

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

**Phillipstown Primary School
Cefn Rhychdir Road,
Phillipstown,
New Tredegar.
NP24 6XE**

School Number: 6762316

Date of Inspection: 27/03/06

by

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17717**

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

The inspection of Phillipstown Primary School took place between 27/03/06 and 29/03/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Luned Eleri Betts undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

"There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a standard inspection."

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Phillipstown Primary School is located in the village of Phillipstown near New Tredegar in the Rhymney Valley, an area of high unemployment and social disadvantage, which has been identified as the most deprived area in the County Borough of Caerphilly and around the ninth most deprived in Wales. The community has been in existence since the early part of the last century when it provided housing for a large number of coal miners. The school itself is located in an old building built in the 1920s and is situated in the middle of the village.
2. 125 pupils aged 3-11 years of age attend the school at present, a figure which includes ten part-time nursery children who occupy the same class as reception aged children; they are housed in an unit within the school playing areas. The school considers that most pupils come from economically disadvantaged homes. Around 47% of pupils are registered as being entitled to Free School Meals (FSM). There are no children from an ethnic minority background and no pupils who speak Welsh at home. Two pupils are looked after by the local authority.
3. All mainstream classes are mixed age classes. In addition, there are two Special Educational Needs (SEN) classes; one is a nurture class for reception and Year 1 (Y1) which provides emotional, social and behavioural support for four days a week. At present five pupils attend this class. The other is a class for pupils from seven to 11 years of age who have moderate learning difficulties (MLD). Ten pupils attended this class at the time of the inspection. Six pupils in the special classes and three in mainstream classes have a statement of SEN; a further 31 pupils are on the school's SEN register. No pupil has a National Curriculum (NC) disapplication. On entry to school the baseline indicates the poor communication and very low-social interaction skills of the children.
4. The school's mission statement is that:
5. 'At Phillipstown school we work hard, play fair and treat all people as we would like to be treated. We respect the environment.'
6. The school was last inspected in January 2000 and gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark in May 2005.

The school's priorities and targets are to:

- promote the enjoyment of learning and knowledge;
- develop pupils' moral values and encourage self-respect and self-discipline;
- provide pupils with basic language and mathematical skills;
- promote understanding and experience of simple scientific experiences, take an interest in technology and try out new ideas;

- encourage an awareness, knowledge and care of the immediate environment and how it relates to the world at large;
- look at the past and how it relates to the present;
- foster an appreciation of beauty in music, art and drama;
- develop physical skills to play fair;
- develop knowledge about Christian beliefs and those of other religions, to respect the beliefs of others and be aware of the spiritual aspects of prayer and worship and care for others.

The school's priorities for this year are to:

- ensure that key skills are planned for in all areas of the curriculum;
- raise standards in oracy at both key stages;
- raise standard in mathematics at both key stages;
- continue to develop investigative skills in science;
- raise standards in Information and Communication Technology(ICT) across the school;
- develop social skills throughout the school;
- review schemes of work for history at Key Stage 1(KS1);
- review schemes of work for physical education and design and technology across the school;
- evaluate and improve the quality of provision for SEN in mainstream;
- continue to develop portfolios of work in foundation subjects;
- address matters relating to the fabric of the building.

Summary

7. This school is the focus of life in Phillipstown and plays a significant role in the lives of its pupils. It successfully promotes self-esteem amongst them. The range of enriching experiences provided for pupils is an outstanding feature. The headteacher provides very effective leadership; she is a highly visible leader who is approachable to both parents and pupils.
8. The school knows itself well. The inspection team agreed with the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report in six out of the seven key questions. Where it differed the team gave the school a higher grade.

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

9. Standards in lessons observed in subjects inspected during the inspection are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	54%	43%	-	-

10. Standards of achievement in lessons observed are higher than the Welsh Assembly Government(WAG) all-Wales targets that, by 2007, 98% of standards should be satisfactory or better (Grade 3) but only 57% was a Grade 2 or better which is below the national target of 65% good or better (Grade 2).
11. The overall quality of the provision for the under fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. During the inspection, standards for under fives across the six areas of learning, were as follows:

Under fives	Nursery	Reception
Language, literacy and communication	Grade 3	Grade 2
Personal and social development	Grade 2	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2	Grade 2
Under fives	Grade 2	Grade 2

12. Standards in KS1 and KS2 in subjects inspected were as follows:

Inspection Area	KS1	KS2
English	Grade 3	Grade 3
Mathematics	Grade 3	Grade 3
Information technology	Grade 3	Grade 2
Design and technology	Grade 2	Grade 2
Music	Grade 2	Grade 2

13. Although cohorts may vary in ability, baseline assessment shows that children, when starting school, have far lower skills than other schools locally and nationally, especially in language. However, with the language and behavioural support programmes provided for them, the majority achieve good standards.
14. Overall in KS1 and KS2 the majority of pupils achieve their potential and succeed regardless of their social and linguistic background. This is particularly true of pupils in the nurture class in KS1 and within the MLD class in KS2 where the individual attention they receive promotes their skills and understanding well; they make good progress in line with their needs.
15. In teacher assessment at the end of KS1 the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) (which is a combination of the results of pupils achieving a level two, the level expected of seven year olds) in all three core subjects, has been consistently below the percentages of average local and national figures and those of similar schools (schools in the same FSM category) for the last three years.
16. In KS2 results in NC assessments are significantly below the averages for local, national and similar schools. The CSI (a combination of the results of pupils achieving level four, the level expected of 11 year olds) has also been significantly lower than other schools during the last three years.
17. In the key skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and the use of ICT, standards in the under-fives class for reception aged children overall, have good features and no important shortcomings. Standards are also good for the part-time nursery children in the same class, though the speaking skills of nursery children are limited. Bilingual skills of reception children are outstanding.
18. Across both key stages standards in key skills including bilingualism have some shortcomings. Standards in listening and reading are good while speaking,

writing, numeracy and the use of ICT have some shortcomings and are inconsistent between classes.

19. Pupils' personal, social and moral skills develop well. An outstanding feature of social development is the inclusion of pupils in the special class into mainstream during afternoon sessions. Pupils are aware of moral issues which are often conveyed to them in a set of simple school rules displayed prominently. Pupils' preparation for life within their community is outstanding; they are made to feel proud of where they live.
20. The school places importance on equal opportunities for all. Pupils understand that all places and people must be respected. Pupils themselves report that there is no discrimination between boys and girls, able and less able pupils.
21. Pupils have good attitudes to their lessons and most are keen to learn. A small minority of pupils however, has short attention spans and occasionally displays behaviour that disturbs others from learning.
22. Most pupils attend school regularly and are punctual at the start of the school day. A significant minority, though, frequently arrives late or misses school, often for trivial reasons. These pupils have poor attendance patterns and, as a result, miss important elements of their education.

The quality of education and training

23. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was judged as follows.

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
9%	66%	25%	-	-

24. The quality of teaching is a key element in the progress pupils make. Teachers provide good role models, and their relationships with their pupils are good.
25. The school's assessment policy is good, and assessment procedures are in place and are used well.
26. The quality of assessment for nursery and baseline assessment for reception children is very effective. In KS1 and KS2 work is marked regularly and constructive comments are made, which in the best examples, explain clearly how pupils may improve on their work. Annual reports to parents conform with statutory requirements and provide detailed observations on pupils' achievements, and the way ahead.
27. Overall the school succeeds in meeting pupils' needs and provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets legal and course requirements. Planning for under-fives is effective and ensures that the needs of children of all abilities are met.

