

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

**Pontlottyn Primary School  
Fochriw Road  
Pontlottyn  
Nr. Bargoed  
Caerphilly South Wales  
CF81 9QH**

**School Number: 676/2341**

**Date of Inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005**

**by**

**Robert Alun Isaac  
W170/15942**

**Date: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005**

**Under Estyn contract number: T/184/04P**

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

The inspection of Pontlloftyn Primary School took place between 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mr R A Isaac undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The national curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

## LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE REPORT IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

ACCAC	- Awdurdod Cymwysterau Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru (The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales)
AEN	- Additional Educational Needs
AT	- Attainment Target
CoP	- Code of Practice
EBP	- Education Business Partnership
EMAS	- Ethnic Minority Achievement Service
EWO	- Education Welfare Officer
GB	- Governing Body
ICT	- Information and Communications Technology
IEP	- Individual Education Plan
INSET	- In-service Education and Training
KS	- Key Stage
LEA	- Local Education Authority
NC	- National Curriculum
NNEB	- National Nurse Education Board
NQT	- Newly Qualified Teacher
PSE	- Personal and Social Education
PTA	- Parents and Teachers Association
RoA	- Record of Achievement
SDP	- School Development Plan
SEN	- Special Educational Needs
SENCo	- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SMT	- Senior Management Team
SNU	- Special Needs Unit
WAG	- Welsh Assembly Government
Y	- Year

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Pontlottyn Primary School is a community primary school with 153 pupils on roll aged 3 to 11. The school has a part time Nursery with 8 full time equivalent (fte) children on roll. The school was formed through the amalgamation of Pontlottyn Infant School and Pontlottyn Junior School in September 1998 and the current headteacher was appointed at that time, having previously led the Junior School. The school is located in the centre of the village of Pontlottyn, which is about five miles north of Bargoed in the Rhymney valley. The Welsh Assembly Government has designated the locality as a Community First area and most pupils come from the surrounding area. The school reports that the intake of pupils represents the full ability range, and contains sizeable groups of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Approximately 37per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, which is above the national average. No pupils speak English as an additional language and few have minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language, and none are formally cared for by the Local Authority. One pupil in KS2 was excluded in the last year. Around 25 per cent of pupils have special educational needs (SEN), and five pupils have formal statements of SEN. The entry of children into the nursery is controlled and administered by Caerphilly County Borough Council (the local education authority). Pontlottyn Junior School was last inspected in 1997 and Pontlottyn Infant School in 1998. Because Pontlottyn is now a new primary school, this inspection was designated as a full inspection by Estyn, and all subjects were inspected and all key questions investigated.

### The school's priorities and targets

2. The school's main aim is to provide the best possible education for all children and to enable them to achieve high standards in all aspects of their work.
3. Other aims include:
  - to help each child to listen, speak, read and write effectively in English and Welsh as a second language;
  - to help each child to know and understand a great deal about mathematics, science and technology;
  - to help children know and understand the world in which they live;
  - to provide all children with opportunities to enjoy and acquire skills in music, art and craft.
4. The school's major priorities and targets for 2004-2005 include:
  - to raise further, standards of achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science in KS1 and KS2;
  - to improve standards in problem solving in mathematics;

- to improve differentiation in mixed age classes;
- to develop the teaching of art and design and technology with specialist staff;
- to implement an effective Key Skills policy.

## Summary

5. Pontllytyn Primary School is an effective and caring school, which continues to raise the standards achieved by its pupils and the quality of education it provides. The school's leaders have made good progress in amalgamating the former infant and junior schools. Although more remains to be done to raise standards further, overall, its pupils get a good deal in their primary education. The inspection team agreed with most of the judgments made by the school about the standards pupils achieve and other areas of its work.

### Table of grades awarded

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

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

### Standards of achievement

7. Overall, pupils' standards of achievement in the areas of learning and subjects inspected are as follows:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Pupils' standards of achievement	5%	65%	30%	0%	0%

8. Pupils' standards of achievement are well above the Welsh Assembly Government's all-Wales targets for 95 per cent of standards to be satisfactory or better and 50 per cent to be good or better.

9. The overall quality of the educational provision for children aged under five is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children’s Learning. Baseline assessments indicate that, for many children, attainment on entry is below average.

<b>The six areas of learning</b>	<b>The Under-Fives</b>
Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 3
Personal and social development	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 3

10. In KS1 and KS2, the standards of achievement are as follows:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>KS1</b>	<b>KS2</b>
English	Grade 3	Grade 2
Mathematics	Grade 3	Grade 2
Science	Grade 3	Grade 2
Welsh second language	Grade 3	Grade 3
Design and technology	Grade 3	Grade 3
Information technology	Grade 2	Grade 2
History	Grade 2	Grade 2
Geography	Grade 2	Grade 2
Art	Grade 2	Grade 2
Music	Grade 2	Grade 1
Physical Education	Grade 2	Grade 2
Religious Education	Grade 2	Grade 2

11. Pupils’ standards and progress in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading writing, numeracy, information and communications technology, and bilingualism, across the curriculum, are satisfactory.
12. In the KS1 2004 NC teacher assessments, pupils’ achievements in attaining NC Level 2 or higher were below national results in English, mathematics and science. No pupils achieved the higher NC Level 3 in any of these core subjects and this was well below the national average.
13. The school’s 2004 assessment results in KS1 in English, mathematics and science, collectively, were below those of many similar schools in the LEA. The proportion of KS1 pupils who gained NC Level 2 in all three core subjects was below local and national averages.
14. In KS1, girls attained more highly than boys in all three core subjects; the gap between the attainments of girls and boys being larger than the national pattern. KS1 assessments have fluctuated widely in the last four years.
15. Overall, although there is room for improvement, the school’s KS1 results in 2004 have already improved when compared with those achieved in 2003.

16. Pupils make very good progress from the end of KS1 to the end of KS2. In the KS2 2004 NC test results, pupils' achievements in attaining NC Level 4 or higher were at least above national results in English, mathematics and science. The proportion who achieved the higher NC Level 5 was above national averages in English and mathematics, and very high in science.
17. In 2004, the results achieved by many boys in KS2 were broadly similar to those of girls in English, mathematics and science and this represents very good progress for those boys.
18. Results have improved steadily from 1996 to 2004 in all three core subjects. In 2004, the school's results in KS2 in English, mathematics and science were well above those of most other similar schools locally and nationally.
19. Most pupils, including those with SEN, and those in vulnerable circumstances, make good progress and usually perform well. Overall, they do well in acquiring new knowledge and the school helps them to develop their ideas and increase their understanding in many areas.
20. Most pupils make good progress towards fulfilling their potential. They are often well-motivated; they work productively and make effective use of their time. In KS1 and KS2, pupils' understanding of equal opportunities issues is developing well. They have respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within British society.
21. Overall, pupils have good personal, social and learning skills. Their creative and problem-solving skills are good in a range of subjects. Their spiritual development is good. Their knowledge of the Welsh dimension across the curriculum is satisfactory.
22. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes towards learning are consistently good. This contributes significantly to the standards they achieve and to the quality of life in the school.
23. Attendance rates are satisfactory, averaging 92 per cent for the past 12 months. The school is successful in improving attendance rates for pupils of compulsory school age and in reducing instances of unauthorised absence. Most pupils are punctual and keen to attend school.

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

24. Overall, the quality of teaching in the areas of learning and subjects inspected is as follows:

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
The quality of teaching	16%	63%	21%	0%	0%

25. The percentage of lessons which are good or better is high at 79 per cent, this being above the all-Wales average.

26. In the most effective lessons, teachers stimulate many pupils to achieve well. Where teaching is less effective it is usually because the separate parts of lessons are too long or too short or work is mismatched to pupils' capabilities. In some classes, homework is set inconsistently.
27. The overall quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good. Teachers maintain detailed records of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses.
28. The school responds well to pupils' learning needs. It provides good opportunities for pupils to learn well and experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Planning for the improvement of key skills across the curriculum is satisfactory but its implementation in classes is inconsistent. Pupils benefit from equal opportunities to take part in a good range of extra-curricular activities.
29. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Acts of collective worship make a good contribution to their understanding of moral issues and help them to respect truth and justice.
30. The provision for promoting bilingual skills and reflecting the languages and culture of Wales is satisfactory. Teachers give pupils some good opportunities to acquire an understanding of the traditions and history of Wales in English lessons. However, they have an insufficient, overall knowledge of Welsh culture in subjects such as history and geography.
31. The school keeps parents well informed about their children and its work. A useful home/school agreement is in place, which has readily been accepted by the majority of parents.
32. The quality of care, guidance and support is very good and a strength of the school. The provision for learners with additional needs is good.

### **Leadership and management**

33. The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The leadership shown by the headteacher, in particular, is of high quality. Her management is very purposeful and she gives a very clear sense of direction to the school's work, working closely with the deputy headteacher and senior teacher to achieve school improvement.
34. The overall quality of subject co-ordination is good: coordinators have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum. They share aims and values, which promote equality of opportunity for all. However, subject coordinators in most subjects facilitate and co-ordinate subject development rather than provide subject leadership.
35. The development of a democratically elected school council helps pupils to contribute to and influence directly the decisions that affect them. This council also helps pupils gain a much better understanding of citizenship.

36. Although improvements have been made recently, the outdoor accommodation for children aged under five remains inadequate.
37. The governing body is involved in school life on a number of levels. Governors have a caring and supportive attitude towards the school's teachers and pupils. The headteacher provides the governing body (GB) with regular, comprehensive reports on the curriculum and pupils' progress.
38. The GB has begun to take a strategic lead in setting the school's educational direction and in monitoring the quality of provision. Appropriate policies are in place to meet statutory requirements although some have not been ratified formally. The school prospectus and the annual report of the governors to parents are informative and well presented. The prospectus, however, does not comply fully with the statutory requirements and guidelines provided by the Welsh Assembly Government.
39. The school effectively fosters a culture of self-evaluation. The self-evaluation report and the school's self-evaluation processes are thorough, perceptive and clear-sighted. The school identifies strengths and areas where improvements are required honestly and fairly. The school's leaders have made good progress in amalgamating the two former schools.
40. The school has made good progress since its inception. The quality of teaching has significantly improved, standards are rising and the quality of leadership and management is good. Overall, the school gives good value for money.

