

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

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

**St Helen's R.C. Infant & Nursery School  
Maes-Y-Cwm Street  
Barry  
CF63 4EH**

**School Number: 6733361**

**Date of Inspection: 05/11/2007**

**by**

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

The inspection of St Helen's R.C. Infant & Nursery School took place between 05/11/07 and 07/11/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by John Andrew Clark undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. St. Helen's Roman Catholic (R.C.) Infant and Nursery School is situated in the town centre of Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan. The majority of pupils are from the immediate area and about 10% come from further afield, some by bus. Pupils are aged 3 to 7. There are 123 full-time pupils on roll and a further 32 attend part-time in the Nursery. The majority of pupils are from Welsh/British families. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language. Approximately 10% of pupils are identified as being from ethnic minorities from India, Spain, Hungary, Malta, the Philippines and Poland. Many of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
2. Twenty per cent of pupils are eligible for a free school meal, which is average for Wales and above the local average. Pupils come from a mixture of privately owned and rented homes, the majority of which are neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Approximately 20% of pupils are identified on the school's register of special educational need (SEN) and 1% has a statement of special educational need. These proportions are broadly average.
3. Children start school with a range of skills and experiences which are broadly typical for their age.
4. The school has gained several awards which include:
  - Renewal of the Basic Skills Quality Mark (2005);
  - Three "Gold Leaf" awards through participation in the Vale Healthy Schools Network Initiative (2005/2006/2007);
  - Bronze and Silver Awards (2006/2007) and more recently the ECO Green Flag (October 2007);
  - The school is also most proud to have recently received the prestigious "Most Valued Primary Partner Award" (2006 -2007) from Careers Wales for the Most Innovative Enterprise programme.
5. The school was last inspected in December 2001. There has been a significant decrease in the numbers on roll since then because of demographic changes.

### The school's priorities and targets

6. The school has broad aims based on a Christian ethos, in which 'Pupils can work in harmony to achieve high standards in personal and academic development'. The school seeks to, 'Recognise individual talents and to reach a positive awareness of God through Christ's teaching'.
7. Its motto is: 'Living and learning in the way of Jesus'.

8. The priorities for improvement include:
- Preparation for Foundation Phase – review of Early Years provision, scheme of work and assessment;
  - Assessment for learning – pupils’ involvement in setting and monitoring their own targets;
  - Further development of the ‘outdoor classroom’ for Foundation Phase;
  - Review of staffing structure;
  - Basic skills literacy and numeracy action plans – raising the percentage of pupils reaching level 3, and lower ability pupils’ speaking and listening skills;
  - Information technology (IT) - digital photography, further development of the use of interactive whiteboards;
  - Religious education action plan;
  - Building repairs and maintenance action plan;
  - Food and fitness audit and policy;
  - Global citizenship and cultural diversity policy;
  - Development of the governors’ role in monitoring the quality and standards of education through informally looking at pupils’ work and talking to them.

## Summary

9. St Helen’s RC Infant and Nursery school has good features with no important shortcomings. There are some outstanding features. It is a warm and friendly school and pupils achieve good standards. Children’s progress through the Early Years is good with outstanding features and pupils are cared for and guided very well throughout the school. The school is well led and managed.

### Table of grades awarded

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

### Areas of learning for under-fives

	Nursery Grade	Reception Grade
Language, literacy and communication	1	2
Personal and social development	1	1
Mathematical development	1	2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	1	1
Physical development	1	1
Creative development	1	1

10. 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.

### Grades for standards in the subjects identified for inspection

Subject	Grade
English	2
Information technology	2
Design technology	1
Art	1
Physical education	2

11. Pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons observed and subjects inspected were as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
29%	54%	14%	3%	0%

12. The percentages are broadly above the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) targets for 2007, that 98 per cent of lessons should be grade 3 or better and 65 per cent should be grade 2 or better.
13. Children start school with skills and experiences typical for their age. By the time they leave the school, standards achieved are good with no important shortcomings. Since the school was last inspected, assessments for reading, writing and mathematics for Year 2 pupils have been at least in line with and generally above national and local averages. In 2007, the combined proportions of pupils reaching the expected levels in English, mathematics and science (the core subject indicator (CSI)) was in the top 25 per cent of similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals) and schools nationally. The school sets challenging targets for pupils to achieve and the trend for improvement is good.
14. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards challenging targets set for them. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls overtime. Pupils with English as an additional language progress well.

15. The most able pupils generally make good progress. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels in all three subjects was similar to the local average in 2007 and shows an improving trend over time.
16. In the Early Years, children's progress in their key skills is good with outstanding features. They achieve especially well in the Nursery because of the very high quality of teaching. Creative and physical skills are especially well developed. The children's ability to control a wide range of wheeled vehicles, including two wheeled cycles, is a particularly outstanding feature.
17. In Key Stage 1, achievement in the key skills is good with no important shortcomings. Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and numeracy. Speaking and listening skills are sometimes outstanding. However, achievement in both information technology (IT) key skills and bilingualism has good features which outweigh shortcomings because progress is not consistent throughout all lessons. Pupils' creative development is often outstanding and their model making and art work often shows very high standards of imagination and finish.
18. The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills is good with outstanding features. Pupils behave very well indeed. They are polite and respectful and conduct themselves very well when they move between buildings or out in the playground. Pupils' social and moral development is outstanding. They are eager and attentive and work well in groups but not always independently enough in their learning. Pupils relate well to adults. They gain an exceptionally good insight into the world of work when they get involved in mini-enterprise projects every year.
19. The pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily and care for themselves. They take full advantage of the opportunities for physical activity and eat healthy meals at lunchtime. Attendance is good and pupils are punctual and eager to start work.
20. Pupils' understanding of fairness and equality is good. Through their 'World Awareness' week and other activities throughout the school year, they successfully explore global issues and develop a good understanding of the culture of Wales.

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

### **Grades for teaching**

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
29%	52%	16%	3%	0%

21. The percentages are higher than the national picture described in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of School's Annual Report for 2005-6, which stated that the quality of teaching in 62 per cent of lessons in primary schools was Grade 2 and 17 per cent of lessons Grade 1.

