to support economic development are good. The recently established school council has made suggestions that have been incorporated into the school's priorities for development. Some changes have already been made, such as the decoration of the pupils' toilets. The council run a school shop in order to raise funds to support the purchase of additional resources for the school, whilst older pupils run the fruit tuck shop as part of the healthy school initiative. There are also good opportunities for pupils to develop their problem solving skills, for instance in science and design and technology.

99. The school takes good account of the national priorities for lifelong learning. Pupils are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning and individual child friendly targets are set. Transition arrangements with the local secondary school are good and pupils are well prepared for their transfer at the end of Year 6. Opportunities are available for pupils to develop their research skills during the lunchtime library and ICT clubs. The ICT suite is also well used by members of the community who take part in lifelong learning placements with the local college.
100. The school is good at promoting awareness of the culture of Wales. A school Eisteddfod is held annually on St. David's Day, when pupils sing Welsh songs and listen to Welsh music. They are introduced to Welsh stories and study the work of Welsh artists.
101. Children's bilingual skills are promoted very effectively in the nursery, but their promotion is not consistently successful throughout the school.
102. The school is very good at promoting sustainable development. There are recycling boxes in classes and pupils are aware of the need to recycle paper and other materials. There are light sensors in every class and the school is working towards being an Eco School. The pupils participate in an annual environmental quiz and receive guidance from countryside wardens. There is a wild area in the school grounds, which is in the process of being further developed. Many trees on the school grounds have preservation orders and the pupils know why.
103. Global citizenship is promoted well in a variety of ways, including assemblies. For example, the forthcoming meeting of the leaders of the G8 group of countries to address world poverty was a current topic of discussion during the week of the inspection.
104. An outstanding feature of the school's work is its focus on helping to tackle social disadvantage within the community. A wide range of courses has been run aimed at encouraging adults to gain basic skills accreditation to enable them to gain employment. The school is also involved in initiatives such as the Pathways and Job Seekers projects. These projects provide opportunities for adults to experience placements as a stepping- stone towards gaining full time employment.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

105. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
106. Pupils are well looked after in a happy, caring environment and the school gives good attention to their support and guidance. Pupils state that they feel safe and well supported by all adults who work in the school. When required, the school is quick to seek additional help and guidance from external

- agencies. Care arrangements in the nursery are extremely good; the individual, personal and medical needs of the youngest children are effectively met. Parents' confidence in the care that is provided for their children throughout the school is well founded.
107. Very good systems have been established to monitor and address any concerns related to pupils' behaviour. These arrangements are a key factor in both the improvements in pupils' behaviour since the last inspection and also in the current good standards of behaviour.
 108. The school ensures parents and carers are fully involved in discussions about the care of their children. This is an outstanding feature of its work. This is particularly notable where concerns are related to pupils' behaviour. Another reason for the significant improvement in pupils' behaviour is the way the school has enlisted the support and co-operation of parents in implementing its behaviour management strategies.
 109. Arrangements to help children settle into the nursery class are extremely well organised. There are also very good links with other pre-school providers. Parents are fully involved in the induction process and this helps to establish a good working relationship with them from children's earliest days at the school. Arrangements to ensure pupils settle into school life at a later stage are good. The school also works very well in partnership with the local comprehensive school to support transition for pupils.
 110. Pupils are well known to all adults within the school. It is these secure relationships that underpin the school's work and give pupils the confidence to seek help if they should need it. There are clear policies and procedures to ensure everyone's health, safety and welfare. The governing body plays an appropriate role in overseeing the school's health and safety arrangements. Child protection arrangements are secure and well documented and known to all who work in the school. However, the child protection policy does not reflect the school's current good practice. Good day-to-day systems are in place to deal with any pupils who may become unwell or who hurt themselves during the school day.
 111. Personal and social education is well planned throughout the school. Suitable attention is given to sex education and drugs awareness. Good use is made of the expertise from visiting specialist agencies and speakers. This programme develops pupils' personal and social skills very effectively, as well as contributing to their awareness of citizenship. The school is also involved in good initiatives to develop healthy lifestyles.
 112. Attendance, punctuality and pupils' performance are monitored closely and swift action taken if there are any concerns. The information gained from monitoring pupils' academic progress is consistently well used in all classes to indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve their learning.
 113. The provision for learners with special or additional learning needs in the mainstream school is good. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are of good quality and are reviewed regularly. Pupils with additional needs are fully

included in mainstream classes and care is taken to ensure that additional support does not prevent access to the full curriculum offered.