28. In general, in KS1 and KS2, policies and schemes for curriculum areas are appropriate and help ensure progression and continuity in knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers' short-term planning is consistent and well focused in terms of learning objectives and activities. However, it does not always cater for the different needs of pupils of all abilities, including the less and more able in mainstream classes, especially when pupils from the MLD class are integrated. The school has identified planning for key skills as an area for development; at present it is inconsistent between classes.
29. Learners, whatever their levels of ability, social and ethnic backgrounds and gender have equal access to the curriculum. Learning experiences are enhanced by the provision of a good range of extra-curricular activities.
30. Provision for the development of spiritual, moral social and cultural education is good. Personal and Social Education (PSE) is planned for well. The school council makes important contributions to pupils' social development.
31. The school's links with parents, the local community and the wider community are an outstanding feature of this school especially the use made of local facilities and the close working arrangement with the local community house which benefits all greatly. Pupils also benefit highly from some work-related activities which raise their personal understanding and awareness of the world of work.
32. Information provided for parents is good. The annual report of governors to parents and the school prospectus fully meet statutory requirements.
33. Teachers provide good quality personal support and guidance for pupils. They in turn, state that they feel confident in approaching staff for advice and support if they have problems, and feel that it is a happy school.
34. There is a clear programme of induction for pupils starting in nursery and links with the comprehensive school to which pupils transfer are effective.
35. Procedures for monitoring and following up absence are good with the headteacher personally taking responsibility and contacting families.
36. There is an appropriate health and safety policy and effective procedures are in place but some health and safety issues were discussed with the headteacher and governing body during the inspection.
37. Whilst the school has a comprehensive child protection policy, which is in line with LEA guidelines, not all ancillary staff have received training in this field.
38. The school works hard at meeting the needs of pupils with additional learning needs and the provision has a number of good features. In the nurture and MLD classes teachers and nursery nurses provide a well-focused range of experiences and good quality support.

39. The quality of support for pupils whose behaviour can have an adverse effect on their own progress and that of others is good. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or aggressive behaviour.

Leadership and management

40. The school has a clear vision and its aims and priorities focus on establishing pupils' self-esteem.
41. Staff professional development is linked to individual needs and school priorities. Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time has been well thought through.
42. The School Development Plan (SDP) is a valuable document which records the school's priorities and demonstrates how the school is responding to its needs. The school compares its performance consistently with other schools.
43. Recommendations identified for improving the school in this report correspond closely to those specified in the school self-evaluation report. Subject leaders audit their subjects at the end of each school year; however they do not visit classes as part of a rigorous monitoring system and therefore, their contribution to the report is limited at present.
44. The Governing Body (GB) is very supportive of the school and fully meets regulatory and statutory requirements. Parents and governors however are not an integral part of the evaluation process. The voice of pupils, mainly through the school council is gradually becoming a force in the school evaluation process.
45. The school has made good progress overall in all the key issues identified in the last inspection report. Although the need to improve the quality of self-evaluation is also a recommendation in this report the school has made progress in this aspect but can still improve further.
46. There is a sufficient number of teachers with suitable qualifications to teach every aspect of the curriculum. Members of support staff work very well with them and all other adults make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school.
47. The school generally has sufficient resources for every age and most subjects. The quality of them is good, and effective use is made of them in lessons.
48. The condition of the main building is reasonably good with some issues being currently addressed. Classrooms are a good size, and provide appropriate spaces for the teaching and learning of all pupils; however there is limited space in the under-fives' class for the development of physical skills on large equipment.

49. The GB finance committee monitors spending regularly and efficiently and the school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to move the school forward the staff and GB need to:

R1 raise standards in English and mathematics across the school and in information technology in KS1;

R2 develop planning for key skills in order to raise standards across the school;

R3 improve provision for providing work adapted to suit the different needs for less and more able pupils within mainstream classes;

R4 develop whole school evaluation procedures by establishing:

- a) rigorous systems for the monitoring of subjects by staff and
- b) clear strategies for developing the role of GB, parents and pupils in the self evaluation process;

R5 continue to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality;

R6 respond to safety matters identified during the inspection

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

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.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

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

51. Standards in lessons observed in subjects inspected during the inspection are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	54%	43%	-	-

52. Standards of achievement in lessons observed are higher than the WAG all-Wales targets that, by 2007, 98% of standards should be satisfactory or better (Grade 3) but only 57% was a Grade 2 or better which is below the national target of 65% good or better (Grade 2).

53. The overall quality of the provision for the under fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. During the inspection, standards for under fives in the areas of learning, were as follows:

Under fives class	Nursery	Reception
Language, literacy and communication	Grade 3	Grade 2
Personal and social development	Grade 2	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2	Grade 2
Under fives	Grade 2	Grade 2

54. Standards in KS1 and KS2 in subjects inspected were as follows:

Inspection Area	KS1	KS2
English	Grade 3	Grade 3
Mathematics	Grade 3	Grade 3
Information technology	Grade 3	Grade 2
Design technology	Grade 2	Grade 2
Music	Grade 2	Grade 2

55. Although cohorts may vary in ability, baseline assessment shows that children when starting school have far lower skills than other schools locally and nationally especially in language. With the language and behavioural support programmes provided for them, the majority achieve good standards by the end of the reception year.

56. Children under-five have a good understanding of when they do well and understand what they must do to improve themselves.
57. Overall in KS1 and KS2 the majority of pupils achieve their potential and succeed regardless of their social and linguistic background. This is particularly true of pupils in the nurture class in KS1 and the MLD class in KS2 where the individual attention they receive promotes their skills and understanding well; they make good progress in line with their needs. However work adapted to suit the different needs for the wide range of abilities in mainstream classes is more limited; often the more able and less able pupils do not achieve their potential because tasks are too difficult or insufficiently challenging. The majority achieve the targets set for them but although lesson outcomes are shared with them, they are not always clear of what they are to do or how they can improve.
58. In teacher assessment at the end of KS1 the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) (which is a combination of the results of pupils achieving a level two, the level expected of seven year olds) in all three core subjects has been consistently below the averages for local and national figures and those of similar schools (schools in the same FSM category) for the last three years. However, although results in language, mathematics and science have all been below the average there has been some improvement. Science results especially, have increased significantly over the period. No significant differences have been recorded in the performance of boys and girls.
59. In KS2 results in NC assessments are significantly below the averages for local, national and similar schools for the last three years. Results in 2005 were particularly low as almost all pupils were on the SEN register. The CSI (a combination of the results of pupils achieving level four, the level expected of 11 year olds) is also significantly lower than other schools. Results in English are extremely low, but mathematics and science are also in the lower 25% when compared with other similar schools. Percentages improve by around 8% in all three subjects without the results for pupils in the referral unit. Girls tend to perform a little better than boys.
60. In the key skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, numeracy, and the use of ICT, standards in the class for reception aged children have good features and no important shortcomings. Standards are also good for part-time nursery children in the same class, though the speaking skills of nursery children are limited. Bilingual skills of reception children are outstanding.
61. Across both key stages standards in key skills have some shortcomings. Standards in listening and reading are good while speaking and writing have some shortcomings and are inconsistent between classes. However, evidence was seen at the upper end of the school of pupils using music terminology confidently while discussing their compositions. Standards in numeracy have some shortcomings as provision in classes is inconsistent. The use of ICT has some shortcomings in KS1 but is good in KS2. There are some shortcomings in bilingual skills; the school does not build successfully on the standards achieved in the class for under-fives.