22. The quality of teaching of children under five is good with outstanding features. Staff have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and plan interesting experiences within them.
23. The outstanding features of teaching throughout the school include: very precise planning stating clearly what pupils are to learn; extremely good use of time that keeps pupils engaged and active; very good use of interactive whiteboards and good involvement of pupils in their own learning.
24. The weaker teaching involves pupils in listening for too long and the work set for them is over-directed so they do not use the skills they have learned effectively. In the one grade 4 lesson, pupils spent far too much time inactive and the resources were insufficiently well used. A minor shortcoming in teaching is the inconsistent promotion of key skills, especially for IT.
25. The good working relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are a strong feature of teaching throughout the school. Teaching and support staff work very closely together to plan and deliver the most appropriate learning activities and assess pupils' progress. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is regularly good.
26. The school's assessment policy is clear and comprehensive and procedures are effective. The systems are very well managed so that individuals are typically set appropriately challenging targets to reach. These are shared well with parents.
27. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and relevant to the pupils' needs. The provision for pupils' personal development and the extent to which the school responds to the needs of employers and the wider community, are outstanding. However, the systematic planning for the development of key skills is not fully embedded.
28. The school provides pupils with outstanding care and guidance. High quality support and pastoral care underpins the work of the school and is a very strong part of provision. The school works exceptionally well with parents, involving them in every aspect of their child's education. Support arrangements are well planned and managed. Monitoring and promotion of attendance and behaviour is very robust. The school makes a very good contribution to pupils' well being. The school's commitment to promoting an understanding of healthy living is effective and is well supported by the school meal service.

### **Leadership and management**

29. The leadership and management of the school have good features and no important shortcomings. The headteacher and her deputy work very closely to provide a strong and clear sense of direction within a very caring ethos. A major strength is the very good use of assessment and monitoring analyses to

set very precise priorities for improvement and manage performance. The school has made good progress since the last inspection,

30. The governing body undertakes its duties conscientiously and works closely with the headteacher to set the direction for school development. Curriculum leaders are effective in developing and monitoring their subjects. There are sufficient well-qualified staff. Their professional development is promoted effectively in many ways, but the sharing of good practice is a minor weakness. The management of teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time (PPA) makes a good contribution to the school's overall effectiveness
31. There is a very clear statement of intent and strong steps are taken to ensure a positive ethos in which all pupils are valued. The school makes use of a wide range of information to analyse and monitor progress. It draws well on the views of pupils and parents. The self-evaluation is largely accurate and realistic and this contributes to good school improvement planning. Resources are good overall. The accommodation provides a bright and stimulating environment through the excellent displays of pupils' work.
32. Finances are very closely monitored and the school provides good value for money.

## Recommendations

In order to further improve, the school now needs to:

- R1** Address shortcomings in pupils' standards in key skills in bilingualism and information technology in Key stage 1;
- R2** Further develop pupils' independent learning skills in Key stage 1;
- R3** Plan for consistent progression in pupils' key skills in Key stage 1\*;
- R4** Share the best practice in teaching to eliminate the few shortcomings.

\*This recommendation is already identified in the school improvement plan.

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

## Standards

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

#### Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings

33. The inspection judgements agree with those made in the school's self-evaluation.

#### Areas of learning for under-fives

	Nursery Grade	Reception Grade
Language, literacy and communication	1	2
Personal and social development	1	1
Mathematical development	1	2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	1	1
Physical development	1	1
Creative development	1	1

34. 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. Children's achievement in personal and social development is especially good as they quickly settle and show enthusiasm and curiosity for all their learning. This helps them make very rapid progress in early reading and writing skills.

#### Grades for standards in subjects identified for inspection

Subject	Grade
English	2
Information technology	2
Design technology	1
Art	1
Physical education	2

35. Pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons observed and subjects inspected were as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
29%	54%	14%	3%	0%

36. These are above the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) targets for 2007, that 98 per cent of lessons should be grade 3 or better and 65 per cent should be grade 2 or better.
37. Pupils achieve well in all subjects. They attain good results in National Curriculum (NC) assessments and these compare favourably with national and

local averages. They are at least in line and often exceed them. In 2006, the combined results of English, mathematics and science assessments for pupils achieving the expected level 2 (the CSI) were in the lower half when compared with similar schools (those in the same free school meal band). However, this was anticipated as the pupils' skills and experiences on starting school were significantly lower than usual. In 2007, the CSI was above the national and similar schools' average. These results were in the top 25 per cent nationally and for similar schools. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls overtime.

38. The proportions of pupils achieving the higher level (level 3) in NC assessments have been lower than those of other schools in the local authority (LA) in past years. The school has successfully introduced measures to target and promote achievement for the most able. This has led to a good improvement in 2007 with the overall proportion of pupils achieving level 3 now in line with the local averages, and above the national averages in mathematics and reading.
39. The school makes very close and regular assessments of pupils' progress and uses this information well to set targets for achievement. Learners, regardless of their ability or social and ethnic background, make good progress towards them. As a result, overall trends in improvement are good. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress overall and often outstanding progress in the early stages of learning English.
40. Pupils' achievement in the key skills is good with no important shortcomings. There are some outstanding features in aspects of their creative and physical development throughout the school. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are well developed. Pupils develop reading and writing skills well through most subjects, although sometimes the pupils are not independent enough in writing at length and expressing their own ideas. They are appropriately involved in setting and evaluating their own progress in these areas.
41. Pupils' progress in key skills is good overall. Numeracy skills are well developed and pupils' measuring skills are improved through subjects, such as design technology (DT). Pupils do not consistently develop a breadth of IT skills and experiences through all lessons. Pupils' progress in bilingualism is not consistent from class to class.
42. Pupils make good progress in their development and understanding of the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig*. They are familiar with the work of a number of Welsh artists and musicians.
43. Pupils are eager and well motivated. They enjoy their learning and try hard. They occasionally lack self-confidence in working independently and sometimes rely too heavily on teachers to direct them.
44. Behaviour is good with outstanding features. Pupils of all ages are polite and friendly and keen to talk to visitors about their school. They are very interested in their lessons and pupils of all ages respond well to the clear expectations

set by adults. Older pupils take good care of each other and younger pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils' behaviour is particularly impressive when they move between buildings and in assemblies.

