

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

**Pontymoile Primary School  
St Matthew's Road  
Cwmfields  
Pontypool  
Torfaen  
NP4 5J2**

**School Number: 678/2130**

**Date of Inspection:  
31<sup>st</sup> January – 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2005**

**by**

**Mr Michael T. Ridout  
W180/78730**

**Date: April 10<sup>th</sup> 2005**

**Under Estyn contract number: T/167/04/P**

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

The inspection of Pontymoile Primary School took place between 31<sup>st</sup> January and 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mr. Michael T. Ridout undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This summary report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

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

<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 of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who 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	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

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

The national curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## **Context**

### **The nature of the provider**

1. Pontymoile Primary is a community school, for boys and girls aged from four to eleven years. The school is organised in eight mainstream classes and two special needs resource base classes (SNRB), funded by the unitary authority, providing for 12 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. In total, there are 210 pupils on roll. The average class size in mainstream classes is 24.75. There are 10 full-time and two part-time teachers, including the headteacher, and eight full-time and two part-time learning support assistants (LSA).

2. The school is situated in Pontymoile, a suburb of the town of Pontytpool, including a mixture of privately owned and rented housing. The school confirms a number of families have disadvantaged circumstances. About 25% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is above national and local figures. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups. The school reports a number of pupils (7%) are from Traveller families. No pupils come from homes where Welsh is the first language. English is the first language of all pupils and the school teaches Welsh as a second language.

3. The school receives pupils from the full range of abilities. A range of assessment data confirms this. Around 29% of pupils have SEN. In mainstream classes, the figure is about 24%. This proportion is in line with that found in many similar schools. Nineteen pupils have statements of SEN.

4. The school was previously inspected in February 1999. Since that time a number of changes, both in organisation and of personnel, have impacted on the school, such as the closure of a nearby primary school resulting in an increase in the number of pupils. Furthermore, the trend in admissions of pupils during Key Stage 2 (KS2) means that only about two thirds of the pupils attend the school throughout the key stage.

### **The school's priorities and targets**

5. The work of the school is built around the statement, 'Working together; achieving together.' This is supported by four school aims that are published in the prospectus.

6. Appropriate targets are set for end of key stage attainment. The school sets out its priorities in a three-year strategic plan (SP). The main priorities highlighted in the school development plan (SDP) 2004-05 focuses upon raising standards of achievement and promoting effective teaching and learning. Whole school behaviour is targeted in the SP and is in its second year of development.

**Summary**

7. Taken overall, this school provides a broadly acceptable standard of education. There is strong commitment within the school to make and sustain improvements. Nonetheless, this school has serious weaknesses in important areas that make it difficult for the school to improve.

**Table of grades awarded**

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

**Standards**

8. In 42 lessons, or parts of lessons mainly in the subjects inspected, standards of achievement were judged:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	40%	38%	19%	0%

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

10. In the subjects inspected, standards were judged:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	Grade 3	Grade 3
Mathematics	Grade 3	Grade 3
Welsh second language	Grade 2	Grade 3
Design and technology	Grade 2	Grade 2
Geography	Grade 3	Grade 3
Music	Grade 3	Grade 3

11. In English and mathematics, pupils achieve sound standards, but progress is variable. In both key stages, pupils achieve well in design and technology. Standards in Welsh second language have improved since the last inspection, although shortcomings remain in KS2.

12. In both key stages, pupils' geographical knowledge and skills are not fully developed. The scrutiny of pupils' work in geography, history and religious education, shows a lack of depth in most of the topics studied.
13. In music, pupils achieve well and enjoy performing. Skills in music are improving well.
14. Slow learners, including those with SEN, make sound progress in relation to age and ability.
15. In the special needs resource base (SNRB), pupils in KS1 make good and sometimes very good progress. In KS2, good progress towards specific targets is not always maintained. This is an important shortcoming in provision.
16. In mainstream classes, pupils' acquisition and use of basic and key skills is widely variable. Progress in acquiring information and communications technology (ICT) skills is limited. This is an important shortcoming.
17. In KS1, teacher assessments for 2004 indicate standards close to national averages in English, mathematics and science. The proportion attaining expected levels in all three subjects was 86%. This result compares well with the figures for similar schools having between 25% and 28% of pupils entitled to free school meals.
18. In KS2, the National Curriculum (NC) test results for 2004 are well below national averages and those for similar schools in English and mathematics and just below average in science. The proportion of pupils attaining expected levels in the three core subjects (54%) is well below average.
19. Analysis of the KS2 results shows that girls generally outperform boys, except in science where boys perform well.
20. A gradual decline in standards is evident over the last three years in both key stages. This indicates important shortcomings.
21. Children in reception and pupils in Y1 consistently achieve good standards of behaviour and have positive attitudes. The school acknowledges that in most mainstream classes there are important shortcomings in some pupils' behaviour and attitudes.
22. The school has a clear policy to promote good behaviour. Behaviour in the playground has improved with the initiative of issuing yellow and red cards for unacceptable behaviour.
23. Many pupils are polite and courteous to staff and to visitors. This is particularly evident when speaking to pupils in small groups or as individuals.
24. There are important shortcomings in many pupils' ability to work independently and productively.
25. Overall attendance rates are low, averaging 87.7% over the three terms before the inspection. A significant number of pupils have attendance rates below 85%; this has an adverse impact on the standards they achieve.

## **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

26. The effectiveness of pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is variable. Many pupils are developing a secure set of personal and moral values, but a significant number find it difficult to take responsibility for their actions.
27. In discussion with older pupils, they display a growing respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within society.
28. Many pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of treating everyone equally. This is especially evident when pupils from mainstream classes and the SNRB join together for lessons.
29. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is well promoted throughout the school.

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

30. In 48 lessons, or parts of lessons mainly in the subjects inspected, teaching was judged:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
4%	42%	38%	16%	0%

31. Teachers and support staff have good working relationships with pupils. In the SNRB, the quality of relationships is very good and the teamwork in the KS1 class is outstanding.
32. Teachers are becoming skilled in using strategies such as assertive discipline. However, taken overall, the challenging behaviour of some pupils limits the impact of teaching.
33. The main emphasis in lesson planning is often the subject content. Important shortcomings in lessons often arise when the learning and resources are not adapted sufficiently to engage and challenge pupils of differing abilities. This often results in a slow pace of learning.
34. The organisation and use of lesson time are sometimes insufficiently rigorous to ensure the systematic development of pupils' work in the foundation subjects.
35. In a significant proportion of the lessons observed, good opportunities to develop basic and key skills were not developed fully.
36. Good use is made of test results to track pupils' progress and set individual and whole-school targets. In some instances, assessments against key learning objectives are used well. This good practice is not sufficiently disseminated.
37. In most subjects, effective, consistent and efficient systems for recording ongoing assessments have yet to be established. This is an important shortcoming.
38. A good range of learning experiences is provided for children under-five.

39. In the SNRB, the curriculum is adapted and planned very well to meet the needs of the pupils in KS1. In KS2, planning is less rigorous and has important shortcomings.
40. The curriculum in both key stages is sufficiently broad, but planning is insufficiently rigorous to ensure appropriate balance and progression in most foundation subjects. The systematic development of key skills is not sufficiently embedded into daily learning programmes. These are important shortcomings.
41. A good variety of extra-curricular activities broadens and enriches pupils' experiences.
42. The school is implementing positive initiatives such as assertive discipline and 'Circle time' to enhance pupils' personal development.
43. The school's partnerships with parents, other providers and interested parties are effective.
44. There are well considered arrangements for the care and supervision of all pupils. In the SNRB, the provision is excellent.
45. The school appropriately identifies individual learning needs. In mainstream classes, some individual education plans (IEPs) are not sufficiently differentiated to meet pupil's needs.
46. In the SNRB, the annual review objectives for pupils with statements in KS1 are well implemented. In KS2, the objectives are not effectively developed. This is an important shortcoming.
47. The school acknowledges the need to review the match of 'in class' and 'withdrawal' support given to the pupils' needs in mainstream classes.