62. Thinking skills and problem-solving skills are underdeveloped especially in relation to those linked to numbers. However pupils' creative skills are good; pupils across the school produce imaginative work in art and at the upper end of the school they display a good degree of creativity when working together to create melodic compositions in music.
63. Pupils' preparation for life within their community is outstanding. They are made to feel proud of where they live. They have a wide knowledge of life in the village and are encouraged to develop entrepreneurial skills through selling fruit and enterprise weeks which prepare them for life outside school.
64. Pupils' personal, social and moral skills develop well. An outstanding feature is the inclusion of pupils in the special class into mainstream during afternoon sessions. The effect of this can be seen when these pupils play together happily during morning break and lunch times. All pupils are given responsibilities; this successfully develops a range of social skills amongst all pupils. Pupils often take part in activities within their school 'house'; this enables them to mix and socialise successfully with other groups of pupils. Pupils are aware of moral issues which are often conveyed to them in a set of simple school rules displayed prominently.
65. The importance placed by the school on equal opportunities for all is conveyed clearly to pupils through its mission statement 'treat people as we would like to be treated'. Pupils understand, through a range of visits, that the world is a diverse place and that all places and people must be respected. Pupils report that there is no discrimination between boys and girls, able and less able pupils.
66. Pupils have good attitudes to their lessons and most are keen to learn. They concentrate well and their behaviour, particularly when asked to sit still and listen to the teacher, is often very good. A small minority of pupils however, has short attention spans and occasionally displays behaviour that disturbs others from learning. Where available, the additional support given to these pupils keeps these disturbances to a minimum.
67. Pupils follow the clear rules set for them, for example using the corridor colours to enable everyone to move around the school in an orderly manner. They are polite and courteous and relate well to each other and to adults.
68. Most pupils attend school regularly and are punctual at the start of the school day. A significant minority, though, frequently arrives late or misses school, often for trivial reasons. These pupils have poor attendance patterns and, as a result, miss important elements of their education.
69. Whole school attendance for the last three terms has been consistently below 90% but in the week before the inspection attendance figures exceeded the 90% with two classes averaging 96%. Part-time nursery and some reception children frequently miss school and this inhibits their progress especially in language. Some families take holidays in term time but do not exceed the statutory allowance; this is always done with the headteacher's approval.

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 inspection team's findings match the school's judgements in its self-evaluation report.

71. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
9%	66%	25%	-	-

72. The quality of teaching is a key element in the progress pupils make. Teachers provide good role models, and their relationships with their pupils are good. On the whole they have high expectations, and pupils' efforts are consistently praised.

73. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and are aware of recent developments in their subjects. They use a range of teaching strategies and appropriate resources. Effective use is made of class assistants to support groups of pupils with SEN; as a result equal opportunities are provided for all pupils. Teachers provide a stimulating environment with good quality displays of pupils' work in a variety of subjects, both in the classroom and in the corridor.

74. The quality of teaching provided for the under-fives is consistently good and for pupils in KS2 it is consistently good and sometimes very good.

75. Where teaching is good, features include:

- the clear sharing of lesson objectives with pupils;
- a good balance between introduction, activity and plenary in lesson;
- stimulating presentations and the effective use of language;
- clear instructions given to pupils enabling them to complete tasks;
- interesting activities which link with previous work and
- appropriate pace to lessons.

76. Where teaching displays some shortcomings:

- tasks are not purposefully differentiated for every pupils' needs;
- group activities are not well structured to extend learning and less able pupils do not remain on task

77. The school's assessment policy is good, and assessment procedures are in place and used well.
78. The quality of assessment for nursery and baseline assessment for reception children is very effective. Challenging individual targets are set for children under- five. Consistent and detailed monitoring of children's progress towards these targets ensures that assessment procedures give direction and purpose to the teaching and learning in the classroom.
79. In KS1 and KS2 work is marked regularly, according to consistent guidelines, and constructive comments are made, which in the best examples, explain clearly how pupils may improve on their work.
80. Analysis of the results of end of key stage assessments in the core subjects, together with pupils' scripts, is used to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work, so that these can be addressed in teachers' medium and short-term planning.
81. In KS1 and KS2 standardised tests are given on a termly basis, to assess pupils' progress. Progress tests in English and mathematics are given in the summer term, and results transferred to the next teacher.
82. Reading tests are administered in the autumn and summer terms for Year1 (Y1) – Y6 in order to identify pupils' reading ages, and decide on the level of support required; detailed records of pupils' reading and reading age scores are kept. Tests are given in Y5 to help set realistic and challenging targets for them in Y6.
83. An appropriate national test is used to assess the progress of pupils with SEN in the autumn and summer terms. IEPs are reviewed twice a year, and parents and pupils are invited to discuss the targets.
84. Samples of work in core subjects are assessed and levelled in the autumn and spring terms to inform target setting. LEA portfolios of levelled and annotated work are used to moderate standards in English and mathematics, and portfolios of work in all the core subjects have been assembled by the cluster of schools to which Phillipstown belongs. The school has added examples of its own to these portfolios. Some samples of work in geography, ICT and art have also been collected by the school.
85. The process of tracking individual pupils' progress is being developed. Setting targets for individual pupils is also in the early stages of development and is identified as a priority in the school self-evaluation report and the School Development Plan (SDP). Opportunities for pupils to be involved in planning their own progress and improvement are limited, both on a class and individual level. Pupils' folders include only certificates for good work and copies of their annual reports.
86. Annual reports to parents conform with statutory requirements. They provide detailed observations on pupils' achievements, and the way ahead. There are

formal opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress in meetings with the teachers and with SEN teachers where appropriate, in all three terms, and to write their own observations on the reports, which are issued in the summer term.

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

87. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. Although some aspects of planning need refining furthering in KS1 and KS2 it was felt that the learning experiences provided enriched pupils' lives.
88. Overall the school succeeds in meeting pupils' needs and provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets legal and course requirements.
89. Planning for under-fives is effective and focuses well on the six areas of learning under six termly themes. Schemes of work are currently being reviewed and incorporate activities for the outside area accessed from the classroom. For bilingual skills planning for the under-fives is good with consistent opportunities provided for the development of Welsh. Weekly planning ensures that the needs of children of all abilities are met.
90. In general, in KS1 and KS2, policies and schemes for curriculum areas are appropriate and help ensure progression and continuity in knowledge, skills and understanding. Some of the schemes are in the process of being further revised. Teachers' short-term planning is consistent and well focused in terms of learning objectives and activities. However, it does not always cater for the different needs of pupils of all abilities, including the less and more able in mainstream classes, especially when pupils from the MLD class are integrated.
91. The school has identified planning for key skills as an area for development; at present it is inconsistent between classes. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop creative skills but planning for bilingualism and problem-solving are less well developed.
92. Equal opportunity underpins all aspects of school life and learners whatever their levels of ability, social and ethnic backgrounds and gender have equal access to the curriculum.
93. Pupils benefit from a wide range of themed weeks planned throughout the year. These include a focus on mathematics, healthy living, and enterprise. Learning experiences are enhanced by the provision of first-hand experiences, both in the locality and further afield in a range of subjects. Good use is also made of visitors to the school who include musicians, local clergy, those representing other cultures, supporting charities and performing groups.