114. The school benefits from well-deployed Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) who effectively support pupils with SEN. They work closely with teaching staff to provide optimum opportunities for pupils. The LEA provides extra support for pupils with behavioural difficulties. The close and effective partnership between teaching and support staff promotes pupils' progress within the school. The school is committed to supporting pupils with SEN. However, in some classes and subjects, work is insufficiently modified to meet the needs of all pupils.
115. Although currently there are no pupils with physical disabilities attending the school, it makes suitable arrangements to ensure that anyone with a disability, whether adult or child, is able, wherever possible, to gain access to the building.
116. The school is an inclusive community. Fairness, tolerance, equality and respect for different views and values are clearly promoted. Pupils, whatever their gender or social background, have equal opportunity to take part in all activities. The school has an appropriate race equality and diversity policy. The school's arrangements to eliminate oppressive behaviour, bullying and harassment are good. These topics are covered well in the personal and social education programme, religious education lessons and during assemblies. The school council also plays a prominent role in anti-bullying strategies through monitoring any comments that might be placed in the 'bully box'.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

117. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
118. The school has a clear mission statement and aims that are shared by the governors and the staff. The acting head teacher provides clear direction to a dedicated and enthusiastic team of teaching and non-teaching staff and has been successful in identifying priorities and ensuring that they have been effectively tackled. There is a tangible team spirit amongst the staff and a unity of purpose that has a very positive impact on the ethos of the school as a whole.
119. There is a good equal opportunities policy, which actively promotes equality for all, both staff and pupils. Staff who are new to the school are very well supported and are given the opportunity to develop their areas of expertise.
120. School targets are set through consultation in staff meetings, after reviewing past performance and available assessment data. The targets are challenging and realistic and are having an impact on the development of the school.
121. All staff have agreed job descriptions. The school has good arrangements for monitoring the performance of teaching staff. There is a well-developed policy for staff development and the programme reflects priorities in the School Strategic Plan (SSP) and individual teachers' needs and interests. Staff appraisal leads to effective professional development and contributes to school improvement.
122. Subject leaders have the opportunity to attend courses on managing curricular areas and the deputy head teacher has attended relevant management courses. Training for newly qualified teachers is well managed. Training for LSAs is well established and all staff have attended relevant and appropriate training to meet their developing needs.
123. Account is taken of the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities and the school works particularly effectively in partnership with other local providers of education and training.
124. The governing body is very supportive and kept regularly informed through meetings and visits to school. The Chair of Governors visits the school frequently and offers very good support. Other governors also play an active role in the school. They effectively monitor the quality of the school's provision by discussing planning, resources and other issues with the leaders of the subjects in which they take a particular interest. Those who have time available during the school day also help by listening to readers, helping with practical activities and school productions. However, the school has several

new governors who, although very supportive, have yet fully to develop their role in helping to set the school's strategic direction. Sub-committees are established and report back to the Governing Body regularly.

125. Governors fulfil the vast majority of legal duties placed upon them. However, although there are Race Equality and Accessibility policies in place, the governing body does not yet have action plans to monitor the implementation of them.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

126. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
127. The school is developing effective and comprehensive self-evaluation processes. Leaders and managers at all levels have a very comprehensive overview about performance in the areas for which they are responsible and are committed to raising standards. The acting head teacher knows the school well and has been particularly effective in bringing forward areas for development in a constructive and efficient way.
128. The senior management team draw information from class teachers and support staff, from governors, parents, and pupils and from outside agencies and use this to good effect to monitor school performance and plan school development. The school also makes good use of external data to identify strengths and areas for further development and is effectively fostering a culture of self-critical analysis.
129. The SSP is a full working document that correctly identifies issues that need to be addressed. It sets clear priorities and describes, in detail, the actions to be taken to bring about improvement. It is well set out and accurately focuses on the needs of the school. It is sufficiently detailed to provide opportunity for governors and managers to plan and evaluate the progress of initiatives the school has identified as priorities. It does not, however, include sufficiently robust evaluations of the extent to which previous priorities have been addressed or regular monitoring observations of current objectives.
130. Subject leaders have a good understanding about standards and the quality of provision in the subjects for which they are responsible. They effectively use a range of appropriate strategies including formal discussion with class teachers, scrutiny of planning and regular monitoring of samples of pupils' work to check standards.
131. Class teachers evaluate pupils' progress regularly and use standardised test materials to ensure that all pupils achieve their targets. The senior management team has focused on supporting leaders in the core subjects and now seeks to extend the good practices developed here to other subjects

in the NC. Resources are allocated effectively to support the school's plans for development.

