

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

**Oldcastle Infants School  
South Street  
CF31 3ED**

**School Number: 6722202**

**Date of Inspection: 29/11/05**

**by**

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78218**

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

- \* nursery schools and settings maintained or used by local education authorities (LEAs);
- \* primary schools;
- \* secondary schools;
- \* special schools;
- \* pupil referral units;
- \* independent schools;
- \* further education;
- \* adult community-based learning;
- \* youth support services;
- \* LEAs;
- \* teacher education and training;
- \* work-based learning;
- \* careers companies; and
- \* the education, guidance and training elements of Jobcentre Plus.

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

The inspection of Oldcastle Infants School took place between 29/11/05 and 30/11/05. An independent team of inspectors, led by Merfyn Lloyd Jones undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

"There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a short inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Context</b>	1
<b>Summary</b>	2
<b>Recommendations</b>	6
<b>Standards</b>	7
Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?	7
<b>The quality of education and training</b>	10
Key question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	10
Key question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	12
Key question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	14
<b>Leadership and management</b>	16
Key question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	16
Key question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	17
Key question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	18
<b>School's response to the inspection</b>	20
<b>Appendices</b>	
A Basic information about the school	21
B School data and indicators	22
C National Curriculum assessments results	23
D Evidence base of the inspection	24
E Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	25

## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. The school is situated in the town centre of Bridgend and serves a catchment area that consists mainly of private houses.
2. The school has 177 pupils between 3 and 7 years of age on roll. Pupils represent the full ability range. None of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs although there are 45 pupils on either school action or school action plus for extra support. The pupils are arranged into 7 classes.
3. Children are admitted into the nursery in the term following their third birthday and children to the reception class are admitted in the September following their fourth birthday.
4. According to the school, the pupils are drawn from a social background, which is described as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Four and a half per cent of the pupils receive free school meals.
5. English is the predominant language spoken at home. Three and a half per cent of the pupils are of Asian and African origin.
6. The school was last inspected in November 1999. The current head teacher has been in post since 1998.

### The school's priorities and targets

7. The school's vision statement states:  

'We have a caring community which fosters parental involvement providing children with a rich and challenging working environment ensuring that every pupil is given the opportunity to achieve their highest potential in a happy and stimulating environment.'
8. The school's mission statement is 'It's Fun to Learn'.
9. The priorities set for the current year include:
  - 96 per cent of pupils to achieve level 2+ in mathematics;
  - 96 per cent of pupils to achieve level 2+ and 30 per cent of pupils to achieve level 3 in writing;
  - improve the use of information technology (IT) in the Nursery;
  - further develop experiential and creative learning;
  - develop questioning techniques to promote learning;
  - consider the requirements for the implementation of the Foundation Phase.

## Summary

10. Oldcastle Infant School is a very good school with many outstanding features. Not only has it maintained the high standards achieved at the last inspection in 1999 but improved on them. Teachers and pupils have forged a happy hard-working community, based on expectations that are consistently high. Its leadership and management are outstanding.
11. The inspection team agreed with the school's judgement in six out of the seven key questions. In key question two the school had underestimated the quality of teaching.

### Table of grades awarded

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

### Standards

12. Children under five achieve very good standards in all areas of learning. The quality of provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils make very good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. This is a significant strength of the school.
13. Children make excellent progress in the nursery and reception classes with some pupils regularly producing some outstanding work; this is built upon successfully at key stage 1.
14. In end of key stage 1 teacher assessment in 2005, the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or better in English, mathematics and science was well above the LEA and national average for Wales. Standards since 2002 in all core subjects have been consistently above the LEA and national averages. This is an outstanding achievement.
15. When compared with similar schools across Wales in 2004, using the free school meals indicator the school was placed in the top 25 per cent of schools for English and the top 50 per cent for mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs make very good and consistent progress and cope

successfully with work well matched to their individual needs. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

