

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**St Aloysius Primary School
Cedar Way
Gurnos Estate
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 9PA**

School Number: 6753307

Date of Inspection: 26 February 2007

by

**Robert Huw Jones
78144**

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

The inspection of St Aloysius Primary School took place between 26/02/07 and 28/02/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Robert Huw Jones undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All 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	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 St Aloysius RC Primary School is situated on the Gurnos Estate in Merthyr Tydfil and serves the Catholic and other denomination Christian communities in the immediate area. A small number of pupils live outside the County Borough and travel a considerable distance to school. The school describes its catchment area as being one which is recognised within the borough and nationally as being one of great social deprivation. Forty three per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals which is significantly above the local education authority (LEA) average and more than twice the average for Wales. The school caters for pupils between three and 11 years and there are currently 170 pupils on roll. There are separate full-time nursery and reception classes and all but one of the other classes are comprised of pupils of mixed age; a Y1/2 class, one containing all Y3 and some Y4 pupils, a Y4/5 class which caters for the remainder of Y4 and all of Y5 and a class for Y6 pupils. There are 67 pupils who are identified as having special educational needs (SEN). None of the pupils comes from homes where Welsh is the main language and 7 pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language (EAL). There are two pupils who are looked after by the local authority. Pupils' attainment when they start school is lower than the LEA average.
- 2 The school was last inspected in February 2001.

The school's priorities and targets

- 3 The school's priorities for improvement as indicated in the school development plan (SDP) include:
 - improving pupils' language and literacy skills, especially in oracy;
 - improving pupils' skills in mental mathematics;
 - establishing Welsh second language as an integral part of every day activities;
 - to develop the school as an Eco-school and strive to attain a silver award;
 - establishing physical education as a key aspect of promoting a healthy lifestyle, and
 - maintaining high standards in teaching.

Summary

- 4 St Aloysius RC Primary School is a good school with a number of outstanding features. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils contribute significantly to the quality of life in the school. Each member of the school community feels valued and respected and the school has a warm, caring ethos.

Table of grades awarded

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

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

- 5 Standards of achievement in the lessons observed are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	84%	13%	0%	0%

- 6 Pupils' standards in the lessons observed are much higher than the Welsh Assembly Government targets for all Wales by 2007, that is 98% of standards being satisfactory (the equivalent of Grade 3) and 65% good (the equivalent of Grade 2) or better.
- 7 The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- 8 Standards of achievement for the children under five are as follows:

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

- 9 Good progress has been made since the last inspection in language, literacy and communication and in personal and social development. Good standards have been maintained in the other areas of learning.

10 In the subjects inspected, standards of achievement are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	Grade 2	Grade 2
Welsh second language	Grade 2	Grade 3
Information Technology	Grade 2	Grade 1
Geography	Grade 2	Grade 2
Physical Education	Grade 2	Grade 3

- 11 Since the last inspection, standards have improved in English and geography in both key stages and in Welsh second language and physical education in key stage (KS) 1. Good standards have been maintained in information technology in KS1 and they have risen in KS2. Standards in Welsh second language and physical education in KS2 have remained the same.
- 12 In NC assessments in 2006, results in KS1 (by teacher assessment) were lower than the LEA results and all-Wales averages in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools in Wales with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, results are in the third 25% in English and mathematics and in the fourth (lowest) 25% in science. The percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in English, mathematics and science was in the second 25%. The trends over the past three years have been good and the 2006 results were considerably lower than those in the previous two years.
- 13 Results in KS2 (by teacher assessment) were lower than the LEA results and all-Wales averages in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools in Wales with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, results are in the second 25% in English, in the third 25% in mathematics and in the fourth (lowest) 25% in science. The percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in English, mathematics and science was in the second 25%. There are no discernible trends over the past three years although the 2006 results overall were lower than the previous two years. Over the past three years the school has met most of its targets.
- 14 Baseline assessments compare unfavourably with the LEA averages in oracy, reading, writing and number. There is a significant difference between girls' and boys' scores. While girls' results are above LEA averages in all but writing, boys' scores are considerably lower.
- 15 Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress in acquiring key and basic skills. By the end of the reception class children have mature personal and social skills and make good use of their bilingual words and phrases. Their information and communications technology (ICT) skills are also developing well.
- 16 Pupils in both key stages make good progress in the key skills of speaking, and listening. They read well to gain knowledge, and their standards of writing across the curriculum are generally good. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge in a number of contexts and they make good use of their ICT skills to support and enrich their learning in subjects across the curriculum. Older pupils in KS2 demonstrate very good ICT skills. Pupils' creative skills are good overall.

