

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

**A Report on the Quality of Education in**

**Ponthir Church in Wales Primary School  
School Close  
Ponthir  
Torfaen  
NP18 1GA**

**School Number: 6783332**

**Date of Inspection: 25/01/10**

**by**

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## Introduction

Ponthir Church in Wales 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 Ponthir Church in Wales Primary School took place between 25/01/10 and 27/01/10. An independent team of inspectors, led by Dr. Peter David Ellis 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.

Estyn's reports follow its guidance for the writing and editing of reports, which is available on the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)). The table below shows the terms that Estyn uses and a broad idea of their meaning. The table is for guidance only.

<b>Nearly all</b>	with very few exceptions
<b>Most</b>	90% or more
<b>Many</b>	70% or more
<b>A majority</b>	over 60%
<b>Half/around half</b>	close to 50%
<b>A minority</b>	below 40%
<b>Few</b>	below 20%
<b>Very few</b>	less than 10%

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 nursery schools, 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 (Y)1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Ponthir Church in Wales Primary School is situated in the village of Ponthir about half way between Caerleon and Cwmbran. In 1975 it moved from an older building near Llanfrechfa Church to purpose-built accommodation on a new site, although originally the building was designed for infants only. The school was renamed 'Ponthir' and in 2006 it returned to its original voluntary aided status. The building is on a single level and set within attractive grounds with two playgrounds, surrounded by sports pitches and predominantly private houses. The accommodation comprises classrooms, a music room, a quiet room, a hall, a staff room and offices. There is also a demountable unit with two classrooms, which are currently used for withdrawal groups and other purposes.
2. The school currently caters for 75 full-time equivalent learners between the ages of four and eleven; there are no children of nursery age. There are three classes, each containing a mixed age range, comprising reception/Y1, Y2/Y3/Y4 and Y4/Y5/Y6. There are four full-time teachers, including the headteacher, plus one part-time teacher. The number on roll has remained relatively stable over the last four years, but rose significantly in September 2009 to around the level at the time of the last inspection.
3. The school serves the community of Ponthir and the surrounding area, although a small but increasing percentage of learners come from outside the traditional catchment area. According to the school the majority of families are relatively prosperous. Around 8% of learners are registered as being entitled to receive free school meals, which is well below the county and national averages.
4. The intake covers the full range of ability. Around 11% of learners are identified as requiring special educational needs (SEN) support, which is well below the county and national averages; one is statemented and one is in the process of assessment. No learners use Welsh as a first language. Two are looked after by the local authority (LA) and around 4% have an ethnic minority background, but all use English as their predominant language at home.
5. The school was last inspected in February 2004. The present headteacher was seconded to the school in September 2007, initially for a year; she was officially appointed in September 2008. Recent changes include new staff and reducing the number of classes from four to three.
6. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Green Flag award and phase three of the Healthy Schools initiative. Its Investors in People (IIP) accreditation is due to be renewed in 2010.

### The school's priorities and targets

7. The school's mission statement is 'Together we care, learn and grow' and this is underpinned by an appropriate set of aims that are clearly laid out in the prospectus and which reflect the school's Christian foundation.
8. The school's current major and minor priorities, as laid out in its current school improvement plan (SIP), are to:
  - improve standards of teaching and learning in religious education;
  - improve the standards of teaching and learning in science;
  - set up effective self-evaluation and performance management systems;
  - develop the eco status of the school, incorporating healthy eating;
  - develop the role of the governing body (GB);
  - review class structure and the admissions policy;
  - apply for grants to develop the school building inside and outside;
  - continue to support and prepare for the next steps of the Foundation Phase;
  - fully implement the revised national curriculum; and
  - maintain the IIP award.

### Summary

9. Ponthir Church in Wales Primary School is an improving school, where standards are now at least good in all classes and where around a third of the teaching is outstanding. The quality of provision and leadership and management are also consistently good, although aspects of writing, assessment and the curriculum require continued attention.

### Table of grades awarded

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	Grade 2
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	Grade 1
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 2
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	Grade 2

10. The inspection team agreed with the school in its self-evaluation report in five of the seven key questions. Where there was a difference, this was because the team awarded a higher grade in Key Question 2, due to the amount of outstanding teaching observed, and a lower grade in Key Question 3, due to insufficient outstanding features being identified in the learning experiences provided.

### Standards

11. Overall, the school does consistently well in national curriculum assessments and its results are frequently among the highest when compared to similar schools. There is also good evidence of value added progress through the school. However, the results have to be treated with caution, because cohorts are relatively small and it is difficult to identify any trends, for example in relation to performance or gender.
12. In national teacher assessments for key stage 1 (KS1) in 2009 all pupils attained at least level 2 in English and science and around 78% did so in mathematics. Almost a half attained the higher level 3 in English, around a fifth in mathematics and a third in science; these figures are higher than for the family of schools, the county and nationally in English and science. The weakest performance was in writing and mathematics.
13. In national teacher assessments for KS2 in 2009 all pupils attained at least level 4 in English, mathematics and science, which is well above the family of schools, the county and nationally. The percentage attaining the higher level 5 was also consistently much higher than each of the three comparative groups.

### Grades for standards in the subjects inspected

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
18%	82%	-	-	-

14. These percentages represent a considerable improvement since the last inspection and overall are well above the national averages published in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's (HMCI) latest Annual Report for 2008-9, which indicates that standards of achievement in primary schools in Wales are 85% Grade 2 or better, of which 12% is Grade 1.

### Areas of learning for the under-fives

Area of Learning	Reception
Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development	Grade 2
Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 2
Welsh language development	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2

15. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes.

**Grades for standards in subjects inspected in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2**

<b>Inspection Area</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Key Stage 1</b>	<b>Key Stage 2</b>
Foundation Phase	Grade 2		
Welsh second language		Grade 1	Grade 2
Science		Grade 2	Grade 1
ICT		Grade 2	Grade 1
Geography		Grade 2	Grade 2
Physical education		Grade 2	Grade 2

16. Since the last inspection standards in physical development in reception, in Welsh second language, geography and physical education in KS1 and in science and ICT in both key stages have improved.
17. All learners, whatever their aptitude, ability or social or ethnic background make good progress through the school and fulfil their potential.
18. Standards in the key skills of listening and speaking are outstanding across the school and learners make good progress in their reading abilities. Standards in writing are good overall, but at times the range and quantity is limited. Spelling and punctuation are generally used accurately, but handwriting and presentation are variable.
19. Across the school learners use numeracy skills in a range of contexts and subjects. They also make good progress in their use of ICT across the curriculum and by the end of KS2 achieve high standards.
20. Bilingualism is generally well developed and all learners have a positive attitude to learning Welsh.
21. Learners progress very well in their personal, moral, social and wider development. Most use their skills of problem solving, thinking and creativity very effectively. They are able to work independently and make their own choices and decisions, especially in older KS2. Nearly all work extremely well with others and take turns and share ideas together very successfully.
22. Learners have a very positive attitude to their work and are effectively motivated. They concentrate on their tasks, work productively and make good use of their time. They respond extremely well to target setting systems and acquire a good understanding of what they have to do to improve.
23. Learners' behaviour throughout the day is exemplary. All are friendly and polite and relate well to each other, staff and visitors.

24. Attendance for the three terms prior to inspection at 94.9% is above the national average and that of the county and similar schools. Nearly all learners are punctual at the start of the school day.
25. Learners have a secure awareness of equal opportunities issues and understand that everyone should be treated fairly and equally. They also have a developing understanding of the world of work and make a valuable contribution to the local community.