132. The school is developing good procedures for obtaining the views of all those with an interest in the school. Parents complete questionnaires and speak very positively about the provision. Pupils also complete questionnaires and they have opportunities via the school council to make their views known. Governors visit the school frequently to build up a picture of standards and provision and good use is made of external bodies such as the LEA and the Basic Skills Agency to help it monitor and evaluate its provision.
133. Standards in all aspects of school life are much improved. All the key issues for action from the previous inspection have been addressed and some aspects, such as pupil behaviour, have improved dramatically. The school is moving forward and needs to ensure that the governing body continues to develop its role as a critical friend in order to ensure that self-evaluation is rigorous, accurate and drives the school towards higher standards.
134. The school's self-evaluation report succinctly describes the school's views on each of the seven questions. It provides details of where the evidence can be found and correctly identifies strengths and areas for development. It is firmly based on firsthand evidence and accurately evaluates school performance. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in all seven key questions.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

135. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
136. The overall quantity and quality of staffing is a strength of the school. There is a very supportive blend of youth and experience in the team, who are effectively deployed. Teachers are confident and experienced in their subjects and LSAs are very effective in their role. The school administrator carries out daily routines and a range of other responsibilities efficiently and effectively. Caretaking, cleaning and mid-day supervisory staff play a major role in the smooth day-to-day running of school affairs. Pupils are given good support by well-qualified and experienced staff who are effectively deployed to use their skills to best effect.
137. Teachers willingly share their knowledge. New staff and supply teachers feel valued and there are good induction procedures in place. There is a strong commitment to staff development, which has contributed to higher standards.
138. The school has been resourced appropriately and systematically so as to maximise educational opportunities and achievements for all age ranges and subject areas. Books and materials are in good condition and plentiful. The

computer suite is a well-used resource and opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum are maximised through access to computers in every classroom and regular use of interactive whiteboards for both key stages. In addition to having access to substantial classroom reading resources and the mobile library, pupils can, under teacher supervision, access additional fiction by borrowing books on display along the corridors. There is also a central reference library in the same room as the computer suite but this appears to be underused. The school has identified a need to extend pupils' involvement in running and using this facility for research and investigative work.

139. The overall quality of the accommodation is good, although there are some shortcomings. The caretaker and cleaning staff are extremely dedicated and work hard to ensure that pupils and staff work in a pleasant environment. Although school grounds and outdoor play areas are well maintained and clean, the exterior appearance of the school building is not immediately appealing. However, the school is planning to remedy this through the involvement of an artist-in-residence to work with the pupils in producing attractive murals.
140. Inside the school, attractive displays celebrating pupil achievement have done much to brighten up the fabric of the building. Most classrooms offer spacious teaching areas and the school is steadily improving access to the building for disabled people. There is also good space for pupils to enjoy practical sessions in art or design and technology.
141. The under-fives play in a safe, secure outdoor area to which has very recently been added an activity area which will help promote their physical development. Good use is also made of the local environment and the school grounds. A thorn bush sited adjacent to the playground is a health and safety hazard.
142. The area designated for older pupils in Key Stage 2 on the first floor is small. Furthermore, the fact that many windows cannot be opened properly means that the top floor can become very warm, stuffy and not conducive to learning.
143. The use of resources is regularly reviewed so that spending decisions are matched well to the priorities identified in the SSP so that, overall, the school gives good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Subject 1: English

Key Stage 1 Grade 2 – good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 Grade 2 – good features and no important shortcomings

Good and outstanding features

144. Pupils display an increasingly effective range of verbal strategies as they progress through the school. In Key Stage 1, pupils listen well in whole-class situations and respond appropriately in a variety of contexts by describing, explaining or asking appropriate questions. They share their ideas and opinions enthusiastically and bring personal experience to bear upon the focus of the lesson.
145. Standards in reading are good in Key Stage 1. When questioned, pupils display good understanding of the characters, settings and structures of stories. Some can identify punctuation conventions, such as an exclamation mark or a question mark in a big book. Year 1 pupils recognise full stops and capital letters and speech bubbles. They sequence events and retell a story in their own words well. By the end of Key Stage 1, most readers have a positive attitude and use a range of reading strategies to help them understand the text. They apply their knowledge of letter and sound correspondences effectively when they meet an unfamiliar word.
146. Their engagement in imaginative play areas has encouraged boys, in particular, to take an interest in writing, stimulating them to produce some high quality imaginative work showing a good range of vocabulary. By the end of the key stage, many pupils' writing is organised, clear and contains some good ideas, with sentences demarcated by capital letters and full stops. More able pupils use a range of punctuation marks in their written work and use a variety of sentence structures to enhance the impact of it.
147. Pupils in Key Stage 2 listen respectfully and carefully to their teachers and in lessons remain focused for a sustained time. When answering questions, most give answers, in writing and verbally, in full sentences. They are confident in discussing their ideas and opinions with their peers. They make good progress in speaking for different purposes and audiences and collaborate effectively in discussions.
148. Through discussion, pupils gain a better understanding of the books they read and are motivated to read a range of literature, including fiction and non-fiction. By the end of Key Stage 2, most have moved from graded reading scheme books to selecting their own choice of literature. Good readers can talk about their response to character and plot and offer evidence-based opinions about the book and author. They read fluently, with expression, use a range of reading strategies and can make comparisons with other books read. Pupils can explain when they might use a thesaurus in preference to a dictionary.