### **Leadership and management**

48. In the absence of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the senior staff have made a major contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
49. The aims and values of the school are clearly reflected in its caring and supportive ethos.
50. The leadership has clearly identified key issues for the school, but over time insufficient support is given to securing the consistent impact of good initiatives and consequently important shortcomings remain.
51. The headteacher and deputy headteacher articulate clear educational vision and are skilled in elements of self-evaluation, but the means of achieving this vision is not securely embedded in the day-to-day work of the school. This is an important shortcoming.
52. Governors are appropriately involved in setting the school's direction. The three-year SDP provides a good basis to take the school forward. Expenditure is closely tailored to the school's needs and is within budget.

53. There are clear aspirations to establish a systematic approach to self-evaluation. However, there is little evidence of detailed action planning and few examples of gathering first hand evidence. This is an important shortcoming that limits the impact of subject co-ordinators

54. The provision of staff and accommodation is good and there is a basic sufficiency of learning resources. However, the library and ICT suite are not fully utilised.

### **School improvement**

55. There is clear evidence of recent improvement in pupils' behaviour around the school. However, the school provides very little evidence of improvement since the previous inspection.

## **Recommendations**

56. In order to improve provision further, the school needs to:

- raise standards further in subjects where shortcomings are identified and improve achievement in basic and key skills across the curriculum<sup>1</sup>;
- consistently implement the behaviour policy and develop pupils' capacity to work productively;
- develop lesson planning to more closely match the differing learning needs of pupils and build on day-to-day assessments effectively;
- review the organisation of class timetables to improve the pace of learning and ensure appropriate balance and progression in the foundation subjects;
- improve the focus and implementation of some pupils' IEPs and ensure the most effective match of learning support to the needs of pupils;
- secure the impact of improvement strategies and carefully plan, prioritise and focus initiatives highlighted in the SDP;
- establish effective self-evaluation procedures and link these closely to whole-school priorities;
- develop the role of subject leaders;
- raise overall attendance levels and implement effective strategies to promote and monitor good attendance and punctuality.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> The school development plan (2004-5) targets the development of a scheme of work for key skills and the improvement of teachers' skills in the use of ICT.

**Standards**

**Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?**

**Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings**

57. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question as Grade 2.

58. In 42 lessons or parts of lessons, mainly in the subjects inspected, standards of achievement were judged:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
3%	40%	38%	19%	0%

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

60. Children under five make good progress in acquiring basic and key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT).

61. In English and mathematics, pupils achieve sound standards overall, although progress is variable, particularly in KS2. The school sets individual targets and plans to involve pupils appropriately in reviewing progress. This practice is becoming established.

62. Across both key stages, pupils achieve well in design and technology. In KS1, standards are good in Welsh second language. Overall, standards in Welsh second language have improved since the last inspection, although some shortcomings remain in KS2.

63. In both key stages, some aspects of geographical knowledge and skills are not fully developed. The scrutiny of pupils' work in geography, in history and in religious education, shows a lack of depth in most of the topics studied. There is little evidence of pupils developing research and enquiry skills and using reading and writing skills to develop their learning. These shortcomings hamper progress for all.

64. In music, pupils achieve well in performing. Skills in music are improving well and pupils demonstrate confidence and enjoyment in musical activities across the school.

65. Slow learners, including those with SEN, make sound progress in relation to age and ability, particularly in basic skills. They benefit from the support and intervention strategies provided.

66. Pupils in the SNRB make good and sometimes very good progress in relation to their learning targets in KS1. In KS2, good progress towards specific targets is not always maintained. This is an important shortcoming.

67. In mainstream classes, good progress and achievement are particularly evident in lessons where pupils are enthused, have a clear understanding of the learning tasks and are well guided in building on what they already know. Pupils achieve less success

where the learning tasks lack sufficient interest, relevance and challenge. Where pupils lose interest and motivation, misbehaviour often further reduces the quality of learning.

68. The extent to which pupils acquire and use basic and key skills is widely variable in the school. Steady progress is evident in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills, but good opportunities to develop speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and research skills are only seldom fully exploited across subjects.

69. In general, pupils make only limited progress in acquiring basic information and communications technology (ICT) skills. This is an important shortcoming. In the lessons observed, there was very little evidence of the use of ICT to enhance learning or consolidate skills.

70. Pupils are appropriately supported in developing bi-lingual competence. They respond positively in both key stages although there is greater consistency in KS1.

71. Taken overall, pupils achieve similar levels of success in learning, whatever their background. By the end of Y6, pupils make sound progress towards fulfilling their potential and preparing for the next stage of education.

72. At the time of the previous inspection, the results of NC assessments in KS1 were broadly in line with national figures and in KS2 results were well above.

73. A gradual decline in standards is evident over the last three years in both key stages. This indicates important shortcomings. Performance figures include the results of pupils with SEN. For example, in KS2 the 2004 results for mainstream pupils are broadly average when compared with similar schools.

74. The most recent results for 2004 confirm that performance in KS1 is close to national figures in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools having between 25 and 28% of pupils entitled to free school meals, overall performance is just above average in English and just below in mathematics and science. The proportion attaining expected levels in all three subjects was 86%. This compares well with the figures for similar schools.

75. In KS2, the NC test results for 2004 are well below national averages and those for similar schools in English and mathematics and just below average in science. Performance in English is lower than in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils attaining expected levels in the three core subjects is well below average at 54%.

76. In 2004, results closely matched the school's end of KS1 targets. In KS2, results matched the target in mathematics, were below target in English and well above target in science. Analysis of the KS2 results shows that girls outperform boys in English and mathematics at Level 5 and in science boys outperform the girls overall. The school plans to boost attainment through its focus on effective teaching and learning strategies.

77. Children in the reception class and pupils in Y1 consistently achieve good standards of behaviour and have positive attitudes to learning; their personal and social skills are developing well. Taken overall, pupils' behaviour is generally better around the school than in many lessons. In most mainstream classes, there are important shortcomings in some pupils' attitudes to learning. This has a detrimental impact on the

interest the majority of pupils show in their work, their ability to sustain concentration and to work productively.

78. Many pupils demonstrate appropriate behaviour, have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and are polite and courteous to staff and to visitors. This is particularly evident when speaking to pupils in small groups or on an individual basis; they demonstrate self-discipline, show respect and are keen to participate in discussion.

79. The school acknowledges that a significant number of pupils have difficulty in accepting the school's rules and code of conduct and find it difficult to take responsibility for their actions. On occasions, when pupils line up, move about the school or are at play, there is an undercurrent of aggressive behaviour in their dealings with each other. Behaviour in the playground has improved recently with the initiative of issuing yellow and red cards for unacceptable behaviour. All instances are followed up carefully, and appropriate action is taken.

80. In many lessons throughout the school, there are shortcomings in pupils' attitudes towards learning and this has an adverse impact on the standards they achieve. A significant number of pupils find it difficult to listen and concentrate for any length of time. They become restless, lose interest and sometimes disturb the learning of others. This is especially true when the pace of lessons is too slow and when tasks lack challenge or are not suited to the pupils' needs. Teachers and support staff spend an undue amount of time dealing with these pupils to the detriment of those pupils who are trying to complete their work without interruption.

81. The school has an appropriate policy to promote good behaviour, and the behaviour co-ordinator works closely with class teachers to identify those pupils whose behaviour and attitudes are giving cause for concern. These pupils are counselled; parents are involved, sound individual behaviour plans are drawn up and support is sought from external agencies when necessary. Lack of support staff in classrooms and a lack of appropriate training for staff sometimes hinder the successful implementation of behaviour plans, and pupils' behaviour fails to improve significantly.