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

### **Grades for teaching**

26. 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>
31%	63%	6%	-	-

27. These figures overall are an improvement since the last inspection, although the amount of Grade 1 teaching is slightly lower. The figures also compare well with the national picture reported by HMCI in his annual report for 2008-2009, which indicates that the quality of teaching in primary schools in Wales is 85% Grade 2 or better, of which 17% is Grade 1.
28. In the lessons where teaching was judged to be Grade 1, the outstanding features include use of a range of innovative teaching and learning methods, a very brisk pace, very good questioning techniques, high expectations, lively and energetic delivery and very good provision for creative and investigative work.
29. Where teaching was judged to be Grade 2, the good features include good preparation and planning, clear aims, a purposeful range of appropriate tasks, a well organised and positive atmosphere with good time management, appropriate attention to differentiation, good use of praise and encouragement and effective use of ICT.
30. Where occasionally teaching was judged to be Grade 3, this was due to learners spending too much time listening to the teacher and not being sufficiently engaged.
31. The level of respect between teachers and learners is outstanding and has a positive effect on standards and achievement.
32. Teachers actively promote bilingualism and equal opportunities; they have good subject knowledge and are familiar with recent developments and initiatives in primary education.
33. Lessons are well planned and have clear objectives and learners are encouraged to be systematic and logical in their investigations and learning strategies. These features are outstanding.

34. Teaching assistants provide very effective support for individuals and groups across the curriculum.
35. The school meets statutory requirements for assessment, recording and reporting. Assessment is good overall, although it is still in the early stages of development in the Foundation Phase and there is a lack of consistency at times in procedures across the school. An outstanding feature is the way learners are given opportunities to be involved in monitoring their own learning and progress.
36. Marking is undertaken regularly throughout the school and in the best examples it is positive and constructive with clear targets for future learning. Parents/carers are provided with informative end of year reports.
37. Overall, the school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that meets statutory requirements and the needs of the range of learners, although there is a shortfall in teacher contact hours in KS2.
38. The school is developing schemes of work based on the themes chosen and in accordance with the new Foundation Phase and skills framework at KS2. In most curriculum areas long term planning is at a very early stage of development. Medium and short term planning is sufficiently detailed, but varies in format between classes.
39. The school provides a range of extra-curricular clubs for both KS1 and KS2 pupils and educational trips to places of interest both locally and further afield are undertaken regularly.
40. The school's holistic approach to personal and social education (PSE) reflects its inclusive ethos. Sustainable development and health promotion initiatives are also an integral part of the curriculum.
41. Learners' spiritual and cultural development is good and their moral and social development is outstanding. Collective worship sessions take place daily and fully meet statutory requirements.
42. There is an appropriate emphasis in the curriculum and the daily life of the school on celebrating cultural diversity and the cwricwlwm Cymreig.
43. Relationships with parents and carers are very good and the way in which the school values the partnership and communicates with them is a notable feature. Reciprocally, parents and carers indicate positive approval of the school's work. Homework is set regularly in all classes.
44. Very good partnerships have also been developed with the local community, the parish, LA support agencies, the local university and secondary schools and colleges in the area.
45. The school has a number of links with local businesses and enterprises and entrepreneurial skills are appropriately developed.

46. The school is a happy, caring community where learners are highly valued and supported. The quality of care, support and guidance is a strength and there are outstanding features in the way that arrangements are planned and managed.
47. Well developed induction and support programmes help learners settle in quickly and transition arrangements between classes are well planned and managed. Transfer arrangements with the two neighbouring comprehensive schools are good.
48. Effective health and safety and child protection procedures are in place and supervision at play times and lunch times is sound.
49. Procedures to monitor attendance, punctuality, behaviour and performance are effective. High attendance is rewarded and a record is kept of late arrivals, although the school has not set any targets for raising attendance.
50. The school gives a high priority to good behaviour. All staff encourage and praise acceptable conduct and the school's support for the small minority of learners with challenging behaviour is outstanding
51. The provision for learners with SEN is a strength; early identification and continual diagnostic assessment ensure purposeful and focused support. Targets in individual education plans (IEP) are monitored and reviewed appropriately. Parents/carers are fully consulted and there are close links with outside agencies.
52. There are well established and clear policies on race equality, equal opportunities and diversity and anti-social behaviour is not tolerated.

### **Leadership and management**

53. The school has a very positive ethos, which underpins its life and work.
54. The headteacher leads by example and has a good oversight of the administration and strategic direction of the school. She has achieved a great deal since her arrival in September 2007.
55. There is no deputy headteacher, but the senior teacher acts in this role. She is very supportive and efficient and a model of good classroom practice.
56. Staff work very effectively together as a team. There is a feeling of mutual support throughout the school and all share high expectations for achievement and behaviour. The school is currently reviewing its subject co-ordination arrangements in light of the introduction of the Foundation Phase and staff restructuring.
57. Teachers are appraised through the annual performance management cycle and all other staff are involved in professional review meetings. Targets are linked to the SIP and professional and personal needs.

58. Governors understand their roles and are proactive in the life of the school. The GB meets regularly and provides a clear sense of direction.
59. Good attention is given to national and local priorities. All statutory policies and requirements are in place. However, the school's documentation lacks standardisation and consistency and there is no rolling programme of review and GB approval.
60. Self-evaluation is carried out systematically and all stakeholders are involved. Staff and governors share a common vision and commitment to school improvement.
61. Accurate judgements are made by the school about its strengths and areas for development. The involvement of pupils, parents/carers, local employers and external agencies is positively encouraged in the consultation and decision making processes and good use is made of first hand evidence.
62. There is a clear cycle of development planning. Major and minor targets for improvement are identified in the SIP and these are realistic, manageable and achievable. Progress since the last inspection has been good overall.
63. The school has an appropriate number of teachers who are suitably qualified and who have a good range of expertise and experience. The quality of support staff is a notable feature of the school.
64. All staff attend and benefit from relevant training courses, but the range of training undertaken is limited. The school meets the statutory requirements of the workload agreement.
65. The accommodation provides good facilities for teaching and learning and an extensive outside area provides good opportunities for play and learning experiences. The buildings and the site are in good order, well cared for and kept clean.
66. Learners have access to appropriate resources that match the demands of the curriculum; the quantity and quality are generally good. All available resources are effectively managed.
67. Financial management is good. In light of its results and quality outcomes the school achieves good value for money.

## Recommendations

In order to build on the progress since the last inspection and the evident good practice in the school, the GB and staff need to:

- R1 raise standards in aspects of writing across the curriculum;
- R2 continue to develop curriculum planning and management arrangements in line with the Foundation Phase and the skills framework for KS2;
- R3 ensure teacher contact time meets the recommended hours for KS2;
- R4 continue to develop comprehensive and consistent assessment and recording procedures; and
- R5 establish a rolling programme for standardising, updating and approving school policies and documentation.

N.B. Recommendation 2 is a specific target in the school's current SIP.

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

## Standards

### Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

#### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 68. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 69. Overall, the school does consistently well in national curriculum assessments except for the occasional dip in mathematics in both key stages and in writing for boys in KS1. There is also good evidence of value added progress through the school. However, the results have to be treated with caution, because cohorts are relatively small and vary widely in their composition and so it is difficult to identify any trends, for example in relation to performance or gender.
- 70. In national teacher assessments for KS1 in 2009 all pupils attained at least level 2 in English and science, which is above the county and national averages, and around 78% did so in mathematics, so that the core subject indicator (CSI), which is the percentage of those attaining at least level 2 in all three subjects, was around 78%, compared to the county and national averages of 85% and 81% respectively. Almost a half attained the higher level 3 in English, around a fifth in mathematics (two boys), and a third in science (again all boys); these

figures are higher than for the county and nationally in English and science and about the same in mathematics. The weakest performance was in writing, where 11% (one boy), only attained level 1 and where no pupils attained level 3.