149. Overall, standards of writing are good in Key Stage 2, with many pupils producing extended pieces of high quality work in their creative writing books. They have also written entertaining poetry as evidenced by an excellent class collection of illustrated descriptive verses on the theme of 'My Magic Box'. There is clear progress in sentence construction, which is grammatically sound and displays variety and interest. Pupils understand the need to write in different forms for different purposes, and can explain clearly how and when they would use paragraphs. Older pupils are beginning to develop their skills in organising their writing by sequencing and in improving their work through redrafting. Handwriting is fluent and legible. Punctuation and spelling are mostly accurate.

Shortcomings

150. The independent research skills of pupils in upper KS2 are under-developed.

Subject 2: Science

Key Stage 1 Grade 2 – good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 Grade 2 – good features and no important shortcomings

Good and outstanding features

151. Across both key stages, pupils show good knowledge of scientific facts, accompanied by an enthusiasm for learning and acquiring scientific knowledge. They are able to record their work in a variety of ways including writing, tables and charts. They also use a variety of sources to gain scientific knowledge including books and the Internet.
152. In Key Stage 1, pupils understand the concept of healthy eating and the need for exercise. They can identify drinks with a high sugar content and understand why fruit juice is a healthier option. They can explain life cycles and know that some animals give birth to babies but others, such as birds and frogs, lay eggs.
153. All pupils can sort materials by their properties and many recognise and can identify that some materials are man-made whilst others come from natural sources such as sheep, and plants. They demonstrate good knowledge of reversible and irreversible changes and some more able pupils recall that water turns into steam when hot. They can sort and describe materials as rough, smooth, bendy or dull.
154. Pupils recognise and understand the importance of forces. They explain the need to push with feet to make a skateboard move faster. More able pupils use the term 'friction' in context. Some pupils have an emerging awareness of gravity. Most pupils understand that a circuit needs to be complete in order to light a bulb and know that electricity must be used with care.

155. Pupils make good progress in building their scientific knowledge during Key Stage 2 and in knowing how to conduct investigations. By the end of the key stage, they are aware of the need for fair testing and can predict results.
156. Pupils recognise the difference between solids, liquids and gases and know that molecules are closer together in solids, further apart in liquids and very wide apart in gases. They know that a thermometer measures temperature and can identify boiling and freezing point. They can label a diagram of the water cycle correctly and explain the concept of evaporation and condensation.
157. Pupils recognise the need for vibration to produce sound and can explain where vibrations come from and how we hear sounds and sound waves. They use the terms 'pitch' and 'volume' and know what they represent.
158. They have good knowledge of the solar system. They can draw and label a diagram to show how day and night occurs and show good understanding of how shadows are formed. They have an emerging knowledge of lunar movements.
159. Pupils can identify features of a healthy and unhealthy lifestyle. They have good knowledge of the effects of smoking and passive smoking and know that some drugs are helpful to people, while others are not.

Shortcomings

160. The standard and quantity of pupils' written work in science is underdeveloped.

Subject 3: Design and Technology

Key Stage 1 Grade 2 – good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 Grade 2 – good features and no important shortcomings

Good and outstanding features

161. Throughout the school, pupils are aware of important health and safety issues in design and technology. Pupils in Key Stage 1 know that they must be careful when using staples or a saw. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 know the importance of personal hygiene when handling food and in upper Key Stage 2 they are aware of safety features when using tools.
162. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress in developing the skills of joining and assembling different materials and components. They enjoy investigating the joining techniques of sellotaping, stapling, sewing and glueing and make some perceptive evaluations of their advantages and disadvantages in relation to their purpose, to make puppets.
163. They use a wide variety of materials and components to make a good range of products. Their model 'playground equipment' has some outstanding

features. After their investigation in a local park, they designed swings and slides, tested the strength of different shapes to make joints and used a very wide range of materials and finishes to produce very attractive individual models of high quality.

164. They use a computer program effectively to generate repeated patterns for their designs for Joseph's coat of many colours, linked to their work in religious education. They talk purposefully about their ideas and can explain stages in the process.
165. In upper Key Stage 2, pupils share ideas about how to make a vehicle that moves using wheels and axles, plan how they are going to make it and modify their ideas in response to new ones offered by other pupils.
166. They use information sources well, including the Internet, to generate ideas for making masks from different cultures and periods in history. They succeed in producing original masks from balloons and paper maché and use a variety of eye-catching finishes.

Shortcomings

167. In both key stages, the frequency and standard of pupils' recording of ideas, stages and evaluations does not reflect the quality of the products they make.