94. A good range of extra-curricular activities is offered. These include clubs for music, art, Welsh folk dancing, French, netball and football. There is a homework policy and homework is appropriate and for the most part is well targeted.
95. Provision for the development of spiritual, moral and social education is good. Acts of collective worship comply with requirements and make important contributions to pupils' development in these fields. A good range of moral themes are introduced and pupils are given appropriate opportunities for taking part in quiet reflection. Special assemblies are well attended by members of the community.
96. PSE is planned for well and includes timetabled periods. The school is working towards the Healthy Schools Award; its focus on healthy eating and living is effective. Visitors such as the community policeman and health service personnel make important contributions to the curriculum. The school is taking on board a further LEA initiative to meet the needs of the PSE framework.
97. The school council makes important contributions to pupil' social development. Older pupils care for younger ones at playtimes and visit the nurture class to support pupils. Pupils are well aware of those who are less fortunate; they contribute well to charitable causes at home and abroad. These include the Velindre Cancer hospital, LEPRRA and UNICEF.
98. Pupils' cultural development is good. Although artists who live and work in Wales do not receive sufficient attention, planning for the curriculum Cymreig is generally good and assemblies provide pupils with an outstanding awareness of famous Welsh people and places. The focus on multi-culturalism is good, particularly in religious education and geography. Through the Comenius project pupils become aware of the European dimension and the schools' links with primary schools in Northern Spain and in Tuscany, Italy successfully broadens pupils' horizons.
99. The school has carried out a number of good initiatives linked to sustainable development and global citizenship such as recycling, litter collection and in pupils' developing awareness of the problems which face rain forests. The school is involved in the Kerbcraft initiative, local history projects, bulb planting and in book competitions. Many visits are arranged for pupils both within the community and surrounding areas; these events enrich pupils' lives.
100. The school's links with parents, the local community and the wider community are an outstanding feature of this school. It develops very close liaison with parents and carers to ensure that all the pupils gain the maximum benefit from their time in school. There is a small but very active Friends Association which organises social events and raises much needed funds for identified needs. Although none attended the pre inspection meeting and very few pre-inspection questionnaires were returned, parents play a very important part in the school's activities and contribute in a variety of ways, including helping in class and supporting school trips. An outstanding feature is the use made of local facilities

and the close working arrangement with the local residents' community house which greatly benefits all.

101. The information provided for parents is good, and presented in an user friendly format. Parents' and carers' evenings are well organised and well attended. The school clearly outlines the home/school agreement at the initial meeting and most parents and children have signed this. The annual report of governors to parents and the school prospectus fully meet statutory requirements.
102. The various partnerships with other local schools, voluntary agencies, and a number of individuals, local organisations and public safety, health and welfare authorities are also an outstanding feature and these ensure pupils' general well being.
103. Pupils benefit highly from some work-related activities and visits, for example visiting the local shops and supermarket and there are examples of local businesses supporting school events. A very imaginative enterprise week successfully encourages learners to develop their entrepreneurial skills and helps staff to raise their personal understanding and awareness of the world of work.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

104. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
105. A marked feature of life and work at the school is its distinctive ethos. It is a caring school, where pupils feel respected. Emphasis is placed on raising pupils' self confidence. A range of certificates are awarded for pupils' efforts, co-operation and achievements during weekly assemblies.
106. There is an appropriate range of policies and procedures to support the pastoral care of pupils. Teachers provide good quality personal support and guidance for them. They in turn, state that they feel confident in approaching staff for advice and support if they have problems and feel that it is a happy school.
107. The school operates a successful breakfast club which gives pupils a good start to their day. Pupils are provided with bottles of water and parents have been asked to comment on its effect on their learning; fruit is also sold daily.
108. Links with parents, guardians and with relevant outside agencies are often outstanding. Procedures are in place for looked after children and close links exist with social services.
109. There is a clear programme of induction for pupils starting in nursery; parents are invited to link-up meetings and provided with a useful nursery brochure. Links with the comprehensive school to which pupils transfer are effective and

involve visits by staff of the secondary school to get to know the pupils; procedures for transferring relevant information about pupils are effective.

110. Procedures for monitoring and following up absence are good with the headteacher personally taking responsibility and contacting families to try and ensure that their children attend regularly and on time. The Education Welfare Officer is also very pro-active.
111. Registers are marked in accordance with statutory requirements but not all teachers call the register at a given time each morning and each afternoon. The whole procedure is occasionally a little haphazard and is not a crisp and punctual start to the pupils' working day.
112. There is an appropriate health and safety policy and effective procedures are in place. The school uses the Local Education Authority's (LEA) risk assessment forms which are adapted to its particular needs. These assessments are thorough and carried out prior to school visits. An accident book is completed appropriately and the school has six first aiders. Some health and safety issues were however discussed with the headteacher and GB during the inspection.
113. Whilst the school has a comprehensive child protection policy which is in line with LEA guidelines, not all ancillary staff have received training in this field.
114. The school works hard at meeting the needs of pupils with additional learning needs and the provision has a number of good features. The overall programme however is in the process of further revision as is the policy document. Following a detailed self- review exercise the school has identified a number of features for development in relation to mainstream provision which were also identified by the inspection team.
115. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) ensures that the school adheres closely to the Code of Practice (CoP). The school works closely with outside agencies such as the health authority and social services. There are particularly close links with the educational psychologist and the LEA inclusion service. The SEN advisory teacher is a regular visitor as is the Super Shelby Project Officer. Appropriate support is also provided by the behaviour support service.
116. Procedures for the early identification and further diagnosis of pupils with SEN are effective and involve a range of tests and teacher expertise. In general, IEPs have clear and specific targets and are drawn up for all pupils on the SEN register. Targets are well monitored and reviewed twice a year. The SENCo monitors general provision and there is a good record keeping system in place. Parents are made aware of their children's needs and targets, additional evenings are held for them and the SENCo is available for meetings on a weekly basis. The school also provides an SEN handbook for parents and carers.
117. In the nurture class, the teacher and the nursery nurse provide a well focused range of experiences and good quality support. Systems for monitoring,

assessing and recording and links with mainstream classes are of a good quality.