71. In comparison to schools within Wales with a similar free school meals percentage, KS1 pupils in 2009 performed among the best 25% in English and science, but among the lowest 25% in mathematics, so that overall the CSI was in the lower 50%. They achieved their predicted levels in English and science and almost matched these in mathematics. In relation to the family of schools, they did better than the average in English and science at both level 2 and above and at level 3, but less well in mathematics.
72. In national teacher assessments for KS2 in 2009 all pupils attained at least level 4 in English, mathematics and science, which are all above county and national averages, so that the CSI, which is the percentage of those attaining at least level 4 in all three subjects, was around 100%, compared to the county and national averages of 82% and 77% respectively. The percentage attaining the higher level 5 was also consistently much higher than for the county and nationally.
73. In comparison to schools within Wales with a similar free school meals percentage, KS2 pupils in 2009 performed among the best 25% in all three core subjects and well above their predicted levels. In relation to the family of schools, they also did better in all subjects at both level 4 and above and at level 5.

#### Grades for standards in the subjects inspected

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
18%	82%	-	-	-

74. These percentages represent a considerable improvement since the last inspection and overall are well above the national averages published in HMCI's latest Annual Report for 2008-9, which indicates that standards of achievement in primary schools in Wales are 85% Grade 2 or better, of which 12% is Grade 1.

#### Areas of learning for the under-fives

Area of Learning	Reception
Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development	Grade 2
Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 2
Welsh language development	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2

75. A majority of children enter reception with above average ability and results from baseline assessments indicate that they make good progress. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes.

### Grades for standards in subjects inspected in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Inspection Area	Reception	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Foundation Phase	Grade 2		
Welsh second language		Grade 1	Grade 2
Science		Grade 2	Grade 1
ICT		Grade 2	Grade 1
Geography		Grade 2	Grade 2
Physical education		Grade 2	Grade 2

76. Since the last inspection standards in physical development in reception, in Welsh second language, geography and physical education in KS1 and in science and ICT in both key stages have improved.
77. All learners, whatever their aptitude, ability or social or ethnic background, including those with SEN and the more able, make good progress through the school and fulfil their potential.
78. Standards in the key skills of listening and speaking are outstanding across the school; in 2009, for example, by the end of KS1 and KS2 all pupils reached the expected level 2 or 4 in oracy and around a half attained the higher levels 3 and 5 respectively. Learners in all classes listen attentively in a range of contexts, make oral contributions confidently and follow instructions carefully. They speak clearly and articulately and interact willingly with both adults and peers. They have a well developed vocabulary.
79. Learners make good progress through the school in their reading abilities; in 2009 by the end of KS1 and KS2 all pupils reached the expected level 2 or 4 respectively in reading with just under a half in KS1 and around two thirds in KS2 attaining the higher levels 3 and 5 respectively. Reading tests also show steady progress and many learners are one year above their chronological age. From reception onwards most read fluently, make few errors and tackle unfamiliar words confidently, using an appropriate range of strategies, although only a minority regularly use a dictionary to find out the meaning of words.
80. Standards in writing are good overall, although in 2009 no pupils in KS1 attained the higher level 3; over 50% in KS2, however, reached the higher level 5. Reception children engage in a variety of mark making and learn to write their name and begin to form words on their own. Most pupils in KS1 and KS2 produce increasingly extended written work across the curriculum for different purposes and audiences, but at times the range and quantity is limited. Spelling and punctuation are generally used accurately, but handwriting and presentation are variable.

81. Across the school learners use numeracy skills in a range of contexts and subjects. In reception they utilise a variety of resources to sort and count and they recognise basic two and three dimensional shapes. In KS1 and KS2 they interpret data and present it in different forms. They can apply their skills to real life situations and most can use alternative strategies to reach mathematical solutions quickly.
82. Learners make good progress in their use of ICT across the curriculum and by the end of KS2 they achieve high standards. In reception they begin to use computers and other types of electronic equipment confidently and competently. In KS1 and KS2 they work independently on personal computers and lap tops, displaying good mouse control and understanding a range of relevant functions on screen. They access databases and the internet to research information and they use word processing for redrafting and editing their work.
83. Bilingualism is generally well developed. Through its regular use in lessons and routines learners build up a range of words and phrases and independently begin to converse in brief sentences. All have a positive attitude to learning Welsh and respond to commands, instructions and questions confidently and fluently, commensurate with their age and experience, although at times they are under challenged by the range of tasks provided.
84. Learners progress very well in their personal, moral, social and wider development. Nearly all complete tasks quickly and accurately and tackle problems with enthusiasm; they use their thinking and creative skills very effectively to make inferences and to relate cause and effect. They are able to work independently and to make their own choices and decisions, especially in KS2. They take turns and share ideas together very successfully; there is evidence of good quality co-operative and meaningful paired work in a variety of learning situations.
85. Learners have a very positive attitude to their work and are effectively motivated and fully engaged in lessons. They concentrate on their tasks, work productively and make good use of their time. They respond well to advice.
86. Learners respond extremely well to target setting systems and acquire a good understanding of what they have to do to improve. They play an active part in setting their own targets, especially in language and mathematics. Particularly in older KS2, they become increasingly skilful in self and peer assessment activities.
87. Learners' behaviour throughout the day is exemplary. They settle quickly in class and move calmly around the building. They are aware of the high standards of behaviour expected of them and contribute to their own class rules. Older pupils volunteer to support their peers and those younger than themselves. All are friendly and polite and relate well to each other, staff, governors and visitors.
88. Attendance for the three terms prior to inspection at 94.9% is above the all-Wales average and above that of the LA and similar schools. Absences are

caused mainly by illness and a few parents withdraw their children, with the school's permission, for holidays in term time. Nearly all learners are punctual at the start of the school day.

89. Learners display a good awareness of equality, diversity, race and inclusion matters and feel that bullying is not a problem in the school. They understand that everyone should be treated fairly and equally, regardless of their backgrounds and differences. They realise that other people within their own society and in other countries hold different beliefs and views to their own and that these should be respected and appreciated. Older pupils reason logically about how the possible disadvantages of having a disability can be addressed.
90. Learners have a developing understanding of the world of work and make a valuable contribution to the local community by taking part in a range of activities and functions in the village. Visitors and members of the community come into school to share their experiences and to talk about their work.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

91. The findings of the inspection team do not match the Grade 2 judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report, due to the amount of outstanding teaching observed.
92. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
31%	63%	6%	-	-

93. These figures overall are an improvement since the last inspection, although the amount of Grade 1 teaching is slightly lower. The figures also compare well with the national picture reported by HMCI in his annual report for 2008-2009, which indicates that the quality of teaching in primary schools in Wales is 85% Grade 2 or better, of which 17% is Grade 1.
94. In the lessons where teaching was judged to be Grade 1, the outstanding features include:
- use of a range of innovative teaching and learning methods;
  - a very brisk pace;
  - very good questioning techniques;
  - high expectations that challenge and stimulate learners;
  - lively and energetic delivery, which motivates and excites learners; and
  - very good provision for creative and investigative work, which helps learners to find things out for themselves and promotes lifelong learning.

95. Where teaching was judged to be Grade 2, the good features include:
- good preparation and planning;
  - clear aims to the lesson, good guidance and a purposeful range of appropriate tasks;
  - a well organised and positive atmosphere with good time management;
  - appropriate attention to differentiation, so that tasks are well matched to learners' ages and abilities;
  - good use of praise and encouragement; and
  - effective use of ICT.
96. Where occasionally teaching was judged to be Grade 3, this was due to learners spending too much time listening to the teacher and not being sufficiently engaged.
97. The level of respect between teachers and learners is outstanding and has a positive effect on standards and achievement. Learners know that teachers value their contributions and this raises their self-esteem and motivation for learning. Teachers have high expectations in terms of learners' self-discipline and self-responsibility.
98. Teachers actively promote bilingualism and adopt a comprehensive approach to the teaching of bilingual skills through providing a range of opportunities that encourage learners to express themselves in both Welsh and English, although on occasions the use of incidental Welsh is limited. Regular visits from the advisory teacher assist staff with Welsh language delivery.
99. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are familiar with recent developments and initiatives in primary education. Assessment for learning strategies are becoming embedded in the best classroom practice.
100. Lessons are well prepared and have clear objectives, which are shared with learners and which indicate how a variety of skills can be developed; resources are readily available.
101. Learners are encouraged to make good use of a range of reference material. They are taught to be systematic and logical in their investigations and learning strategies. These features are outstanding.
102. Teaching assistants provide very effective support for individuals and groups across the curriculum. They encourage learners to be independent and provide clear directions.
103. Teachers take every opportunity to promote equality of opportunity. They ensure all learners are treated fairly and with respect and they encourage boys and girls to work and play co-operatively together. They fully include all learners with SEN in the life and work of the school.
104. The school meets statutory requirements for assessment, recording and reporting. Assessment is good overall, although it is still in the early stages of

development in the Foundation Phase and there is a lack of consistency at times in procedures across the school. An outstanding feature is the way learners are given opportunities to be involved in monitoring their own learning and progress.