Subject 4: Geography

Key Stage 1 Grade 2 – good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 Grade 2 – good features and no important shortcomings

Good and outstanding features

168. Key Stage 1 pupils use appropriate geographical terminology to identify the physical and human features of a coastal scene. When discussing the weather, they can state that places have different temperatures and show that they understand the concept of averages. They demonstrate how such information would affect their choice of clothes when packing a suitcase to visit Norway or Spain.
169. During Key Stage 2, pupils develop a range of geographical skills, a secure knowledge of the location, features and character of places and a good understanding of the relationship between people and the environment and their role in caring for it.
170. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 use a range of secondary sources to identify and compare a child's daily routine in Chembakoli, in India, with their own. They work independently at a level appropriate to their ability and write accurately using geographical vocabulary about features of life there. They have considered how a rich country might help a poor one and can explain about fair trade.

171. Pupils can use a key when comparing green areas of Cwmbran to those in Cairo and use a range of other symbols in relation to the weather when comparing climate.
172. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 make perceptive comments and write accurately about the daily routine in African classrooms in comparison with their own, showing a good awareness of the impact of climate and shortage of water on daily life. In discussion, they revealed good knowledge of the human and physical features of Porthcawl and were able to make sound comparisons with features of their own local area.

Shortcomings

173. The quantity and quality of pupils' recorded work in both key stages does not reflect their geographical knowledge and understanding.

Subject 5: Music

Key Stage 1 Grade 2 – good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 Grade 2– good features and no important shortcomings

Good and outstanding features

174. Throughout the school, pupils sing from a wide repertoire of songs from different cultural traditions. They really enjoy singing and have good diction and control of dynamics. The choir effectively adds harmony to pupils' singing.
175. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing a good understanding of differences in pitch and the vast majority sing pleasantly and in tune. They recognise and respond appropriately to symbols relating to higher and lower notes and repeated melodic patterns.
176. They respond very well to the teacher as 'conductor' when playing a range of percussion instruments and generally control their playing effectively to vary the pace and dynamics of the piece. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils can keep a steady beat and maintain their part in a group performance, singing, clapping or playing an instrument.
177. Pupils in Key Stage 2 play an increasingly wide range of instruments. In Y3/4 they use the pentatonic scale to compose interesting tunes for a Dragon Song on the theme of Chinese New Year. They work well together to arrange their musical ideas and perform their pieces confidently and accurately on chime bars, in front of an audience.
178. Pupils in Y4/5 enjoy chanting and clapping a rhythmic pattern and extend their exploration of the rhythm to keyboard, tambourines and chime bars in order to compose a tune for their rhythm. When given the opportunity, they can appraise their compositions and suggest alternative ways of performing.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

Subject 6: Religious Education

Key Stage 1 Grade 2– good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 Grade 2– good features and no important shortcomings

Good and outstanding features

179. Throughout the school, pupils develop good knowledge and understanding of important features of different religions through their re-enactment of stories, ceremonies and celebrations and their study of religious texts and artefacts. They discuss what they have learned with confidence and in some detail.
180. Pupils in Key Stage 1 know a range of Bible stories and can relate events in the stories to their own life experiences. For example, after hearing the story of 'The Prodigal Son' they thought about a time when they were forgiven for not behaving as they should.
181. They are becoming aware of important religious symbols and ceremonies and have some understanding of their meaning. They know that sacred texts such as the Bible and the Torah are important to Christians and Jews. Through their visit to the local church and discussions with the priest, they are developing an understanding of important features in places of worship and how worship can be expressed.
182. They understand what it means to belong to communities such as the church, school and family and explore similarities and differences between people. They are familiar with some aspects of the lifestyle of people of different faiths, such as Sikhs and Hindus.
183. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 have a good understanding of important features of Islam. They know a number of stories from the Qur'an, and understand how such stories deliver moral teachings, such as the need to treat people as you would like to be treated.
184. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of some features of Christianity, Islam and Judaism and that these features are expressions of beliefs. They can identify symbols and artefacts from different religions and explain their significance. They know that one purpose of a sacred text is to guide people in how they should live and understand how they try to put religious beliefs into practice. They ask some fundamental questions and show respect for the views of others.

Shortcomings

185. In both key stages, the quantity and quality of pupils' written work does not reflect the depth of their religious knowledge and understanding.

School's response to the inspection

We have considered the outcome of the inspection and are pleased that the findings of the inspection team matched the school's self evaluation report. We are particularly delighted to be described as successful in creating a caring ethos based on mutual respect and consideration of others. The school's link with parents and the local community, as an outstanding feature, was also mentioned in the report.

The quantity and quality of staff were described as a strength of the school. Seventy nine per cent of the teaching observed was found to be good or better, exceeding the Welsh target of 50 per cent.

Subject leaders were acknowledged for showing expertise and described as good role models to their colleagues.

Behaviour was described as consistently good and that this good behaviour is having a positive impact on the school as a community, on the progress made in lessons and on standards achieved.

An action plan will be put into place to address the recommendations within the report. Staff and Governors have already discussed the health and safety issues and arrangements have been made to address them immediately. Air conditioning units have been purchased for the upstairs classrooms and contractors are visiting the school during the holidays to remove the thorn bush adjacent to the school playing area. The other recommendations will be addressed by staff in the new school year and identified in the school development plan.