16. In the early years, the standards and progress children under-five make in the key skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are very good.
17. At key stage 1 the majority of pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills. They also read with fluency, confidence and understanding. They write with accuracy, presenting their written work well. They show good ability when using their numeracy skills and can apply them accurately in different contexts.
18. Pupils across the age range demonstrate very good ICT skills. They can find relevant information, are competent in handling data and can use these skills confidently to support and extend their learning across a range of curriculum areas.
19. Pupils are beginning to make good progress in their bilingual competence. They speak well and are acquiring a good vocabulary. However, they have yet to acquire the necessary confidence to move with ease between the two languages.
20. Pupils make very good progress in developing their personal, social and moral skills. Excellent relationships exist between pupils and adults throughout the school. The attitude to work by the majority of the pupils and the ability to concentrate is an outstanding feature throughout the school. Pupils have very good awareness of equal opportunity and show respect for the diversity of beliefs and cultural traditions to be found in society. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, and outside at play is exemplary.

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

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

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
52%	41%	7%	0%	0%

22. Ninety three per cent of lessons observed were graded good or very good, which is well above the target set by the Welsh Assembly Government. Of these, fifty two per cent had outstanding features, which include:
  - Work set at the right level for pupils of all ages and abilities and very good support given in lessons;
  - Very good questioning techniques and high expectations which challenge and stimulate pupils;
  - Very good relationships helping to create an ethos where learning is nurtured;
  - Very good provision for creative and investigative work which helps pupils to find things out for themselves and promoting life long learning;

23. Good teamwork is evident with all adults right across the school. Teachers are well trained and have high aspirations for their pupils' development.
24. Assessment procedures are another outstanding feature of provision. They are thorough and very well managed by the school, fully meeting all statutory requirements. The school has made a good start to involving pupils in planning their own progress and setting targets for improvement plans are in hand to further involve pupils in their own assessment but these are still at a very early stage. Reports to parents are good. They give a clear picture of what pupils know and can do.
25. The curriculum is well organised, broad and balanced, and fully meets the needs and aspirations of individual learners, whatever their age or ability. The overall provision for pupils' personal development is good because teachers plan so well for this aspect. Pupils are provided with many relevant opportunities throughout the day to develop spiritually through moments of deep thinking and reflection on issues raised in their daily lives and in the world around them. Teachers promote clear values, but they also listen to pupils and show them that their views and opinions are valued, helping them to develop their confidence and self-esteem.
26. Opportunities for pupils to celebrate cultural differences and diversity are limited. There are insufficient planned opportunities for them to learn about the cultures of the wider world, and in particular, to debate and discuss issues that arise from living in a multicultural society.
27. The partnership that has been established with parents and carers is excellent; this is a notable feature of the schools' work. Links with other schools, including the junior school to which pupils transfer are extremely good. A good range of age appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils so that even at this young age they are able to learn about the world of work. The provision to develop pupil's entrepreneurial skills and those for life long learning is an outstanding feature of the schools work
28. There are many very good opportunities for pupils to extend and enrich their understanding of *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* by acknowledging and celebrating the culture and heritage of Wales, including contemporary Wales.
29. The school plans and manages care and support arrangements extremely well. As a result of these very good arrangements pupils are very well supported by all adults who work in the school as well as by a good range of external agencies. Arrangements to help children settle into the nursery or reception year are extremely well organised. Arrangements to ensure pupils settle into school life at a later stage are also outstanding.
30. There are very clear policies and procedures to ensure everyone's health, safety and welfare. The schools arrangements to ensure health and safety and to protect any pupil who may be at risk are outstanding.

31. Pupils are very well known to all adults within the school. The day-to-day care and guidance for pupils is of a very high quality, an outstanding feature of the schools work. Arrangements to monitor and address any concerns related to pupils' behaviour, attendance, punctuality or performance, are outstanding.
32. The quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs is an outstanding feature of the school. The school promotes positive attitudes to overcome any prejudices and presumptions based on gender, race, language or social background, and to respect diversity.