118. Provision in the other special class for pupils with MLD drawn from the Upper Rhymney Valley cluster of schools is good and effectively led by the SENCo supported by a nursery nurse. Provision for the great majority of pupils who have a statement of SEN in this class reflects the recommendations in their statements. Six pupils in mainstream receive specific support for varying periods during the week. The quality of this support including full time support for one pupil with a statement of SEN in mainstream, is well focused.
119. Within mainstream provision, withdrawal sessions focus almost exclusively on linguistic needs only. Identified under-fives receive good support from staff to meet their needs. Provision for a minority has been enhanced through the school's involvement in the Super Shelby project for nursery children which involves parental contributions. Identified pupils in Y2 receive good additional support as part of the Catch up reading programme for two sessions per week. The LEA provides a reading support teacher for specific groups for three sessions during the week; the quality of this support is good.
120. Features relating to the SEN programme are included on weekly staff meeting agenda so that staff can raise any concerns immediately. While teachers and support assistants, have a good awareness of the contents of IEPs and offer support within classroom situations, teachers' planning does not consistently focus on differentiation of tasks in a sufficiently rigorous manner.
121. The quality of support for pupils, whose behaviour can have an adverse effect on their own progress and that of others, is good. IEPs with a specific focus on behavioural needs are in place and teachers are confident in implementing a positive approach effectively.
122. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or aggressive behaviour but when such incidents have arisen, teachers have applied school policies and procedures promptly and effectively. The school has a very positive policy and set of procedures to promote good behaviour, including an imaginative and much valued system of rewards. School rules are simple, relevant and clearly understood by the majority of pupils.
123. The school has an appropriate policy statement and good procedures are in place to develop pupils' understanding of the importance of racial equality. Good emphasis is also placed on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of diversity. There is an accessibility plan for disabled people in school. The school caters well for the disability needs of pupils who are currently in the school.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

124. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgment in its school evaluation report as the school had awarded itself a Grade 3 for this question. The inspection team felt that, even though standards are consistently below other schools, the headteacher provides very effective leadership for the needs of the pupils of this school and its community.
125. The school has a clear vision; all those who work at the school show a clear commitment to equality of opportunities for all. The headteacher is a highly visible leader who is approachable to both parents and pupils. She appreciates the work of all involved in school life; as a consequence people feel valued and give of their best. Lines of communication are clear through staff meetings, weekly briefings of what is on and through daily discussions.
126. The school has an effective School Management Team consisting of the deputy headteacher and two senior teachers. A School Change Team was appropriately constituted for considering the changes brought about by the new workload remodelling arrangements. PPA time has been well thought through; a qualified teacher was appointed to take classes. The discrete room provided for teachers to do their work is a good resource.
127. A range of management policies are in place and comply with statutory requirements; their clarity ensures that all who work at the school are aware of daily procedures. Staff members have job descriptions which are in the process of being further updated in line with new workload arrangements.
128. Performance management of staff is appropriate. Staff professional development is linked to individual needs and school priorities.
129. The school compares its performance consistently with other schools and although in the past was concerned that targets set were not sufficiently challenging, targets now set are realistic but also provide challenge for the majority of pupils. Many initiatives have been established recently to support pupils and enable them achieve higher targets. The school is also very much to the fore in planning for the forthcoming Foundation Phase.
130. The SDP is a valuable document which records the school's priorities and demonstrates how the school is responding to its needs; the methods, finance and personnel used to bring about new developments are clearly identified.
131. Although formal monitoring by subject leaders has not recently taken place, they coordinate their subjects well and are very aware of what is delivered in other classes. They are developing a consistent approach to the management of their subjects.
132. The GB is very supportive of the school. The headteacher and chair of the GB, who is very knowledgeable about school issues, have recently attended governor training. There are link governors for child protection, special needs and health and safety. Although individual governors are not linked to subjects, there is a curriculum committee and staff members deliver inputs on curricular

areas; the school has initiated systems where three meetings a year concentrate on curricular matters. The GB fully meets regulatory and statutory requirements.

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

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings.

133. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
134. The findings of the inspection team match that of the school in six of the seven key questions; where there is a difference the team gave the school a higher grade.
135. The school knows itself well. It has produced an appropriate self-evaluation report describing the school's strengths and how it needs to move forward. The recommendations identified for improving the school in this inspection report, correspond closely to those specified in that self-evaluation report.
136. Following the last inspection an appropriate action plan was produced responding appropriately to key issues identified. This has been followed by a series of development plans which have focused on short and long term issues in order to move the school forward. Progress has been monitored regularly. The present SDP is a working document shared by staff and governors and focuses on raising standards.
137. The present self-evaluation report collated by the headteacher has been shared by staff and the GB. Subject leaders audit their subjects at the end of each school year; however they do not visit classes as part of a rigorous monitoring system and therefore, their contribution to the report is limited at present. The school however, under the guidance of the LEA has produced a self-evaluation report of its SEN provision.
138. Although parents have received a questionnaire on a recent school initiative they are not an integral part of the evaluation process. Although the school has also sought the views of governors by means of questionnaires they are not sufficiently involved in the self-evaluation process. The voice of pupils, mainly through the school council is gradually becoming a force in the school evaluation.
139. The school has made good progress overall in all the key issues identified in the last inspection report. Although the need to improve the quality of self-evaluation is also a recommendation in this report the school has made progress in this aspect but can still improve further.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings.

140. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgements in its self-evaluation report.
141. There is a sufficient number of teachers with suitable qualifications to teach every aspect of the curriculum. The In Service Training Programme, which is linked to the school's SDP and performance management cycle, ensures that they extend and update their subject knowledge. Teachers in the MLD and nurture classes provide a secure and stimulating learning environment for pupils with SEN.
142. Although the monitoring role of the subject coordinators has not fully developed, responsibilities for subjects and aspects are shared fairly between members of staff. An extra teacher is effectively deployed to provide PPA time for all teachers. The headteacher does not have charge of a class, but she regularly teaches one lesson to release the deputy headteacher, and takes daily assembly.
143. Members of support staff in classrooms such as nursery nurses and classroom assistants, work very well with teachers to plan and record pupils' progress. They display very good care and patience as they deal with pupils.
144. The school secretary and those who serve dinners and supervise pupils at lunch times, make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school.
145. The school has sufficient resources for every age and most subjects, though artefacts needed for the teaching of history and reference resources in the library are limited. Priorities for spending are identified in the SDP. The quality of resources is good, and effective use is made of them in lessons. There are plenty of materials for creative work.
146. Colourful displays of pupils' work, which are a feature of the corridor and classrooms, provide a stimulating and attractive environment in which pupils can work. They include individual pupils' work and whole class projects.
147. The caretaker and cleaning staff work very hard to ensure that the school is clean and well maintained; standards of cleanliness in the building and within the school grounds are good.
148. The condition of the main building is reasonably good, and patches of dampness caused by ingress of water are being addressed. However, some windows still leak in wet weather. There is a rolling programme for the repair and maintenance of the two buildings, including roofing, and further decoration is planned for one classroom and the hall.

149. Classrooms are a good size, and provide appropriate spaces for teaching and learning; however there is limited space in the under-fives' class for the development of physical skills on large equipment. The hall is used effectively for physical education, drama, music and collective worship. Good use is made of the newly established ICT suite for raising of standards in ICT skills, and of the school library for shared reading sessions.
150. The school has a suitable play area for the under-fives, and two yards for KS1 and KS2 pupils. There are plans to mark these with games for playtimes and lunch times. There is also a school garden, created and maintained by the caretaker, which provides the school with a valuable teaching and learning resource for the science curriculum. These places are safe and used appropriately.
151. The governing body finance committee, through the headteacher reports, monitor spending regularly and efficiently; the school provides good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Under 5s Grade 2: good with no important shortcomings

Language, literacy and communication skills

Nursery: Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings
Reception: Grade 2: good with no important shortcomings

Nursery

Good features

152. Part-time nursery age children are learning to listen to adults and peers; they show an understanding of all that is said in class by adults. Some make significant improvement in their communication skills and are eager to discuss their tasks. Many can describe a teddy and some can give reasons for what they like best. Children who are three begin to understand the enjoyment provided by stories and listen to them well. They realise that characters are central to a story and have a good understanding of the tale of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. They understand that there is a purpose to making marks on paper; some produce recognisable ones and know the sounds they represent. They recognise the format of a letter. They use the correct words for many colours and numbers and understand a variety of greetings and commands in Welsh.