- 17 Pupils acquire good bilingual skills in the early years and KS1. They demonstrate a good understanding of the Welsh language which they hear frequently during the school day. They respond well to questions and directions given in Welsh, answering in Welsh or English as appropriate. In KS2, pupils' progress is much slower and their bilingual skills have a number of shortcomings.
- 18 Pupils identified with SEN achieve good standards according to their age and ability. They make good progress and achieve well the targets set for them.
- 19 Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal and social skills. They have good moral values and exhibit these regularly in the life and work of the school. Relationships throughout the school between pupils and between staff and pupils are outstanding.
- 20 The level of attendance has improved since the previous school inspection and is averaging just above 90 per cent over the last three terms. During the most recent full term attendance well exceeded the schools' target of 93 per cent.
- 21 The initial development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the workplace is helped by occasional visits to the school by members of the local community. Overall, pupils' understanding of the world of work is underdeveloped.

The quality of education and training

Grades for teaching

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
32%	53%	13%	2%	0%

- 22 The percentage of teaching that is Grade 2 or better is considerably higher than the averages for the whole of Wales.
- 23 Teaching has many outstanding features, including the high level of challenge, dynamic interaction with pupils, and the use of very effective strategies to ensure that teachers get the very best from all their pupils. The very strong and respectful relationships that pupils have with their teachers is also an outstanding feature. All adults are unfailingly pro-active in providing a haven of security for pupils in this very deprived area and a positive, supportive ethos prevails in lessons and throughout the daily life of the school.
- 24 Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations which are well communicated to pupils. Teachers' questions are stimulating and challenging, helping to extend pupils' thinking and develop their ideas. With very few exceptions, teachers have excellent class control. Work is very carefully structured and presented in a well-organised and methodical way. This ensures that pupils fully understand teachers' expectations and what they need to do next thus enabling them to work independently.
- 25 The quality of assessment and its use in helping the school to raise standards is exemplary. Teachers, the special needs co-ordinator [SENCO] and headteacher all have a wealth of assessment data available to them in all subjects and in the early

years. They use it wisely and rigorously to track pupils' progress from the nursery and to set individual targets for improvement. Through assessment the school has identified a significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment on entry to the nursery. Teachers are working hard to address this.

- 26 Pupils are fully involved in evaluating their own progress. Teachers help them to set their own targets for improvement in all subjects. They are keen to discuss their targets and to confirm their successes.
- 27 Annual reports to parents are of a good quality and parents say they are happy with the information the school provides.
- 28 Throughout the school teachers make outstanding efforts to provide the very best possible learning activities for the pupils in their care. They have channelled much time and effort, not only into creating a curriculum that is progressive, well structured, broad and balanced, but also in providing rich and exciting experiences that interest and motivate pupils. This is particularly important for this school as many pupils enter the nursery with exceptionally limited experiences of the world outside their immediate environment. The curriculum fully meets legal requirements.
- 29 The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities both during and outside the school day. Clubs include sporting and musical activities and drama.
- 30 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Collective worship successfully promotes pupils' spiritual development and the Christian ethos of the school. Teachers strive consistently to ensure that all pupils know that they are valued and that their views and needs are important.
- 31 Pupils are helped to develop a good knowledge and understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales.
- 32 The school has a positive ethos which constantly assures pupils that they are valued; as a result they are happy and secure in their learning.
- 33 The development of pupils' personal and social education is very effective indeed and is an outstanding feature of the school's provision. Instances where pupils and staff gather together to discuss important issues give pupils the confidence to enable them to take control of their own lives; they also raise their self-esteem.
- 34 There are extremely well planned policies to ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils. These are effectively implemented by all staff.
- 35 The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding and is managed exceptionally well by the SENCO and the head. They are well organised and efficient and work conscientiously together. Pupils' progress is meticulously assessed and monitored in all areas of difficulty. The help of outside professionals, such as speech and language therapists and the educational psychologist is sought and used appropriately. Learning assistants are enthusiastic and supportive and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. All procedures fully comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice for SEN.

- 36 One noteworthy feature is the school's success in providing for a number of children in the early years who have been identified as having serious language difficulties. Effective strategies have been introduced in the nursery and reception classes to quickly improve children's oral skills.
- 37 The school has recently integrated and supported effectively a number of pupils who have EAL.
- 38 The school is good at helping pupils to recognise and respect diversity in the wider world. The promotion of pupils' understanding of living as part of a multi-ethnic, multi-faith society, however, is underdeveloped.