## Recommendations

41. In order to improve the school further, the staff and governing body need to:
  - R1** raise standards further in:
    - English, mathematics, science and Welsh second language in KS1;
    - design and technology in KS1 and KS2;
    - the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum in KS1 and KS2;
  - R2** improve further the quality of teaching, where it is less than good;
  - R3** further enhance the roles of subject leaders and governors in the strategic development of the school;
  - R4** strengthen the links between homework and schoolwork;
  - R5** improve the outdoor accommodation for children aged under five;and
  - R6** ensure that the school prospectus fully meets the guidelines and requirements of the Welsh Assembly government.

42. 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

43. Overall, the findings of the inspection team match the judgment made by the school in the self-evaluation report. Overall standards of achievement in subjects and areas of learning inspected are:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Pupils' standards of achievement	5%	65%	30%	0%	0%

44. The overall quality of the educational provision for children aged under five is appropriate to their needs and they make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Baseline assessments indicate that, for many children, attainment on entry is below the county average.

The six areas of learning	The Under-Fives
Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 3
Personal and social development	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 3

45. In KS1 and KS2, the standards of achievement are as follows:

Subject	KS1	KS2
English	Grade 3	Grade 2
Mathematics	Grade 3	Grade 2
Science	Grade 3	Grade 2
Welsh second language	Grade 3	Grade 3
Design and technology	Grade 3	Grade 3
Information technology	Grade 2	Grade 2
History	Grade 2	Grade 2
Geography	Grade 2	Grade 2
Art	Grade 2	Grade 2
Music	Grade 2	Grade 1
Physical Education	Grade 2	Grade 2
Religious Education	Grade 2	Grade 2

46. Pupils' standards and progress in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and information and communications technology across the curriculum display good features which outweigh shortcomings. The standards

of children aged under five in key skills and bilingual competence generally have good features which outweigh shortcomings, and good features with no important shortcomings in numeracy.

47. KS1 and KS2 pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They speak confidently when answering questions and discussing their work. They retell stories well, using appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure. Pupils use reading skills satisfactorily to locate information, for example, from a screen. They write satisfactorily in different forms across the curriculum, making good use of terminology in most subjects. Written work in history in KS2 is good, with pupils summarising facts and maintaining interest in a variety of formats.
48. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in some subjects, for example, in geography in Year 6, but, in general, standards have good features which outweigh shortcomings.
49. Pupils have regular opportunities to use word processing, graphics and data handling and their skills are satisfactory. KS1 pupils work independently with equipment, and KS2 pupils use a range of graphs to display results in some subjects. Pupils have limited skills in obtaining information via the internet because there is no classroom software for electronic mail.
50. In general, standards in bilingual competence are satisfactory. Pupils do not use Welsh outside school but after spending time in the nursery and reception classes, and in Year 1, their oracy skills develop well. There is a lack of appropriate progress in oral, reading and writing skills at the upper end of KS1 and in KS2. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 use Welsh infrequently in situations outside their Welsh lessons.
51. In the KS1 2004 NC teacher assessments, pupils' achievements in attaining NC Level 2 or higher were below national results in English, mathematics and science. No pupils achieved the higher NC Level 3 in any of these core subjects and this was well below the national average. Girls attained more highly than boys in all three core subjects; the gap between the attainments of girls and boys being larger than the national pattern.
52. The school's 2004 assessment results in KS1 in English, mathematics and science, collectively, were below those of many similar schools in the LEA. The proportion of pupils who gained NC Level 2 in all three core subjects was below local and national averages. KS1 assessments have fluctuated widely in the last four years. The school's KS1 results in 2004 have improved when compared with those achieved in 2003, however, overall, there is room for further improvement.
53. Pupils make good progress from the end of KS1 to the end of KS2. In the KS2 2004 NC test results, pupils' achievements in attaining NC Level 4 or higher were at least above national results in English, mathematics and science.
54. The proportion who achieved the higher NC Level 5 was above national averages in English and mathematics and very high in science. KS2 results

have improved steadily from 1996 to 2004 in all three subjects. The school's results in KS2 in English, mathematics and science, collectively, in 2004 were well above those of most other similar schools locally and nationally.

55. The results achieved by many boys in KS2 were broadly similar to those of girls in English, mathematics and science and this represents very good progress for those boys.
56. Most pupils, including those with SEN, and those in vulnerable circumstances, make good progress and usually perform well. Overall, pupils do well in acquiring new knowledge, and the school helps them to develop their ideas and increase their understanding in many areas.
57. Pupils' overall understanding of equal opportunities issues is developing well. They have respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within British society. Visits in the local community and to places of interest linked to the workplace help pupils to broaden their understanding of their community and the world of work.
58. Overall, pupils have good personal, social and learning skills. Their creative and problem-solving skills are good in a range of subjects. Their knowledge of the Welsh dimension across the curriculum is satisfactory.
59. Overall, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good and the school functions well as a happy, supportive and orderly community. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards learning; they are interested in their work and are keen to do their best. Most listen carefully to their teachers, settle quickly to task and sustain concentration to the best of their abilities. Pupils take pride in their achievements and know their teachers appreciate their work.
60. A few KS1 pupils find it difficult to listen and concentrate for any length of time. Teachers work diligently with these pupils to promote understanding and acceptance of school rules and conventions, but the pace of lessons is sometimes impeded.
61. The behaviour and attitudes of KS2 pupils have outstanding features. Pupils develop into responsible and mature individuals who show respect and courtesy towards all who are involved in the school community. They display enthusiasm and commitment to their work.
62. The school has effective policies and procedures in place to promote good behaviour. Pupils have been involved in the formulation of their class rules, which are positive, relevant and reflect the school's caring ethos. It has successfully implemented a range of strategies to enhance pupils' self-esteem and confidence, especially through circle time, and this has contributed significantly to pupils' positive behaviour and the quality of school life. Pupils are courteous, polite and relate well to each other, to staff and to visitors.
63. Attendance rates are satisfactory, averaging 92 per cent for the past three terms. Most pupils are punctual and keen to attend school. Registration

sessions and lessons start promptly. The school complies with the attendance requirements set out in the National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99, *Pupil Support and Social Inclusion*.

64. Many pupils succeed regardless of their social, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds and make good progress in acquiring new skills and developing new ideas. They work independently on tasks and co-operate willingly when working in pairs and groups. They organise group activities fairly and help and support each other generously. In discussion, pupils realise the importance of education and how their own attitudes and commitment contribute to the quality of their learning.
65. Pupils make very good progress in their personal, spiritual, moral and social development. Very good relationships between staff and pupils underpin this. Pupils are confident in expressing their ideas and opinions because they know that teachers value and respect their contributions. They develop wholesome moral values and demonstrate honesty, fairness and tolerance in their work and play.
66. The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity for all, and pupils understand well that they should treat others equally, fairly and without discrimination. In discussion, older pupils display a growing respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within society.
67. The school is at the heart of the village community and greatly valued by those it serves. Staff, governors and pupils are highly committed to the local area and the school participates in many aspects of community life. The school makes exemplary use of the community as a learning resource and pupils regularly support many civic, cultural, and charitable projects.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

#### Good features

68. Overall, the findings of the inspection team match the judgment made by the school in its self-evaluation report. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was as follows:

The quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	16%	63%	21%	0%	0%

69. The percentage of lessons which are good or better is high at 79 per cent, this being above the Welsh average.
70. In the most effective teaching, teachers stimulate many pupils to achieve well. They provide opportunities for pupils to talk about concepts and to explain their thinking in reaching answers. They use open-ended questions and investigations to encourage independent thinking. Most lessons are well-paced, providing both challenge and reinforcement. Teachers manage pupils well and have a range of strategies to stimulate and motivate the more passive or slower learning individuals. Many lessons are lively and varied ensuring that pupils maintain interest throughout.
71. The use of interactive whiteboards, coupled with appropriate software, has a good impact on teaching and learning.
72. Teachers know their pupils well, value them as individuals and establish very good relationships with them. They display a very caring attitude to them and offer a firm, fair, consistent and effective approach to discipline. They make clear what they expect of pupils in terms of achievement and behaviour, using judicious and frequent praise to help build self esteem. Consequently, pupils feel happy and secure. They confirmed to inspectors, in discussion, how much they value the way teachers respect them.
73. The school has well qualified and experienced teachers, who demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use effectively their own specialist knowledge, coupled with the expertise of visiting specialists in literacy to enhance the quality of many lessons. Teachers have a good understanding of the requirements of Estyn and ACCAC for aspects which are cross-curricular, such as personal and social education (PSE).
74. Teachers plan effectively for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding across year groups and key stages. Much has been done to

establish good planning arrangements in all subjects in recent years and the senior management team has taken a key role in this.

75. Teachers' lesson plans identify clear objectives, summarise what pupils will do and identify what resources are needed. Lessons are usually well-organised and well-timed. The arrangements for withdrawal and for in-class support for pupils with SEN are effectively organised so that their lessons parallel the work done by their peers elsewhere. Teachers regularly evaluate how successful their lessons are to ensure that pupils learn effectively.
76. Teachers use a range of organisational strategies, providing pupils with opportunities to work as a whole class, in groups, in pairs or as individuals. They also use a mix of techniques and well-prepared resources to enliven their lessons. Teachers, for example, in the classes for children aged under five, work in good partnerships with classroom assistants, including those with NNEB accreditation, to provide interesting and informative sessions.
77. Teachers match work well to pupils' abilities. Lessons are planned well to take account of the needs and capabilities of individuals with average abilities or those who are less or more able. The headteacher and her colleagues take a very active interest in monitoring the progress of individuals. Teachers promote equality of opportunity well, ensuring that all pupils have equality of access to the whole curriculum.
78. The quality of assessment, record-keeping and reporting is good; including that for children aged under five. Assessments are accurate and consistent, and meet statutory requirements, including those for pupils with SEN, or those in vulnerable circumstances. Teachers make good use of the results of national tests to investigate and analyse standards and to set realistic targets. They keep detailed records of each pupil's progress, and make valuable use of assessment to improve planning.
79. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and, in general, offer appropriate guidance on how pupils can improve their work. Pupils, especially those in KS2, have a good understanding of their own progress, and play a practical part in evaluating their development, and setting their own targets, in some subjects. Teachers keep portfolios of levelled work in some curricular areas to ensure the moderation of assessment is consistent.
80. The annual reports to parents about their children are of good quality and conform to statutory requirements. They provide useful information and observations on individual pupil's progress. They indicate very clearly to parents what their children can do to improve further. Good links with parents of pupils with SEN, or those in vulnerable circumstances, ensure that they are well informed about their children's progress and how they can help them further.
81. Where teaching is less effective it is usually because the separate parts of lessons are too long or too short or work is mismatched to pupils' capabilities. In some classes, homework is set irregularly.