82. Attendance rates are unsatisfactory overall, averaging 87.7%. A proportion of the school's population is transient and this situation has an adverse impact on whole-school attendance rates. The school works closely with the education welfare officer (EWO) and has been successful in raising the attendance rates of Traveller children over the past two years. However, a significant number of pupils from all backgrounds have attendance rates below 85% and this has an adverse impact on the standards they achieve.

83. The governing body (GB) is rightly concerned about the number of parents who take their children on holiday during term time. This disrupts the continuity of pupils' formal education and depresses overall rates of attendance for the school. A minority of pupils consistently arrives late for the start of the school day; this disrupts the class and these pupils miss important parts of the first lesson of the day.

84. There are important shortcomings in pupils' ability to work independently. Many pupils find it difficult to stay on task when working individually or as part of a group. They seldom plan and organise their own work without direct supervision.

85. The school provides opportunities for pupils to take part in decision making and problem solving, for example through the school council and production of the school

newspaper. Some pupils are taking full advantage of these opportunities and their social and personal skills are enhanced.

86. The development of pupils' personal, moral and social development is variable. Many pupils are developing a secure set of personal and moral values and demonstrate honesty, fairness and tolerance in their work and play. A significant number of pupils find it difficult to take responsibility for their actions and their work and this inhibits their personal, social and moral development.

87. Many pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of treating everyone equally, fairly and without discrimination. This is especially evident when pupils from mainstream school and the SNRB join together for lessons. In discussion with older pupils, they display a growing respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within society.

88. The school successfully prepares pupils to play an active role within their local community, and good use is made of the locality as a learning resource. Educational visits and the expertise of members of the local community make a positive contribution to pupils' learning in many curriculum areas. Pupils regularly serve the community by supporting a range of cultural, environmental and charitable projects.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

89. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question as Grade 2.

90. In 48 lessons, or parts of lessons mainly in the subjects inspected, teaching was judged:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	42%	38%	16%	0%

91. Good features in teaching include detailed planning, clear explanations, challenging questioning, effective support and good use of resources to develop the learning. In effective lessons these characteristics are skilfully used to enable pupils to achieve well.

92. Teachers and support staff have good working relationships with pupils. This is most evident when they work with individuals or small groups. In the SNRB, the quality of relationships is very good and the teamwork in the KS1 class is an outstanding feature.

93. In most mainstream classes, a minority of pupils sometimes misbehave and challenge teachers. This significantly reduces the impact of teaching. Teachers are becoming skilled in using strategies such as assertive discipline, but the impact lacks consistency.

94. Teachers have appropriate knowledge of the curriculum they teach. Although teachers engage in training to update their skills in teaching ICT and using target setting for example, new approaches are not yet consistently implemented.

95. The school has adopted clear and easy to use planning frameworks and the content of lessons is guided by appropriate schemes of work. Most lessons have clear objectives and teachers are becoming skilled in explaining the purpose of the learning to pupils.

96. The main emphasis in planning is often the content of the scheme of work. Important shortcomings in lessons arise when the learning and resources are not adapted sufficiently to engage and challenge pupils of differing abilities.

97. Learning support assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning; this is most effective where they have a clear understanding of the learning and the focus for their support.

98. Teachers use an appropriate range of methods. In effective lessons, strengths include explanations and questioning to check pupils' understanding at the end of the lesson.

99. The organisation of timetables and the use of lesson time are insufficiently rigorous to ensure the regular and systematic development of pupils' work in information technology and most foundation subjects. The 'blocking' of long periods, such as an afternoon to one subject, sometimes results in a loss of pace in lessons. This is an important shortcoming.

100. There is sometimes insufficient planning to ensure pupils' experience a variety of learning styles during the day. For instance, during the inspection there were occasions where pupils were required to listen for too long or the tasks undertaken remained very similar over two or more lessons. Such factors reduce pupils' productivity and effort.

101. In a significant proportion of the lessons observed, good opportunities to develop basic and key skills were not developed fully. In some lessons in English, the use of worksheets and exercises restricts pupils' responses. This was also evident in the scrutiny of pupils' previous work in other subjects.

102. Teachers work hard to promote equality of opportunity in learning. The school recognises the need to boost achievement and the practice of providing differentiated activities, clearly focused teaching and appropriate support is being developed.

103. Where the use of incidental Welsh is consistent, pupils' bilingual skills are successfully enhanced outside lessons in Welsh. However, during the inspection, the use of incidental Welsh was inconsistent in KS2.

104. Day-to-day evaluations are seldom evident in teachers' lesson planning and records. Where good practice is established progress is assessed against key learning objectives and the 'next steps' are indicated. In some cases, achievement is affirmed through marking pupils' work. This good practice is not yet sufficiently disseminated.

105. A feature of around half the lessons observed was insufficient differentiation in both the learning and teaching and sometimes too little attention is given to checking what pupils have learned at the end of lessons. These are important shortcomings.

106. Teachers are beginning to set individual learning targets in English, but in both key stages the older pupils' understanding of the purpose of targets and their involvement in reviewing their progress is at a very early stage.

107. The school meets statutory requirements for assessment. Teacher assessment is well supported by the systematic use of standardised tests in English and mathematics and end-of-topic tests in science. Good use is made of this data to track pupils' progress and set individual and whole-school targets.

108. In most subjects, effective, consistent and efficient systems for recording ongoing assessments have yet to be established. It remains an aspiration to develop collections of assessed work to better inform teacher assessment. Even though the data from tests is analysed against criteria such as gender, the use of this information to focus teaching and resources within classes is not fully embedded in the school's practice.

109. Written reports to parents and carers inform them well about their child's progress in all subjects and clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement. The school shares assessment data with agencies involved in making provision for pupils with SEN.

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

<b>Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings</b>
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110. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question Grade 2.

111. The planned curriculum provides a sound basis to meet the needs of all pupils. A good range of learning experiences, across the six areas of learning, is provided for children under-five.

112. There are appropriate schemes of work to guide the provision of relevant learning experiences across both key stages. However, important shortcomings in implementing the programs of study in non-core subjects, especially information technology, geography and religious education mean pupils seldom achieve their full potential in mainstream classes.

113. In the SNRB, the curriculum is adapted and planned very well to meet the needs of the pupils in KS1. In KS2, planning is less rigorous in ensuring all pupils access a sufficient range of relevant and stimulating activities. This is an important shortcoming.

114. The curriculum in both key stages is sufficiently broad. Good emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy, but the planning, organisation and use of lesson time in most foundation subjects is insufficiently structured to ensure appropriate balance, continuity and progression.

115. The systematic development of key skills is not sufficiently embedded into daily learning programmes. Although the curriculum appropriately promotes the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and lesson planning in other subjects is beginning to identify opportunities to develop key skills, this provision is under-developed.

116. A good variety of activities, including occasional educational visits and a good range of extra-curricular clubs, broaden and enrich pupils' experiences. More than fifty pupils benefit from instrumental tuition and after-school clubs are well attended. There is appropriate provision for competitive sports.

117. Pupils perform concerts at local care homes, churches and for senior citizens at Christmas. They enthusiastically compete in the local schools' eisteddfod and successfully take part in the annual Folk Dance competition in Cwmbran.

118. The school is implementing positive initiatives such as assertive discipline, 'Circle time' and the development of 'thinking skills' to enhance pupils' personal development. However, these good programmes and systems are not consistently reflected in pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

119. Daily class or school assemblies, incorporating the required act of collective worship, offer suitable opportunities for guided reflection. There is strong emphasis on moral and social issues, but during the inspection less attention was given to promoting pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness.