### **Leadership and management**

33. The quality of leadership provided by the head teacher is outstanding. Her management is purposeful and knowledgeable. Her vision, shared by all members of staff and governors is clear. She has a considerable positive effect on the work of the school.
34. There is good team work amongst all staff with effective management structures, which enables the school to function smoothly. The school's policies and procedures provide clear guidance for promoting every aspect of school life. They are implemented effectively and the school's success in this regard is one of its outstanding features. The school shows a strong commitment to developing the expertise of all staff. Staff, are clear as to what is expected of them. Performance management practices contribute well to the identification of teachers' professional development needs.
35. The governing body is very supportive and is regularly provided with good quality information about the school's performance and activities. Governors have good knowledge of the aims and vision of the school. In almost every area of their work the governing body fulfils its legal and statutory requirements. However, the school prospectus and governors annual report to parents, have minor omissions in the information they should contain.
36. The school's self-evaluation procedures are highly effective. This is an outstanding feature of the school's work. It is very comprehensive and is used well to inform priorities in the school development plan (SDP). The school has continued to make very good progress since the last inspection. It has built upon the very sound foundations that were in place in 1999. All the key issues have been very well addressed and this has further improved the already high standards at the school.
37. There are a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers to teach every aspect of the curriculum. Despite financial constraints, the quality and quantity of the resources to support learning are good. The governors, head and all staff have a clear focus on school improvement and keep budget priorities under constant review through rigorous discussion. The budget is well managed and the school fully committed to best value principles.
38. Overall the school gives very good value for money.

## Recommendations

39. In order to improve the school in the areas inspected, the staff and governing body needs to:
- R1 further develop pupils' involvement in identifying and setting their own targets for improvement;
  - R2 develop planned opportunities for pupils to learn about living in a multicultural society and the cultures of other countries;
  - R3 continue to improve pupils' bilingual skills across the school;
  - R4 work with the Local Education Authority to address the shortcomings in accommodation;
  - R5 address the shortcomings in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents so that they fully comply with statutory requirements.

NB: A number of the above issues have already been identified as areas for further development through the school's self-evaluation process.

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 1: Good with outstanding features

40. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
41. Children aged under five achieve very good standards in all areas of learning. The quality of provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils make very good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. This is a significant strength of the school.
42. Pupils make excellent progress in the nursery and reception classes with some pupils regularly producing some outstanding work; this is built upon successfully at key stage 1. Maintaining these high standards has been a challenge for teachers because assessment results are showing that pupils are now entering the nursery with more language and personal and social difficulties than have been seen previously. Despite this, it is to the credit of teachers that pupils are still achieving above average standards, by the time they enter key stage 2.
43. In end of key stage 1 teacher assessment in 2005, the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or better in English, mathematics and science was well above the LEA and national average for Wales. Standards since 2002 in all core subjects have been consistently above the LEA and national averages, this is an outstanding achievement.
44. When compared with similar schools across Wales in 2004, using the free school meals indicator the school was placed in the top 25 per cent of schools for English and the top 50 per cent for mathematics and science.
45. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
46. The school sets realistic targets for all pupils. They are based on a sound recognition of the ability of individual pupils. They are always challenging and consistently achieved. Some of the more able pupils produce some outstanding work. There are no differences in standards of achievement of pupils in terms of social background, language or race.
47. Pupils with special educational needs make very good and consistent progress and cope successfully with work matched to their individual needs. Pupils have individual targets, which they understand and they make good progress towards achieving these. The majority achieve level 2 or better by the end of year 2.

48. In the early years, the standards and progress pupils under-five make in the key skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing, numeracy and ICT are very good. At key stage 1, the majority of pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills. They read with fluency, confidence and understanding. They write with accuracy, presenting their written work well. Pupils also show good ability when using their numeracy skills and can apply them accurately in different contexts.
49. Pupils across the age range demonstrate very good IT skills, can find relevant information, are competent in handling data and can use these skills confidently to support and extend their learning across a range of curriculum areas.
50. Pupils achieve well in collaborating on creative and problem solving activities. They use an appropriate range of strategies, make hypotheses and deductions, and explore ideas creatively in a number of media.
51. Pupils are beginning to make good progress in their bilingual competence. They speak well and are acquiring good vocabulary. However, they have yet to acquire the necessary confidence to move with ease between the two languages.
52. Pupils make very good progress in developing their personal, social and moral skills. Excellent relationships exist between pupils and adults throughout the school. This enables pupils to become secure and confident in their learning. They are sensitive to the needs of others and demonstrate this by looking out for each other in and around the school.
53. The attitude to work by the majority of the pupils and the ability to concentrate is an outstanding feature throughout the school. They work diligently with a high degree of independence. They take responsibility for their own learning and understand what they have to do to improve their work. They are happy to ask questions in the knowledge that their effort will be appreciated. They support each other and understand and carry out their role within a team. 'Learning how to learn' is a particular strength across the school.
54. Pupils have very good awareness of equal opportunity and show respect for the diversity of beliefs and cultural traditions to be found in society.
55. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, and outside at play is exemplary. Older pupils, in year 2, are extremely good role models for the very youngest pupils. All pupils are very polite and friendly and courteous towards visitors. They are happy to talk to visitors and take a very keen interest in what they have to say. Pupils' relationships with each other are very good. They show respect for their classmates. There is no evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour. The pupils spoken to during the inspection, say that unkindness or bullying is extremely rare.
56. Attendance rates are good. They are above the national average and broadly similar to the LEA average. Punctuality at the start of the day is also good.