45. The vast majority of pupils attend well. Levels are at least as good as those found in most schools in Wales. Parents report how eager pupils are to attend even when ill. Pupils arrive on time and lessons start promptly throughout the day. The school takes good account of Circular 3/99 and staff record attendance carefully.
46. Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal, social and moral development. They mix very well with adults and other pupils and are happy to work in different social groups. They show excellent maturity and confidence when performing in assemblies to their parents. Work done to raise donations for charities is a particularly strong feature of provision and pupils have a real sense of their own good fortune compared with, for example, children in Sri Lanka.
47. Pupils gain a very good understanding of what is right and wrong and they develop into confident and relaxed children who are happy and settled in school. They understand what it means to treat each other fairly and equally and, from a young age, learn to value differences within society.
48. Pupils gain an exceptionally good insight into the world of work when they get involved in mini-enterprise projects every year. In preparing for this they complete team building activities. Then they make items for sale, handle small budgets and for their age do very well working together. Pupils become very confident in working with others because of the outstanding range of visits and visitors.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings

49. The inspection team agrees with the judgements made in the school's self-evaluation.
50. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
29%	52%	16%	3%	0%

51. These figures are mostly higher than the national picture in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of School's Annual Report for 2005-6, which stated that the quality of teaching in 62 per cent of lessons in primary schools was Grade 2 and 17 per cent of lessons were Grade 1.
52. Working relationships throughout the school are outstanding. These are established from a very early stage and maintained through the strong ethos of care and mutual respect which pervades all aspects of the school's work. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well, setting clear boundaries and rewarding positive and caring attitudes.
53. Outstanding features include the very stimulating and motivating tasks, which encourage pupils to think for themselves and take some responsibility for their own work. This is particularly good in the Early Years classes and also in DT and some English lessons in Key Stage 1. Another very strong feature is the teachers' ability to skilfully question pupils to consolidate ideas and introduce new learning. There is frequently a very good pace to these lessons and a sense of fun. Interactive whiteboards are used to good effect to bring lessons to life.
54. Amongst the many good features, teachers give clear instructions and plan work which closely matches pupils' abilities. The teaching assistants provide support of high quality to pupils who are struggling with work or just need extra guidance. Teachers effectively prepare and use appropriate resources to challenge pupils and ensure progress.
55. In a small minority of lessons where there are shortcomings in teaching, pupils are over-directed by worksheets, which restrict their opportunities to think for themselves. There is sometimes an imbalance with too much time spent listening to the teacher and too little activity. Very occasionally, teachers' expectations are not made clear enough to pupils and this slows their progress.
56. Despite good provision overall there are some inconsistencies between classes in the attention paid to teaching key skills, such as bilingualism, even in some good lessons. Additionally, pupils are not given enough opportunity to use IT as part of their learning.
57. Specialist teaching for the few pupils with English as an additional language is outstanding. It is based on very good questioning and modelling of appropriate language and very good resources engage pupils' interest.
58. Policies guide good practice in promoting equal opportunities across the school. Good thought has gone into ensuring resources are well chosen to avoid stereotypical thinking. Dolls and puppets are used to raise awareness about attitudes towards disability and racial and cultural differences. Pupils who have English as an additional language are warmly welcomed into school and treated kindly by their new friends.

59. Assessment procedures are good with no important shortcomings and are used well to plan future learning. The school carries out regular assessment of pupils' progress and uses this information well to ensure that pupils' learning and individual needs are planned for and met.
60. Nursery baseline assessments are undertaken on entry to nursery. The results are shared with parents in the autumn term and development targets are agreed. These are reviewed and shared at the next parent consultation evening in the spring term.
61. Throughout the school, parents are invited to discuss their child's progress in detail and examine their work on three occasions during the year. Parents may also contact teachers at any other time, should they have any concerns. The pupils' individual targets are shared and agreed with parents at meetings. The school retains detailed notes on what has been discussed to ensure that any concerns are followed up and points of information shared with other staff.
62. The school provides very useful information to parents of nursery children on what their child has achieved in the first term in the nursery. Teachers use a detailed observation record as a focus for discussion at meetings with parents. Written reports for all children in Early Years are presented in an attractive user-friendly format. Reports throughout the school are a good feature; they communicate precisely what children know, understand and are able to do as well as including targets and indicating the way forward. Because they are also personalized, parents feel confident that the school knows their particular child very well.
63. The school fully meets statutory requirements for recording and accrediting the achievements of pupils.
64. Work is regularly marked and teachers use positive comments to encourage pupils and help them to improve their work. The involvement of pupils in setting and reviewing their own targets for improvement is at an early stage of development.

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

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

65. The inspection team does not agree with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report. There are a number of good features to the work of the school. However, there are also some shortcomings, particularly in relation to the systematic development of pupils' key skills.
66. 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.

67. Nursery and Reception children enjoy the stimulating range of both indoor and outdoor learning experiences that promote the areas of learning extremely well. However, the Reception classes do not have constant access to this provision. The school has correctly identified the need to improve provision for use of the outdoor learning environment in preparation for the introduction of the Foundation Phase.
68. The curriculum allows pupils to learn ideas and knowledge in a logical order across the range of subjects and other learning opportunities. Learning experiences provide good opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively together.
69. The school gives high priority to developing pupils' basic skills to enable them to gain access to the curriculum and reach their potential, whatever their ability. It works co-operatively with the Basic Skills Agency to effectively introduce teaching strategies and intervention programmes to improve pupils' basic skills.
70. Staff provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of, for example, reading, writing, speaking and listening and numeracy across the curriculum. Systematic whole-school planning for key skills across all curriculum areas is still at an early stage of development. The school has recognised the need to ensure that specific skills are more clearly identified in short-term planning.
71. Pupils benefit from frequent educational visits to the local library, a nearby supermarket, the Amelia Trust farm, St. Fagan's Museum of Welsh Life and the National Museum of Wales. The school provides a range of extra curricular activities open to all that benefit pupils' development. They particularly enjoy the Welsh Club and recorders.
72. A number of visitors to the school from the world of science and the arts effectively enrich the curriculum and provide stimulating learning opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills. Grandparents who attended the school talk about what school life was like when they were children. This builds a bond between generations and helps pupils develop an awareness of the passing of time.
73. Annual school celebrations of cultural activities, such as St. David's Day and the World Awareness week, help children develop a sense of national identity and an appreciation of cultural traditions. The language and culture of Wales are effectively promoted and integrated into schemes of work. Teaching and support staff mostly act as good role models for bilingualism. They have attended appropriate training courses and receive good support from *Athrawes Bro*.
74. The school meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum provision. Its provision for personal and social education and sex education also meets requirements.