Leadership and management

- 39 The school is well led and the head teacher gives it positive direction and purpose. She has a clear vision which is set in the context of Christian values and is shared by the staff. The head teacher and staff are successful in creating a good ethos based on sound values which are evident in the life and work of the school. They have succeeded in creating a caring and stimulating environment which promotes effective learning and ensures equality for all.
- 40 The head teacher manages staff systems well and members of staff share positive values about teaching and learning. They work well as a team. All staff are involved in analysing performance data and in setting challenging yet realistic targets for improvement.
- 41 The school responds well to national priorities and places particular emphasis on standards in literacy and numeracy which it constantly seeks to improve.
- 42 School self-evaluation procedures are well established. The school uses the LEA's comprehensive framework to analyse its performance. Subject co-ordinators monitor standards in their subjects and use the evidence gathered to set targets for improvement.
- 43 The school makes effective use of the information it collects and there is a close link between self-evaluation, the SDP, performance management and in-service training. The SDP is a comprehensive document which clearly notes the school's priorities for improvement.
- 44 The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues in the last inspection report.
- 45 The school has adequate staff to support the number of pupils on roll. Teachers demonstrate commitment to the school and the classroom assistants work well alongside the teachers, giving good support to the pupils. The deployment of teachers, however, does not always make the best use of their expertise.
- 46 The school has a good supply of resources to support the national curriculum and for extra-curricular activities.

- 47 The classrooms are of appropriate size for the number on roll, the corridors, however, are extremely narrow and would make movement around the school by disabled pupils virtually impossible.
- 48 The school has adopted effective procedures for managing teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time in accordance with statutory requirements.
- 49 Effective use is made of all school resources in order to promote high standards. The headteacher and the governors manage the budget effectively and the school ensures good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to build on its many strengths the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in Welsh second language and physical education in KS2;
- R2 improve standards in pupils' bilingual skills;
- R3 continue to address boys' underachievement in the early years; *
- R4 improve pupils' awareness and understanding of diversity in a multicultural society;
- R5 review the deployment of staff in order to make the best use of their expertise, and
- R6 improve links with industry.

* The school is aware of this and is involved in a LEA project exploring boys' underachievement.

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

50 The findings of the inspection team match the school's judgement in the self-evaluation report.

51 Standards of achievement in the lessons observed are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	84%	13%	0%	0%

52 Pupils' standards in the lessons observed are much higher than the Welsh Assembly Government targets for all Wales by 2007, that is 98% of standards being satisfactory (the equivalent of Grade 3) and 65% good (the equivalent of Grade 2) or better.

53 The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

54 Standards of achievement for the children under five are as follows:

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

55 Good progress has been made since the last inspection in language, literacy and communication and in personal and social development. Good standards have been maintained in the other areas of learning.

56 In the subjects inspected, standards of achievement are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	Grade 2	Grade 2
Welsh second language	Grade 2	Grade 3
Information Technology	Grade 2	Grade 1
Geography	Grade 2	Grade 2
Physical Education	Grade 2	Grade 3

57 Since the last inspection, standards have improved in English and geography in both key stages and in Welsh second language and physical education in KS1. Good standards have been maintained in information technology in KS1 and they have

risen in KS2. Standards in Welsh second language and physical education in KS2 have remained the same.

- 58 In NC assessments in 2006, results in KS1 (by teacher assessment) were lower than the LEA results and all-Wales averages in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools in Wales with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, results are in the third 25% in English and mathematics and in the fourth (lowest) 25% in science. The percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in English, mathematics and science was in the second 25%. The trends over the past three years have been good and the 2006 results were considerably down on the previous two years when the percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in English, mathematics and science was in the first (highest) 25%.
- 59 Results in KS2 (by teacher assessment) were lower than the LEA results and all-Wales averages in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools in Wales with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, results are in the second 25% in English, in the third 25% in mathematics and in the fourth (lowest) 25% in science. The percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in English, mathematics and science was in the second 25%.
- 60 There are no discernible trends over the past three years although the 2006 results overall were lower than those in the previous two years when the school's results were in the first and second 25% respectively in English and also in science. In mathematics they were in the second and third 25%. Over the past three years the school has met most of its targets.
- 61 Baseline assessments compare unfavourably with the LEA averages in oracy, reading, writing and number. There is a significant difference between girls' and boys' scores. While girls' results are above LEA averages in all but writing, boys' scores are considerably lower.
- 62 Pupils identified with SEN achieve good standards according to their age and ability. They make good progress and achieve well the targets set for them, often exceeding them.
- 63 Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress in acquiring key and basic skills. By the end of the reception class children have mature personal and social skills and make good use of their bilingual words and phrases. Their ICT skills are also developing well.
- 64 Pupils in both key stages make good progress in the key skills of speaking, and listening. They listen attentively to their teacher and fellow pupils and, as they progress through the school, gain confidence in expressing their ideas, using a register of language and vocabulary appropriate to the context. They read well to gain knowledge, and their standards of writing across the curriculum are generally good. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge in a number of contexts, for example, for measuring and recording. They make good use of their ICT skills to support and enrich their learning in subjects across the curriculum. Older pupils in KS2 demonstrate very good ICT skills. Pupils' creative skills are good overall as demonstrated by some imaginative writing at the end of KS2.