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

<b>Grade 2:</b> Good features and no important shortcomings
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82. The findings of the inspection team match the judgment made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
83. The school responds well to pupils' learning needs. The curriculum is broad and well-balanced, and meets the statutory requirements of the Welsh Assembly Government. It is well structured to achieve the school's aims.
84. Appropriate and detailed policies have been adopted for every subject in the NC and religious education. In general, teachers' schemes of work are good, and promote continuity and progression in learning. Appropriate references are made to *y cwricwlwm Cymreig* in subjects such as English and art.
85. Detailed programmes of study are used to guide teaching for all pupils, to take account of ability, gender and ethnic background. The school has good arrangements in place to support learning, including SEN withdrawal sessions, where the needs of pupils with SEN are met effectively. Teachers set appropriately differentiated tasks in classrooms to cater effectively for pupils of all abilities, including those who are more able.
86. Provision for children aged under five addresses the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning well and ensures that many make good progress. Provision for the under-fives meets the statutory requirements of the Welsh Assembly Government.
87. In a range of learning experiences, pupils are able satisfactorily to apply their basic and key skills. The SDP outlines plans for a whole school policy for the development of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum. Pupils use their creative skills well in dance lessons, and solve problems when interpreting historical documents in KS2. However, although some schemes of work and lesson plans identify opportunities to use key skills, they are not given sufficient emphasis in all lessons.
88. Pupils benefit from equal opportunities to participate in a wide range of interesting extra-curricular activities. Pupils' experiences are greatly enriched by extra-curricular learning in clubs for sport, mathematics and computing.
89. Pupils' learning is also enhanced through educational visits, and through talks on various curricular aspects by visitors to the school. Teachers make good use of the locality as a learning resource, for example, with visits to Drenwydd Museum, and in litter-picking exercises in the village. These activities contribute substantially to the good educational standards achieved.

90. Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, and satisfactory provision for their cultural development. The headteacher, staff and governors are successful in creating an ethos of mutual respect and shared responsibility.
91. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Collective worship, class prayers and religious education play an important part in pupils' growing spiritual awareness. Teachers do much to encourage pupils to reflect on their experiences and consider the values and beliefs of others.
92. The school's positive values are strongly reflected in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Pupils are sympathetic, respectful, kind and tolerant towards each other and show concern for those less fortunate than themselves. They give regular support to local and national charities in KS1 and KS2.
93. Pupils' relationships with the headteacher and staff are mutually respectful and friendly. Staff work diligently to ensure pupils have a clear understanding of right from wrong. Pupils have many opportunities to volunteer for and accept responsibilities. For example, they are encouraged to become actively involved in decision-making within the school. The school council is a good forum where pupils' concerns, ideas and opinions are freely aired. Younger pupils delight in acting as monitors within the classroom. The rich programme of extra-curricular activities and educational visits contribute well to pupils' social development.
94. The provision for pupils' cultural development is underdeveloped. *Y cwricwlwm Cymreig* is planned for in some subject areas and visits to places of interest such as the Roman remains at Caerleon help pupils develop an understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales. Whilst pupils have some opportunities to consider different faiths in religious education, their knowledge and understanding of the diversity and richness of other cultures are underdeveloped.
95. The school's partnerships with parents, the local community, the receiving secondary school and higher education institutions are effective and enrich its life and work. Many parents support the school well and express satisfaction with the standards their children attain within a caring and secure environment. Parents and friends make a valuable contribution to the life and work of the school. Many give freely of their time to support school activities, accompanying pupils on educational visits and in fund-raising for the school. A useful home/school agreement has been drawn up which has readily been accepted by most parents.
96. Communication with parents through regular newsletters, an informative annual report of the governing body, daily informal contact with staff and regular meetings with teachers to discuss children's work and progress is very effective. The school prospectus is a useful document, providing parents with valuable information but, in its present form, does not include all the statutory requirements of the Welsh Assembly government.

97. The school has developed good pastoral, administrative and curricular links with the receiving secondary school at Rhymney. Regular liaison meetings, an exchange of information, resources and ideas, joint in-service training, teacher exchanges and bridging units help to promote continuity of education between KS2 and KS3. Arrangements for transition are good at all levels and ensure pupils settle quickly into their new environments.
98. The school does not have any partnership arrangements with initial teacher training institutions but regularly provides training facilities for NNEB students and those undertaking vocational qualifications. It has established very good working partnerships with a range of relevant external agencies and readily implements new initiatives. For example, the close links with Groundwork Trust, the Shell-by Project, the Communities First Trust and a range of sporting agencies are of great benefit to pupils.
99. The school actively promotes pupils' understanding of the world of work and staff address the vocational aspect of the PSE programme well. Pupils visit a range of retail and commercial sites in Pontlottyn and the surrounding area and have seen for themselves the expansion of retail, commercial and recreational areas such as the development at Cardiff Bay.
100. Local employers are supportive of the school and sponsorship has been received from a number of local businesses. The school has good links with a number of relevant agencies, including the Education and Business Partnership (EBP). Staff have attended courses and visited industrial and commercial sites arranged by EBP. This has enhanced professional development and enriched curriculum provision.
101. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 memorise the words of Welsh songs and prayers well. Pupils study Welsh myths, discuss the work of Welsh artists and celebrate St David's Day well, but the opportunities to acquire an understanding of the traditions and culture of Wales are not defined in sufficient detail in teachers' planning, in order to promote bilingual skills comprehensively.
102. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of sustainable development and global citizenship. A number of subjects, especially PSE, religious education and geography, make a valuable contribution in this field. Pupils are well aware of environmental issues such as the disposal of litter and the problems of industrial pollution, and realise that they have a responsibility to improve and safeguard the environment.
103. Pupils take part in a range of competitions and workshops sponsored by industry and relevant agencies, including the Education Business Partnership (EBP). They have regular opportunities to contribute to decision-making through their involvement in the school council. Pupils exhibit their entrepreneurial and problem-solving skills in seeking ways to enhance their local community. For example, pupils are working closely with other agencies to develop a skate park in the village.

104. Pupils are aware of their own community and understand how they can contribute to its regeneration through citizenship, partnership with others and through care for the environment. Pupils have visited the National Assembly for Wales and written letters in support of community regeneration. They are beginning to understand the democratic process and the need to be enterprising and adaptable when undertaking projects.

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

<b>Grade 1:</b> Good with outstanding features
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105. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
106. The quality of care, support and guidance for all pupils is consistently good with outstanding features. All pupils are very well cared for, and very good support programmes are in place to ensure their specific needs are met sensitively. The school liaises closely with the LEA and draws on the expertise of a range of external support services when needed.
107. The school has developed very effective working partnerships with parents and carers, which contribute significantly to the quality of support and guidance offered to pupils. Parents and carers feel valued and are confident their views are valued by the school.
108. The induction procedures for new pupils or those transferring to secondary school are highly effective and ensure they settle quickly into their new environs. Children aged under five settle in well and are happy and secure in their work and play. The receiving comprehensive school reports that Y7 pupils settle in well and this is confirmed by the very positive letters sent to the primary school by past pupils who have moved on to secondary education.
109. The pastoral care of pupils is outstanding. The headteacher, teaching and support staff are very successful in creating a calm, caring and supportive environment where pupils feel secure and respected. Staff know pupils very well and effectively monitor their academic progress, their social development and their personal well-being. In discussion, pupils expressed high levels of satisfaction with the care and support offered to them by their teachers. They stated that the headteacher, teaching and support staff were kind, understanding and fair.
110. Pupils have access to a very effective personal and social education (PSE) programme, in line with ACCAC and Estyn recommendations, which contributes significantly to the quality of support and guidance offered to pupils.
111. The school monitors pupils' behaviour, attendance and punctuality very carefully. It has effective policies and procedures to promote good behaviour. Pupils, whose behaviour impedes their progress, are counselled, parents are involved and support is sought from external agencies and the LEA when necessary. These arrangements work very well.
112. Very effective procedures are in place to encourage good attendance and punctuality, to ensure pupils' absences are adequately explained and to follow up situations where necessary. The school makes good use of an efficient

computerized registration system, which provides staff with comprehensive information about attendance and enables the school to identify patterns of absence for individual pupils. Regular and effective liaison takes place with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

113. The school has a detailed policy and set of procedures to promote health and safety, including risk assessment, which are monitored and implemented consistently by the headteacher, staff and the governing body. The school is highly successful in encouraging pupils to recognise the benefits of a healthy diet.
114. The school has adopted the policy of the LEA to guide practice in child protection issues and has implemented the new All-Wales child protection procedures. All staff are aware of the procedures to be followed, and the school has very good working relationships with social services and other external welfare agencies.
115. Provision for the 41 pupils on the SEN register, including five pupils with formal statements of SEN, is good, and complements in full the SEN Code of Practice for Wales. Effective use is made of standardised tests for the early identification of needs. Pupils with SEN have full access to all NC subjects.
116. The SEN co-ordinator keeps an up-to-date register of pupils with SEN. The SEN co-ordinator draws up detailed individual education plans (IEPs), with realistic targets, in consultation with class teachers.
117. Pupils with SEN receive good support from class teachers, a specialist teacher, nursery nurses and support assistants, to achieve targets noted in their IEPs. Pupils make good progress relative to their ability, and their progress is carefully monitored.
118. Classroom teachers set appropriate differentiated tasks within lessons to meet the needs of individual pupils, including those who are more able. They make effective use of outside agencies, such as the educational psychology service, and the close links between the school and parents help promote the progress of pupils with SEN.
119. The school recognises the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and all pupils are treated equally, with dignity and respect. The school's policy for equal opportunities is implemented effectively and the priority given to the inclusion of all pupils is exemplary. The school promotes racial harmony successfully through aspects of the PSE programme and through effective policies for equal opportunities and racial equality.
120. The measures taken by the school to eliminate oppressive behaviour, including racial discrimination, bullying and other forms of harassment, are very effective. Such incidents are rare and the school functions well as a harmonious and supportive community where all pupils are valued equally.