75. Pupils are taught in small single age classes where considerable attention is given to their individual needs and well-being. Learning experiences are equally accessible to all. Appropriate support is provided to cater for individual pupils, including those with SEN and for whom English is an additional language.
76. Pupils work very well collaboratively in pairs and small groups under close supervision but there are too few opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning and work completely independently. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has outstanding features as a result of the strong ethos of the school and other opportunities the school provides.
77. The school provides high quality personal and social education delivered through 'Circle Time' and the 'Here I Am' programme for religious education. This enables pupils to progress extremely well in these areas of their development. Religious Education and collective worship are at the centre of the curriculum and provide sound guidance on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.
78. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and relationships and model respect and consideration themselves. As a result, pupils behave as responsible members of the school community from a very early age.
79. The whole school joins the parish community for mass in St Helen's Church on special feast days and Holy Days of Obligation. The Parish involves the school in celebrating special occasions such as Education Sunday and the Church's centenary, which will take place next year.
80. The school regularly welcomes visitors from charities, such as Missions Together and the Hope and Trust Foundation and gives generously to appeals for help to Operation Christmas Child and Macmillan Nurses, amongst others. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic fund-raisers and respond sensitively to the ongoing plight of school children in Sri Lanka after the Tsunami. They generously raise money to provide shoes for every child in one school.
81. Another outstanding feature of the school is the way in which it promotes equal opportunities. The school provides a caring environment where all pupils are encouraged to reach their potential regardless of their background, gender or ethnicity. The school effectively promotes the idea of belonging to a diverse and multicultural world when it invites parents and family members to visit school to share their cultural traditions with pupils during World Awareness Week.
82. Strong partnerships, especially good communication with parents, effectively allow people to work together in the pupils' best interests. The home-school agreement is an established and well supported part of the relationship with parents. Termly open evenings are well attended. Pupils' targets shared at these times support their learning at home as well as at school. The Parent and Friends Association is active and raises significant funds for the school.

Parents who met inspectors and those who responded in the pre-inspection questionnaire were very supportive of the school and the opportunities they have to be kept very well informed.

83. Strong community links, including those with the church and many local shops and businesses, are very important in supporting provision and in widening the range of opportunities planned for pupils. Displays in school show, for example, the enjoyment of elderly residents as well as older pupils when visiting the Day Centre. Pupils enter local competitions and often achieve recognition and success.
84. Links with the junior school are excellent and the headteacher visits regularly, including to play the piano in assembly. Shared resources and joint planning are also effective and enable pupils to move on to the next phase of their education smoothly. Year 6 pupils return to the school for a short “work experience”, which is innovative and beneficial. Very strong links with other colleges and the nearby Catholic Secondary school as well as with initial teacher training institutions also exist and many students benefit from spending short periods of time in the school. Teachers value this support also and it is well managed and a positive experience for all.
85. Links with employers are outstanding and have played a significant role in pupils’ development for many years. The school has just won Careers Wales Most Valued Partner Award, which is the first time an infant school in the whole of Wales has been recognised. This partnership sponsors the ‘Proud to Present’ scheme and works very closely when supporting enterprise week. These links have recently boosted the work done to support healthy living and economic sustainability. Local industry donates items such as a water butt to help it achieve Eco Awards. In addition, six teachers have attended Careers Wales’ placement days in preparation for educational visits to make sure that pupils gain maximum benefit from their visits.
86. The school sets targets for recycling and saving energy, which it meets. Pupils on the Eco Committee speak very sensibly and have a very good understanding for their age of environmental issues. They take their message home with them and told inspectors that their grandparents now recycle too. The Eco Code is displayed very clearly in school. Older children look after their school grounds and litter pick and encourage younger ones to be careful too. The school has just been awarded the Green Flag for its promotion of environmental awareness. Overall the school does extremely well in promoting education for sustainable development, which is an outstanding aspect of the school.

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

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

87. The inspection team agrees with the judgements made in the school’s self-evaluation.

88. High quality support and pastoral care underpins the work of the school and is an outstanding part of provision. An outstanding feature of this work is the effective two-way communication with parents about the progress, development and well-being of their children. At pre-school meetings, parents are invited to share information about their child and any significant pre-school assessments that may have taken place before Nursery. These are noted in preparation for the child's admission to Nursery and any necessary additional arrangements are made.
89. The school works very closely with parents from the moment they decide to send their children to the school. Information is gathered and shared to support pupils equally. Extra involvement of outside agencies, for example, the Education Psychology Service and the Behaviour Support Team, is valued and contributes to the very good quality of care and support, which pupils and their families receive.
90. Induction programmes enable pupils to get to know teachers and for them in turn to get to know families. Staff are experienced and many have worked in the school for a number of years. As a result, they have a good knowledge of individual pupils and a very strong commitment to support families quickly.
91. Staff, including the headteacher, are immediately aware who may be absent from school and monitor attendance very well. Parents nearly always inform the school by telephone if their children are poorly or running late. Behaviour is equally well managed, monitored and supported, again with support from outside agencies where necessary, and by using small targets, which are shared with parents to encourage improvements. Academic support is closely matched because pupils' performance is very well tracked. The consistent systems used across the school, which use a traffic light code to highlight need is very visual and a very successful part of school support. Additional positive features are the relatively small class sizes in every year group and the good number of teaching assistants.
92. Policies are in place, governors fully involved, risks assessed and training needs met to ensure high standards of pupil safety and well being. The school is very successful in encouraging healthy development, safety and well being of all pupils. Work done to teach pupils in this area is very effective and well organised. For example, "Healthy Breakfast Week", the Healthy School Award and participation in Sports Challenge 2007 are examples of school involvement and commitment to promoting health and well being. The promotion of a healthy life style is good.
93. The quality of the provision for pupils with additional or special learning needs is good with no important shortcomings. It fully meets the needs of the SEN Code of Practice for Wales. The school has introduced a traffic light colour coded monitoring system to identify individual pupils causing concern. There is an effective policy of early intervention to provide the extra support these pupils need.