120. A 'focal point' of the school week is the celebration assembly. Class points and house points are awarded for good behaviour and good work. Pupils demonstrate pleasure at the achievements of other pupils, such as in the playing of brass, string and woodwind instruments.

121. The school's partnerships with parents, other providers and interested parties are effective and continue to develop. Parents are kept informed about the life and work of the school by regular newsletters, opportunities to meet teachers to discuss their children's work and progress, by an informative annual report of the GB and a helpful prospectus. A useful home-school agreement has recently been drawn up, but has not yet been distributed to all parents.

122. The Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) organises many fund-raising and social events that enhance links with the local community and provide the school with a vital source of additional income. Funds raised are used purposefully to enhance learning resources and enrich the learning environment for all pupils. A number of parents help at the school on a regular basis.

123. Good pastoral, administrative and curricular links are developing with the main receiving secondary school. Regular liaison meetings, an exchange of information and ideas and shared in-service training help to promote continuity of education for pupils. The school has established partnerships with several institutes of higher education and regularly provides training facilities for student teachers and students undertaking work-experience placements.

124. Curricular provision meets statutory requirements. There is an appropriate programme in personal and social education but the school has not yet drawn together its

varied provision into a formalised scheme of work. There is appropriate provision for pupils with a statement requiring that they follow a modified curriculum.

125. The school promotes pupils' understanding of the world of work through visits to a range of retail, commercial and industrial sites in Pontypool and further afield. Pupils are gaining a good understanding of different working environments and the variety of work undertaken in their area. The school enjoys good working partnerships with the local police and fire services, and older pupils' understanding of the work of the emergency services has been enhanced by their involvement in the *Crucial Crew* programme.

126. Local employers are supportive of the school, but no teachers have yet undertaken a relevant industrial placement with a view to enhancing professional development and enriching curriculum provision for pupils.

127. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is well promoted throughout the school and the school has a strong Welsh ethos. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their knowledge of the culture and heritage of Wales and they are enthusiastic learners of the Welsh language. The language is particularly well promoted in Reception and KS1, but there is scope for greater consistency in the development of bilingual skills in KS2.

128. The school has a clear equal opportunities policy and works diligently to tackle social disadvantage and stereotyping. The school provides good support for 'Looked after' and Traveller children. In general, the school is socially inclusive. In some lessons, pupils' needs are not met when there is a lack of differentiation for different abilities and when the most-able pupils are insufficiently challenged.

129. Pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship is developing. Pupils understand the need to protect the environment and keep their school and community free from litter. They are involved in recycling projects and the school acts in a sustainable way, such as promoting energy and water conservation.

130. Pupils take part in a number of competitions sponsored by industry and relevant agencies and suitably develop their entrepreneurial skills as they design and make goods for sale at the summer and Christmas bazaars organised by the PTA.

131. Pupils are aware of their own community and are beginning to understand how they can contribute to its regeneration through citizenship, partnership with others and through care for the environment.

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

<b>Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings</b>
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132. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question Grade 2.

133. There are well considered arrangements for the care and supervision of all pupils and very well established and effective links with all support services. A range of professionals positively contributes to detailed support programmes for particular pupils and learning support assistants provide good quality guidance for pupils with SEN.

134. In the SNRB, learning support assistants are well allocated and provide excellent support and care for the pupils. In mainstream classes, learning support assistants often work effectively with particular pupils, but the current arrangements do not enable some pupils, who need consistent support, to gain full access to the curriculum.

135. Parents and carers are formally invited to 'open evenings' to discuss their children's progress once a term. Informal contacts are encouraged at other times through an 'open door' policy and the parents of pupils with individual education or behaviour plans are appropriately involved in reviewing their children's progress and setting new targets.

136. The school is developing the use of questionnaires to seek parental views. There are no formal arrangements to seek the views of employers in the community.

137. There are good and effective induction programmes for new pupils at the school and also for transfer between classes. These arrangements help pupils settle in quickly and understand their responsibilities and what is expected of them.

138. Individual teachers and learning support assistants often provide high quality personal support and guidance to pupils. Although the Personal and Social Education (PSE) scheme of work is not formalised there is evidence of effective work through regular 'circle time' sessions and the contribution of health and other professionals.

139. Although the school monitors pupils' attendance and punctuality the procedures are insufficiently rigorous. The school does not always respond quickly enough to absence and lateness. At present, parents are not contacted on the first day of absence if no explanation has been received, and lateness is not followed up systematically. The school has recently undertaken a parental survey about attendance and punctuality and has plans to implement new procedures. There is regular and effective liaison with the EWO. The majority of his time is taken up with attendance issues concerning Traveller children.

140. Registration is conducted efficiently and the school complies with attendance requirements set out in the National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99, *Pupil Support and Social Inclusion*.

141. The school has a clear policy and set of procedures to promote health and safety, including risk assessment, which are monitored and implemented by the headteacher, staff and the GB. The caretaker, who is a member of the GB, makes a very good contribution to the safety and security of the school. The school is successful in encouraging pupils to recognise the benefits of a healthy diet and lifestyle; fresh fruit is readily available at break-times.

142. During the inspection, a matter relating to pupils' health and safety was reported to the headteacher and the governors. It was agreed to amend procedures.

143. A clear policy is in place to deal with child protection issues and staff are aware of the procedures to be followed. The headteacher is the nominated person with responsibility for child protection issues and the school has implemented the new All Wales Child Protection Procedures. Good working partnerships have been developed with social services and other external welfare agencies.

144. The school appropriately identifies individual learning needs. A suitable list of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is maintained. Arrangements are in line with the SEN Code of Practice; at the time of inspection 32 pupils were supported at the school action stage and nine at school action plus. In addition 19 pupils had a statement of SEN.

145. Bi-annual review meetings for pupils with a statement and those with IEPs or IBPs take place. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) appropriately supports class teachers in setting up IEPs, but in mainstream classes some IEPs are not sufficiently differentiated to meet individual needs.

146. In the SNRB, the annual review objectives for pupils in KS1 are linked well to educational targets, IEP and INSTEP assessments. The IEPs are set out clearly and posted on the classroom wall to ensure they are readily available to all concerned. In KS2 the annual review objectives are not effectively linked to educational targets, IEP targets or INSTEP assessments and targets. This is an important shortcoming.

147. In both SNRB classes, teachers and learning support assistants regularly discuss pupils' progress and contribute to future planning.

148. Whole-school systems for 'in class' and 'withdrawal' support for pupils identified as needing extra support are not always closely enough matched to their needs. Some staff responsible for administering individual programmes confirm that they have had insufficient training and they do not know pupils well enough to successfully support them in accessing the curriculum.

149. Even though the school implements a well designed assertive discipline policy the impact lacks consistency. The behaviour of a significant minority of pupils, in almost every class, interferes with the effective learning of the majority of pupils. Although some pupils have IBPs that are reviewed regularly, these pupils are seldom consistently managed and supported. In particular, some staff lack sufficient expertise to effectively implement anger management programmes. These shortcomings hamper improvement.

150. The school supports and guides pupils appropriately in pastoral aspects and takes account of their differing backgrounds, but does not consistently ensure they are given adequate support to enable them to access the full curriculum. Positive steps are taken to promote gender equality in games for example, and to question stereotyping in pupils' choices.

151. The school makes good use of curricular opportunities to promote awareness of good race relations.

152. Despite the measures in place the behaviour of a significant number of pupils adversely affects classroom efficiency and hampers pupils learning.

153. The school caters well for the physical needs of disabled pupils and adults.

154. Pupils recognise and respect diversity; they are aware of the differing needs of their peers and respond positively towards them. This is especially evident when SNRB pupils work in a mainstream class. Pupils also offer support during the lunch hour.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

155. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question Grade 2.