The Governors, Acting Head teacher and staff would like to thank the inspection team for their professionalism and the rigorous yet sensitive approach in which the inspection was conducted.

A copy of the school's action plan, in response to the inspection recommendations, will be sent to all parents. The Governors' Annual Report to Parents will report on the progress we are making on the recommendations.

Appendix A

Basic information about the school

Name of School	Oakfield Primary School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of School	Green Willows Cwmbran Torfaen
Post-code	NP44 3DU
Telephone number	01633 480039
Head teacher (Acting)	Mrs Anne Webster-Blythe
Date of appointment	January 2004
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Paul Levy
Registered inspector	Ms Stephanie James
Dates of inspection	6 th to 8 th June 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	24.5	21	26	34	20	20	22	26	169

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	2	8

Staffing information	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	24 : 1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	8:1 am 12:1 pm
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	28
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1 : 1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Whole School
Summer	90.37	89.5	93.24
Autumn	95.59	91.0	93.26
Spring	91.94	93.6	94.08

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	14
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 2004			Number of pupils in Y2					19
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
English:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	10.5	10.5	47.3	31.5	
		National	0.3	3.5	13.3	63	19.9	
En: reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	10.5	10.5	47.3	31.5	
		National	0.3	2.5	11.2	62.9	23	
En: writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	10.5	15.8	73.6	0	
		National	0.3	5.1	14.4	68.8	11.3	
En: speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	10.5	31.5	57.8	
		National	0.3	3.8	14	55.3	26.5	0.1
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	5.2	21.1	63.2	10.5	
		National	0.3	2.2	10.5	62.5	24.4	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5.2	68.4	26.3	
		National	0.3	1.6	9.5	65.2	23.4	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	73.6	In Wales	80

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

National Curriculum Assessment Results
End of Key Stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2004							Number of pupils in Y6					24
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	4.2	21	4.2	25	46	
		National	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.7	5.6	16.4	46.1	30.4	
	Test/Task	School	0	0	4.2	0	0	20.8	4.2	29.2	41.7	
		National	0.5	1.2	3.2	0	0	3.5	12.6	42.2	36.8	
Welsh	Teacher Assessment	School										
		National										
	Test/Task	School										
		National										
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	12.5	16.7	41.7	29.2	
		National	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.5	3.4	17.2	46.3	31.4	0.1
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	12.5	16.7	50	20.8	
		National	0.5	1.4	1	0	0	3.3	15.3	42.9	35.5	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	33.3	41.7	
		National	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.3	1.4	10.7	50	36.5	
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	20.8	50	29.2	
		National	0.5	1.3	0.4	0	0	0.7	7.7	50.7	38.7	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language)			
By Teacher Assessment		By Test	
In the school	71	In the school	71
In Wales	71	In Wales	71

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

Appendix D

Evidence base of the inspection

- A team of four inspectors visited the school for the equivalent of nine inspector days and a peer assessor was present for three days.

These inspectors visited:

- thirty-three lessons or part-lessons;
- all classes;
- acts of collective worship;
- a range of extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- staff, governors and parents before the inspection began;
- senior managers, teachers, support and administrative staff and groups of pupils during the inspection.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- sixteen responses to a parents' questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- a wide range of pupils' past and current work.

The Registered Inspector held post inspection meetings with the staff and governors.

Appendix E

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Stephanie James Registered Inspector	Context, Summary, Recommendations, Appendices Key Question 1 Key Question 2 Design and Technology Music Religious Education
Lorylle Aubrey Team Inspector	Key Question 3 Key Question 5 Science
Jim Hewitt Team Inspector	Key Question 6 Key Question 7 English Geography
Denise Shields Lay Inspector	Key Question 4
Susan Prosser Peer Assessor	Contributions to the evidence base for all key questions and subjects inspected.

The contractor was:

Evenlode Education Ltd
6 Abbey Close
Alcester
Warwickshire
B49 5QW

Acknowledgement

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

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

**Oakfield Primary School
Green Willows
Oakfield
Cwmbran
Gwent
NP44 3DU**

Summary for Parents

School Number: 678/2205

Date of Inspection: 6 - 8 June 2005

by

**Stephanie J James
W267/78911**

Date: 22 July 2005

Under Estyn contract number: T/241/04/P

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Basic information about the school

Name of School	Oakfield Primary School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of School	Green Willows Cwmbran Torfaen
Post-code	NP44 3DU
Telephone number	01633 480039

Head teacher (Acting)	Mrs Anne Webster-Blythe
Date of appointment	January 2004
Chair of governors/Appropriate authority	Mr Paul Levy
Registered inspector	Ms Stephanie James
Dates of inspection	6 th to 8 th June 2005

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	24.5	21	26	34	20	20	22	26	169

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	2	8

A SUMMARY REPORT FOR PARENTS

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

The inspection of Oakfield Primary School took place between 6th and 8th June 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Stephanie James 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.