94. All identified pupils have good quality individual education plans (IEPs), with clear targets. Planned activities are well designed to help pupils reach their targets. The headteacher and a class teacher share the role of SENCO. Thorough school and class provision mapping ensures pupils' needs are met, and there are good links with specialist agencies, such as for pupils with physical disabilities, sensory impairments and other special needs.
95. The school provides good support for pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress and that of others. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and this is consistently monitored. When necessary an IBP (Individual Behaviour Plan) is put in place and the headteacher oversees the support and liaises with the Behaviour Support Team in the authority.
96. An experienced governor and senior members of staff effectively oversee child protection and safeguarding arrangements in the school. All staff have regular training to update their knowledge and understanding. An appropriate complaints procedure is in place.
97. The quality of provision for equal opportunities is good with outstanding features. The school has a Race Equality Policy, which is monitored by staff and governors annually and meets the needs of the school appropriately. Work in Religions Education supports very positive relationships and an understanding that we are all different and equal. Excellent race relations are strongly promoted. For example, "World Awareness Week" made an outstanding contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils learn about equality, respect and tolerance through assemblies and collective worship, as well as through the planned curriculum. An effective anti-bullying policy is in place and children know that they are learning to behave kindly and considerately towards each other.
98. Parents have been consulted on many aspects of school life. In particular, their views on accessibility influenced changes to the school entrance way.
99. There is an effective school council and Eco Committee. The pupils feel very proud to be a part of these and have learned a lot about democratic processes. They are also helping the school become more energy efficient in saving electricity and recycling. This is an outstanding feature for such young pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

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

#### **Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings**

100. The inspection team agree with the judgements made in the school's self evaluation.
101. The aims and values of the school are very evident in all its work. There is a strong positive ethos which promotes high achievement in academic and

personal development in a very caring way. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are an outstanding team, which has high expectations in all aspects of its work.

102. Staff work together effectively in responding to national and local priorities. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and pupils and staff have benefitted greatly from involvement in the Career Wales, Green Flag Eco award and several others.
103. There are effective arrangements in place to manage and improve teaching and support the staff's performance. These are very well managed by the headteacher and her deputy. They are based upon good quality monitoring of teaching and very good use of assessment data to set challenging targets for staff to work towards. This process has contributed to improvement in many areas, such as the achievement of more able pupils in many subjects and significantly to the strong team ethos. The subject coordinators provide effective leadership in their subjects because they make thorough evaluations of progress and link this closely to school improvement planning aimed at raising standards.
104. The school works well with its immediate cluster of schools and there are outstanding relationships with the junior school, which contributes to the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning.
105. The governing body provides good support to the school. It is well informed about the standards and achievement of the pupils and fulfils statutory requirements well. Governors monitor policies closely and ensure that they are relevant, current and effective. This has a strong impact on all aspects of health and safety and the high quality of pastoral care. They have links to curriculum areas and meet regularly with co-ordinators, providing support and challenge.

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

**Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings**

106. The inspection team agrees with the judgements made in the school's self-evaluation.
107. There are comprehensive procedures in place for subject co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate the quality of achievement and provision including teaching. This is on a regular planned cycle. The cycle relates closely to priorities identified in the school improvement plan and often has a clear focus, such as speaking and listening skills in English. Whilst monitoring procedures are generally good, the school identifies the need for even sharper, manageable processes to eradicate the minor shortcomings. Not all best practice is shared amongst all staff, so that they can improve their teaching consistently.

108. Self-evaluation procedures are good. The inspection team agrees with the school in their judgements in six of the seven key questions. The school's self-evaluation report gives clear and honest judgements on its progress and is well informed from many sources, including parents, pupils and governors. The inspectors disagreed with the school's view on Key Question 3 because it found some relative shortcomings in the current planning for key skills.
109. The school improvement plan provides a useful basis for development. It is well structured and draws on significant first-hand evaluation, especially the in depth analysis of standards. The wide range of tightly focused priorities is met well within the periods identified for their completion and is closely monitored by headteacher and governors.
110. The curriculum coordinators make regular presentations to the governors to keep them informed about achievement and provision in their subjects. The governors approve the school improvement plan and regularly monitor its progress. They have a good overview of strengths and weaknesses and are exploring ways in which they can be more involved in setting the priorities in the first place.
111. The progress made since the last inspection has been good. Good standards have been maintained in subjects and in pupils' personal development. Standards of handwriting have improved. The building has been steadily improved. The school remains 'a thinking school'.

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

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

112. Overall, the findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
113. The overall quality of staff is good. The school is adequately staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced teachers who are deployed well. The Nursery nurse and two learning support assistants in the Early Years are a valuable resource and make a highly worthwhile contribution. The learning support assistants in Key Stage 1 are also highly skilled and are deployed very effectively.
114. Teaching and non-teaching staff provide good support for pupils with SEN. They are well trained and their professional development is managed well.
115. In-service training for staff is well planned and linked to school improvement priorities. Governors also attend some staff training sessions. This has had an influence on developments in the Early Years classes and the use of the outdoor environment.
116. The school has fully implemented the national workload agreement and all teachers receive appropriate time for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA). Good use is made of this time in developing teaching and learning

methods and planning closely for pupils' individual needs. The PPA time also provides the opportunity for the school to make very effective use of a teacher with expertise in teaching pupils with English as an Additional language and another who teaches Welsh. The school makes good use of its resources for workforce remodelling. Teaching assistants are well trained and are jointly working towards National Vocational qualifications in child care.

117. The accommodation comprises the original school, now used as the main school building, the annexe which is used to accommodate the Nursery, one of the Year 2 classes and the hall and one outside classroom which accommodates the other Y2 class. The main school buildings provide a light, comfortable and safe learning environment, with many colourful displays of pupils' work. The Nursery and Reception classrooms and the outdoor play areas for the Nursery and Reception children are used effectively. The staff who work with these children have provided an attractive and stimulating area.
118. The accommodation is kept clean and very well maintained by the caretaker and cleaners. The carpeted corridors and classrooms help reduce noise levels. Colourful displays of the school's work in the corridors and classrooms contribute to the stimulating environment created. Lunchtime supervisory and canteen staff provide a valuable contribution to the efficient running of the school.
119. The headteacher is meticulous and imaginative in managing the school budget. She works closely with the governing body, who scrutinise expenditure very closely. All spending is matched to school improvement planning although there is little flexibility because of falling rolls and high costs relating to the building. However, the governors have maintained their priority of keeping class numbers low and providing good quality teaching assistants. They successfully monitor the impact of this. The school provides good value for money.

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

### **Under 5s**

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

**Nursery - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

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

#### **Outstanding features**

120. Nursery children are very aware that print gives information or tells a story. They point to this in their books and the instructions for magic spells on the wall of the 'witches' cave'. They follow with interest and growing understanding when their teacher reads the weather chart. They enjoy both poetry and stories and use these as a basis for their very creative role-play and artwork.

121. Nursery children listen very carefully to interactive books on their computers, following the direction of the text and enthusiastically joining in with the repetitive sections. They successfully order the events in a story using the interactive whiteboard.
122. A good number of Nursery children recognise not only their own names but those of their friends. Many children know with which letter of the alphabet their name begins.
123. Many Nursery children are enthusiastic emergent writers and begin to make recognisable attempts at forming letters. Most children write their names legibly by the end of their time in the Nursery.