Shortcomings

153. Children's communication skills on entry are limited. In the few hours they are in class they are only able to make limited progress.

Reception

Good features

154. The majority of children of reception age make significant progress in listening and speaking skills. They all listen well to instructions for making a moveable teddy and respond well using effective language to describe the making process and the tools they will need. They have a developing knowledge of a range of sounds and the letters that represent them. They join in eagerly with a story that has a repetitive text and convey emotion in their voices. They understand that a title and cover are important parts of a story and can sequence familiar tales. They use a number of clues to decode words and the more able read with expression and understanding. They make good progress in writing skills and their marks on paper quickly become recognisable. They underwrite well and many can write their names legibly. They have an outstanding understanding of an extensive range of Welsh words, phrases and songs; they respond accurately and confidently at all times; they often volunteer their own comments in Welsh and ask for words to be translated for them.

Shortcomings

155. There are no major shortcomings

Personal and social development:

Nursery: Grade 2: good with no important shortcomings

Reception: Grade 2: good with no important shortcomings

Nursery

Good features

156. Children who are three understand the need to listen and that they can learn new things if they do this well. They realise that when sat together as a whole class they need to conform and follow the class rules. They begin to realise that sharing and waiting turns is important for making friends. They understand the need to eat healthily and cleanly and that washing hands with 'Bobby Bubbles' is important for personal hygiene. They see the importance of being 'helping hands' in the tidying up process and are becoming more and more comfortable when moving on from their solitary play to enjoy interacting with others. They understand that saying thank you pleases adults and that giving compliments is a pleasant and enjoyable practise.

Shortcomings

157. There are no major shortcomings

Reception

Good features

158. Children who are four realise the need to concentrate on tasks and do so well. They play together in pairs and larger groups and conduct themselves appropriately when playing co-operative games. They realise the importance of sharing and waiting their turn. They respond very well to adults in the class and are eager to join them and be supported in their activities; they also demonstrate their tasks proudly to adults. They are pleased when rewarded with a star for their efforts and behaviour and take on a number of class responsibilities willingly. They are very aware of class routines and the pattern of their school day.

Shortcomings

159. There are no major shortcomings

Mathematical development

Nursery : Grade 2: good with no important shortcomings

Reception: Grade 2: good with no important shortcomings

Nursery

Good features

160. Children who are three are able to recite numbers up to ten and can recognise low numbers. They can identify two objects in a list of five and can select one cherry to decorate a cake. They can identify the odd one out in a series of pictures and sequence correctly with shapes and colours and the days of the week. They match pictures that are the same or have a link between them. They develop appropriate mathematical language when filling and emptying buckets with sand. They realise the purpose of money in the role play area as they experiment with the till when paying and giving change.

Shortcomings

161. There are no major shortcomings

Reception

Good features

162. Children who are four have a good knowledge of how numbers work. They can count spaces forwards and backwards in a game. They provide the correct answers to simple addition sums showing an understanding of what adding up means. The majority form numbers accurately and legibly. They can work out simple additions linked to money and understand what 'more than' means. They have a good understanding of shapes and their features and use them well in sequential activities. They develop a good knowledge of mathematical terms linked to capacity when playing in the sand. They have some knowledge of time and can identify the time on the hour.

Shortcomings

163. There are no major shortcomings

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Nursery : Grade 2: good with no important shortcomings

Reception: Grade 2: good with no important shortcomings

Nursery

Good features

164. Children who are three show an understanding that weather can vary from day to day. They also realise that specific weather patterns are often linked to the seasons and that there are other features to different times of the year. They begin to learn about specific features of their community and know that they live in a particular part of Wales. They know that certain artefacts are associated with Wales' special day on March the first but are also aware that other people celebrate differently. They can describe what they like about Divali celebrations and know that fruit, candles and special lamps feature in these celebrations.

Shortcomings

165. There are no major shortcomings

Reception

166. Children who are four understand that they have their own address and know that there are some important buildings in Phillipstown; they realise the significance of the community house and shop to life in the village. They understand that not all places are the same and when visiting a Bear Factory in Cardiff understand some of these differences. They have a good knowledge about objects that are peculiar to the Welsh culture but understand that other cultures often have different features. They appreciate the changes in the seasons when taking a walk around Cyfarthfa Park in autumn. They use the computer well and use the 'draw' and 'fill' tools effectively.

Shortcomings

167. There are no major shortcomings

Physical development

Nursery : Grade 2: good with no important shortcomings.

Reception: Grade 2: good with no important shortcomings.

Nursery

Good features

168. Children who are three hold pencils and drawing equipment comfortably. They develop good hand and eye coordination when moving parts of the computer. They handle a range of small equipment including jigsaw pieces effectively. They move their bodies well to music and can handle a range of large equipment well. The more able are able to work independently on the craft table and glue, cut, fold and stick paper confidently. They develop good skills in pushing and pulling on large equipment.

Shortcomings

169. There are no major shortcomings but the development of a range of physical skills for handling large equipment is limited to times when children can play outside.

Reception

Good features

170. Children who are four handle writing equipment confidently. They can control a variety of pens and brushes when painting. They show good skills when using a range of small equipment in the process of making their teddy. They use construction kits very well and can assemble them together easily to build what they want. Many can take off and put on coats independently at the beginning and end of sessions, They develop appropriate skills of pushing, pulling and balancing on the range of large wheeled equipment and good skills in controlling a football in the outside play area.

Shortcomings

171. There are no major shortcomings but the development of a range of physical skills for handling large equipment is limited to times when children can play outside.

Creative development

Nursery: Grade 2: good with no important shortcomings.

Reception: Grade 2: good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

172. Children who are three use a variety of pens and equipment to create pictures. They create imaginary colourful pictures of Elmer the Elephant. They develop skills in printing using a range of shapes and colours. They understand how colours change when mixed and can create effective sparkly pictures. They appreciate that colours are associated with certain times of the year. They role play effectively as three bears in the bear cave corner. They sing a number of

songs eagerly and understand the importance of singing in tune and keeping to the expected tempo.

Shortcomings

173. There are no major shortcomings

Reception

174. Children who are four can draw recognisable pictures of a human body which they identify as themselves. They co-operate well to create a collage of Goldilocks and the Three Bears; they paint realistic pictures of leeks and mix colours effectively. They use the 'Dazzle' program on the computer effectively to produce a range of pictures and use a variety of materials to create interesting and colourful wind wands, masks and three dimensional models. They work well when creating a moveable toy and take care when drawing an outline and cutting around it. They sing a range of nursery rhymes tunefully in Welsh and English and can use a number of untuned instruments well to keep a steady beat, name them correctly and know what action is needed to play them effectively.

Shortcomings

175. There are no major shortcomings.

English

Key Stage 1: Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings.

Key Stage 2: Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings.

Good features

176. Most pupils in both key stages listen well to their teachers and to each other. They respond to questions with enthusiasm and answer with increasing confidence.