Summary

Oakfield Primary School is a good and improving school. Since the last inspection in 1999 it has successfully addressed the shortcomings identified and achieved outstanding improvement in the standard of pupils' behaviour, which is now consistently good. The inspection team agreed with all the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

Table of grades awarded

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

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

Standards

Standards are good with no important shortcomings. Standards in the lessons in the six subjects observed during the inspection are:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	83%	14%	0%	0%

Pupils' overall standards of achievement in the six subjects inspected are as follows:

Subjects

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Subject 1: English	2	2
Subject 2: Science	2	2
Subject 3: Design and Technology	2	2
Subject 4: Geography	2	2
Subject 5: Music	2	2
Subject 6: Religious Education	2	2

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

In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress and achieve good standards in their knowledge, understanding and skills in the six subjects that were focused on in the inspection. Pupils with additional learning needs, including those with special needs, make good progress relative to their abilities.

Children under five make good progress and achieve good standards in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing and in their use of numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) through their activities in all six areas of learning.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 build well on this sound foundation and continue to make good progress and achieve good standards, with no important shortcomings, in the key skills of speaking, listening and reading, although the ability of older pupils in Key Stage 2 to read and research independently to gain information is not so well developed.

Although there is evidence of good standards achieved in writing in English and history and in work on display, the quantity and quality of pupils' writing in their books in other subjects is variable.

Pupils' application of mathematical skills and their use of ICT to support their work in other subjects are good.

Pupils are developing a good knowledge and understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales. Children's bilingual skills are promoted very effectively in the nursery. As they move through the school, however, pupils experience problems with pronunciation and overall, their bilingual competence is under-developed.

The school's results in English, mathematics and science in the three years up to and including 2004 have, with the exception of science at Key Stage 1, been consistently below the average for both the Local Education Authority (LEA) and that of Wales as a whole. They have also, historically, been below the average performance of schools with a similar socio-economic profile. The performance of boys lagged behind that of girls until 2004. However, as a result of the school's very successful strategy to improve the standard of pupils' behaviour, and improvements in the overall quality of teaching, standards are steadily rising, including those of boys. Pupils are achieving well in relation to their starting points and meet or exceed the targets set for them by the school.

After a very good start in the nursery, pupils continue to make good progress in their personal and learning skills and in their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. They show an interest in their work in the vast majority of lessons and are keen to discuss it. Pupils of all ages show respect for diversity in society, appropriate to their age and by the end of Key Stage 2 have a strong sense of fairness and equality.

Pupils' behaviour in all classes and throughout the school day is consistently good. They move around the school quietly and in an orderly manner, play happily together and display courtesy and consideration to one another and to adults. This good standard of behaviour is clearly having a very positive impact on the school as a community, on the progress made in lessons and on the standards pupils achieve in their work.

Whatever their ability or background, pupils take an active part in school life. They are developing a very good understanding of their local community and their place within it. However, their preparation for participation in the workplace is not as well developed.

Attendance is broadly in line with the LEA and Wales average. There is minimal unauthorised absence. However, despite the school's efforts, too many families take holidays during term time and this number is increasing. Almost all pupils are punctual.

The quality of education and training

In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6%	73%	21%	0%	0%

At 79 per cent, the percentage of good and very good teaching is well above the Welsh Assembly Government's target that 50 per cent of teaching should be good or better.

Throughout the school, teachers use a wide variety of techniques to stimulate pupils' interest in the topics they are studying. Their use of drama is particularly good in maximising pupils' involvement in lessons. The quality of teaching in the nursery has some outstanding features. Excellent provision is made for children's imaginative play and there is a very good balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities.

The quality of the relationships between both teaching and non-teaching staff and the pupils is an outstanding feature of the school. Teachers consistently make clear their expectations of good behaviour and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and liking between pupils and teachers.

All teachers demonstrate secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, with the exception of Welsh, where their confidence in advancing pupils' bilingual skills in their work across the curriculum is variable. Subject leaders show particular expertise in teaching the subjects they lead and are very good role models for their colleagues.

In most lessons, teachers cover a good amount of material in the time available and all pupils are fully involved. Occasionally, however, groups of pupils have to observe while others carry out the main task, for example in some music lessons, which sometimes leads to decreased levels of concentration and a little restlessness.

Overall, teachers' planning is good. They share lesson objectives with pupils and give clear explanations and demonstrations so that pupils understand what they are expected to do. However, there are some missed opportunities in upper Key Stage 2 for pupils to develop their independent reading and research skills.

In the main, high quality support enables most pupils to achieve well. However, tasks provided for pupils, with the exception of work in English and mathematics, do not consistently meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers' expectations of the quantity and quality of pupils' written work in science and the foundation subjects is variable. Some pupils could attempt more challenging, extended tasks, whilst others sometimes need more initial support in their work.