## Leadership and management

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

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

121. Overall, the judgment of the inspection team does not match the school's judgment of Grade 1 made in the self-evaluation report. The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The leadership and management shown by the headteacher is a strength of the school but the roles of subject leaders and governors are generally underdeveloped.
122. The overall quality of leadership and management shown by the headteacher, in particular, is of high quality. Her management is very purposeful and she gives a very clear sense of direction to the school's work, working closely with the deputy headteacher and senior teacher to achieve school improvement.
123. The overall quality of subject co-ordination is good: coordinators have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum. They have re-written or created schemes of work in a planned cycle of improvement. They share aims and values, which promote equality of opportunity for all, and which are reflected well in the school's ethos. However, subject coordinators in most subjects facilitate and co-ordinate subject development rather than provide subject leadership.
124. The school takes good account of national priorities and the guidance provided by the Welsh Assembly Government and Estyn. The initiatives for literacy, numeracy, lifelong learning, family learning and education for sustainable development help pupils to achieve higher standards.
125. The development of a democratically-elected school council helps pupils to contribute to and influence directly the decisions that affect them. This council also helps pupils gain a much better understanding of citizenship. Many pupils are also involved in taking the initiative as representatives of their classes in a good range of other ways.
126. The school sets itself appropriate targets for development. Subject co-ordinators monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibility and share their findings with colleagues. The headteacher ensures that development planning includes the school's most important priorities, and the school's progress since its inception is a testament to her success.
127. An effective performance management system promotes teachers' continuous professional development well and helps to improve the quality of teaching and of the curriculum. Staff confirm that they are mentored well when first appointed, and induction systems are very good. At present the headteacher

and another teacher have been successful in obtaining higher education degrees in primary education at postgraduate level and a third has embarked upon this level of study.

128. The governing body is involved in school life on a number of levels. Governors show a caring and supportive attitude towards the school's teachers and pupils. Governors monitor subjects in which they have a particular interest, and some help pupils in practical lessons. The headteacher provides the governing body (GB) with regular, comprehensive reports on the curriculum and pupils' progress. The GB has begun to take a strategic lead in setting the school's educational direction and in monitoring the quality of provision. It has made difficult decisions in the amalgamation of the two former schools but has seen that these decisions were wise, and in the best interests of the pupils.
129. Governors meet regularly in KS1 and KS2 year and fulfil most regulatory and legal requirements. Appropriate policies are in place to meet statutory requirements although some have not been ratified formally. The school prospectus and the annual report of the governors to parents are informative and well-presented. The prospectus, however, does not comply fully with the statutory requirements and guidelines provided by the Welsh Assembly Government.

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

<b>Grade 2:</b> Good features and no important shortcomings
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130. Overall, the findings of the inspection team match the judgment made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
131. The headteacher, staff and governors are successfully developing a culture of self evaluation. The school's good procedures for self-evaluation are firmly based upon first hand evidence. The headteacher and her colleagues rigorously evaluate the school's progress in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. Those aspects that need improvement are addressed through a well focused and clear SDP.
132. The headteacher and her colleagues take good account of the views of parents and pupils through formal and informal channels. Additionally, pupils have an influential voice through a well-established school council. Governors and teachers value classroom assistants and nursery nurses highly. They are consulted and they make well-judged contributions to the self-evaluation process, informally and through staff meetings.
133. Governors have a good overview of all the school's processes and procedures. They work proactively with the headteacher and subject co-ordinators to evaluate teaching and learning. Individual governors work collaboratively with subject coordinators to ensure that the raising of standards remains at the heart of school improvement.
134. The headteacher and staff take good account of the assessments they make to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and to plan for improvement. Subject co-ordinators monitor standards through the examination of pupils' books, through teachers' planning and through classroom observations. They make good use of their evaluations to improve teaching and learning.
135. The headteacher and the GB have provided good resources to ensure that the targets set in the SDP are achieved.
136. School leaders and managers have set challenging but manageable targets for improvement. As a result, standards are rising, the curriculum has been improved and is being developed further, the overall quality of teaching is good and the overall quality of leadership and management is good. Pontlottyn Primary School has made good progress since its inception largely through honest and fair self-evaluation.

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

<b>Grade 2:</b> Good features and no important shortcomings
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137. Overall, the findings of the inspection team match the judgment made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
138. The overall quality of staffing is good. The school has sufficient teachers who are appropriately qualified to teach every aspect of the curriculum. The headteacher does not have responsibility for a class and supports and monitors learning around the school. A specialist teacher is employed part-time to teach art, and design and technology, to each class, releasing class teachers for planning and assessment. During the inspection, a supply teacher was employed in place of a teacher on sick leave.
139. Teachers and other staff have appropriate job descriptions. Responsibilities for subjects and aspects are shared fairly between staff, and the roles of subject co-ordinators are being developed. Teachers attend INSET courses to develop their knowledge and expertise in various subjects, and the school's commitment to professional development is closely related to its priorities in the SDP. Good INSET is having a beneficial impact upon teaching, for example, in English and Welsh second language.
140. Administrative staff help run the school effectively on a day-to-day basis. Teaching assistants and nursery nurses work effectively with teachers to plan, deliver and record the progress of pupils in their care. Pupils also benefit greatly from effective instrumental tuition by peripatetic tutors.
141. Overall, the school's accommodation is just adequate for the number of pupils on roll but there are a number of inadequacies in the buildings and grounds, for example, in the lack of a suitable, outdoor play area for children aged under five. The fabric and structure of the two external classrooms are sound internally and both classrooms are warm and welcoming. However, they have limited washroom facilities and pupils sometimes have to use the toilets in the main building. They also have to go to the main building to use the hall, IT suite and art room. The art room in the main building has no internal heating and is uncomfortably cold during winter months. The school has limited access for disabled pupils. The external, hard surfaced play area is on a considerable slope, which is challenging when pupils study physical education.
142. The headteacher and staff make every effort to provide a bright, stimulating environment for pupils. Displays of work throughout the school are good and effectively help celebrate pupils' achievements and stimulate learning. The building is clean and well maintained.
143. The school has made a good start on developing the school grounds and has provided quiet, seated areas and a viewing platform for pupils. Working with a

number of external agencies, it is developing an 'outdoor classroom' for the benefit of all pupils.

144. The quality of resources for learning is good, and teachers make good use of them in lessons. The school has adequate resources for creative and practical work, and staff make good use of the interactive whiteboards. However, the school does not have enough interactive whiteboards, and there is no facility for sending mail electronically. This means that no pupils can achieve all elements of NC Level 5 in information technology.
145. The school makes efficient use of the local environment and visits to places of educational interest to enrich pupils' experiences. This makes a significant contribution to raising standards.
146. The system for day-to-day financial management is clear and very efficient. The headteacher ensures that financial control is rigorous and the GB monitors expenditure efficiently. The SDP is used well as a tool for financial forecasting and planning, and the consistent monitoring of the quality of teaching is a vital means of ensuring value for money. Overall, the school gives good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### The Under fives

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

147. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Learning.
148. In nursery (3-4 year olds) and reception (4-5 year olds), children achieve good standards with no important shortcomings in personal and social skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. In nursery and reception, children's standards have good features which outweigh shortcomings in language, literacy and communication skills and in physical development.

**Standards in language, literacy and communication skills have good features which outweigh shortcomings in nursery and reception.**

#### Good features

149. The majority of nursery children listen well and respond enthusiastically when listening to each other's news. They retell stories in the correct order and speak satisfactorily about events in school and at home. They succeed in recognising a good number of letters, and they hold books correctly. A few attempt to write their names independently.
150. In the reception class, children listen well to each other and to adults. They ask sensible questions and use new vocabulary, for example, the names of picnic equipment, when talking about their work. They use puppets effectively to retell the story of Little Red Riding Hood. Many form letters correctly and a few build words successfully. The majority read familiar words well and most respond appropriately in Welsh to simple greetings and phrases.

#### Shortcomings

151. Although children under five make considerable progress in developing their language skills within a short space of time, most find it difficult to find the correct vocabulary and sentence structure when communicating with others.

**Standards in personal and social development have good features and no important shortcomings in nursery and reception.**

### **Good features**

152. Nursery children play well together. They respond effectively to the organisation of activities, and show considerable self-control. They are aware of the need for cleanliness, and show a good degree of independence.
153. Reception children form good relationships with other children and adults. They listen courteously and wait their turn patiently. They understand the importance of class rules and are willing to share resources. They have a good understanding of the need for kindness and respect towards living creatures. They benefit socially by being in the same class as Year 1 pupils.

### **Standards in mathematical development have good features and no important shortcomings in nursery and reception.**

#### **Good features**

154. Nursery children count to five easily, and some count to 10. They have a good understanding of small and large numbers. They sort objects according to colour and shape effectively, and complete patterns well. They recognise two-dimensional shapes well, and sing number rhymes and songs enthusiastically.
155. Reception children know numbers and their names in sequence, counting backwards and forwards up to 10 and beyond with confidence. They have a good understanding of differences between two-dimensional shapes. They know that they need money if they wish to buy objects in a shop, and sort coins appropriately into rows. They copy and continue sequential patterns effectively.

### **Standards in knowledge and understanding of the world have good features and no important shortcomings in nursery and reception.**

#### **Good features**

156. Nursery children recognise colours and have a good knowledge of wild animals, pets and farm animals. They know the names of baby animals and use appropriate terminology satisfactorily as they play roles in the 'pet shop'. They understand that some farm animals provide them with milk and wool. They know they live in Pontlottyn, and they have a good knowledge of Bible stories such as Noah's Ark. They sing Welsh songs about animals in a lively fashion.
157. Reception children have a satisfactory understanding of the concept of today and long ago. They realise the significance of birthdays and most know in which month their birthday falls. They have good knowledge and understanding of the work of the police, and understand well the difference between heavy and light objects. They display appropriate knowledge of their immediate environment when discussing their trip around the school.