156. Changes in the senior management of the school have posed particular challenges in ensuring continuity in educational direction and the strategic management of the school over a significant period. In recent months, in the absence of the headteacher, the newly appointed deputy headteacher together with the strong support of other senior staff, has made a major contribution in focusing the school's work.

157. The shared aims and values of the school are clearly reflected in its caring and supportive ethos. Good efforts have been made to address key priorities through implementing the important and far reaching initiatives identified in the SDP.

158. Staff and learning support assistants have responded positively to training opportunities and worked hard to assimilate 'new' teaching strategies and materials, as well as tackling fundamental issues linked to underachievement and disruptive behaviour.

159. In the short-term, through a successful collegiate approach, leadership has clearly identified the key challenges for the school. This is evident in the self-evaluation statement and from conversations with staff. There is awareness of the need to build on the SDP. However, matters such as budgetary and personnel issues have made it more difficult to establish a sufficiently clear and coherent understanding of whole-school improvement strategies among the staff.

160. The SDP and other documents prepared by senior staff provide a clear analysis of needs and opportunities. However, inspection finds that over time insufficient managerial guidance and support is given to securing the consistent impact of numerous good initiatives and as a consequence important shortcomings remain.

161. There is appropriate attention to national priorities and the school works in close partnership with its partner schools and institutions.

162. There are good systems to inform target setting. Appropriate information is disseminated to staff and governors. In recent times, the school is more successful in meeting annual targets in KS1 than in KS2.

163. Leadership has established appropriate systems to review and update staff's roles and responsibilities. However, performance management and on-going professional review have yet to become fully and effectively established.

164. Senior managers articulate a clear educational vision and are skilled in elements of self-evaluation. Documentation, including the self-evaluation statement, provides sound conceptual structures for the school's work but the means of achieving this vision is not

securely embedded in the day-to-day direction of the school's work. This is an important shortcoming.

165. Governors are suitably informed about the school's strategic direction by senior staff. They endorse the priorities in the SDP and are closely involved in key decisions. Governors ensure compliance with their statutory obligations.

166. The school has identified the need to develop the role of governors in monitoring the quality of provision. This aspect is currently under-developed.

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

<b>Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings</b>
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167. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question Grade 2.

168. Senior staff are well informed about the school's performance in national tests. The coordinators for the core subjects are appropriately involved in analysing this data. On the one hand this information is used well to set targets and track pupils' progress, but on the other hand, although data is disseminated, its use to shape provision is under-developed.

169. The lead role in monitoring lessons is taken by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. This monitoring has focused on the core subjects, but the links to whole-school initiatives are seldom sufficiently clear. There has been limited monitoring in other subjects, such as scrutinising pupils' books and resources.

170. The absence of a detailed and well understood programme to support subject leaders in monitoring and developing provision is an important shortcoming that hampers the effectiveness of their work across the school. The informal subject links established with several governors are a positive development.

171. Whole-school arrangements for self-evaluation are at an early stage. The staff informally identifies key priorities for the school and contributes to the SDP. The three-year SDP and the Literacy and Numeracy development plans provide a good basis to take the school forward.

172. There are clear aspirations to establish a systematic and co-ordinated approach to self-evaluation. However, there is little evidence of detailed action planning and few examples of gathering first hand evidence. This is an important shortcoming. Initiatives such as developing collections of exemplar work in English and mathematics have yet to be developed.

173. The school plans to develop ways of seeking out and taking account of the views of pupils and other interested parties. The School Council is being developed as a voice for pupils and parental questionnaires is planned.

174. Appropriate priorities are set in the SDP and relevant strategies have been put in place. However, the impact of these strategies in reducing challenging behaviour, improving teaching and learning and tackling underachievement is not sufficiently evident. These issues are important have a significant bearing on the overall quality of teaching and learning.

175. The strategic planning of expenditure is closely tailored to the school's needs. The allocation of support staff in the SNRB is excellent. The overall budgetary strategy takes account of an anticipated reduction in the number of pupils. Governors and senior managers have taken the necessary steps to ensure spending remains within budget.

176. The use of resources such as 'time' and learning support assistants is not always fully effective. This is an important shortcoming that limits the school's ability to achieve its major priorities.

177. There is clear evidence of recent improvement in pupils' behaviour around the school. However, the inspection team found a lack of consistency in implementing key initiatives. The school provides only limited evidence of improvement in the areas identified by the previous inspection.

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

<b>Grade3: good features outweigh shortcomings</b>
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178. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question Grade 2.

179. There is a sufficient number of qualified and experienced teachers who possess a good range of expertise to provide for the needs of pupils, including those with SEN and the under fives. Learning support assistants including those with NNEB qualifications work hard to support teachers and pupils. They provide sensitive support for Traveller children and for pupils with SEN, and are valued members of the school community.

180. The school secretary makes a valuable contribution to the smooth and efficient running of the administrative aspects of school life. The cook, mid-day supervisors and canteen staff work diligently to provide pupils with nutritious lunches and ensure they are well cared for during the lunch break.

181. There is a basic sufficiency of learning resources. There are good quantities of books to support the reading schemes, but the availability of a wider range of reading and reference materials and artefacts is more limited. Although the school has invested heavily in computer hardware, some deficiencies remain in the software available to teachers and pupils.

182. The accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on role and is clean and well maintained through the vigilance of the school caretaker and cleaner. Teachers make every effort to provide a bright, stimulating environment for pupils; the quality of display throughout the school is good and effectively celebrates pupils' achievements and stimulates learning. The outdoor, hard-surfaced playgrounds and the school field are on considerable slopes, which present challenges when undertaking physical education. The

school is developing the grounds and a quiet, seated area with a small garden is available for pupils in the infant playground. The SNRB is cut off from the main school buildings and this hinders full inclusion of all pupils.

183. The use made of all resources, including learning support assistants, is not always effective in meeting the needs of all pupils. The lack of learning support assistants in some classes inhibits pupils' ability to access the curriculum and make progress with their learning. This is particularly evident in the reception class. The school is currently reviewing the deployment and professional development of learning support assistants; at present learning support assistants do not have professional development interviews. The library and the computer suite are not fully and effectively utilised.

184. Appropriate performance management systems are in place, and teacher development is suitably linked to the needs of the school and to the personal development needs of teachers.

185. Spending decisions are linked to priorities identified in the SDP. The school has carried forward a considerable budget surplus but the GB has specific plans for this money; a significant fall in pupil numbers anticipated for the next academic year will result in a much-reduced budget and governors have set aside the surplus to compensate for this reduction.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### English

#### KS1 and KS2 - Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

##### Good and outstanding features

186. Pupils in both key stages demonstrate a good capacity to listen to each other and to adults as individuals and in small groups. In such contexts, they maintain attention and confidence when speaking. Pupils express themselves with increasing confidence in 'circle time' and are generally keen to express their views.

187. In upper KS2, pupils respond to teachers' questions with enthusiasm. They express themselves clearly, in group and class discussions and demonstrate an increasing vocabulary.

188. In KS1, pupils develop reading skills well. They possess a number of strategies to decode new words by looking at patterns or by using phonic skills. More-able pupils in Y2 confidently describe the story and characters in books they have read.

189. In KS2, many pupils read with growing confidence. The more-able pupils in Y5 and Y6 express views on choice of books and their favourite authors, recall the events of a story, and predict endings.

190. Pupils in KS1 make sound progress in developing writing skills. In Y1, pupils space their writing well, they form most letters correctly and use their knowledge of initial sounds and letter blends to spell words starting with 'wh' for example.

191. In Y2, pupils develop writing skills well, such as improving their use of 'position' words having studied a published text. They record personal experiences, compose stories and recount the tale of 'The Giant Jam Sandwich' for example. They use basic punctuation and sentence structure appropriately.