105. The accuracy with which teachers assess pupils' work is supported by effective in-house standardisation procedures, underpinned by advice from the LA, but moderation within the local cluster of schools and collections of evidence to guide judgements are relatively underdeveloped.
106. Marking is undertaken regularly throughout the school and in the best examples it is positive and constructive with clear targets for future learning and with comments that allow learners to discuss strategies for further improvement.
107. Parents/carers are provided with end of year reports which meet statutory requirements. These are informative and provide details on progress in each subject. There are also regular consultation meetings for parents/carers to talk to teachers about their child's progress, although they are welcome to make an appointment at any time.

**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**

108. The findings of the inspection team do not match the Grade 1 judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report, due to insufficient outstanding features being identified in the learning experiences provided.
109. Overall, the school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that meets statutory requirements and the needs of the range of learners; it offers equality of access to all ages and abilities. Teacher contact time for KS1 meets recommended hours, but there is a shortfall in KS2.
110. Throughout the school the curriculum is based on a series of themes, which each class teacher selects. Most lessons are related to the theme but subjects are taught discretely when necessary. Parents/carers express some concerns when the same theme covers three year groups, especially when this involves a split key stage.
111. The school is developing schemes of work based on the themes chosen and in accordance with the Foundation Phase and skills framework at KS2 and in a few subjects, such as science and Welsh second language, LA or commercial schemes are used. However, in most curriculum areas long term planning is at a very early stage of development and teachers use a variety of different materials to access ideas. The development of schemes of work has been delayed due to the reconfiguration of classes and the varying mixed age ranges.
112. Medium and short term planning is sufficiently detailed, but varies in format between classes, so there is no consistent pattern across the school. All teachers produce topic webs and plans for the term, outlining learning objectives

and the range of skills and activities to be developed for different ages and abilities, but not all have short term plans or clearly outline the key skills to be covered. There is also no consistent approach to evaluating plans or promoting bilingualism.

113. The school provides a range of extra-curricular clubs for both KS1 and KS2 pupils, led by teachers and outside agencies and involving sports, music, ICT and safe cycling. In addition, parents, grandparents and local residents come in to work with learners.
114. The activities are enjoyable occasions and are well supported. There is also a high up take of musical instrumental tuition taught by the Gwent Music Service.
115. Educational trips to places of interest both locally and further afield are undertaken regularly and Y5/Y6 pupils take part in biennial residential activities alternated with team building outdoor activities.
116. A PSE policy and framework are in place in line with the latest Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) guidance. Each class participates in circle time sessions and lessons are supported by outside agencies, such as the police, in relation to safety and drug awareness. The programme is designed to permeate all areas of the curriculum and this holistic approach reflects the school's inclusive ethos.
117. Sustainable development initiatives are an integral part of the curriculum and are strongly promoted by the school council and eco committee. The school is building an eco friendly green house and developing of a small allotment plot. It participates in recycling and Keep Wales Tidy initiatives, as well as the collection of Yellow Pages, for which it has received recognition for its achievements.
118. Learners' spiritual and cultural development is good and their moral and social development is outstanding. Collective worship sessions take place daily and are reverent and thought provoking occasions; statutory requirements are fully met. Learners regularly participate and the local vicar and other visitors frequently lead the worship. Good use is made of the Welsh language and music.
119. Learners know the difference between right and wrong and work and play together very well; relationships between them and with adults are very good. They develop a good understanding of those less fortunate than themselves through their involvement in raising money for various charities and good causes, both at home and abroad.
120. There is an appropriate emphasis in the curriculum and the daily life of the school on celebrating cultural diversity, for example through studying other faiths, cultures and lifestyles. Multicultural themes are effectively developed, particularly through religious education, dance, music and geography. Cultural development is also promoted through visits, visitors and links with other countries, such as The Gambia, China and a school in Highveld in South Africa, which involves reciprocal visits by staff.

121. The cwricwlwm Cymreig is well developed across the curriculum, for example through the study of local and Welsh artists and authors. Learners take part in a range of activities and cultural events, such as Welsh Country dancing led by a governor, Welsh singing, celebration of St. David's Day and an annual Eisteddfod. There is a Welsh week and in March collective worship reflects the culture of Wales. The use of bilingual signage and displays also help to promote the Welsh dimension.
122. Homework is set regularly in all classes and guidelines are clearly outlined in the school prospectus. All learners take reading books home accompanied by a reading record, in which parents/carers and teachers can comment; older pupils keep their own record. As they progress through the school, learners also undertake spelling and mathematics work and research projects at home. In KS2 homework is regularly set on a Friday and handed in and marked the following Friday and information is posted on the school website. Parents/carers overall are happy with the arrangements.
123. Relationships with parents and carers are very good and the way in which the school values the partnership with them is a notable feature. Reciprocally, parents and carers indicate positive approval of the school's work. Communication with them is a strength and they are kept well informed through regular newsletters, information leaflets and parents' evenings. In addition, a curriculum information sheet with dates is issued at the beginning of each term outlining the themes and work to be undertaken.
124. A well established and active Friends of Ponthir Association raises considerable funds for the school and is well supported by staff. Parents/carers are invited in to share their skills and experiences and to assist with various tasks and activities, such as the gardening club held in school time. All feel able to come to the school to discuss any needs or issues that may arise regarding their children and they are confident that any complaints or suggestions are taken seriously and acted on. There is a home/school agreement, which most parents/carers have signed.
125. Very good partnerships have been developed with the local community and residents are invited to attend concerts, events and open days. The school is proactive in the parish and a member of the church attends collective worship weekly to play the piano. Learners attend services at the Church and contribute to the parish magazine. A group of senior ladies from the parish run the knitting club and the proceeds of the bears they make help to build a school in Burundi. There are also good links with the police, the fire brigade, an artist in residence and the community council, whose members are invited to all school activities.
126. There is good liaison with the school's LA support agencies, although, due to the fact that most Y6 pupils proceed to a secondary school outside the county, the school maintains links with the neighbouring LA as well. The community focused schools initiative is also developing successfully, for example through literacy, mathematics and eco days and there is an identified community focused school governor.

127. The school also has good links with the local university and secondary schools and colleges in the area; it regularly accepts teacher training and work experience students on placement.
128. Although the school has no specific partnership with industry policy, there are a number of links with local businesses and enterprises, which introduce pupils to the work environment outside school and the concept of community regeneration.
129. Entrepreneurial skills are developed through problem solving activities within the curriculum and specifically through the involvement of some older pupils in the production and sale of the school newspaper and by making small items for sale at school fetes. Learners also discuss issues of cost and practicality, for example when making decisions in the school council.