177. In speaking, Y2 pupils use appropriate vocabulary in role-play based on a well-known fairy tale. In Y4 pupils demonstrate their ability to express an opinion about the destruction of the rainforest. Through the medium of drama, Y6 pupils' group discussions express plenty of ideas for a dramatic presentation of the storm in *The Tempest*. They give clear explanations of 'freeze frames' and of their own roles, and express themselves confidently

178. By the end of KS1 most pupils make good progress in reading by developing good decoding and word recognition skills in their individual reading. They can use a number of strategies for attempting unfamiliar words, and can read quite confidently and with understanding. They are able to discuss the story line,

identify the main characters, and can predict sensibly how the story may develop.

179. Most pupils in KS2 read fluently. Some read confidently and with expression and are able to correct mistakes themselves. They have a good understanding of the conventions of books, and can use appropriate vocabulary to discuss the plot and characters. They develop appropriate skills in expressing opinions about the books they are reading well.
180. By the end of KS1 more able pupils are writing at a level appropriate to their age. They write confidently and with an increasing awareness of spelling and punctuation requirements.
181. KS2 pupils write for a variety of purposes and a variety of audiences, including drama scripts, interviews, poems, stories, reports, letters, and diary entries. More able pupils are developing a good vocabulary and are using similes and metaphors to enrich their work. They complete language exercises correctly before using their knowledge in free writing.
182. The whole school literacy project of Busy Lizzie has greatly increased pupils' confidence in writing a story in an exciting and stimulating way. Good use is made of a familiar setting and a sympathetic central character to explore a variety of fictitious situations, which develop pupils' imaginative thinking.
183. By the end of KS2 handwriting skills have developed well, and most pupils can present their work clearly and neatly.

Shortcomings

184. Pupils' spelling is underdeveloped across both key stages, and their grasp of grammar conventions is not always secure.
185. Pupils' higher order reading skills, including library research skills are underdeveloped across both key stages.
186. Pupils' ability to produce extended writing in KS2 is constrained by over dependence on worksheets.

Mathematics

Key Stage 1 Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings
Key Stage 2 Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

187. The majority of KS1 pupils make appropriate progress in their understanding of number and money. Across the key stage they explore simple number patterns and differentiate between even and odd numbers. At appropriate levels, the

majority add and subtract accurately. By the end of the key stage, most have a sound grasp of two, five and 10 times' tables. The mental maths skills of a minority of pupils in Y2 are good.

188. Most pupils in KS2 make appropriate progress in their understanding of weight and measurement. Pupils across the key stage are developing a sound grasp of two-dimensional shapes and their properties and some Y2 pupils are beginning to recognise the properties of three-dimensional ones. With help, most older pupils are able to create simple bar graphs; a minority demonstrate good skills in this field and are beginning to interpret graphs appropriately. Most pupils develop a sound understanding of time in half hour intervals and a few draw good comparisons with digital times.
189. Across KS2, a number of pupils develop a good mathematical vocabulary and an effective grasp of terminology and understanding of concepts. Most make appropriate progress in number work, in using tables and when focusing on money. The mental mathematical skills of a number of pupils are good. Most Y3 pupils develop sound skills in rounding numbers while most Y4 pupils round up sums of money to the nearest pound.
190. Pupils across the key stage make sound progress in their understanding and use of fractions. At the end of the key stage, the majority have an appropriate understanding of decimals.
191. In Y4 pupils demonstrate sound skills in using tally charts and interpreting graphs. The majority of older pupils focus appropriately on database work and are beginning to focus on the concept of averages. A minority demonstrate good skills in focusing on a variety of methods to work out addition and subtraction problems.
192. Pupils at the upper end of KS2 generally make sound progress in their understanding of time and compare analogue and digital times in an appropriate manner.
193. Across the key stage, pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of two and three-dimensional shapes and their properties and at appropriate levels focus on the concept of symmetry.

Shortcomings

194. The mathematical skills of a minority of pupils in both key stages are limited and the mental mathematical skills of a significant minority of KS2 pupils in particular, are insufficiently developed.
195. Most pupils across KS1 and KS2 make insufficient progress in developing their skills of applying mathematics.
196. Most older pupils' understanding of the concepts of area, perimeter and volume are underdeveloped as are their skills in identifying and measuring angles.

Information technology

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

Good features

197. In both key stages, pupils make good use of opportunities presented by the new computer suite to enhance their skills.
198. In KS1, pupils are developing an appropriate familiarity with the keyboard. They develop good skills of using the mouse to move items from one part of the screen to another, as they create patterns and experiment with different colours to create images. They develop appropriate skills of opening and saving text.
199. Across KS1, the majority of pupils use the word processor well to produce short pieces of writing; they link text ably to given illustrations.
200. Older pupils in KS1 are beginning to make appropriate use of computer programs, including CDROMs and the internet, to gather information about animals.
201. With help, pupils in KS1 are beginning to develop their skills of in-putting data to create simple graphs relating to personal features.
202. Across KS2, at appropriate levels, pupils develop good skills of editing text by varying fonts, colour and size of print and by copying, cutting and pasting.
203. At appropriate levels, pupils across KS2 demonstrate good word processing skills. Younger pupils in the key stage effectively write poems and play scripts while older pupils show good skills as they write character conversations and process creative writing. They incorporate graphic images confidently into written work.
204. Across KS1 pupils make good progress in gathering and downloading information from the intranet and CDROMs. Many demonstrate good skills as they create effective PowerPoint presentations. The work of Y3 and 4 pupils on rain forests and older pupils' work on the Victorians is particularly impressive.
205. Across KS2, pupils have good skills in using databases to store information and to check it before entering it to produce a series of graphs. These include a focus by younger pupils on dinosaurs, rivers and shadows and older pupils work on birds of prey. Pupils make good progress in their interpretations of work produced in graphical form.
206. By the end of KS2 many pupils are able to demonstrate appropriate modelling skills

Shortcomings

207. In KS1, the skills of the majority of pupils in relation to modelling skills are insufficiently developed.
208. KS1 pupils' skills of using simple data gathering packages and their abilities to work independently to create a variety of block graphs and pictograms are limited.
209. The majority of KS2 pupils' skills in using e-mail are limited.

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 features

210. Pupils in both key stages use equipment safely, and they are aware of dangers and risks.
211. In both key stages pupils have a good understanding of the design process, and are able to design, make and evaluate for improvement.
212. The application of key skills from other subjects, especially science, art and mathematics is a feature of KS1 and KS2 pupils' work. In the planning stage pupils measure accurately, investigate possible materials, and consider the aesthetic dimension of the finished product.
213. Pupils in both key stages test products against original specifications, identifying problems, and carrying out modifications. Their ability to evaluate their work is developing well.
214. Pupils' awareness of the significance of the design process towards a finished product is reinforced during the enterprise week when pupils engage in small enterprise activity.
215. Pupils in Y1 make a vehicle out of junk materials. They demonstrate good measuring and cutting skills to make axles, and choose wooden wheels to attach. They decide which colours are appropriate to paint their cars, buses, or vans, and use a fair test to evaluate how effectively they can travel.
216. Pupils in Y2 design and make an articulated figure out of card. They use paper to make a prototype, and evaluate its effectiveness to decide on any necessary changes. They choose the card, and colours for decoration, and use good drawing and cutting skills to make the figure.
217. Y3 and Y4 pupils use ICT effectively to gather information before designing Easter cards that light up. They decide how and where to arrange the pictures, what colours they will choose, where the light will be placed for best effect, and

where the verse will be written. They record the processes, evaluate the effectiveness of the product, and decide what changes will have to be made before producing the finished article.