192. Across KS2, pupils write for different purposes and audiences, including letters, stories, dialogue and poems. In Y5 and Y6, pupils have written interesting first-hand accounts of their visit to Cardiff. In Y6, the more-able pupils have a secure understanding of spelling patterns and paragraphing. The content of their writing is generally coherent and interesting. Most pupils use punctuation correctly to promote good expression and intonation.

193. Younger pupils confidently identify adjectives and nouns in the text of a traditional tale and improve their use of descriptive language and older pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of the characterisation of myths and fables.

194. When preparing an argument for a debate, pupils in Y6 'scan' a text for information and confidently identify points in the argument presented. With guidance, they improve the content and presentation of their ideas for a structured argument.

195. In the best examples of written work, pupils' handwriting is neat, well formed and presented.

## Shortcomings

196. Pupils in KS1 do not build sufficiently on their reading skills while working independently. They seldom record their answers to questions in well-structured extended sentences.

197. Across both key stages, pupils do not spell a number of basic words accurately and make limited use of dictionaries and word banks to help improve their spelling.

198. Pupils do not make enough use of drafting and redrafting to improve their writing skills. They do not produce a sufficient variety of extended pieces of good quality imaginative and factual writing.

199. Pupils' library and research skills are insufficiently developed. In particular, the older, more-able pupils do not make sufficient use of the resources available, such as dictionaries, thesauri and class libraries.

## Mathematics

### KS1 and KS2 - Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

#### Good and outstanding features

200. In KS1, pupils count forwards and backwards with increasing confidence. More-able pupils count up to fifty and a few beyond.

201. They increasingly use a range of mathematical language in the correct context, including such terms as *more than*, *less than*, *one more* and *one less*.

202. Pupils name and recognise a range of two-dimensional shapes and older and more-able pupils can identify the properties of two-dimensional shapes and apply this knowledge to three-dimensional shapes in everyday situations such as identifying food containers and cardboard boxes.

203. Most pupils have a good grasp of time and its relevance to school life, for example break-time, lunch-time and home time. By the end of the key stage, pupils read analogue clock times with increasing accuracy.

204. Pupils suitably develop their understanding of length and capacity in practical situations. They demonstrate appropriate skills when using standard and non-standard units of measure and use comparative terms such as *longer* and *shorter*.

205. Across KS2, appropriate to age and ability, most pupils are increasingly able to explain their methods of work using appropriate mathematical language. They demonstrate developing fluency in number skills and achieve appropriate understanding of number calculations using the four rules.

206. Most pupils in upper KS2 recognise and define the properties of shapes such as equilateral triangles. They recognise and draw lines of symmetry on a variety of shapes and identify symmetrical patterns.

207. By the end of KS2, most pupils speak confidently and use a good range of mathematical terms to explain their calculations. They confidently use calculators to support their work and apply mathematical knowledge and skills to solve everyday problems. Pupils have good recall of units of measure and demonstrate a sound knowledge of place value when converting one unit of measure to another.

### **Shortcomings**

208. In KS1, pupils' knowledge of number bonds and patterns is insufficiently developed to enable them to make calculations mentally and apply mathematical knowledge to written calculations with confidence.

209. A significant minority of pupils in KS2 have limited recall of number tables and insecure knowledge of place value, and of number patterns and relationships. This limits their ability to select appropriate methods and formulate alternative strategies for making calculations.

## **Welsh as a second language**

**KS1 - Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings**

**KS2 - Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings**

### **Good and outstanding features**

210. In KS1, pupils use basic sentence patterns in Welsh to answer questions about the weather. They respond confidently to questions about their family and offer basic self-descriptions.

211. Pupils are beginning to speak with expression and intonation. They listen intently to instructions and respond appropriately.

212. In Y1 and Y2, pupils sing well-known Welsh songs with obvious enthusiasm and enjoyment. They are introduced to everyday Welsh vocabulary and read cues around the classroom. Pupils look at and read Welsh books for enjoyment and information with increasing confidence.

213. By Y2, pupils are beginning to write simple sentences in Welsh using a variety of forms. Their use of punctuation is increasingly accurate.

214. In KS2, pupils write using increasingly complex structures in Welsh such as 'ond' and 'ac' in sentences. The younger pupils in Y3 and Y4 show understanding of an increasing vocabulary and are emerging as confident speakers.

215. In some classes, pupils confidently write a simple dialogue and read it aloud in front of the whole class. Pupils particularly enjoy 'Hot Seat' activities where they improve their oracy skills through answering questions from fellow pupils.

### **Shortcomings**

216. There are no important shortcomings in KS1.

217. In KS2, pupils' skills in correct pronunciation and the use of a range of grammatical structures when speaking and writing is under-developed.

## **Design and technology**

### **KS1 and KS2 - Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Good and outstanding features**

218. Pupils in KS1 engage in a suitable range of practical activities. They draw their designs, select appropriate materials and increase their knowledge of the characteristics of rigid and flexible materials.

219. Pupils in Y2, use folding, layering and rolling techniques when testing the strength of paper, record their results in tabular form and draw conclusions from their observations.

220. In KS2, pupils plan and design their work well. They use a suitable range of materials and record their designs appropriately. Pupils make well-informed evaluations of their work.

221. Pupils in Y3 suitably investigate structures through using construction kits. They create a three-dimensional structure and convert it to a two dimensional form based on the design of a 'flat pack' in every day life. In Y4, pupils successfully join two pieces of material using a needle and thread when making a purse.

222. In upper KS2, pupils sensibly identify suitable materials to build bridges. They enthusiastically develop their designs, basing them on their knowledge of the Severn Bridge. More-able pupils understand the added strength of triangles and incorporate this shape in their designs.

223. Pupils carry out experiments to test their bridge designs, they discuss and analyse the results with increasing competence and are beginning to suggest improvements.

#### **Shortcomings**

224. Pupils' skills in using control technology are under-developed.

## **Geography**

### **KS1 and KS2 - Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings**

#### **Good and outstanding features**

225. In KS1, pupils develop basic map skills through drawing plans. They describe the position of features in the playground and in their home from their drawings.

226. The older pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of direction when using the points of the compass to direct 'Barnaby Bear' to sites in Pontymoile. They confidently identify familiar features in the locality from photographs.

227. In lower KS2, pupils distinguish between human and physical features in the landscape. Using aerial photographs and maps they trace the route they have walked into Pontypool and begin to use compass directions and grid references. The more-able pupils use the key to interpret symbols on a map and begin to give directions using geographical terms appropriately.

228. In upper KS2, pupils have good recall of the features of Cardiff Bay. They discuss similarities and differences between Pontypool and Cardiff Bay and pupils in Y6 demonstrate high levels of confidence when presenting well researched 'TV reports' about tourism, land use and buildings.

229. Pupils confidently use four figure map references and know how to use the key on an ordnance survey map. The more-able pupils make good progress in understanding six figure grid references.

### **Shortcomings**

230. In both key stages, pupils' geographical knowledge and enquiry skills are under-developed. Pupils rarely gather evidence from a sufficient variety of sources in order to draw conclusions and answer questions using appropriate geographical terms.

231. In most KS2 classes, pupils' work demonstrates limited use of key geographical terms to describe contrasting environments, including human and physical features. Pupils seldom record geographical information using a sufficient variety of writing, graphical and ICT skills.

## **Music**

### **KS1 and KS2 - Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings**

#### **Good and outstanding features**

232. The KS1 pupils know a wide range of songs in English and Welsh. They perform actions in time with the music, sing in tune with enthusiasm and take turns to play untuned percussion instruments to accompany the singing.

233. In Y1, pupils select appropriate untuned instruments to represent four different sounds of winter. They perform the song 'Sounds of Winter' and successfully create a sound sequence with instruments. Pupils follow a graphic score and take turns to conduct.