Both attendance levels and punctuality have improved since the last inspection. The school takes suitable account of the Welsh Assembly Government guidance.

57. Pupils are developing a good understanding of their place in the community and of the world of work.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features.

58. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question as grade 2 and underestimated the overall quality of teaching.

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

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
52%	41%	7%	0%	0%

60. Ninety three per cent of lessons observed were graded good or very good, which is well above the target set by the Welsh Assembly Government. Of these, fifty two per cent had outstanding features, which include:

- Very good questioning techniques and high expectations which challenge and stimulate pupils;
- Work set at the right level for pupils of all ages and abilities and very good support given in lessons;
- Lively and energetic delivery, which motivates and excites pupils;
- Very good relationships helping to create an ethos where learning is nurtured;
- Very good subject knowledge enabling teachers to plan lessons competently and thoroughly, particularly for pupils basic and key skills;
- Very good provision for creative and investigative work which helps pupils to find things out for themselves and promoting life long learning.

61. No lessons were seen where shortcomings outweighed good features. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes was always good or very good. In the nursery it was, without exception, outstanding. In an extremely small percentage of lessons there was limited use of incidental Welsh, learning objectives were not thoroughly shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons, and there were some missed opportunities for pupils to work independently.

62. Good teamwork is evident with all adults right across the school. Teachers are well trained and have high aspirations for their pupils' development. They are eager to incorporate new initiatives into the life and work of the school. When they listen to pupil's views, they are keen to take their opinions into account. When they plan rich, exciting and varied experiences, they use a wide range of strategies to gain pupils attention and they manage behaviour exceptionally well. They provide relevant and interesting resources and are well prepared for the new Foundation Phase.

63. Teachers are keen to improve their practice and it is evident from documentation, pupils work and lesson observations that they are having some success because, not only are standards high now, but they have been

consistently high over a long period of time. All staff are fully committed to equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender, ability or race. Consequently, all pupils are treated fairly and with respect. Planned activities give good access to pupils of all ability levels. The very good links teachers have developed with parents have enabled parents to properly support their children by helping with good quality home school tasks. This enhances both learning and achievement.

64. Assessment procedures are another outstanding feature of provision. They are thorough and very well managed by the school, fully meeting all statutory requirements. The school has implemented an effective system for assessing pupils' progress from the time they enter school. In the nursery, a baseline assessment is supplemented by other assessments across the areas of learning and daily written observations. This continues as children move through the reception classes and is used to check value added as pupils enter key stage 1.
65. Assessment arrangements continue to be exceptionally thorough in all subjects as pupils move on up through key stage 1. The information gained is used to help governors, the head and staff to:
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of policies;
  - Carefully track progress and set targets to raise the achievement of individual pupils;
  - Assess pupils against LEA and national data benchmarks;
  - Inform curriculum planning and set objectives;
  - Analyse the performance of boys and girls, different teaching groups, year on year trends, performance in subjects and the performance of more able pupils and pupils with special educational needs;
  - Identify strengths and weaknesses across the school;
  - Communicate performance to the wider community, including parents and carers.
66. To help the assessment process, useful portfolios with examples of pupils' work in all subjects have been compiled to indicate the levels that pupils can achieve at each year group. This work is annotated against criteria found in the schemes of work and the national curriculum. It is helpful in guiding teachers when adjusting their planning to meet individual need.
67. The school has made a good start to involve pupils in planning their own progress and setting targets for improvement. Pupils are well informed, through careful marking of their work and discussion, of targets that have been set for them and this has raised their awareness of where they need to improve. Plans are in hand to further involve pupils in their own assessment but these are still at a very early stage.
68. Reports to parents are good. This is because the school has worked so hard to ensure that all parents are fully informed about their children's progress and achievement and parents say they appreciate this. Reports give a clear picture of what pupils know and can do. They indicate where pupils need to