**Standards in physical development have good features which outweigh shortcomings in nursery and reception.**

**Good features**

158. Nursery children use small equipment, such as pencils, blocks and scissors with good control. In physical education lessons, they show good knowledge of different parts of the body, and understand differences between running, walking, skipping and jumping. They know of some of the benefits of exercise and have a satisfactory awareness of safety in the hall.
159. In the reception class, children handle small equipment, such as gluing materials, jig-saws and writing equipment, safely and independently. They use scissors safely, showing good hand-eye co-ordination.

**Shortcomings**

160. On the playground, they display only satisfactory control when playing with bikes and scooters and do not always use the space effectively or safely.

**Standards in creative development have good features and no important shortcomings in nursery and reception.**

**Good features**

161. Nursery children work confidently with different media to create attractive pictures of animals, animal mobiles and collages of snowmen. They sing nursery songs, which reinforce language patterns, energetically, and use percussion instruments imaginatively to create animal sounds. They display good colour sense in their computer pictures of farm animals.
162. Reception children mix paint well and create lively work in a variety of formats, for example, in their self-portraits. Their printing work on fabric is good and they display good modelling skills in their models of food. They sing in tune, make interesting sounds with their hands, and beat rhythms accurately.

<b>English</b>
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- Key Stage 1**    **Grade 3:** Good features outweigh shortcomings  
**Key Stage 2**    **Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

**Good features**

163. Most pupils in KS1 listen attentively to their teacher's explanations and to other pupils' contributions. They speak in a variety of contexts with increasing confidence and are keen to answer teachers' questions and offer their own

comments and observations. They listen carefully to stories, can sequence events and retell stories using their own words.

164. Standards in KS1 have good features which outweigh shortcomings. Pupils display a good understanding of the characters, settings and structure of stories. Some can identify grammatical conventions, such as an exclamation mark or a question mark in a big book. Most Year 1 pupils recognise full stops and capital letters.
165. By the end of KS1, a few more able pupils read unfamiliar texts with confidence. Other readers have a positive attitude to reading and use a small range of reading strategies to help them understand the text.
166. Overall standards in spelling are good in KS1 and KS2. Many pupils have developed a good knowledge of the alphabetical order of letters.
167. Pupils make progress during KS1, from emergent to independent writing. By the end of KS1, a few write good stories using some of the key features of narrative. The handwriting of most is legible. They know the meaning of terms such as author, publisher and illustrator.
168. Year 2 pupils suggest some creative ideas for the ending to stories read aloud to the class. A few more able KS1 pupils write quickly and at some length. Their writing is well organised and they are starting to plan, draft and revise their work. Their writing is good when they write in response to stimuli that have inspired them.
169. Most pupils in KS2 listen respectfully to their teachers and to others. In lessons, they remain focused for a sustained time. When answering questions, most give answers, in writing and orally, in full sentences. They make good progress in speaking for different purposes and audiences, and collaborate effectively in discussions.
170. Pupils in KS2 read aloud well. Many make relatively good progress from a low initial level.
171. Pupils ask questions about the topics they investigate and suggest and use appropriate sources of information, when available. They skim and scan the pages to find the answers to their questions and use dictionaries and thesauruses to find the meaning of unfamiliar words. Most pupils have a good understanding of the basic skills in reading, are developing strategies to deal with unfamiliar words, and can discuss plot and character. Most can identify types of words such as nouns or verbs with close support.
172. Most KS2 pupils read and identify various descriptive figures of speech, such as similes and metaphors. They have good strategies to decode figures of speech or to use personification, and they use them aptly. By Year 6, pupils' skills in reading are good and they have a number of favourite authors. They are confident in discussing plot and character and have benefited from visits to the

school by local authors. A few more able readers read with expression, using different voices for different characters.

173. Pupils in KS2 understand some of the characteristics of myths and legends through exciting lessons about Blodeuwedd or Eurydice. They know the difference between myths and legends. As a result, when they write creatively, they recall important aspects, find appropriate adjectives and form complex sentences well.
174. Most pupils in KS2 show an awareness of different degrees of formality in writing. Their handwriting in Year 6 is usually neat and well formed. They understand terms such as the blurb, contents, index and glossary, and recognise that these are guides to finding information. Pupils in KS2 have some understanding of the differences between direct and indirect speech and rewrite stories as play scripts with stage directions and character studies.
175. Standards of writing in KS2 are good with no important shortcomings. Pupils' work shows some command of the characteristics of persuasive and informational writing. Many pupils understand how to use punctuation. Many develop a good vocabulary, knowing, for example, that the word *transformation* means *metamorphosis*.
176. Generally, the work of more able pupils is good with no important shortcomings, showing some use of adjectives, neat sentence construction and good punctuation.
177. When teachers use an interactive whiteboard with relevant text and images, it has a positive impact upon pupils' understanding. Pupils use computers skilfully for word-processing their stories and poems and combining suitable images and text.

### **Shortcomings**

178. A significant minority of KS1 pupils find it difficult to listen for a sustained period of time.
179. The school has assessed pupils' progress in KS1 in learning to read and its analysis shows that over 50 per cent have below average reading skills by the end of Year 2.
180. Some KS1 pupils have difficulty using the correct letter formation, forgetting, for example, to leave spaces between words.
181. In KS1 and KS2, pupils' use of literacy across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

## Mathematics

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

### Good features

182. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 use mathematical terms confidently and correctly.
183. In Year 1, pupils confidently recite different number stories and they have a good knowledge of number bonds. Their knowledge of place value within tens and units is good. Their understanding and use of odd and even numbers are good and they have a satisfactory understanding of number in the context of money.
184. By Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of place value in hundreds, tens and units. They use strategies, such as doubling and halving numbers, satisfactorily and recognise simple number patterns. Most pupils recognise and read numbers which are greater than 100.
185. KS1 pupils use simple fractions, such as halves and quarters, during practical activities and they use tables, pictograms and graphs satisfactorily to record information that they have collected. Their understanding of the geometric properties of 2D and 3D shapes is sound. They recognise shapes by their mathematical names and describe their main characteristics correctly. In Year 2, pupils use standard measures of length, mass and volume satisfactorily, and they have an appropriate understanding of time.
186. In KS2, pupils make good progress in understanding number. They have a good understanding of place value and handle large numbers confidently, both mentally and on paper. They recall number facts swiftly and their knowledge of multiplications is secure. Most pupils use all four operations to solve word problems, and explain their strategies clearly. They round off numbers correctly.
187. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 have a good understanding of decimals and fractions and more able pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 explain the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages confidently.
188. Across KS2, pupils' understanding of shape and space is good, and Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have a very good understanding of area and perimeters. They discover area confidently by the process of multiplication. Pupils in KS2 use standard metric units intelligently, and they discuss time and money effectively. Year 4 and Year 5 pupils have a good understanding of time through their practical work.

189. In KS2, pupils' knowledge of data handling is good, and they make good progress in collecting, presenting and interpreting information in a variety of graph formats.

### Shortcomings

190. In KS1, pupils collect, record and interpret data at too simple a level.

191. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 lack fluency in using ICT to extend their mathematical understanding.

192. Many pupils in Year 2 are slow in making arithmetical calculations verbally.

## Science

**Key Stage 1    Grade 3:** Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

### Good features

193. Younger KS1 pupils listen well to a range of sounds and identify the sounds made by farm animals correctly. They categorise sounds into those which are loud or quiet and know that sounds get louder the closer they get.

194. Older pupils in KS1 understand which foods constitute healthy eating and which should be eaten in moderation. They know that fruit and vegetables are beneficial to good health.

195. Throughout KS1, pupils develop an increasing vocabulary of scientific words so that by the end of Year 2 they use words such as *flexible* or *rigid*, *loud* or *quiet*, accurately when discussing their work.

196. Pupils in lower KS2 have a good knowledge of the dangers of electricity inside and outside the home. They understand that it is important for electrical plugs to be insulated, and they use words such as *crocodile clip* and *conductor* accurately. Pupils extend a circuit's length by adding metal utensils and insert a switch device to control the flow of electricity. They predict accurately the good conductivity of silver foil and prove their hypotheses in fair tests. Pupils experiment to find different ways to connect a series of loops in a circuit.

197. Pupils in KS2 know that many metallic substances act as good conductors and allow electricity to flow, whilst other non-metallic materials interrupt the flow and are therefore good insulators. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the pitfalls they encounter in setting up parallel and serial circuits. They use correct mathematical vocabulary such as parallelogram when designing a series of traffic lights in parallel circuits. They know the correct flow of lights in a traffic light sequence.

198. KS2 pupils plan and carry out their science investigations in logical sequences. They have a good understanding of fair testing and the necessity of changing only one variable at a time in their experiments. They understand that it is often necessary to repeat experiments to ensure validity in their test results. In their work on solubility, they test the absorption levels of different natural materials using equipment carefully in order to achieve reliable results. They know that water boils at 100° centigrade and freezes at 0° centigrade.
199. They are critical observers, retesting diligently and altering the design of their test when necessary. They are active problem solvers. Pupils make effective use of mathematical processes to aid the recording of results and enhance the quality of their investigations. They report their results and discuss the comparisons they make between their predictions and their findings with maturity.