### **Good Features**

124. Children in both Nursery and Reception listen politely when adults are speaking and they listen to each other with growing attention. They speak clearly and confidently to their friends when playing and answer questions using sentences of increasing length.
125. Children with English as an additional language make good progress in the early stages of basic reading and writing skills. They are well placed to access the curriculum along with their peers by time they leave Reception.
126. Reception children correctly identify objects beginning with the letter of the week. Many successfully begin to empathise with characters in the stories that are told or read to them. They demonstrate good imagination when expressing their ideas about how the characters might feel. Reception children imaginatively recreate the story of Rama and Sita, using puppets.
127. Children in both age groups know a good range of Welsh songs and rhymes. They develop their understanding of bilingualism effectively in their movement sessions when they correctly follow instructions given in Welsh or English. Children often respond in Welsh at other times without prompting when, for example, describing the weather in both English and Welsh.

### **Shortcomings**

128. There are no important shortcomings.

### **Personal and social development**

#### **Nursery and Reception - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

#### **Outstanding features**

129. Nursery and Reception children's personal and social development is very good. They settle quickly into the Nursery and become very sociable and confident. Children of all ages engage in purposeful activities that help them to

develop very good attitudes to learning throughout their time in the Early Years.

130. Children in both Nursery and Reception behave very respectfully to adults and to each other. They co-operate extremely well when engaged in group activities and talk sociably to one another whilst working. They share toys and equipment fairly and pass objects they are given to examine politely.
131. From an early age, children in both Nursery and Reception discuss their feelings with growing understanding and respond sensitively to the needs of others when role-playing with the persona doll or finger puppets. Children make effective connections between their religious beliefs and the importance of loving and caring for others.
132. Children in both Nursery and Reception have a very good understanding of health issues. They use the toilet independently and wash their hands afterwards. They explain effectively that it is important to wash hands to prevent germs.

### **Good features**

133. Nursery and Reception children quickly understand and correctly follow the routines imposed by a difficult school building. Children dress and undress quickly and capably for their movement sessions or collective worship in the school hall and line up sensibly. They remove and replace their shoes with minimal direction and negotiate the short but challenging journey with maturity.

### **Mathematical development**

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

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

### **Outstanding features**

134. The mathematical development of children in the Nursery is an outstanding feature. Number, pattern and shape form an integral part of their play activities, particularly in creative work, and children develop a sound understanding of the use of mathematics in every day life. They apply their new knowledge in their play and in helping their teachers work out how many children are present.
135. Nursery children correctly identify colours of autumn leaves and use them to successfully create a repeating pattern. They accurately count the leaves and match them to the correct number symbol. Many children do this up to number 10 and a good number of children accurately count beyond this.
136. Most Nursery children correctly identify the shape of the rockets they are making as cylinders.

137. Nursery and Reception children demonstrate a very good understanding of the use of money when they play in the shop or cafe.
138. Many Reception children correctly recognise the values of several coins. They know which coins have a higher value.

### **Good features**

139. Reception children engage in a well-integrated range of play activities designed to reinforce their understanding, in addition to designated 'mathematics' time, that effectively develops their mathematical skills. They use and apply their knowledge and skills frequently in their daily activities when counting out equipment or role-playing. During their frequent cooking activities children develop a good understanding of mass and capacity.
140. Reception children correctly identify and count sets of objects to nine. Some children accurately count sets of objects more than 10. They confidently say which set has more or less than a given number. When describing their work, Reception children generally use correct mathematical terms and begin to understand the term 'fewer'.

### **Shortcomings**

141. Some Reception children of above average ability do not move quickly enough to the next stage in their learning.

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

#### **Nursery and Reception- Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

#### **Outstanding Features**

142. Nursery children welcome many visitors from the world of work and the local community and this helps to broaden their knowledge and understanding.
143. Nursery children have a well-developed sense of different cultures that make up the wider world. During French Week they enthusiastically discuss French food and learn a few French words. They carefully examine and competently reproduce their interpretation of the painting *L'Escargot* by Matisse.
144. Nursery children quickly begin to understand the changes that occur during different seasons of the year. They use the outdoor area effectively to explore the natural environment. They correctly notice and suitably describe the texture of conkers and the shell surrounding them, using words like 'prickly', 'smooth' and 'rough'.

145. Nursery children closely observe and accurately describe changes that occur when chocolate is melted and resets. They make sensible predictions about what might happen and use correct terms, such as setting and melting.
146. Nursery children have a very good understanding of the purpose of technology in everyday life. They use computers, the interactive whiteboard, programmable toys and listening stations with growing confidence and skill. Children carefully use the laminator with adult help.
147. Some Reception children use computers exceptionally well to practise writing their numbers. Children confidently use 'draw' and 'fill' tools to create an attractive number picture. Their mouse control is outstanding.

### **Good features**

148. Reception children successfully develop a sense of the passing of time when their teachers share the timetable for the day. They fully understand that particular events take place at certain times of the day and begin to plan for them.
149. Reception children frequently take part in cooking activities that help them to develop a broad range of skills and observe changes in materials.
150. Reception children have a well-developed understanding of the part that religion plays in the lives of believers. They understand the part that celebration plays in religion and know that people in many different parts of the world, including Britain, celebrate Divali. They thoughtfully make their own Divali cards for friends or family and imaginatively role-play a celebration meal.

### **Shortcomings**

151. There are no important shortcomings.

### **Physical development**

#### **Nursery and Reception - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

#### **Outstanding features**

152. Children in both Nursery and Reception engage in a variety of play activities, both indoors and outside, that help them develop their fine and gross motor skills very successfully. They ride bicycles and scooters outdoors with confidence, skill and very good control. Children in both age groups successfully move large toys by pushing and pulling and they climb competently. They handle art and craft materials skilfully and follow outlines carefully. Children of all ages handle scissors with growing dexterity, successfully cutting a range of materials. They manipulate small construction toys competently and with increasing control.

153. Nursery children work with growing independence to construct firework rockets, rolling the card for themselves and applying their own adhesive tape and small decorations. Similarly, they make chocolate lollies, pushing their own sticks into the marshmallow and dipping them in the chocolate with minimal assistance.
154. In their directed movement sessions, Reception children move with an outstanding degree of control. They jump and spring skilfully with feet together and most of them alternate their feet correctly when skipping. Children fully explore the space around them, choosing alternative pathways and starting and stopping promptly. They work competently on group activities, correctly remembering instructions for using simple apparatus. Reception children knowledgeably describe and confidently demonstrate to others the correct method of jumping and skipping. They evaluate their work with maturity and skill.