improve their work. A separate response sheet is provided for parents to comment.

69. Parents also say they find meetings with teachers, where they can discuss their children's progress and see work, equally useful. Teachers are friendly, approachable and helpful when guiding parents as to how they can best support their children's learning.

**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**

70. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
71. The curriculum is well organised, broad and balanced, and fully meets the needs and aspirations of individual learners, whatever their age or ability. It also meets all statutory requirements. It provides pupils with rich experiences that excite, interest, and motivate them well, encouraging them to learn and achieve.
72. The school makes a good effort to create links between subjects through themes and topics and this gives coherence and relevance to pupils' learning. An outstanding feature of this is the use made of visitors to the school and visits out into the locality and further afield.
73. The range of extra curricular activities is adequate. These complement and enhance pupil's learning, capturing their interest.
74. Additional activities such as those linked to sport are very restricted because of the lack of suitable outdoor facilities, such as a school field.
75. The school makes very good provision for the progressive development of pupil's basic and key skills. They are provided with many opportunities to develop creatively and investigative work is a strong feature.
76. The overall provision for pupils' personal, social and moral development is good because teachers plan so well for this aspect. Pupils are provided with many relevant opportunities throughout the day to develop spiritually through moments of deep thinking and reflection on issues raised in their daily lives and in the world around them. Daily acts of collective worship, and visits from local clergy, also contribute very well to this aspect.
77. Teachers promote clear values, but they also listen to pupils and show them that their views and opinions are valued, helping them to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Teachers are friendly and supportive, effectively promoting a sense of right and wrong, fair play and honesty. They are caring and the very good relationships, which they share with pupils, are important to

them. They also have high expectations of behaviour. Their success is evident in the very mature, thoughtful and caring attitudes and the very good behaviour and self-discipline of the pupils throughout the school. Support for charitable causes is strong because pupils care about those who are less fortunate than themselves.

78. The school appreciates the need for pupils to celebrate cultural differences and diversity and recognises that currently, planned opportunities for them to learn about the cultures of the wider world, and in particular, to debate and discuss issues that arise from living in a multicultural society are more limited. An action plan is in hand to address this.
79. The partnership that has been established with parents is excellent. They are encouraged to play a full and active part in school life and their children's education. Parents hold the school in high regard and are very pleased with all it provides. The information provided for parents is very good, regular and full of practical and useful information.
80. Links with other schools, including the junior school to which pupils transfer, are extremely good. The school also has well established and productive links with other providers such as initial teacher training institutions. The school has a good partnership with the local community including the church. Members of the nearby community are regular visitors to the school and the experiences they share with pupils enriches their education.
81. A good range of age appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils so that even at this young age they are able to learn about the world of work. However, no placements for staff within business and industry have taken place as part of their professional development.
82. There are many very good opportunities for pupils to extend and enrich their understanding of *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* by acknowledging and celebrating the culture and heritage of Wales, including contemporary Wales. Provision for the teaching of the Welsh language is also very good. The promotion of bilingualism across the school, however, although often good, is variable, and depends on the teacher's confidence in using the language incidentally throughout the school day.
83. The school has good arrangements to help it tackle social disadvantage. All adults ensure that pupils have equal opportunity to access the curriculum offered and to take part in all areas of school life what ever their ability or background.
84. The schools provision for sustainable development and global citizenship is in the early stages of development. An Eco council has been established and the school is currently involved in recycling and energy saving initiatives.
85. The provision to develop pupil's entrepreneurial skills and those for life long learning is an outstanding feature of the schools work. Many opportunities, appropriate to the age of pupils, are well planned into the curriculum. Pupils

problem solving, research and questioning skills are promoted very well. Right through the school pupils are successfully encouraged to become independent and self-assured. Pupils take pride in undertaking a good range of responsibilities and duties for their teachers. Transition arrangements at the end of year 2 are very good and pupils are well prepared for their transfer to their next stage of education.