### Shortcomings

200. Pupils have a limited understanding of how to use computers in their scientific work.

## Welsh second language

**Key Stage 1    Grade 3:** Good features outweigh shortcomings  
**Key Stage 2    Grade 3:** Good features outweigh shortcomings

### Good features

201. Pupils in KS1 listen well and speak confidently when using simple greetings and phrases. Year 1 pupils respond particularly well to questions, for example, about the weather, using familiar patterns and vocabulary. Their standards of oracy are good. In Year 1 and Year 2, pupils enunciate well and sing Welsh songs satisfactorily.
202. In lower KS2, pupils use Welsh satisfactorily as they answer questions, share experiences and convey information about parts of the body. In upper KS2, pupils enunciate accurately when they speak in small groups about parts of the body and clothes. They listen well to their teachers and fellow pupils, and follow directions carefully.
203. KS1 pupils read from a range of simple materials, such as sentence-building cards based on the weather, with increasing accuracy. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils complete comprehension exercises satisfactorily, and pupils read accurately from the computer screen as they use computer games to extend their vocabulary. Older pupils read effectively from the screen, and Year 4 and Year 5 pupils read in groups with a good measure of understanding.
204. In Year 1, pupils write simple sentences describing the weather, and the standard of their work is good. Year 2 pupils create satisfactory graphs showing eye colour in the class. In Year 3 and Year 4, pupils demonstrate adequate

knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure when they describe their parents.

205. Pupils in upper KS2 produce interesting written work based on reading books. They write in the present tense using suitable sentence patterns satisfactorily, such as ones expressing likes and dislikes. In their written dialogues, they use appropriate vocabulary and accurate spelling. A few pupils make good use of conjunctions to extend sentences. Year 6 pupils write simple poems of a good standard based on food.

### **Shortcomings**

206. Pupils in KS2 do not build sufficiently upon the oral, reading and writing skills and language patterns acquired in KS1.

## **Design and technology**

**Key Stage 1    Grade 3:** Good features outweigh shortcomings

**Key Stage 2    Grade 3:** Good features outweigh shortcomings

207. No lessons were taught during the inspection and judgment is based on scrutiny of previous work, displays and discussions with pupils. Design and technology has been taught as a specialist subject by one teacher from this term on and is developing from this point on that basis.

### **Good features**

208. In KS1, pupils work busily with a broad range of materials and tools to develop the skills and understanding associated with designing, making and evaluating. They also develop an understanding of the importance of health and safety issues when using scissors, staples and glue. Pupils make good quality working models from a range of materials, including clay sculptures and wheeled vehicles.
209. KS1 pupils design blocks of shapes with some flair using computer software.
210. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils have designed good working models of pop-up puppets using pulleys, cams and followers. Year 5 pupils have added designs and instructions to this work. They have also had experience of using legotechnic kits.
211. Pupils in upper KS2 have made good quality moving models of cars, with wooden axles and wheels. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have evaluated their products in writing.
212. Pupils generally show an appropriate awareness of health and safety issues, for example, by wearing goggles whilst using a saw.

## Shortcomings

213. In KS1, pupils do not extend their imaginative skills often enough or evaluate their work in enough depth or quantity.
214. In lower KS2, pupils' understanding of the design, manufacture and evaluation process is underdeveloped.
215. Pupils' skills in using computers for design and technology are underdeveloped.

## Information technology

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

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

### Good features

216. Pupils learn to use ICT to communicate and handle information, to some degree, in a range of subjects. They have, occasionally, used a digital camera well to record their work.
217. In KS1, pupils have developed a number of basic skills such as executing program commands, saving their work, using the mouse and pointer, and operating a number of facilities on the tool bar such as the airbrush, the spray and the pen. KS1 pupils use a mouse, icons and the screen pointer well. Many are confident in using a light-sensitive pen on an interactive whiteboard to build a pictogram of fruit.
218. KS1 pupils develop some skills in word processing; they create and print simple sentences. Pupils with SEN in mainstream classes make good progress in literacy and numeracy by using appropriate computer programs, with good support from assistants.
219. KS1 pupils create good digital imagery in the style of famous artists, using the straight line and fill tools adeptly.
220. Pupils in lower KS2 name a number of programmable household items. They are accurate in estimating the distance a robotic toy will travel in covering a pre-programmed set of units. The most successful pupils manage to program a robotic toy to travel and negotiate four out of five pathways continuously. The more able pupils program a screen turtle to draw rectangles and squares using different coloured pens.
221. KS2 pupils find appropriate files on a hard disk and open and use them. They use computers to support their research, for example, by using digital encyclopaedias on multimedia compact discs.

222. Pupils in KS2 explain the meaning and purpose of different file commands such as edit and print. Upper KS2 pupils have a good, working knowledge of useful websites and know how to use the browser bar.
223. Pupils have used computers creatively to combine text and images. They have also explored, collected and presented information using a computer.

### Shortcomings

224. Pupils' skills in using computers and interactive whiteboards across the curriculum are underdeveloped.

## History

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

### Good features

225. Pupils in KS1 have a good understanding of the concept of today and long ago. They make purposeful use of timelines to promote their understanding of the passage of time. They realise that they can learn much about life a long time ago from photographs, books and artefacts.
226. KS1 pupils refer to the differences between the lives of people today and the times of their grandparents, for example, when visiting the seaside. They speak with enthusiasm, displaying much knowledge, about the experiences of tourists at the seaside many years ago.
227. Pupils in KS1 have good knowledge about historical characters, such as Guy Fawkes, and famous Welsh people, such as Jemima Nicholas and Lady Llanover. When studying the life and work of a nurse during the Crimean War, pupils effectively compare the nursing care available then and now.
228. Year 2 pupils discuss the Great Fire of London, the Spanish Armada and the Coronation of Elizabeth II with enthusiasm, showing a good knowledge of these events.
229. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 use historical terminology well when discussing their work orally and in writing.
230. KS2 pupils have a good knowledge of the historical eras they have studied, and recall information from their current and previous work correctly. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 discuss the Romans with understanding and have gained good insights into life in Britain under Roman rule through visits to the Roman amphitheatre, Roman barracks and Legionary Museum at Caerleon.
231. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 have enriched their historical understanding through visits to places of interest, such as the Welsh Assembly, Drenwydd Museum,

The Museum of Welsh Life at St. Fagan's and Llancaiach Fawr Tudor manor house.

232. Pupils in KS2 have a very good knowledge and understanding of local history. They discuss the growth of Pontlloftyn confidently, making outstanding use of census figures and other documentation to study population figures and to find out who lived in particular streets in the village. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the growth and decline of the coalmining industry in the area, while Year 3 and Year 4 pupils have good knowledge of the medicinal plants used in the locality in previous times.
233. Year 4 and Year 5 pupils have a good recall of life in Victorian Britain, and compare the lives of rich and poor people well. They describe in discussion why families moved from the country to live in towns during the Industrial Revolution.
234. Pupils in Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 have a very good knowledge of World War II and its effects on the people of Pontlloftyn. They discuss the lives of evacuees from London and empathise well with children living under difficult conditions. They appreciate the value of primary historical sources, and they use questioning and note taking adroitly.

### Shortcomings

235. In KS1 and KS2, pupils show insufficient depth of knowledge about the history of Wales.
236. A minority of pupils in KS1 and KS2 show a lack of chronological awareness.

### Geography

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

237. No geography lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and staff.

### Good features

238. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 make satisfactory use of geographical vocabulary and terminology when discussing their work.
239. KS1 pupils contrast Pontlloftyn with a seaside area effectively, discussing confidently the similarities and differences between their village and Newton.
240. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 have a good knowledge of ways of travelling, and use their mapping skills effectively to plot their route from home to school. They make good use of simple grids and they recognise and interpret symbols on the map sensibly.

241. KS1 pupils mark correctly the location of their home village on a map of Wales, and they have a good knowledge of the location of the constituent countries of Great Britain. They describe in detail features observed on their journey from school to Llanelli, and discuss with enthusiasm Barnaby Bear's visit to Dublin.
242. In KS2, pupils' knowledge of points of the compass is good. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils use four figure references effectively to locate specific places on a map, while pupils at the upper end of the key stage use six figure references.
243. Pupils in KS2 have a good knowledge of the countries, continents and capital cities of the world. They have a great deal of knowledge about St. Lucia and discuss various aspects in depth. For example, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils have extensive knowledge about weather, transport and leisure facilities, and Year 5 compare land use in Wales and St. Lucia most effectively. Year 6 pupils create effective graphs to compare temperatures in Wales and the Caribbean.
244. In KS1 and KS2, pupils discuss the influence of man on the environment with interest, and are aware of the responsibility of individuals for the world about them. They have extended their understanding by visiting the recycling centre, participating in a litter-picking exercise in the community and being aware of possible sources of danger in the village.
245. Older pupils have a good understanding of the various features of Cardiff Bay, following a visit to the area. Their knowledge of the physical and human features of their locality is satisfactory.

### Shortcomings

246. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 do not make sufficient use of ICT to collect and record information in geographical investigations.
247. In KS1 and KS2 pupils' knowledge of the physical and human geography of Wales is limited.

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

### Good features

248. In KS1, pupils use pencils of varying widths and hardnesses to record marks on paper to make recognisable illustrations of faces.
249. KS1 pupils participate well in class discussions. They show a good sense of proportion in drawing faces, for example, in their positioning of the eyes. Their understanding of shapes such as a circle or a rectangle is good. Pupils are starting to use shading and smudging techniques.

250. Lower KS2 pupils have a good understanding of the works of Brueghel the Elder, talk knowledgeably about his paintings and understand the characteristics of his style. Pupils produce sketches of good quality in his style. Pupils, generally, have studied and produced work in the style of the Welsh artist Alfred Janes, and also of famous artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, John Constable, Claude Monet and Leonardo da Vinci.
251. Pupils work in a range of media, including pencils, chalks, pastels, oils and charcoal. They pay good attention to line, tone, and colour and show some understanding of perspective.
252. Pupils in KS2 know how to mix primary colours to make secondary colours and do so competently using an interactive whiteboard. Many pupils understand contrasting colours and use them to good effect when printing patterns. Pupils show a developing use of varied brush strokes. Pupils produce collages of good quality using a range of materials.
253. KS2 pupils evaluate their work as it progresses. They suggest positive ways of achieving better effects. Pupils are stimulated and enthusiastic about their artwork. They keep to task well and are proud to describe their artistic achievements at length. Pupils with SEN concentrate well when they paint.
254. KS2 pupils know about the styles and work of famous artists and use pastels or computers adeptly to draw in the styles of artists such as William Morris. They show some artistic flourishes, for example when using charcoal to depict the elliptical curve of a flowerpot, or when using pencils of differing thickness to portray the effect of light on leaves.