## **Creative development**

### **Nursery and Reception - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

#### **Outstanding features**

155. The creative skills of children in both Nursery and Reception are outstanding.
156. Children in both Nursery and Reception sing frequently throughout the day as part of their learning across the whole Early Years curriculum. They sing in tune, confidently, in both English and Welsh with clear diction and very good control.
157. Children in both age groups enjoy painting and craftwork and work imaginatively in both 2D and 3D. They express themselves very creatively using a wide variety of materials and tools.
158. Nursery children play very imaginatively in the role-play area, beautifully furnished to represent a magic cave. Boys, in particular, are effectively stimulated by this newly redesigned area and independently engage in very creative drama work when acting out the stories of witches and fairies they have heard. They clearly describe the spells they are making and successfully explain the purpose of the silver and gold wands.
159. Nursery children enthusiastically explore a wide range of percussion instruments from different cultural traditions. They quickly discover that they produce different sounds and begin to compare these, saying which they like. They demonstrate good imagination when suggesting that the sound reminds them of rain or fireworks. With adult support, children begin to compose an accompaniment to a song, changing the sounds to make them sound more like a firework. Children play their instruments with good control to accompany a song, starting and stopping correctly. When singing they competently clap a steady beat.

160. Reception children regularly engage in art and craft activities linked to their learning in other areas. They are particularly confident in craftwork and competently create effective collages. Children begin to appreciate the effects created using mixed media. Reception children have a well-developed sense of shape and colour and draw and paint skilfully. Their self-portraits with correctly placed features and varied expressions are of a very good standard.

<b>English</b>
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### **Key stage 1: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

161. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good.
162. In Year 1, pupils know how to give instructions in letter games in their English lessons. They adapt different characters in role play or when retelling a fairy tale and use appropriate language. The more able pupils explain the sequence of events for completing complex tasks, such as making a puppet, with clarity and accuracy.
163. In Year 2, pupils use a rich vocabulary to describe the actions of different fireworks and develop their own adjectives prompted by displays on the interactive whiteboard. They follow directions and instructions well and ask interesting questions to understand the actions of characters in a story.
164. Pupils' reading skills are good.
165. In Year 1 most pupils make good progress in understanding how letter sounds blend together to form new words. They read simple familiar sentences with fluency and are increasingly confident in tackling new words for themselves. They recognise adjectives and use the correct term. They have a good understanding of the difference between a fiction and non-fiction book. They understand the difference between an illustrator and an author.
166. In Year 2, pupils of average ability and above read with very good levels of fluency and accuracy. The most able pupils are very quick to identify new words, making full use of a wide range of reading strategies. The average pupils are also fluent readers. They make good use of word building techniques to identify unfamiliar words.
167. Pupils anticipate what is going to happen next in the story and many understand why a character takes the action that it does. Pupils enjoy reading and being read to.
168. Pupils' writing skills are good.
169. In both year groups, pupils write for a wide range of different purposes from lively poetry about fireworks, fairy tales and myths to non-fiction diaries about

healthy eating or instructions for making a fruit salad. They have a good understanding of how to write a story with a beginning, middle and end. They use a good range of adjectives and some adverbs to bring their writing to life.

170. Pupils of all abilities spell simple words accurately and develop a good knowledge of common spelling patterns. Many more able pupils spell quite complex words with a good understanding of their structure. Pupils become increasingly adventurous in their use of punctuation, including question marks and explanation marks. Handwriting is generally neat and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
171. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress overall and often outstanding progress in the early stages of learning English.

### **Shortcomings**

172. The more able pupils in Year 1 do not always progress quickly enough in learning new word and letter sound combinations.
173. Pupils' independent writing skills are limited. The more able pupils are not always able to express their ideas freely.

<b>Information technology</b>
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### **Key stage 1: Grade 2 – Good with no important shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

174. The pupils have successfully developed a number of basic skills, such as executing commands and using the mouse and pointer, whilst using basic number and language programs.
175. Year 1 pupils competently program a device to follow commands. They work co-operatively in pairs. Most pupils are able to make a sensible route and then command the programmable toy effectively. A few pupils successfully communicate their own way of recording the route.
176. Most use an Internet site to click and drag objects successfully. Many pupils enter text into a word processor and with help change the font and colour and print a piece of work. Pupils use word processing to label diagrams to show parts of the body. The more able pupils go into considerable detail and arrange the text boxes well.
177. Year 2 pupils understand the meaning of the word font and why we use a variety of them. More able pupils begin to understand and experience using the tool bar and certain functions, for example, 'file', 'edit' and 'format'.
178. The pupils make their own simple interactive dictionaries by selecting information from a data base, attaching an illustration and producing their own

sentences. Pupils use a simple spreadsheet to create their own menus and total the prices.

179. Year 2 pupils predict outcomes using on-screen modelling situations. They recognise that a device can be controlled. They investigate the control panel and discuss the names of the icons. They use the interactive whiteboard to describe the command buttons. They understand the need to give a sequence of actions to control devices. In small groups they explore a controlled toy and competently complete a technology questionnaire.
180. The pupils produce simple questions about graphs they make using the computer from data they have collected.

### **Shortcomings**

181. Pupils' progress in developing information technology capabilities, such as basic keyboard skills, is not consistent and they do not apply new skills often enough.

## **Design technology**

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

#### **Outstanding features**

182. Pupils' making skills are very well developed. They select the correct methods to join different materials and apply them very accurately. For example, in Year 1 they use glue carefully to provide strength where it is needed without spreading it where it is not.
183. Nearly all pupils correctly explain why it is best to sew certain fabrics and to glue others and they take great care to sew accurately. Models are frequently finished to a high standard, such as the decoration on model hot air balloons or lampshades in Year 2. The pupils make sensible choices from a range of materials to suit the product they wish to make.
184. Pupils' design and plan their tasks very well. For example, in Year 1 they refer to very specific needs when planning their puppets, such as the size and shape and describe how they must fit exactly onto the hand. Year 2 pupils produce detailed plans of their vehicles from different perspectives. They show how they will apply elastic band power in the diagrams.

#### **Good features**

185. Pupils make good progress in developing the skills to evaluate and improve their models. In Year 1, they amend diagrams and pictures to show how to improve their work. In Year 2, they write about how successful they have been in their tasks. Many of their comments are very sophisticated when explaining why one fruit would look more attractive in a fruit salad than another.