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

##### **Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

86. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
87. The school plans and manages care and support arrangements extremely well. As a result of these very good arrangements pupils are very well supported by all adults who work in the school as well as by a good range of external agencies.
88. The school works very well with parents and carers. This is a notable feature of its work. They are consulted about the care and support needed for their children. Care plans are drawn up when required and these are appropriate to the age and need of the pupils. At the pre-inspection meeting parents expressed the view that the schools provides very well for their children; the inspection team endorses this.
89. Arrangements to help children settle into the nursery or reception year are extremely well organised. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in this process. A great deal of practical and helpful information is provided for parents before children start school. Arrangements to ensure pupils settle into school life at a later stage are also excellent.
90. There are very clear policies and procedures to ensure everyone's health, safety and welfare. The governing body plays a suitable role in overseeing the schools health and safety arrangements. Child protection procedures are very secure and well documented and known to all that work in the school. The child protection policy reflects recommended good practice. The schools arrangements to ensure health and safety and to protect any pupil who may be at risk are outstanding.
91. Pupils are very well known to all adults within the school. The day to day care and guidance for pupils is of a very high quality, a notable feature of the schools work. Pupils confirm that they trust adults and would turn to them for help if required. Personal and social education is very well planned throughout the school, suitable attention is given to sex education and substance misuse, appropriate to the age of the pupils. The school also ensure that healthy lifestyles are promoted though many topics within the curriculum.

92. Arrangements to monitor and address any concerns related to pupils' behaviour, attendance, punctuality or performance are outstanding. The schools systems ensure that all these areas are very closely monitored and swift and very effective action taken if there are any concerns.
93. The quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs is an outstanding feature of the school. The head teacher as the school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) manages this very well. There are very effective procedures for early identification, assessment and monitoring which contribute significantly to raising achievement. Information about pupils' need is systematically collected and shared with all members of staff who teach them.
94. Forty-five pupils have been identified as requiring additional support. These are supported effectively by a good balance of withdrawal from the classroom or in-class support. They are well planned and result in effective learning. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are supported by dedicated and effective school staff and by outside agencies where that is deemed necessary. Individual education plans (IEPs) include carefully set targets, which are both challenging and achievable. Pupils with SEN experience a broad and balanced curriculum and participate fully in the life of the school.
95. There is very good support for pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress, they are managed sensibly and effectively and achieve well. This is rarely seen as a problem by the school.
96. The school promotes positive attitudes to overcome any prejudices and presumptions based on gender, race, language or social background, and to respect diversity. Opportunities to recognise and value cultural diversity are identified and promoted but are somewhat limited.
97. The school takes every reasonable step to ensure that no disabled pupil would suffer from being treated less fairly.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

98. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
99. The quality of leadership provided by the head teacher is outstanding. Her management is purposeful and knowledgeable. Her vision, shared by all members of staff and governors is clear. She has a considerable positive effect on the work of the school. Both the head teacher and deputy head teacher provide excellent role models. All members of the school community are wholly dedicated to their respective roles and responsibilities.
100. There is good team work amongst all staff with effective management structures, which enables the school to function smoothly. The school operates in an environment of mutual trust and understanding. The general organisation of the school is excellent and it functions daily as an orderly and well-organised community.
101. The school's policies and procedures provide clear guidance for promoting every aspect of school life. They are implemented effectively and the school's success in this regard is one of its outstanding features. There is a real sense of ownership by staff, governors and pupils alike in achieving the best.
102. The school shows a strong commitment to developing the expertise of all staff. Staff are clear as to what is expected of them. They have been involved in policy-making and regularly review the schemes of work thoroughly. The quality of subject leadership is very good. Leaders are very involved in monitoring standards and evaluating teaching and draw up detailed monitoring reports for their subjects. This has a positive impact on standards. This is an outstanding area of work.
103. Performance management practices contribute well to the identification of teachers' professional development needs. These are appropriately linked to the school's improvement agenda. The school's procedures for performance management and teacher appraisal meet national requirements.
104. The governing body is very supportive and is regularly provided with good quality information about the school's performance and activities. Governors have good knowledge of the aims and vision of the school. They meet regularly and have a well-established and effective committee structure, all of which have suitable terms of reference.
105. Despite many governors being very new to their roles, they are quickly developing a good understanding of their responsibilities. They already have a good grasp of the school's many strengths and the areas for development.