218. In Y5 and Y6, pupils work collaboratively to use constructional kits such as 'mobilo', 'clixi', 'lego' and 'knex' to make a prototype for a fairground ride. They consider how strong it will need to be, how gears can be used to make it move and whether speed or direction can be changed to improve the ride.

Shortcomings

219. Pupils' use of ICT in the design process is not consistent across the key stages and their experience of using control equipment is limited across both key stages

Music

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

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

Good features

220. Pupils of all ages and abilities develop good standards in singing when taking part in community and seasonal events. They also widen their musical experiences significantly when preparing a whole school CDROM for Comenius partnership schools in Spain and Italy.

221. Pupils across the school develop a further awareness of the diversity of music and instruments through a visiting African music workshop.

222. In KS1 pupils sing a range of songs including some traditional and contemporary Welsh ones enthusiastically. They concentrate well to keep an appropriate tempo and rhythm and begin to understand how attention to singing softly and loudly can improve their performance. They sing together effectively in large and small groups and can accompany their singing with appropriate body actions.

223. In KS1 pupils have a good knowledge of untuned instruments. They know the names of many and can identify some from their sounds. They realise that a drum is a good choice for keeping a strong, steady beat accompaniment.

224. In KS2 pupils sing tunefully when accompanied by the piano. Those who learn the recorder play a range of notes cleanly and play their own compositions; those who take advantage of violin lessons develop good performing skills.

225. In Y3 pupils can add a suitable accompaniment to a song; they evaluate their performance well and amend it where necessary.

226. In Y4 pupils understand how they can change the pitch and tempo of a composition and evaluate their efforts effectively.

227. Pupils in Y5 and Y6 can identify a range of notes on a staff, a treble clef and time signature. They have a clear understanding of the difference between a verse and chorus and know that a chorus can have a change of rhythm. They have a good grasp of note values and understand the effect of rests. They understand the importance of stepping notes when moving from a high note to a low one.
228. At the upper end of the school, pupils can incorporate a rhythm and melody into group lyrical compositions. They achieve good standards when recording this graphically.
229. Older pupils' understanding of musical terminology develops well. They know the difference between improvisation and composition and can describe what a 'phrase' means in musical terms. They know the meaning of the musical term 'ostinato' and can identify it in a composition.
230. Pupils in Y5 and Y6 evaluate their own group performance and that of other groups very well; they offer constructive comments on improving a performance. In order to complete their compositions together they choose a range of tuned and untuned instruments and play them correctly.
231. At the upper end of the school, pupils listen to a range of music and can identify the mood. For instance, they listen to church and organ music and create their own composition based on simple chords. They also use a computer program well to develop their musical awareness.

Shortcomings

232. Pupils across the school are very unsure of pitch when singing to the accompaniment of taped music and have a limited knowledge of the works of world famous and Welsh composers.

School's response to the inspection

233. We are pleased that this report recognises the good work taking place at present and the commitment of all those involved in the school to strive to achieve even more. It is also pleasing that the grades awarded by the team match closely those we had put forward ourselves in our self-evaluation document. This indicates that we know our school well. This was a very positive outcome of the inspection for us as a school community.

234. An important issue for the school was that the team recognised the school's entry baseline and the value added achievements for our pupils which are consistently echoed throughout the report. As a school we will be taking on the recommendations in this report as targets for the school. Those not already included in current planning will feature in our next SDP in order to move the school forward. We will now draw up an action plan to respond to the inspection recommendations and will report to parents accordingly.

235. We are committed to continuing to raise standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics across the school. We will continue to provide and extend opportunities in information technology at KS1 so that standards match those at KS2. All our staff are committed to providing our pupils with the tools of literacy, numeracy and information technology needed to make their way in today's ever changing world. As a school we have already begun the introduction of key skills into our planning and schemes of work and this will continue to be a major focus. The issue of differentiation for the more and less able of our pupils within planning has already been taken on board by staff in their short-term planning and will be discussed further in more detail during the process of monitoring. Timetable and staffing issues have already been looked at to ensure that in the future more rigorous monitoring procedures of subjects will take place. As a school and GB we will try to ensure that all interested parties are encouraged to play an active part in all future self-evaluation.

236. The headteacher will continue to work alongside pupils, parents and the EWO to ensure improvements in attendance and punctuality. Discussions are ongoing at this time with the LEA and Health and Safety to rectify those issues raised in this report. We would like to thank the inspection team for making the inspection such a positive experience.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Phillipstown Primary School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Cefn Rhychdir Road Phillipstown, New Tredegar, Gwent
Postcode	NP24 6XE
Telephone number	0 1443 875522

Headteacher	Mrs Lynne Evans
Date of appointment	June 2000
Chair of governors	Mrs Denise Williams
Registered inspector	Mrs Eleri Betts
Dates of inspection	March 27 th - 29 th

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	5	23	14	26	13	15	12	17	125

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	1	7.5

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	27:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	3.5:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	22
Teacher (fte): class ratio	22.1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of School
Spring 2005	89.2%	89.4%	88.9%
Summer 2005	89.2%	84.5%	87.5%
Autumn 2005	56.5%	84.2%	88.4%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	47.2%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	-

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2005			Number of pupils in Y2:		14		
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	21	21	57	0
		National	0	4	13	63	20
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	36	57	7
		National	0	2	11	63	24
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	14	21	64	0
		National	0	2	10	65	23

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

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

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2005						Number of pupils in Y6		19				
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	11	5	21	37	26	0	
		National	1	0	0	0	1	6	5	56	30	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	5	5	26	26	37	0	
		National	0	0	0	0	1	3	17	46	31	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	11	5	26	58	0	
		National	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	50	37	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	26.3%	In the school	-
In Wales	71%	In Wales	-

D Pupils who are exempted 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 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Four inspectors spent a total of seven inspector days in the school. A team meeting was held prior to the inspection. The head was the nominee; there was no peer assessor.

Inspectors visited:

- 32 lessons or part lessons
- All classes
- Acts of collective worship

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- Staff, governors and parents before the inspection began
- The Registered Inspector also held a meeting with the head to discuss the self-evaluation report before the inspection.
- Senior managers, teachers and talked to a range of other adults and pupils during the inspection.
- The nominee during the inspection

The team also considered:

- The school's self evaluation report
- Responses to the four parents'/carers' questionnaires that were received
- A comprehensive range of documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection
- A range of pupils' work.

The inspection team also held post inspection meetings with staff and governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mrs Eleri Betts Registered Inspector	Key Questions 1/5/6 Under fives, music.
Mrs Rhiannon Boardman Lay Inspector	Contributions to questions 1/3/4/7.
Mrs Rhiannon Harries Team Inspector	Key Questions 2/7 English, design and technology
Mr Brin Jones Team Inspector	Key Questions 3/4 Mathematics, information technology
Mrs Lynne Evans Headteacher Nominee	Contributing information

The inspection team would like to thank the headteacher, members of staff, GB parents and pupils for their co-operation during the inspection.

Contractor

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