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

**Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

130. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
131. The school is a happy, caring community where learners are highly valued and supported. The quality of care, support and guidance is a strength and there are outstanding features in the way that arrangements are planned and managed.
132. Well developed induction and support programmes help learners settle in quickly when entering reception and the headteacher meets all new parents/carers personally. There are very good links with the Ponthir playgroup and especially the private Seren Fach nursery next door, which uses the school hall for football skills, gymnastics and its Christmas concert.
133. As learners progress through the year groups, transition arrangements between classes are well planned and managed, especially when the age range of a class has to be reconfigured. Parents/carers are consulted and decisions are not made until they have been thoroughly discussed by staff and governors in association with the LA.
134. Transfer arrangements with the two neighbouring comprehensive schools are good and a transition plan is in place. There are transition projects and all pupils are able to visit their chosen secondary school before entry. There is regular class teacher liaison and Y7 staff visit Ponthir and provide workshops. In addition, there are data transfer procedures enabling staff to diagnose individual needs.
135. Older pupils are given special responsibilities, such as ringing the bell and acting as prefects. They also serve as playground pals and reading buddies to support younger learners.

136. The school council plays an important part in the life of the school. It is an effective voice for the pupil body and provides learners from reception to Y6 with good opportunities to develop their social skills. Members are made aware of cost implications and make decisions whether or not to accept ideas for improvement.
137. The school has a notable record of participation in the Healthy Schools project; health promoting activities, including healthy eating and fitness, are an integral part of the curriculum and crisps and sweets can only be brought to school on a Friday. Sex education follows the LA's policies and guidelines.
138. The school has a health and safety policy and there are trained first aiders; risk assessments are carried out when necessary and accidents are recorded and reported. Fire drills are held regularly and learners are aware of what they need to do if they bring medicines to school. The school is working with the LA's Highways Division to produce a travel plan to ensure pupils have a safe route to school.
139. Effective child protection procedures are in place. The headteacher and the senior teacher are the child protection officers and there is a designated governor. A clear and effective safeguarding policy is in place. Staff and governors are fully aware of their roles and procedures within the school and supervision at play times and lunch times is sound. Refresher training is carried out and all staff, governors and volunteers have current Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks.
140. Wrap around care facilities are available for working parents/carers, which they appreciate. A breakfast club is provided at the neighbouring nursery school and an after school club takes place in the demountable classroom.
141. Procedures to monitor attendance, punctuality, behaviour and performance are effective through, for example, rewards and sanctions, celebration assemblies, an achievement board and discussions with learners in the formulation of class rules.
142. Good attendance is rewarded and a record is kept of late arrivals; there are very few unauthorised absences. However, the school has not set any targets for raising attendance.
143. The school gives a high priority to good behaviour. It has an agreed positive behaviour management policy and this is successfully put into practice, based on the recognition of learners' achievements. All staff encourage and praise acceptable conduct and the school's support for the small minority of learners with challenging behaviour is outstanding.
144. The provision for learners with SEN is a strength; early identification and continual diagnostic assessment ensure purposeful and focused support. The school's SEN policy is comprehensive and complies with the Code of Practice. The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO), who is the senior teacher and who has only

recently taken on the role, is skilled and effectively works closely alongside staff. There is a designated governor for SEN.

145. Targets in IEPs are stated in observable and measurable terms and are monitored and reviewed appropriately. Teachers and support staff work as a strong team, providing continuity of support and assessment of need. Parents/carers are fully consulted and involved in the process. They are able speak to the class teacher or SENCO regarding their child's progress at any time. Annual reviews of learners with statements meet statutory requirements.
146. The more able and talented are also identified and have IEPs, which target their particular talents and abilities.
147. There are close links with outside agencies; for example, the school nurse visits monthly and there is support from educational psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists.
148. There are well established and clear policies on race equality, equal opportunities and diversity. The school has adopted the LA's anti-bullying policy and anti-social behaviour is not tolerated. Learners' awareness of these issues is developed through PSE, assemblies and an appropriate range of reading material, as well as through the establishment of non-stereotypical play areas.
149. The school has an appropriate disability equality scheme and accessibility plan which provides relevant information for disabled learners, parents and carers.

## **Leadership and management**

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

#### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

150. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
151. The school has a very positive ethos, based on its Church in Wales status and its mission statement and aims, which were recently revised by learners, staff and governors with a facilitator from IIP; they were also shared with parents during the initial consultation period. They are prominently displayed around the school and underpin its life and work.
152. The headteacher leads by example and is very committed to the school. She has a good oversight of the administration and strategic direction of the school and has established very good relations with staff, governors and parents. She has achieved a great deal since her arrival at the school in September 2007 and has successfully taken the school forward in many ways.
153. There is no deputy headteacher, but the senior teacher acts in this role; her designation and status are currently under review. She covers for the

headteacher in her absence, as well as having responsibility for mathematics and ICT and an input into assessment. She is also the SENCO for which she has a teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) post. She is very supportive and efficient and a model of good classroom practice.

154. Staff, including teachers and support assistants, work very effectively together as a team. There is a feeling of mutual support throughout the school and all share high expectations for achievement and behaviour. There are regular whole school meetings and staff are keen to take on board new initiatives; they are willing to share good ideas and offer help and support to each other. They have begun to visit other schools to observe good practice.
155. The school is currently reviewing its subject co-ordination arrangements in light of the introduction of the Foundation Phase and staff restructuring. Due to the small number of teachers, co-ordinators are currently only allocated for English, Welsh second language, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education; all other subjects come under joint custody of all staff, unless they are a target in the SIP.
156. Teachers are appraised through the annual performance management cycle, led by the headteacher. All other staff are involved in professional review meetings, when targets are set and training needs are identified. Targets are linked to the SIP and professional and personal needs.
157. Governors understand their roles and are proactive in the life of the school; most come into school regularly, for example to visit classes and to contribute to extra-curricular activities, attend events or lead collective worship; the majority are linked to a particular class. They are kept up to date through attendance at training events and the headteacher's termly reports. Newsletters are also sent out to them, highlighting the school's successes.
158. The GB meets regularly and relevant sub-committees are convened throughout the year and feed back into full GB meetings. The finance sub-committee meets at least once a term, where more in-depth discussions take place.
159. The GB provides a clear sense of direction for the work of the school; members act as critical friends and hold the school to account for the standards and quality it achieves.
160. Good attention is given to national and local priorities. All statutory policies and requirements, including a complaints procedure, are in place, except for one or two minor omissions in the GB's annual report to parents. However, the school's documentation, although considerably rationalised since the last inspection, lacks standardisation and consistency and there is no rolling programme of review and GB approval; most policies and procedures are not signed or dated.

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

**Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

161. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
162. Self-evaluation is carried out systematically and all stakeholders are involved. Staff and governors share a common vision and commitment to school improvement. The headteacher and deputy regularly review the school's progress.
163. Accurate judgements are made by the school about its strengths and areas for development. This is exemplified by the fact that the inspection team agreed with the school's judgements in its self-evaluation report in five out of the seven key questions.
164. Classroom observations and subject monitoring are undertaken by the headteacher mainly in the core subjects and ICT. Teachers oversee the subjects they are responsible for, principally through looking at learners' work during their non-contact time and sharing views in staff meetings, and they produce brief subject reviews and action plans at the end of the year. Monitoring and reporting in other subjects are minimal.
165. The school positively encourages and supports the involvement of pupils, parents/carers, local employers and external agencies in the consultation and decision making processes. For example, first hand evidence is gathered through listening to learners; their views are sought both formally through questionnaires and informally through everyday communication. Questionnaires are also sent to parents/carers from the school council to gauge their opinions on a range of issues and governors' views are acquired through meetings and discussions.
166. Good use is made of data analysis; assessment results are evaluated effectively and acted upon. Staff use evidence, such as baseline and cognitive ability test scores, to inform progress through the school and governors are kept well informed of the school's performance.
167. There is a clear cycle of development planning which incorporates the views of governors and staff. The SIP outlines planned improvements over the next three years; it is updated annually in line with the needs of the school and reviews of progress occur each term. Major and minor targets are identified and these are realistic, manageable and achievable with success criteria and costs. The school's self-evaluation report is very comprehensive and clearly outlines the school's progress and areas for development.
168. The school has introduced a number of curriculum initiatives and intervention programmes in order to raise standards and evidence indicates that these are resulting in measurable improvements, for example in reading and mathematics.