106. Governors meet regularly with subject leaders and this contributes significantly to the setting of the strategic direction of the school and to monitoring the quality of provision and the standards that pupils achieve. In both these areas governor's roles are developing well.
107. In almost every area of their work the governing body fulfils its legal and statutory requirements. However, the school prospectus and governors annual report to parents, have minor omissions in the information they should contain.

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

**Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

108. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
109. The school's self-evaluation procedures are highly effective. All teaching staff are involved in systematic discussion and evaluation of their own work, work of the subjects which they are responsible for, year groups and of the school. This is an outstanding feature of the school's work.
110. Pupils' views, the views of non-teaching staff, parents and governors are all taken into account through the school self-evaluation process. A self-critical and supportive culture is well established to improve provision and performance. This is accepted as part of on-going good management practice.
111. The school's self-evaluation report is very comprehensive and is used well to inform priorities in the school development plan (SDP). This is a working document of high quality, which identifies clearly the action required against each priority with appropriate responsibilities, costing, time scales and measurable outcomes. Staff and governors regularly evaluate the progress being made.
112. A rolling programme of classroom observations to monitor teaching and learning, progress and standards is a well established practice. Subject leaders scrutinise pupils' work and identify good practice and areas for further development. Useful portfolios of pupils' work in all subject areas are produced. Some of these are accurately levelled to National Curriculum standards. Subject leaders' monitoring reports are of excellent quality. This area of work is outstanding and the head teacher has been invited by the LEA's advisory service to share the school's practice with other head teachers and deputy head teachers.
113. Strategies for assessing and evaluating pupils' standards of achievement are very effective. Teachers' analysis of assessment records helps to identify strengths and shortcomings and to set individual targets for pupils. The

quality of this work is outstanding. There is very good awareness of performance in county and national contexts.

114. The school has continued to make very good progress since the last inspection. It has built upon the very sound foundations that were in place in 1999. All the key issues have been very well addressed and this has further improved the already high standards at the school.

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

#### **Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

115. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
116. There are a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers to teach every aspect of the curriculum. The head teacher is very experienced, as are many of the staff in the school. There are good number of suitably trained support and ancillary staff who are suitably deployed and managed effectively.
117. The accommodation has good features but there are shortcomings in important areas. For instance, there is no school field and the outside hard play area is very limited. There is no suitable outdoor play area for the reception children and no water supply in their classrooms. There are an inadequate number of toilets in the building used by the nursery children. Many classrooms are small and cramped and there is inadequate storage space throughout the school. It is to the credit of the school how very well they manage these shortcomings and have not allowed them to impact on pupils learning and standards of achievement. All areas of the school are bright and cheerful, clean and well cared for. Displays of pupil's work make the classrooms look attractive and show the school values pupil's achievements.
118. Despite financial constraints, the quality and quantity of the resources to support learning are good. Good use is also made of the locality to enrich pupils learning experiences.
119. Throughout the school all new resources are carefully and thoroughly monitored by the head and subject leaders to ensure they are properly impacting on learning. The general level of resourcing is good. Shortcomings seen at the time of the previous inspection, particularly for the development of pupils' ICT skills have been addressed.
120. Governors feel that it is important to employ good experienced staff, even if this means that other projects have to wait. Staff resourcing, therefore, has been given the highest priority, as this is enabling pupils to attain so well and move on to key stage 2 with such high standards.

121. Staff and governors have a clear vision of where to target other funding, for example, in order to provide appropriate resources to ensure a smooth transition into the new Foundation Phase. Much has already been done, particularly for children who are under five.
122. The governors, head and all staff have a clear focus on school improvement and keep budget priorities under constant review through rigorous discussion. The budget is well managed and the school fully committed to best value principles.
123. Overall the school gives very good value for money.