### Shortcomings

255. In KS1, pupils have limited experience and understanding of three-dimensional art.
256. In KS1, pupils' use of sketchbooks is underdeveloped in showing how their ideas are planned, sketched and developed, prior to the final outcome.

### Music

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

### Good and outstanding features

257. Pupils in KS1 learn new songs quickly and respond naturally to rhythm using various parts of their bodies. Most pupils successfully keep a steady beat in time to music and recognise when the tempo changes. Pupils clap in time to musical notation imaginatively. They understand the concept of graphical notation.

258. Younger pupils have a good knowledge of the names of musical instruments they use, such as the glockenspiel or the xylophone, and develop good understanding of the duration of musical sounds when playing musical instruments.
259. In lower KS2, pupils are accurate and confident in pronouncing words and phrases when singing in Welsh. They know that an ostinato is a repeated pattern.
260. In KS1 and KS2, the quality of singing is outstanding. Pupils sing joyfully in school assemblies with great confidence and enjoyment. They appraise their musical performances positively and make sensible and thoughtful suggestions to improve their presentations.
261. Older pupils in KS2 know that texture means layers of music, duration is the length, and pace refers to timing. Pupils show much empathy for music and can speak of how music evokes differing emotions.
262. A minority of pupils have tuition in a variety of stringed instruments and make good progress in learning how to play them.

### **Shortcomings**

263. Pupils in KS1 and lower KS2 are unfamiliar with a range of musical terminology.

## **Physical education**

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

### **Good features**

264. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 know of the beneficial effects of physical exercise on the body and they demonstrate perseverance and enthusiasm in physical education lessons.
265. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 dress appropriately to take part in a wide variety of physical activities in the school. These include gymnastics, dance, including Welsh folk-dance and line-dancing, athletics, swimming and a variety of games.
266. In dance, KS1 pupils perform energetically as they enact a toyshop scene. Most pupils show satisfactory awareness of the body and move with a fair measure of sensitivity, changing speed as they dance. They plan and evaluate their work satisfactorily.
267. In gymnastics, KS2 pupils transfer their weight onto various body parts effectively, and their sequences of movements show satisfactory flow and good awareness of parts of the body. When making symmetrical and asymmetrical

shapes on the floor and on the apparatus pupils evaluate and improve their work effectively.

268. In dance, KS2 pupils display good control and sensitivity as they move energetically to music. They link shapes well to form interesting and lively sequences, and plan and evaluate their work critically.
269. A large minority of boys and girls develop their ball handling skills well in Dragon Sport activities after school hours. During football sessions, pupils receive and move skilfully with the ball, exercising good control. In rugby and netball sessions standards of ball handling are very good, with pupils working in a disciplined fashion, displaying the ability to co-operate well with others, and using sensible tactics to outwit opponents. Pupils benefit from the expertise of volunteers who lead some of these sessions.
270. From the records seen, pupils make good progress in learning to swim.
271. A large minority of pupils develop their skills further by participating successfully in a range of area-wide competitions.

### Shortcomings

272. Pupils' standards in games and athletics are sometimes limited because of the lack of an on-site playing field and a suitable, even surface on the yard.

## Religious education

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

### Good features

273. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus of the LEA well. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 have a good knowledge of the Bible as a sacred book. They know a number of Bible stories and have a good recall of characters and events. For example, pupils in KS1 retell the story of Zaccheus enthusiastically. KS2 pupils explain well the significance of Bible stories, such as some of the miracles performed by Jesus. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils make good use of various literary forms, for example, newspaper reports, to retell religious stories in an interesting way.
274. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 have a good awareness of some of the major Christian festivals. They realise the significance of Christian baptism and confirmation and are familiar with the main features and the artefacts of the local church. Through relevant activities, and the life and work of the school, pupils from both key stages have a good understanding of the meaning of belonging to a Christian community.

275. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 have a satisfactory knowledge of the life and work of benefactors such as Dr Barnardo, and of Welsh saints such as St David and St. Dwynwen.
276. Pupils' understanding of qualities such as friendship, care for others and sharing is good in KS1 and KS2. These are discussed effectively in circle time and during PSE sessions, as well as during religious education lessons. Pupils in both key stages are strongly aware of the importance of protecting the environment and caring for the world and the creatures that inhabit it.
277. Pupils in KS1 have a satisfactory knowledge of Judaism. They discuss a number of features confidently, describing customs and festivals in detail. KS2 pupils are well aware of religions other than Christianity, and they have a good knowledge of the Muslim religion. They are familiar with the Qu'ran, visit a Cardiff mosque via a virtual reality programme on the computer, and discuss the Five Pillars of Islam knowledgeably. They compare prayers and praying customs of various religions effectively, and compose their own sensitive Christian prayers.

### **Shortcomings**

278. Pupils' understanding of other faiths is limited because they have insufficient opportunities to handle artefacts from other religions.

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

279. We are pleased that the report recognises that Pontlottyn Primary School is an effective and caring school. The inspectors' findings confirm that the school has made good progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning since its inception.
280. The inspection has highlighted the way the school responds well to pupil's learning needs and provides good opportunities for pupils to learn well and experience a broad and balanced curriculum. The inspection also identified that pupils have consistently good behaviour, which together with positive attitudes to learning, contribute significantly to their standards of achievement and to the quality of school life.
281. Inspectors have confirmed that the overall quality of teaching at Pontlottyn is good and the report acknowledges that one of the school's major strengths is the high quality of care, guidance and support. The inspection team has recognised the school as a happy, supportive and orderly community where pupils of all ages are courteous, polite and relate well to each other.
282. In order to improve the school further, an action plan will be put into place to address the recommendations in the report. Where it is possible to do so, staff and governors will start to address many of the recommendations before the end of the current school year. A copy of the school's action plan in response to the inspection recommendations will be sent to all parents.

## Appendix A

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Pontlottyn Primary School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Address of school	Fochriw Road Pontlottyn Bargoed
Post-code	CF81 9QH
Telephone number	01685 841438

Headteacher	Mrs Helen Leaman
Date of appointment	1 <sup>st</sup> September 1998
Chair of governors	Councillor Anwen Morgan
Reporting inspector	Mr Robert Alun Isaac
Dates of inspection	24 <sup>th</sup> to 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2005

## Appendix B

### School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	8	16	23	21	17	21	24	23	153

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	6	1	6.5

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	28.1:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	8:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	n/a
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	29
Teacher (fte): class ratio	0.9:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection				
Term	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School
Summer 2004	87	90	94	90
Spring 2004	91	95	93	93
Autumn 2003	90	92	94	92

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	37
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	1

## Appendix C

### National Curriculum Assessment Results

#### End of Key Stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2004			Number of pupils in Y2:					17
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	2+
English:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	12	18	71	0	71
		National	0	4	13	63	20	83
En: reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	18	6	71	6	77
		National	0	4	14	54	28	82
En: writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	12	18	71	0	71
		National	0	5	13	71	10	81
En: speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	29	71	0	71
		National	0	2	11	64	22	86
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	29	71	0	70
		National	0	2	9	61	26	87
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	18	82	0	76
		National	0	2	10	68	20	88

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

In the school	71	In Wales	80
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D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements  
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

## National Curriculum Assessment Results

### End of Key Stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2004							Number of pupils in Y6			23		
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	4+
English	Teacher assessment	School	4	0	0	0	0	4	4	52	35	87
		National	0	0	1	0	1	5	16	45	29	74
	Test/Task	School	5	0	0	0	0	4	5	55	36	91
		National	0	2	0	1	0	4	12	41	38	79
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	35	57	92
		National	0	0	0	0	1	4	19	46	27	73
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	36	59	95
		National	0	2	0	0	0	4	19	43	30	73
Science	Teacher assessment	School	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	78	96
		National	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	49	33	81
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	82	100
		National	0	3		0	0	1	10	47	38	88

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	89	In the school	87
In Wales	68	In Wales	70

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

## Appendix D

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

The inspection team of three inspectors, including the lay inspector, was at the school for a total of 9 inspector days. During this time, all teachers were visited and all classes were seen. A total of 44 sessions, part sessions or interactions were observed and a wide range of pupils' work was scrutinised. Twenty formal notes were taken about other aspects of school life. Inspectors talked to pupils about their work and life in the school and listened to them reading their own work and extracts from class reading books.

The full range of documentation made available by the school was scrutinised. Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors, teachers, classroom assistants, other staff and pupils. Pre- and post-inspection meetings were held with 11 governors and all staff, and nine parents attended a pre-inspection meeting with inspectors. Questionnaires completed by 60 parents were also analysed.

## Appendix E

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Mr Robert Alun Isaac	Registered Inspector	Leading on Key Question 1, Key Question 2, Key Question 5 and Key Question 6.	English Science Design Technology Information Technology Music Art
Mrs Zohrah Evans	Team Inspector	Leading on Key Question 3, Key Question 4 and Key Question 7. Contributing to Key Question 1 and Key Question 2.	Early Years Welsh 2 <sup>nd</sup> Language Mathematics History Geography Physical Education Religious Education
Mrs Janet Warr	Lay Inspector	Contributing to Key Question 1, Key Question 2, Key Question 3, Key Question 4, Key Question 5 and Key Question 7.	

**Contractor**           Atlantes Educational Services  
Technology House  
Lissadel Street  
Salford M6 6AP

### Acknowledgement

The visiting inspectors wish to thank the headteacher, the governors, all the staff and the pupils for the co-operation and courtesy they received during the inspection.