169. Progress since the last inspection has been good overall. Although not all subjects were inspected in the current inspection, standards have improved in those that were reviewed with the result that none is now less than Grade 2. Key skills, including ICT, are now identified in most teachers' planning, but inconsistencies remain. Parents/carers are clearly informed about the curriculum their children are studying term by term and the SIP contains a more manageable and sharply focused number of priorities. School documentation has been audited and revised, but requires further updating and rationalisation. The headteacher's role has now been stabilised and the school works closely with the LA so that the best use of resources is achieved. Statutory requirements are met in relation to the prospectus and the Code of Practice for SEN.

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

**Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

170. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
171. The school has an appropriate number of teachers who are suitably qualified and who have a good range of expertise and experience; all have job descriptions.
172. An additional part-time teacher is employed for three mornings per week to provide extra support for the present Y2 pupils and identified individuals in Y3, as well as taking a group of more able and talented pupils one morning a week.
173. The quality of support staff is a notable feature of the school. They are allocated to each class and well deployed and their expertise has enabled the school to plan effective support strategies. However, the adult:child ratio in the mixed reception/Y1 class makes it difficult at times to implement fully the Foundation Phase.
174. All staff attend and benefit from relevant training courses, linked to the SIP and their personal and professional needs, and these experiences positively impact on teaching and standards. However, the range of training undertaken, especially in relation to the curriculum, is limited.
175. The school meets the statutory requirements of the workload agreement. Teachers are allocated their entitled planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time, when the headteacher takes their classes, usually for religious education lessons.
176. Kitchen, clerical and maintenance staff carry out their duties conscientiously; they make a valuable contribution to school life and are well respected. School routines operate efficiently.
177. The accommodation provides good facilities for teaching and learning and classrooms are spacious for the number of learners on roll. The hall provides

appropriate space for physical education lessons, dining arrangements and whole school gatherings. Although classrooms are somewhat limited in the space available for displays, pupils' work is attractively exhibited to celebrate their achievements and to enhance the learning environment.

178. An extensive outside area, including access to a playing field, provides good opportunities for play and for extending children's learning experiences. The playgrounds are relatively small, but they are marked for games and contain benches and a recently constructed shelter. The buildings and the site are in good order, well cared for and kept clean by the school caretakers. Two accommodation issues were raised with the GB.
179. Learners have access to appropriate resources that match the demands of the curriculum; the quantity and quality are generally good. New materials are purchased according to priorities in the SIP. The school library is well resourced and there are adequate ICT facilities, although the reception/Y1 class does not have an interactive whiteboard. All available resources are effectively managed.
180. Financial management is good and the school is on course to meet its current budget commitments. Good financial protocols and access to specific grants enable the headteacher and the GB's finance committee, in association with the LA's finance officer, to manage the budget effectively.
181. In the previous financial year the school had an underspend of around eight per cent and capitation was well above average, although the funds were insufficient to employ another full-time teacher. The most recent audit report of 2009 highlighted a large number of recommendations, four of which were considered to be high risk. The school has taken steps to address all the identified shortcomings.
182. In light of its results and quality outcomes the school achieves good value for money.

## **Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning**

### **Foundation phase for under 5s**

#### **Reception: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development.**

#### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

183. Children settle quickly into the reception class and succeed in forming very good relationships with adults and peers. They show concern for each other and co-operate in groups and pairs confidently and take turns fairly. They are able to follow the maximum number allowed in an area at any one time and conscientiously fill in their own activity sheets once they have completed a task.

They share resources well and move on to other activities quickly and sensibly. Many are able to work independently and without support, showing good concentration and a positive attitude to learning.

184. All children develop a very positive self-image. Most are able to dress and undress on their own, although a few require assistance. They independently wash their hands after going to the toilet and before eating. They begin to understand the need to show respect for people who are different to themselves, while having a clear understanding of their own identity. All explore the outside area confidently and understand the need to be aware of others when engaged in physical exercise. Behaviour in all activities is very good.

### **Shortcomings**

185. There are no important shortcomings.

### **Language, literacy and communication skills.**

#### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

186. Children achieve high standards in speaking and listening. They speak clearly in well formed sentences and most have a well developed vocabulary and understand a range of words associated with the theme they study. They give sensible answers. They listen very well as a whole class and in groups and operate the listening centre independently. They use a suitable language register when role playing in the home corner.
187. Most children read simple books fluently and with interest and all enjoy stories such as Jack and the Beanstalk. They look at books for pleasure and information and handle them appropriately; they extract meaning accurately from the words and pictures. Most recognise the sign and sound of individual letters and their pronunciation is generally clear.
188. Children engage in a variety of mark making with an emphasis on emergent writing. Nearly all can write their own name and copy, trace and overwrite accurately; a few can write simple words on their own. They practise forming letters in different ways, using paint, glue and sand. They can sequence a story correctly, such as the Three Billy Goats Gruff.

### **Shortcomings**

189. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Welsh language development**

### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

190. Many children respond positively to instructions and greetings in Welsh and speak words, phrases and short sentences freely and clearly. They join in well with songs and rhymes in the language and their pronunciation is generally clear.
191. All children listen well to stories that include words and phrases they know; they can recall those learnt during previous experiences and they use them naturally as part of their role play, as they act out, for example, the story of Jack and the Beanstalk in the castle corner. They can follow simple texts in Welsh and a few can read labels. They recognise the structure of questions and know single digit numbers and colours in Welsh. They are confident in using the language and have positive attitudes to it.

#### **Shortcomings**

192. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Mathematical development**

### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

193. Children use mathematical language well in relevant contexts. Most are able to count to 20 and in twos and know what number comes next. They show confidence and a developing awareness of basic numbers and recognise their symbols, matching them to the correct number of objects. In their role play a few can identify basic coins and make them up to 10p.
194. In practical activities many children demonstrate an understanding of subtraction, for example when making tarts from playdough. Most recognise basic two dimensional shapes and can manipulate these into the correct position on a computer game. The majority understand comparative terms, such 'big' and 'little' and 'long' and 'short', which they use accurately in activities involving, for example, measuring and weighing. Most can sort accurately by colour, size and shape.

#### **Shortcomings**

195. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

196. Children understand that seeds need light, water and heat to grow and they are able to speculate what might happen if these are not present. They eagerly take part in experiments to test out these concepts and make accurate observations of their results.
197. Children know about different types of habitats and weather patterns and understand that people's choice of clothing depends on the weather. Most know that the landscape changes with the seasons. Many are familiar with a range of physical features, such as hills and rivers, and are able to reason about position and location.
198. Many children understand that castles are places where people used to live and they become familiar with the sort of clothes the occupants wore. They have a good understanding of the role and purpose of castles in the past and they use appropriate associated words, such as 'knight' and 'princess', when undertaking activities in relation to the topic.
199. Children use computers for a variety of purposes. They develop good keyboard skills and can load programs. They use the mouse confidently. Many are able to use grids to compose a story and can fit a jig saw on screen together correctly.
200. In religious education all children understand the significance of occasions such as harvest and Christmas and the purpose of saying prayers. They learn to appreciate the wonder of God's world.

#### **Shortcomings**

201. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Physical development**

### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

202. During specific physical development lessons children use space well and are able to keep time to music and a tambourine. They demonstrate their abilities and achievements confidently in front of their peers. They participate enthusiastically and show good co-ordination as they move around the room in different ways and at different levels.
203. Children regularly use wheeled vehicles and a variety of other mobile equipment to pedal, steer, push and pull in order to move around the playground. They display well developed physical skills and a good awareness of space. They can

work out how to travel over obstacles while changing methods of travel, such as walking, balancing, hopping and running. The majority understand the importance of exercise and keeping fit.

204. Most children use small tools effectively when engaged in art and craft activities. They handle implements, such as paint brushes, glue sticks and scissors, carefully and manipulate small objects and construction toys well.