234. In Y2, pupils clap a series of rhythms, keep a steady beat and learn the ostinato patterns of a Jamaican song.

235. In lower KS2, pupils explain that an ostinato is a repeating musical pattern. Most pupils clap the rhythm as they sing and make good progress in performing a four beat ostinato in groups and develop this as a round.

236. In upper KS2, some pupils understand musical terms such as unison, pitch and dynamics. They successfully perform increasingly complex clapped rhythms based on

legs 'crossed' or 'uncrossed'. Pupils make good progress in performing two-part, three-part and four-part rounds based on the 'Drum Kit' song.

237. A good number of pupils benefit from tuition in playing brass, woodwind and string instruments. This has a positive impact on the standards they achieve.

### **Shortcomings**

238. In both key stages, pupils have a limited knowledge of musical styles and composers. The majority have under-developed skills in composing and appraising their own and recorded music.

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

239. The head teacher, staff and governing body have carefully considered the outcomes of the report and comment as follows:

240. The past three years have been particularly challenging times at Pontymoile Primary School – the increase in the number of pupils on roll following the closure of a nearby primary school and changes in staffing, particularly in senior management positions, are significant factors.

241. We are pleased that the inspectors noted in the report that the shared aims and values of the school are clearly reflected in its caring and supportive ethos; that good efforts have been made to address key priorities through implementing the important and far reaching initiatives identified in the SDP. The report acknowledges that staff and learning support assistants have responded positively to training opportunities and work hard to assimilate new teaching strategies and materials, as well as tackling fundamental issues linked to underachievement and disruptive behaviour. Also teachers work hard to promote equality of opportunity in learning; the school recognises the need to boost achievement and the practice of providing differentiated activities, clearly focused teaching and appropriate support is being developed.

242. Many of the recommendations highlighted in the report reflect the priorities of the school, as identified in the three-year strategic plan, such as:

- Embedding key skills across the curriculum
- Improving pupil behaviour at playtimes and lunch times
- Developing effective lesson structure
- Reviewing the curriculum to improve pupil motivation in lessons
- Developing the role of the subject leader
- Implementing an effective system of self-evaluation.

243. The Inspection report acknowledges the ability of the staff to move the school forward. All members of staff are hard working and committed to improving the quality of education for all our pupils and will use the report as a basis for raising standards. The headteacher, staff and governing body will ensure that the recommendations outlined in the report are addressed thoroughly when drawing up the post inspection action plan and through its implementation during the current and following academic years.

244. A summary of the school's action plan will be sent to all parents and carers, and the Governors' Annual Report to Parents will include an evaluation of progress made in all aspects of the plan.

## Appendix A

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Pontymoile Primary School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	4 – 11 years
Address of school	St Matthew's Road Cwmfields Pontypool Torfaen
Post-code	NP4 5JZ
Telephone number	01495 762191

Headteacher	Mrs. S. Bevan
Date of appointment	07/11/03
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr. D. Coslett
Registered inspector	Mr. M. T. Ridout
Dates of inspection	31/01/05 – 03/02/05

## Appendix B

### School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group								
Year group	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	24	21	32	28	31	34	40	210

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	10	2	11

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	22 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	-
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	2 : 1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	24.75
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.1 : 1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection				
Term	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School
Spring 2004	88.6	93.5	77.2	86.4
Summer 2004	85.3	95.3	75.5	85.3
Autumn 2004	91.8	91.6	91.2	91.5

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	25
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	4

## Appendix C

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 1<sup>2</sup>:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1: Results in the school 2004 and nationally 2003			Number of pupils in Y2: 29						
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	A	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	7	7	79	7	0
		National	0	0	4	14	63	20	0
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	7	7	48	38	0
		National	0	0	4	14	55	27	0
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	10	3	83	3	0
		National	0	0	5	14	69	11	0
EN: Oracy	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	7	7	79	7	0
		National	0	0	3	12	63	22	0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	7	7	52	34	0
		National	0	0	2	11	63	24	0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	7	7	62	24	0
		National	0	0	2	10	66	22	0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school:	86%	In Wales:	79%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements  
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence  
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

<sup>2</sup> The performance data in this table includes the results of a small number of pupils with SEN.

## National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 2<sup>3</sup>:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2: Results in the school 2004 and nationally 2003								Number of pupils in Y6: 29				
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5
<b>English</b>	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	31	34	21
		National	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	16	45	31
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	24	41	17
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	5	12	38	40
<b>Mathematics</b>	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	24	45	24
		National	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	19	46	30
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	21	38	31
		National	0	2	1	0	0	0	4	18	42	33
<b>Science</b>	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	48	38
		National	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	49	35
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	48	35
		National	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	9	48	39

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:	55%	In the school:	54%
In Wales:	70%	In Wales:	71%

- D Pupils who are exempted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum  
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence  
F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence  
B Pupils not entered for the tests because they are working outside the set levels of the tests.  
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

## Appendix D

### Evidence base of the inspection

- The inspection team consisted of three inspectors who worked for nine inspector days (over four days) gathering first-hand evidence. In total, 48 lessons or parts of lessons were observed and graded. Inspectors evaluated the pupils' work.
- The headteacher took the role of nominee, ensuring effective communication with the inspection team. The nominee attended meetings with inspectors and contributed fully to the discussion of inspection evidence.
- Inspectors observed registration sessions, school assemblies and break-times. All teachers were observed teaching. Discussions were held with members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, representatives of the GB, parents and others both during initial inspection visits and during the inspection.

<sup>3</sup> The performance data in this table includes the results of a small number of pupils with SEN.

- All the available work and records of a representative sample of at least three pupils from each class, together with the work of a sample of pupils with SEN, were scrutinised. A representative number of pupils were heard to read both formally and informally. Inspectors sought the views of a number of pupils in discussions with them.
- A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection. The registered inspector also considered further evidence provided by the headteacher after the week of inspection.
- The registered inspector held a meeting attended by 16 parents before the inspection and considered 14 parents' responses to a questionnaire.
- The judgement of standards in subjects is informed by discussions with pupils and the scrutiny of previous work.
- At the end of the inspection, the main findings of the inspection were discussed with the senior management team and the rest of the staff were informed. A short time after the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and senior staff, and the governors to report the findings of the inspection.

## Appendix E

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr M. T. Ridout Registered Inspector	Context      Summary      Recommendations Key question 1: How well do learners achieve? Key question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment? Key question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management? English      Geography      Music
Mrs I.A. Aubrey Team inspector	Key question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community? Key question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? Key question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards? Welsh second language      Mathematics      Design and technology
Mrs J. Warr Lay inspector	Key question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources? Aspects of Key questions: 1, 3 and 4.

The contractor for this inspection was Baker-Phillips Educational Communications Ltd.

Contractor's address: Oaks Lea, Higher Knolton, Overton, Wrexham. LL13 0LF

### Acknowledgement

*The inspectors wish to thank the governing body, staff, parents and pupils of the school for their co-operation, assistance and courtesy before and during the inspection.*

**Inspection under Section 10 of the Schools Inspections Act 1996**  
**Summary Report for Parents on**  
**The Inspection of Pontymoile Primary School,**  
**St. Matthew's Road, Cwmfields, Pontypool, Torfaen**

© Crown Copyright 2005. Pontymoile Primary School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents more information about their child's school. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. **The full report can be obtained from the school.**

The inspection of Pontymoile Primary School took place between 31<sup>st</sup> January and 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mr. Michael T. Ridout undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This summary report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

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

<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

## Summary

1. Taken overall, this school provides a broadly acceptable standard of education. There is strong commitment within the school to make and sustain improvements. Nonetheless, this school has serious weaknesses in important areas that make it difficult for the school to improve.