**Summary Report for Parents**

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

**Pontlottyn Primary School  
Fochriw Road  
Pontlottyn  
Nr. Bargoed  
Caerphilly South Wales  
CF81 9QH**

**School Number: 676/2341**

**Date of Inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005**

**by**

**Robert Alun Isaac  
W170/15942**

**Date: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005**

**Under Estyn contract number: T/184/04P**

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

The inspection of Pontlottyn Primary School took place between 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mr R A Isaac undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The national curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

## LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE REPORT IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

ACCAC	- Awdurdod Cymwysterau Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru (The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales)
AEN	- Additional Educational Needs
AT	- Attainment Target
CoP	- Code of Practice
EBP	- Education Business Partnership
EMAS	- Ethnic Minority Achievement Service
EWO	- Education Welfare Officer
GB	- Governing Body
ICT	- Information and Communications Technology
IEP	- Individual Education Plan
INSET	- In-service Education and Training
KS	- Key Stage
LEA	- Local Education Authority
NC	- National Curriculum
NNEB	- National Nurse Education Board
NQT	- Newly Qualified Teacher
PSE	- Personal and Social Education
PTA	- Parents and Teachers Association
RoA	- Record of Achievement
SDP	- School Development Plan
SEN	- Special Educational Needs
SENCo	- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SMT	- Senior Management Team
SNU	- Special Needs Unit
WAG	- Welsh Assembly Government
Y	- Year

## Context

### The nature of the provider

Pontlottyn Primary School is a community primary school with 153 pupils on roll aged 3 to 11. The school has a part time Nursery with 8 full time equivalent (fte) children on roll. The school was formed through the amalgamation of Pontlottyn Infant School and Pontlottyn Junior School in September 1998 and the current headteacher was appointed at that time, having previously led the Junior School. The school is located in the centre of the village of Pontlottyn, which is about five miles north of Bargoed in the Rhymney valley. The Welsh Assembly Government has designated the locality as a Community First area and most pupils come from the surrounding area. The school reports that the intake of pupils represents the full ability range, and contains sizeable groups of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Approximately 37per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, which is above the national average. No pupils speak English as an additional language and few have minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language, and none are formally cared for by the Local Authority. One pupil in KS2 was excluded in the last year. Around 25 per cent of pupils have special educational needs (SEN), and five pupils have formal statements of SEN. The entry of children into the nursery is controlled and administered by Caerphilly County Borough Council (the local education authority). Pontlottyn Junior School was last inspected in 1997 and Pontlottyn Infant School in 1998. Because Pontlottyn is now a new primary school, this inspection was designated as a full inspection by Estyn, and all subjects were inspected and all key questions investigated.

### The school's priorities and targets

The school's main aim is to provide the best possible education for all children and to enable them to achieve high standards in all aspects of their work.

Other aims include:

- to help each child to listen, speak, read and write effectively in English and Welsh as a second language;
- to help each child to know and understand a great deal about mathematics, science and technology;
- to help children know and understand the world in which they live;
- to provide all children with opportunities to enjoy and acquire skills in music, art and craft.

The school's major priorities and targets for 2004-2005 include:

- to raise further, standards of achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science in KS1 and KS2;
- to improve standards in problem solving in mathematics;
- to improve differentiation in mixed age classes;

- to develop the teaching of art and design and technology with specialist staff;
- to implement an effective Key Skills policy.

## Summary

Pontlottyn Primary School is an effective and caring school, which continues to raise the standards achieved by its pupils and the quality of education it provides. The school's leaders have made good progress in amalgamating the former infant and junior schools. Although more remains to be done to raise standards further, overall, its pupils get a good deal in their primary education. The inspection team agreed with most of the judgments made by the school about the standards pupils achieve and other areas of its work.

### Table of grades awarded

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

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

### Standards of achievement

Overall, pupils' standards of achievement in the areas of learning and subjects inspected are as follows:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Pupils' standards of achievement	5%	65%	30%	0%	0%

Pupils' standards of achievement are well above the Welsh Assembly Government's all-Wales targets for 95 per cent of standards to be satisfactory or better and 50 per cent to be good or better.

The overall quality of the educational provision for children aged under five is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children’s Learning. Baseline assessments indicate that, for many children, attainment on entry is below average.

<b>The six areas of learning</b>	<b>The Under-Fives</b>
Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 3
Personal and social development	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 3

In KS1 and KS2, the standards of achievement are as follows:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>KS1</b>	<b>KS2</b>
English	Grade 3	Grade 2
Mathematics	Grade 3	Grade 2
Science	Grade 3	Grade 2
Welsh second language	Grade 3	Grade 3
Design and technology	Grade 3	Grade 3
Information technology	Grade 2	Grade 2
History	Grade 2	Grade 2
Geography	Grade 2	Grade 2
Art	Grade 2	Grade 2
Music	Grade 2	Grade 1
Physical Education	Grade 2	Grade 2
Religious Education	Grade 2	Grade 2

Pupils’ standards and progress in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading writing, numeracy, information and communications technology, and bilingualism, across the curriculum, are satisfactory.

In the KS1 2004 NC teacher assessments, pupils’ achievements in attaining NC Level 2 or higher were below national results in English, mathematics and science. No pupils achieved the higher NC Level 3 in any of these core subjects and this was well below the national average.

The school’s 2004 assessment results in KS1 in English, mathematics and science, collectively, were below those of many similar schools in the LEA. The proportion of KS1 pupils who gained NC Level 2 in all three core subjects was below local and national averages.

In KS1, girls attained more highly than boys in all three core subjects; the gap between the attainments of girls and boys being larger than the national pattern. KS1 assessments have fluctuated widely in the last four years.

Overall, although there is room for improvement, the school’s KS1 results in 2004 have already improved when compared with those achieved in 2003.

Pupils make very good progress from the end of KS1 to the end of KS2. In the KS2 2004 NC test results, pupils' achievements in attaining NC Level 4 or higher were at least above national results in English, mathematics and science. The proportion who achieved the higher NC Level 5 was above national averages in English and mathematics, and very high in science.

In 2004, the results achieved by many boys in KS2 were broadly similar to those of girls in English, mathematics and science and this represents very good progress for those boys.

Results have improved steadily from 1996 to 2004 in all three core subjects. In 2004, the school's results in KS2 in English, mathematics and science were well above those of most other similar schools locally and nationally.

Most pupils, including those with SEN, and those in vulnerable circumstances, make good progress and usually perform well. Overall, they do well in acquiring new knowledge and the school helps them to develop their ideas and increase their understanding in many areas.

Most pupils make good progress towards fulfilling their potential. They are often well-motivated; they work productively and make effective use of their time. In KS1 and KS2, pupils' understanding of equal opportunities issues is developing well. They have respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within British society.

Overall, pupils have good personal, social and learning skills. Their creative and problem-solving skills are good in a range of subjects. Their spiritual development is good. Their knowledge of the Welsh dimension across the curriculum is satisfactory.

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes towards learning are consistently good. This contributes significantly to the standards they achieve and to the quality of life in the school.

Attendance rates are satisfactory, averaging 92 per cent for the past 12 months. The school is successful in improving attendance rates for pupils of compulsory school age and in reducing instances of unauthorised absence. Most pupils are punctual and keen to attend school.

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

Overall, the quality of teaching in the areas of learning and subjects inspected is as follows:

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
The quality of teaching	16%	63%	21%	0%	0%

The percentage of lessons which are good or better is high at 79 per cent, this being above the all-Wales average.

In the most effective lessons, teachers stimulate many pupils to achieve well. Where teaching is less effective it is usually because the separate parts of lessons are too long or too short or work is mismatched to pupils' capabilities. In some classes, homework is set inconsistently.

The overall quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good. Teachers maintain detailed records of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses.

The school responds well to pupils' learning needs. It provides good opportunities for pupils to learn well and experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Planning for the improvement of key skills across the curriculum is satisfactory but its implementation in classes is inconsistent. Pupils benefit from equal opportunities to take part in a good range of extra-curricular activities.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Acts of collective worship make a good contribution to their understanding of moral issues and help them to respect truth and justice.

The provision for promoting bilingual skills and reflecting the languages and culture of Wales is satisfactory. Teachers give pupils some good opportunities to acquire an understanding of the traditions and history of Wales in English lessons. However, they have an insufficient, overall knowledge of Welsh culture in subjects such as history and geography.

The school keeps parents well informed about their children and its work. A useful home/school agreement is in place, which has readily been accepted by the majority of parents.

The quality of care, guidance and support is very good and a strength of the school. The provision for learners with additional needs is good.

### **Leadership and management**

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The leadership shown by the headteacher, in particular, is of high quality. Her management is very purposeful and she gives a very clear sense of direction to the school's work, working closely with the deputy headteacher and senior teacher to achieve school improvement.

The overall quality of subject co-ordination is good: coordinators have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum. They share aims and values, which promote equality of opportunity for all. However, subject coordinators in most subjects facilitate and co-ordinate subject development rather than provide subject leadership.

The development of a democratically elected school council helps pupils to contribute to and influence directly the decisions that affect them. This council also helps pupils gain a much better understanding of citizenship.

Although improvements have been made recently, the outdoor accommodation for children aged under five remains inadequate.

The governing body is involved in school life on a number of levels. Governors have a caring and supportive attitude towards the school's teachers and pupils. The headteacher provides the governing body (GB) with regular, comprehensive reports on the curriculum and pupils' progress.

The GB has begun to take a strategic lead in setting the school's educational direction and in monitoring the quality of provision. Appropriate policies are in place to meet statutory requirements although some have not been ratified formally. The school prospectus and the annual report of the governors to parents are informative and well presented. The prospectus, however, does not comply fully with the statutory requirements and guidelines provided by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The school effectively fosters a culture of self-evaluation. The self-evaluation report and the school's self-evaluation processes are thorough, perceptive and clear-sighted. The school identifies strengths and areas where improvements are required honestly and fairly. The school's leaders have made good progress in amalgamating the two former schools.

The school has made good progress since its inception. The quality of teaching has significantly improved, standards are rising and the quality of leadership and management is good. Overall, the school gives good value for money.

## Recommendations

In order to improve the school further, the staff and governing body need to:

- R1** raise standards further in:
  - English, mathematics, science and Welsh second language in KS1;
  - design and technology in KS1 and KS2;
  - the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum in KS1 and KS2;
  
- R2** improve further the quality of teaching, where it is less than good;
  
- R3** further enhance the roles of subject leaders and governors in the strategic development of the school;
  
- R4** strengthen the links between homework and schoolwork;
  
- R5** improve the outdoor accommodation for children aged under five;
  
- and
  
- R6** ensure that the school prospectus fully meets the guidelines and requirements of the Welsh Assembly government.

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

### **Acknowledgement**

The visiting inspectors wish to thank the headteacher, the governors, all the staff and the pupils for the co-operation and courtesy they received during the inspection.