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

We are delighted that the inspection findings acknowledge that Oldcastle Infants is a very good school with many outstanding features. The school believes that this report is an accurate analysis of its strengths and areas for development. The inspection report and the school's own self-evaluation report correlate well. The inspection team had thoroughly evaluated pre-inspection documentation and were knowledgeable about the school's context.

The school found the inspection team to be rigorous but extremely professional in their approach. We had total confidence and trust in the team's judgements. Inspectors interacted well with staff and pupils and this ensured that the inspection proceeded smoothly. The judgements made in the report reflect the very high standards of teaching, the stimulating learning environment and enriched curriculum in our school confirming our school motto – 'It's Fun to Learn'.

The school self-evaluation report had awarded itself a grade in one of the key questions which was upgraded by the inspection team. This reflects the culture of the school. We have high expectations and are not complacent. We are always looking for new initiatives to improve and enhance teaching and learning. We have a self-critical but supportive culture.

The positive caring ethos of our school is a strength. We are proud of our children and are very pleased that our inspection found their behaviour exemplary.

The school was extremely pleased that their efforts and achievements were recognised in all key questions. The report praises the teamwork and expertise of teachers, and recognises the contribution that every person makes to the success of the school. Our partnership with parents and governors is a strength that is recognised in the report. This reflects the importance that the school places on these partnerships.

Action plans to address the recommendations in the report will be incorporated in the School Development Plan and the school will continue to strive to maintain the very high standards in all areas of the curriculum.

The Governors and staff would like to thank the Inspection Team for their professional and courteous manner during the inspection.

## Appendix A

### Basic information about the school

Name of School	Oldcastle Infant School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3 to 7
Address of School	South Street Bridgend
Post-code	CF31 3ED
Telephone number	01656 766230
Head teacher	Mrs Lynne Larcombe
Date of appointment	April 1998
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs Sian Kalinka
Registered inspector	Merfyn Lloyd Jones
Dates of inspection	29 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> November 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	30	38	50	52					170

#### Total number of teachers

	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	1	7.1

#### Staffing information

Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	23:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	30:2
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	23
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1:1

#### Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection

Term	N	R	Whole School
Spring 2005	92.7	93.4	93.5
Summer 2005	95.7	93.3	94.7
Autumn 2005	92.5	94.7	95.1

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	4.5%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

## Appendix C

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2005			Number of pupils in Y2					57	
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	W	1	2	3	2+	
English:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	2	61	37	98	
		National	0	4	13	63	20	83	
En: reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	2	45	53	98	
		National	0	4	14	54	28	82	
En: writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	4	68	28	96	
		National	0	5	13	71	10	81	
En: speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	67	33	100	
		National	0	2	11	64	22	86	
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	5	58	37	95	
		National	0	2	9	61	26	87	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	47	53	100	
		National	0	2	10	68	20	88	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	94.7%	In Wales	80%

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

## Appendix D

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

A team of three inspectors and a peer assessor inspected work in all classes. Between them they spent the equivalent of eight full days at the school.

The head teacher was the nominee and she played an extensive role during the inspection.

Twenty nine lessons or part lessons were observed, and a selection of the pupils' practical and written work was scrutinised.

Registration, collective worship and extra-curricular activities were seen.

Discussions were held with staff and pupils about their work.

All documents presented by the school prior to the inspection, and during the inspection, were scrutinised.

Meetings were held prior to the inspection with the head teacher, staff, parents and the governing body.

Eleven parents attended the meeting held prior to the inspection, and the parents' responses (65 in all) to the questionnaires distributed were analysed.

Post inspection meetings were held with the staff and governors.

## Appendix E

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Mr Merfyn Lloyd Jones Registered Inspector	Context, summary and recommendation. Key questions 1, 4, 5 and 6 and SEN
Mrs Kay Andrews Team Inspector	Key questions 2, 3 and 7
Mrs Denise Shields Lay inspector	Contribution to all seven key questions.

### The contractor was:

Evenlode Education Ltd  
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### Acknowledgement

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