Children under five are carefully assessed and the information obtained is used effectively to plan activities to meet their needs. There is a well-established system for assessing pupils' achievements in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 that helps teachers to plan effectively for further work. However, information from assessment is not so effectively and consistently used in science and the foundation subjects to inform teachers' planning for the full range of abilities. Teachers also sometimes miss opportunities in different subjects to develop pupils' self-evaluation skills.

The curriculum provided is broad and balanced and offers equality of access for all pupils. It provides continuity and progression within both key stages, although there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop and refine their designing skills in design and technology in Key Stage 2.

There is very good provision for extra curricular activities. The wide range of extra curricular activities offered includes art, drama, football, guitar, country dancing and choir and pupils visit theatres, museums and other places of interest.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The acting head teacher, staff and governors are very successful in creating a caring ethos built on mutual respect and consideration for others.

An outstanding feature of the school's work is its links with parents, the local community, other schools and training institutions, which are very good. It plays an important role in tackling social disadvantage by running courses for parents and other adults. It also provides work placements as a stepping-stone towards gaining full-time employment.

There are strong links with several local businesses that have a positive impact on pupils' standards of achievement but, the school does not have a planned strategy to develop pupils' awareness of the world of work through a variety of opportunities, including visits.

The school promotes sustainable development very effectively and pupils are very aware of environmental issues and of their role as citizens of the world.

Pupils are well looked after in a happy, caring environment and the school gives good attention to their support and guidance. Pupils are well known to all adults within the school. It is these secure relationships that underpin the school's work and give pupils the confidence to seek help if they need it.

Leadership and management

The school has a clear mission statement and aims. The acting head teacher provides clear direction to a dedicated and enthusiastic team of teaching and non-teaching staff. There is a tangible team spirit amongst the staff and a unity of purpose that has a very positive impact on the ethos of the school as a whole.

All staff have agreed job descriptions and the school has good arrangements for monitoring the performance of teachers and developing their professional expertise.

The governing body is very supportive and well-informed and individual governors are actively involved in the school. However, there are several new governors who, although very supportive, have yet fully to develop their role in helping to set the school's strategic direction. The governing body fulfils the vast majority of legal duties placed upon it. However, although Race Equality and Accessibility policies are in place, it does not have action plans to monitor their implementation.

The school is developing effective and comprehensive self-evaluation processes. Leaders and managers have a very good overview of performance in the areas for which they are responsible and are committed to raising standards. The acting head teacher knows the school well and has been particularly effective in bringing areas for development forward in a constructive and efficient way.

The School Strategic Plan (SSP) is a working document that correctly identifies issues that need to be addressed. It is sufficiently detailed to enable governors and managers to plan and evaluate the progress of initiatives the school has identified as priorities. However, it does not include sufficiently

robust evaluations of the extent to which previous priorities have been addressed or regular monitoring of current objectives.

Subject leaders have a good understanding about standards and the quality of provision in the subjects for which they are responsible. The senior management team has focused on supporting leaders in the core subjects and now seeks to extend the good practices developed here to other subjects. The school is developing good procedures for obtaining the views of all those with an interest in the school such as parents, pupils and governors.

The overall quantity and quality of staffing is a strength of the school. There is a very good blend of youth and experience in the team. The school administrator conducts daily routines and other responsibilities efficiently and effectively. Caretaking, cleaning and mid-day supervisory staff play a major role in the daily life of the school.

The school has been resourced appropriately and systematically so as to maximise educational opportunities and achievement for all age ranges and subject areas.

The overall quality of the accommodation is good, although there are some shortcomings. The under-fives have a safe, secure outdoor area, which has very recently been substantially improved. The school grounds and outdoor play areas are well maintained and clean, although the exterior appearance of the school building is not immediately appealing. However, the school is planning to remedy this through the involvement of an artist-in-residence. Inside the school, attractive displays celebrating pupil achievement do much to brighten up the fabric of the building.

Most classrooms are spacious and the school is steadily improving access to the building for disabled people. However, the area for older pupils in Key Stage 2 on the first floor is small and the fact that many windows cannot be opened safely means that classes can become very warm, stuffy and not conducive to learning.

Spending decisions are matched well to the school's priorities identified in the SSP so that, overall, the school gives good value for money.

Recommendations

To improve further the school now needs to:

- R1 Raise the standard and quantity of pupils' written work in science, design and technology, geography and religious education;
- R2 Improve the quality of bilingual teaching and raise the standard of pupils' bilingual competence;
- R3 Ensure work is more consistently and effectively matched to the needs and abilities of pupils;
- R4 Attend to the health and safety issue brought to the attention of the head teacher and governing body;
- R5 Ensure all regulatory and statutory requirements are met.

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

Acknowledgement

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