### **Shortcomings**

205. There are no important shortcomings.

### **Creative development**

#### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

##### **Good features**

206. Children enjoy painting and mixing colours to create different shades, for example in a picture of windy weather. They produce very effective pictures in the style of the Welsh artist, Peter Prendergast, whom they can talk about. They colour, draw, cut, stick and combine materials to produce attractive pictures, for example of fireworks. They use a variety of media to form letters of the alphabet and can recreate the shape of a castle using various materials, such as bricks.
207. Children regularly engage in role play and structured sand and water play. All join in enthusiastically when singing familiar songs and rhymes and many can keep a steady beat and understand that the rhythm played can be fast or slow and the sounds can be high or low.

### **Shortcomings**

208. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Welsh second language**

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

#### **Key Stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

##### **Outstanding features**

209. In KS1 pupils' use of Welsh to ask and answer questions is outstanding and many respond accurately to questions such as 'Ble rwyd ti...', using well formed phrases and sentences rather than single words. Their knowledge of sentence patterns and vocabulary is reinforced very effectively by recording them in written form.
210. The standard of reading in KS1 is an outstanding feature. Pupils' pronunciation and their clarity of speech and fluency are precise with very few errors. They confidently read a big book with the teacher, such as 'Silo a'i Ffrindiau.'

### **Good features**

211. In KS1 pupils successfully build on the good start in the reception class by developing new vocabulary and simple phrases. They respond well to oral stimuli and follow simple commands and instructions accurately.
212. In KS2 pupils extend their knowledge of sentence patterns to include a variety of questions, such as 'Beth wyt ti'n gwisgo?' They develop their oracy and vocabulary skills by holding conversations either in pairs or groups; their responses on these occasions are good and at times very good. This development of dialogue allows them to extend their knowledge of sentence patterns and develops their confidence in using the language incidentally.
213. The majority of pupils in KS2 achieve well in their reading. Older ones confidently select books independently and are able to explain the contents. Their ability to express themselves develops well.

### **Shortcomings**

214. There are no important shortcomings.

<b>Science</b>
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**Key Stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

215. Older pupils in KS2 plan out and undertake experiments extremely well in pairs and groups. They show a very good understanding of the scientific process and the importance of making precise recordings and repeating tests to check the accuracy of their results. They use a wide range of investigatory and recording methods that demonstrate an outstanding level of knowledge and understanding.
216. When investigating the effects of smoking, older KS2 pupils recall a previous experiment on lung capacity very well. They make very pertinent observations, revealing an outstanding capacity to think issues through and to reach conclusions. They express their views confidently and profoundly and explain clearly why they might have changed their attitudes and opinions, based on their observations and prior learning.

### **Good features**

217. Pupils in both key stages undertake a range of investigatory work linked to the national curriculum programmes of study, involving planning, predicting, experimenting, recording and evaluating results. They develop a good understanding of various scientific topics and processes.
218. Younger pupils in KS1 have a good understanding of how seeds and plants grow and what they need to ensure healthy growth. They experiment with

planting seeds in different ways to test the outcome. They can tell whether a plant looks healthy or not and are able to predict what might happen if light, water or warmth are not present.

219. Older pupils in KS1 investigate which materials might be best to keep soup warm. They help to select the materials to be tested and consider their properties and previous learning before making a prediction. They accurately read and record thermometer temperatures of various objects using the appropriate symbols.
220. Younger KS2 pupils, when also investigating the insulation properties of various materials, realise that the temperatures of each item they test should start the same and will decrease slower with the best insulators. They successfully create a spreadsheet on the computer to record their results before carrying out their experiment.
221. In both key stages pupils understand what makes a test fair and why only one variable should be changed. They use appropriate scientific language well and have a growing awareness of the application of science to everyday life. They present their results in a variety of meaningful ways.

### **Shortcomings**

222. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Information and communications technology**

**Key Stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**  
**Key Stage 2: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **Outstanding features**

223. Most pupils in KS2 display very good skills when using various functions to incorporate texts, graphics and pictures into their work. They recognise and analyse information accurately. They also confidently change text, font and colour using a wide range of art packages demonstrating independence in saving, editing and printing. The work they produce is of an outstanding quality.
224. An outstanding feature is the high level of KS2 pupils' confidence and understanding when creating multimedia presentations, for example on the Welsh seafarer Henry Morgan, using programs such as PowerPoint. Their learning is also considerably enhanced through their participation in video conferencing with their link school in China.

### **Good features**

225. In KS1 pupils develop a number of basic ICT skills well, such as executing commands using the mouse and operating a number of facilities on the tool bar. They can use the space bar and enter and shift keys accurately.

226. Pupils in KS1 also develop a range of keyboard skills and use different fonts to illustrate and enhance their writing. Older ones can cut and paste pictures and blend these into their texts. Many can predict outcomes using on-screen information.
227. KS1 pupils successfully use a word processing package. They are able to write newspaper stories using templates, associated with their literacy project on Jack and the Beanstalk.
228. In KS2 pupils effectively develop their word processing skills further by using programs such as Word to publish newspapers and posters. They also use spreadsheets and databases well to enter information, producing various types of graphs and accurately analysing their results. They complete effective work based on a modelling program.
229. KS2 pupils use the internet effectively for research purposes. They know how to access search engines successfully and how to gather data in order to produce, for example, an information sheet on Wales and the importance of water in Africa. In addition, they acquire information on mountains and rivers and historical evidence about the Tudors and they adapt this evidence to produce good creative art work and writing.
230. All pupils in KS2 store their work on their own personal files and have very good skills of saving and retrieving.

### **Shortcomings**

231. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Geography**

**Key Stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**  
**Key Stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

### **Good features**

232. Pupils in KS1 know and explain their routes to school well. Their awareness of their own locality and of places further afield is well developed. Using different kinds of maps, they name and locate human and physical features confidently within their own locality.
233. Pupils in KS1 study different habitats and reasons why living creatures select certain areas to build, for example on high ground or not too near rivers due to the risk of flooding.
234. In KS2 pupils research topics using atlases, reference books and ICT effectively. They investigate the human effects on the landscape and classify them correctly. They confidently identify the oceans and continents on a world map and use co-ordinates to plot locations accurately.

235. In younger KS2 a notable feature is the work on the Isle of Coll in Scotland where pupils study contrasting lifestyles and amenities, such as modes of transport.
236. In older KS2 pupils pose relevant questions, identify geographical patterns and offer competent explanations of geographical processes. They describe the physical features of rivers and show good understanding of the effects of water erosion and human activity. They produce quality work that demonstrates very good thinking skills, especially when commenting on the use of water.
237. KS2 pupils' knowledge of their locality and beyond is also well developed. Older ones use maps confidently and effectively plot local routes. In their enquiry work, using specific geographical language, they compare and contrast their own locality in Wales with several other places such as Burundi in Africa. They clearly identify geographical features and developments in both communities.
238. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their investigative, enquiry and communicative skills further through a series of fieldwork studies either in the locality or at a residential centre, where they experience orienteering and environmental activities.
239. Pupils in both key stages know that people can affect the environment positively and negatively, both locally and in the wider world. Their understanding of how to look after the natural world is good.

### **Shortcomings**

240. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Physical education**

**Key Stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

241. Three physical education lessons were observed, covering dance, gymnastics and games.

### **Good features**

242. In both key stages pupils are suitably attired for physical education lessons and they realise the importance of warming up and cooling down appropriately. They are aware of health, safety and fitness issues and the effect of these on their welfare. They participate enthusiastically and show interest and enjoyment in the activities they undertake.
243. In KS1 younger pupils move round the hall skilfully and show agility in different types of movement, using varying speeds, directions and levels. They move in time to a steady beat and respond appropriately to music. They work together well and are conscious of those younger than themselves when they travel quickly around the room. A few produce original ideas and actions. They use space effectively.