<b>Art</b>
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### **Key stage 1: Grade 1: - Good with outstanding features**

#### **Outstanding features**

186. Pupils' artwork is of a very good standard and they make very good progress in acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve well.
187. Pupils in a Year 1 class very skilfully handle pencils and templates, drawing with great accuracy around the shape of a teddy bear. They confidently select collage materials on the basis of colour and texture, and use scissors to cut these with outstanding skill and precision.
188. Pupils in Year 2 have a very good knowledge of the work of a number of artists, particularly those specialising in still life, and use this most effectively to develop their own ideas. Most pupils in a Year 2 class work skilfully in three dimensions, using modelling materials imaginatively to create their own still life or large-scale representations of fruit. They represent texture creatively by imaginative use of mark making.
189. Pupils develop confidence and skill in working in a variety of media. They frequently practise using a broad range of tools and materials, including fabric and natural materials. They competently use different painting, printing and modelling techniques to create interesting effects.

#### **Good features**

190. Pupils of all ages demonstrate a good standard of observational drawing. In Year 2, pupils imaginatively organise compositions of fruit. They carefully draw these, accurately observing shape, line and texture. They represent their ideas creatively using paint and pastel.
191. Year 2 pupils skilfully arrange a collection of images into an attractive composition based on the work of Arcimboldo. They then photograph this to make a permanent work of art. Pupils evaluate their own work critically, successfully sharing the ideas behind their thinking with their friends and suggesting how it could be improved.

#### **Shortcomings**

192. A few pupils in Key Stage 1 do not experiment with new techniques with sufficient freedom and independence to consistently achieve the high standards of which they are capable.

## Physical education

### Key stage 1 Grade 2: - Good with no important shortcomings

#### Good features

193. Pupils have a very good understanding of the health benefits of physical activity and how exercise affects the heart rate and breathing. In Year 1, they enjoy measuring their heart beat and explain how it speeds up but slows down slowly after you stop. Pupils understand the value of warming up before exercise and cooling down afterwards.
194. Pupils make full use of the available spaces they work in. They are well disciplined and dodge each other skilfully when moving at speed. The quality of pupils' movement in gymnastics and dance is good. They concentrate hard and successfully hold a balance well for good periods of time. They show precision and care in their movements.
195. Many pupils show imagination in their movements and cooperate well together on the apparatus. They know a wide range of different ways to travel across the floor and apparatus and take pride in acting as a model for other pupils to observe.
196. The pupils are expressive in their dance work. They follow instructions well and work cooperatively, sharing ideas and helping each other. They experience a good range of ball skills and are beginning to develop an understanding of the skills required for successful team games.

#### Shortcomings

197. Pupils do not consistently make suggestions to improve their own performance.

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

The governing body, staff and pupils welcome and celebrate the findings of the inspection report, which identifies the success and achievements of the whole community at St. Helen's RC Infant and Nursery School.

We are extremely pleased that the inspectors found "the school provides pupils with outstanding care and guidance", as this is central to our mission statement as a Catholic school. We are also proud that inspectors recognised that the school works exceptionally well with parents and that the response to employers and the wider community is an outstanding feature of the school.

The whole school community is justly proud that all the key questions and subjects inspected are judged to be good with no shortcomings(Grade 2), and that some are judged to have outstanding features (Grade 1) - in Key Question 4 and in the early years, art and design technology. We are also proud that pupils' standards of achievement are well above the Welsh Assembly Government's targets for 2007 and that overall the quality of teaching is considerably better than the current national picture, especially in relation to the percentages at Grade 1 in both cases.

We are pleased that the inspection team largely agrees with our self-evaluation of the quality of education the school provides for our pupils and recognises the work of the governing body, staff and pupils in maintaining good standards since the previous inspection.

The school accepts the recommendations of the report and will amend its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the inspection findings to further improve the school. This will be circulated to parents after publication of the report.

Finally, the governing body and staff would like to thank the inspection team for their courtesy and positive professional dialogue during the inspection.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	St Helen's R.C. Nursery & Infant School
School type	Nursery and Infant
Age-range of pupils	3 to 7 years
Address of school	Maes-Y-Cwm Street Barry
Postcode	CF63 4EH
Telephone number	01446 732834

Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Ellis
Date of appointment	1 September 1990
Chair of governors	Mrs A Miskin
Registered inspector	Mr Andrew Clark
Dates of inspection	5 – 7 November 2007

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Total
Number of pupils	16	37	40	46	139

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	2	8

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	17.5:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	16.2:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	20
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.2:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Summer 2007	90.2	93.6	92.9
Spring 2007	91.3	92.2	91.9
Autumn 2006	92.5	95.7	94.1

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	20
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

### Appendix 3

#### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2007			Number of pupils in Y2:		49		
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	8	70	22
		National	0	4	12	64	20
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	16	35	49
		National	0	4	14	55	27
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	6	76	16
		National	0	5	14	69	12
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	4	70	24
		National	0	2	11	64	23
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	8	49	43
		National	0	2	10	63	24
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	8	65	27
		National	0	2	9	65	24

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	92	In Wales	81

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

## Appendix 4

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

A team of four inspectors inspected the school over eight inspector days.

The deputy headteacher was the nominee and played a supportive and active role during the inspection.

Pre-inspection meetings were held with the inspection team, staff, the governing body and parents to discuss the life and work of the school.

Seventy-eight questionnaires were completed and returned by parents, which were carefully analysed by the inspection team.

During the inspection, discussions were held with the headteacher, teachers, support staff and pupils about their work and the life of the school.

Thirty-one lessons were observed.

Samples of pupils' work, practical and written, from across the ability range in each year group, were examined.

Pupils' behaviour was observed at various times during the school day.  
Inspectors attended acts of daily worship.

Documentation presented by the school prior to, and during the inspection, was analysed.

Post-inspection meetings were held with the staff and the governing body to discuss the outcomes of the inspection.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Mr Andrew Clark Registered Inspector	Key Questions (KQ) 1, 2, 5, 6 and contributions to KQ7 English, design technology, physical education
Mrs Charlotte Roberson Lay inspector	KQ 4 and contributions to other KQs
Mrs Jan Marsden Team Inspector	KQ 3 and contributions to other KQs Early Years, art
Mrs Helen Smith Team Inspector	KQ 7 Information technology
Mrs Margaret Reynolds Nominee/Deputy Headteacher	Providing evidence and support

### ***Acknowledgement***

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

### **Contractor**

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