## Table of grades awarded

Key Question	Inspection Grade
1) How well do learners achieve?	Grade 3
2) How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	Grade 3
3) How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	Grade 3
4) How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	Grade 3

5) How effective are leadership and strategic management?	Grade 3
6) How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	Grade 3
7) How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	Grade 3

## Standards

2. In 42 lessons, or parts of lessons mainly in the subjects inspected, standards of achievement were judged:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	40%	38%	19%	0%

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

4. In the subjects inspected, standards were judged:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	Grade 3	Grade 3
Mathematics	Grade 3	Grade 3
Welsh second language	Grade 2	Grade 3
Design and technology	Grade 2	Grade 2
Geography	Grade 3	Grade 3
Music	Grade 3	Grade 3

5. In English and mathematics, pupils achieve sound standards, but progress is variable. In both key stages, pupils achieve well in design and technology. Standards in Welsh second language have improved since the last inspection, although shortcomings remain in KS2.

6. In both key stages, pupils' geographical knowledge and skills are not fully developed. The scrutiny of pupils' work in geography, history and religious education, shows a lack of depth in most of the topics studied.

7. In music, pupils achieve well and enjoy performing. Skills in music are improving well.

8. Slow learners, including those with SEN, make sound progress in relation to age and ability.

9. In the special needs resource base (SNRB), pupils in KS1 make good and sometimes very good progress. In KS2, good progress towards specific targets is not always maintained. This is an important shortcoming in provision.

10. In mainstream classes, pupils' acquisition and use of basic and key skills is widely variable. Progress in acquiring information and communications technology (ICT) skills is limited. This is an important shortcoming.
11. In KS1, teacher assessments for 2004 indicate standards close to national averages in English, mathematics and science. The proportion attaining expected levels in all three subjects was 86%. This result compares well with the figures for similar schools having between 25% and 28% of pupils entitled to free school meals.
12. In KS2, the National Curriculum (NC) test results for 2004 are well below national averages and those for similar schools in English and mathematics and just below average in science. The proportion of pupils attaining expected levels in the three core subjects (54%) is well below average.
13. Analysis of the KS2 results shows that girls generally outperform boys, except in science where boys perform well.
14. A gradual decline in standards is evident over the last three years in both key stages. This indicates important shortcomings.
15. Children in reception and pupils in Y1 consistently achieve good standards of behaviour and have positive attitudes. The school acknowledges that in most mainstream classes there are important shortcomings in some pupils' behaviour and attitudes.
16. The school has a clear policy to promote good behaviour. Behaviour in the playground has improved with the initiative of issuing yellow and red cards for unacceptable behaviour.
17. Many pupils are polite and courteous to staff and to visitors. This is particularly evident when speaking to pupils in small groups or as individuals.
18. There are important shortcomings in many pupils' ability to work independently and productively.
19. Overall attendance rates are low, averaging 87.7% over the three terms before the inspection. A significant number of pupils have attendance rates below 85%; this has an adverse impact on the standards they achieve.

### **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

20. The effectiveness of pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is variable. Many pupils are developing a secure set of personal and moral values, but a significant number find it difficult to take responsibility for their actions.
21. In discussion with older pupils, they display a growing respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within society.

22. Many pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of treating everyone equally. This is especially evident when pupils from mainstream classes and the SNRB join together for lessons.

23. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is well promoted throughout the school.

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

24. In 48 lessons, or parts of lessons mainly in the subjects inspected, teaching was judged:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
4%	42%	38%	16%	0%

25. Teachers and support staff have good working relationships with pupils. In the SNRB, the quality of relationships is very good and the teamwork in the KS1 class is outstanding.

26. Teachers are becoming skilled in using strategies such as assertive discipline. However, taken overall, the challenging behaviour of some pupils limits the impact of teaching.

27. The main emphasis in lesson planning is often the subject content. Important shortcomings in lessons often arise when the learning and resources are not adapted sufficiently to engage and challenge pupils of differing abilities. This often results in a slow pace of learning.

28. The organisation and use of lesson time are sometimes insufficiently rigorous to ensure the systematic development of pupils' work in the foundation subjects.

29. In a significant proportion of the lessons observed, good opportunities to develop basic and key skills were not developed fully.

30. Good use is made of test results to track pupils' progress and set individual and whole-school targets. In some instances, assessments against key learning objectives are used well. This good practice is not sufficiently disseminated.

31. In most subjects, effective, consistent and efficient systems for recording ongoing assessments have yet to be established. This is an important shortcoming.

32. A good range of learning experiences is provided for children under-five.

33. In the SNRB, the curriculum is adapted and planned very well to meet the needs of the pupils in KS1. In KS2, planning is less rigorous and has important shortcomings.

34. The curriculum in both key stages is sufficiently broad, but planning is insufficiently rigorous to ensure appropriate balance and progression in most foundation subjects. The systematic development of key skills is not sufficiently embedded into daily learning programmes. These are important shortcomings.

35. A good variety of extra-curricular activities broadens and enriches pupils' experiences.
36. The school is implementing positive initiatives such as assertive discipline and 'Circle time' to enhance pupils' personal development.
37. The school's partnerships with parents, other providers and interested parties are effective.
38. There are well considered arrangements for the care and supervision of all pupils. In the SNRB, the provision is excellent.
39. The school appropriately identifies individual learning needs. In mainstream classes, some individual education plans (IEPs) are not sufficiently differentiated to meet pupil's needs.
40. In the SNRB, the annual review objectives for pupils with statements in KS1 are well implemented. In KS2, the objectives are not effectively developed. This is an important shortcoming.
41. The school acknowledges the need to review the match of 'in class' and 'withdrawal' support given to the pupils' needs in mainstream classes.

### **Leadership and management**

42. In the absence of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the senior staff have made a major contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
43. The aims and values of the school are clearly reflected in its caring and supportive ethos.
44. The leadership has clearly identified key issues for the school, but over time insufficient support is given to securing the consistent impact of good initiatives and consequently important shortcomings remain.
45. The headteacher and deputy headteacher articulate clear educational vision and are skilled in elements of self-evaluation, but the means of achieving this vision is not securely embedded in the day-to-day work of the school. This is an important shortcoming.
46. Governors are appropriately involved in setting the school's direction. The three-year SDP provides a good basis to take the school forward. Expenditure is closely tailored to the school's needs and is within budget.
47. There are clear aspirations to establish a systematic approach to self-evaluation. However, there is little evidence of detailed action planning and few examples of gathering first hand evidence. This is an important shortcoming that limits the impact of subject co-ordinators

48. The provision of staff and accommodation is good and there is a basic sufficiency of learning resources. However, the library and ICT suite are not fully utilised.

### **School improvement**

49. There is clear evidence of recent improvement in pupils' behaviour around the school. However, the school provides very little evidence of improvement since the previous inspection.

### **Recommendations**

50. In order to improve provision further, the school needs to:

- raise standards further in subjects where shortcomings are identified and improve achievement in basic and key skills across the curriculum<sup>1</sup>;
- consistently implement the behaviour policy and develop pupils' capacity to work productively;
- develop lesson planning to more closely match the differing learning needs of pupils and build on day-to-day assessments effectively;
- review the organisation of class timetables to improve the pace of learning and ensure appropriate balance and progression in the foundation subjects;
- improve the focus and implementation of some pupils' IEPs and ensure the most effective match of learning support to the needs of pupils;
- secure the impact of improvement strategies and carefully plan, prioritise and focus initiatives highlighted in the SDP;
- establish effective self-evaluation procedures and link these closely to whole-school priorities;
- develop the role of subject leaders;
- raise overall attendance levels and implement effective strategies to promote and monitor good attendance and punctuality.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> The school development plan (2004-5) targets the development of a scheme of work for key skills and the improvement of teachers' skills in the use of ICT.