244. In younger KS2 pupils work effectively in planning out different movements in relation to the theme of journeys. They perform with good co-ordination and control and the majority produce creative and interesting responses. They demonstrate confidently in front of their peers and evaluate their own and others' achievements perceptively.
245. Older KS2 pupils participate enthusiastically in a simulated ice hockey lesson, linked to the theme of the Winter Olympics. They display well developed skills of using a hockey stick, based on their previous field hockey experiences. They demonstrate good control of the puck, which they pass and shoot accurately. Despite the crowded area, they play fairly and responsibly, keeping to the rules and having due regard to safety. They offer sensible suggestions for improvement in their skills and how to play the game better.
246. Pupils in Y3 and Y4 have swimming lessons in the Spring and Summer terms once a week and by the end of KS2 the school reports that nearly all can swim the expected 25 metres.

### **Shortcomings**

247. There are no important shortcomings.

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

248. The headteacher, staff and governors of Ponthir Church in Wales Primary School have considered the outcomes of the inspection and are delighted with the findings. They are pleased that the inspection team have identified many outstanding features throughout the school. They are particularly gratified with the Grade 1 for teaching and the recognition that considerable improvements have been made since the last Inspection.
249. The school is also pleased that the areas inspected, including the Foundation Phase, all have good features with no important shortcomings, which reinforces the statement that Ponthir is indeed an 'improving school'. All are delighted that the report comments on the outstanding behaviour of learners and that the school is a happy and caring community.
250. The headteacher, staff and governors wish to thank the inspection team for the efficient, thorough and professional way in which the Inspection was carried out. Their opinions are valued and the recommendations will be acted on in the school's current and future development plans.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ponthir Church in Wales Primary School
School type	Primary inc Foundation Phase
Age-range of pupils	4 to 11
Address of school	School Close, Ponthir, Torfaen
Postcode	NP18 1GA
Telephone number	01633 421651

Headteacher	Mrs. Ceris Spooner
Date of appointment	September 2008
Chair of governors / Appropriate authority	Mr. Ian Danaher
Registered inspector	Dr. P. David Ellis
Dates of inspection	25 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2010

## 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	-	17	8	11	10	12	8	9	75

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	4	1	4.3

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	17.5:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	N/A
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.4:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Spring 2009	-	94.7%	93.9%
Summer 2009	-	96.6%	95.0%
Autumn 2009	-	94.1%	94.6%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	8%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	Nil

### Appendix 3

<b>National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2009</b>	Number of pupils in Y2	9
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of key stage 1 was greater than four but fewer than 10, overall performance indicators only are included		

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	77.8%	In Wales	81.1%

This report uses data for 2009 for LEA and Wales comparative information

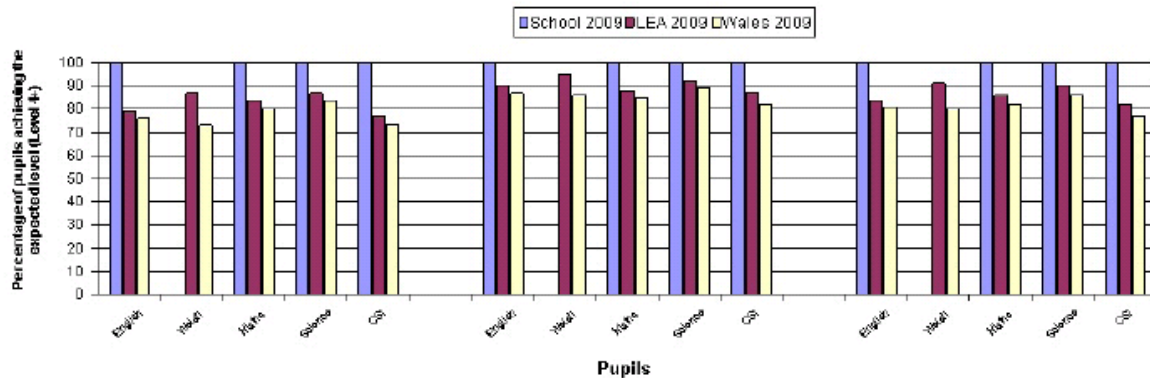
PONTHIR CHURCH IN WALES SCHOOL  
Torfaen

LEA/School no: 678/3332

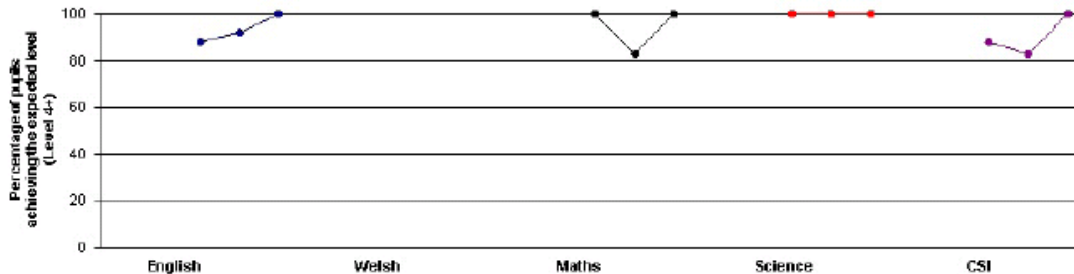
**School comparative information: National Curriculum Assessments 2009 with benchmarking**  
**Key Stage 2**

Percentage of boys, girls, and pupils achieving at least the expected level (Level 4+):

	Boys			Girls			Pupils		
	School 2009	LEA 2009	Wales 2009	School 2009	LEA 2009	Wales 2009	School 2009	LEA 2009	Wales 2009
English	100	79	76	100	90	87	100	84	81
Welsh	.	87	73	.	95	86	.	91	80
Maths	100	84	80	100	88	85	100	86	82
Science	100	87	84	100	92	89	100	90	86
CSI	100	77	73	100	87	82	100	82	77



**School Performance over time (2005 - 2009)**



**Contextual Information**

Benchmarked against schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

School's results shown in greyed boxes. Column headings refer to...

- Quartile 1 School is in the top 25 per cent. Free School Meal Group
- Quartile 2 School is in the top 50 per cent but not the top 25 per cent.
- Quartile 3 School is in the bottom 50 per cent but not the bottom 25 per cent. Less than 8 percent eligible for FSM
- Quartile 4 School is in the bottom 25 per cent.

	Quartile 4	Lower Quartile Boundary	Quartile 3	Median Boundary	Quartile 2	Upper Quartile Boundary	Quartile 1
English		84		90		100	
Welsh		75		88		100	
Maths		84		92		100	
Science		89		97		100	
CSI		80		88		96	100

**Notes:**

1. Figures for Welsh refer to attainment in Welsh first language only.
2. CSI = Core Subject Indicator. To achieve the CSI a pupil must achieve at least the expected level 4 in both Mathematics and Science and either English or Welsh first language.
3. If there were no pupils eligible for assessment in a subject for a particular year the graph will discontinue and show a gap for that year.

## Appendix 4

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

Three inspectors spent a total of six inspector days in the school. There was also a nominee on the team, who was the headteacher.

The inspection team visited:

- sixteen lessons or part-lessons;
- all three classes at least five times; and
- three acts of collective worship.

The inspection team held meetings with:

- staff, governors and parents before the inspection;
- managers, teachers and support, ancillary and administrative staff during the inspection;
- groups of learners during the inspection; and
- staff and governors after the inspection.

The inspection team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- thirty-two responses to the parents'/carers' questionnaire; 95% of answers were positive;
- a comprehensive range of documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection; and
- a variety of learners' current and past work.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Dr. P. David Ellis Registered Inspector	Context Summary Key Question 1 Key Question 3 Key Question 5 Key Question 6 Foundation Phase, science, physical education Appendices
Mr. Enir Morgan Team Inspector	Key Question 2 Key Question 4 Key Question 7 Welsh second language, ICT, geography
Mrs. Deirdre Emberson Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4 and 7
Mrs. Ceris Spooner Headteacher and nominee	Nominee

### Acknowledgement

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

### Contractor:

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