- 65 Pupils acquire good bilingual skills in the early years and KS1. They demonstrate a good understanding of the Welsh language which they hear frequently during the school day. They respond well to questions and directions given in Welsh, using either Welsh or English as appropriate. In KS2, pupils' progress is much slower and their bilingual skills have a number of shortcomings.
- 66 The school's Christian ethos which is reflected in its mission statement is evident in the daily life of the school. It states its commitment to the development of each individual and all pupils, regardless of ability, succeed whatever their linguistic, social or ethnic background. This commitment, which is reflected in practice, is an outstanding feature. Pupils identified with SEN and 'looked after' pupils achieve good standards according to their age and ability. They make good progress and achieve well the targets set for them. Pupils with EAL make good progress in all areas of the curriculum.
- 67 Pupils demonstrate an aptitude for learning new skills, for example in ICT. They develop an understanding of how democratic institutions work through the school council and members understand their responsibilities in representing those who elected them.
- 68 Pupils have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their work and what they need to do to improve. They know their targets, which are placed in their workbooks and what they need to do in order to meet them. The majority achieves the targets set and pupils make good progress towards the next stage in their learning.
- 69 Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy their lessons. They demonstrate a good degree of motivation, complete their tasks with enthusiasm, concentrate well, persevere and give of their best in order to achieve good standards.
- 70 Pupils are well behaved, considerate and courteous and this contributes positively and constructively to the quality of life in the school. They demonstrate respect for each other, all members of staff and their school environment. Pupils enter and move around the school in an orderly and purposeful manner, settling into their classrooms quickly. Their developing self-confidence helps them take an increasing degree of responsibility for their own attitudes and behaviour.
- 71 In discussion, pupils indicate they understand what is expected of them and agree that good behaviour is encouraged, recognised and regularly rewarded. They respond positively to these expectations. There are extremely few reports of recent incidents of bullying or inappropriate behaviour and there have been no pupil exclusions during the last 12 months.
- 72 The level of attendance has improved since the previous school inspection and is averaging just above 90 per cent over the last three terms. This is below the LEA and national averages and about the same as the average for schools in Wales with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. During the most recent full term attendance well exceeded the schools' target of 93 per cent.
- 73 A considerable number of parents take their children on holiday during term time, thus causing pupils to miss valuable learning time. Although the school does not

condone this practice, it is the main cause of pupil absence, particularly during the summer term. During the spring term of 2006 the attendance levels dropped significantly due primarily to an outbreak of e-coli in the area. There are no significant or unexplained variations in attendance levels across the school or throughout the year.

- 74 With the exception of a very small number of pupils punctuality is good at the start of and throughout the school day allowing lessons to start promptly without delay or disruption. The school takes appropriate account of National Assembly of Wales (NAW) Circular 3/99.
- 75 Pupils work effectively as members of groups and display the skills required to work independently. They competently gather the information they require from a variety of sources including the school library and the internet.
- 76 Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal and social skills. They have good moral values and exhibit these regularly from day-to-day in the life and work of the school. They are considerate, friendly and polite to one another, to staff and visitors and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They co-operate well together in lessons and other activities. Relationships throughout the school between pupils and between staff and pupils are outstanding.
- 77 Pupils understand well the principle of equal opportunities as the school constantly emphasises its importance. They have a good understanding of the variety of creeds and cultures found in society at large and they respect them.
- 78 The initial development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the workplace is helped by occasional visits to the school by members of the local community. Pupils' understanding of the world of work, however, is underdeveloped overall.
- 79 Pupils serve the community by supporting a wide range of initiatives, in particular those associated with the European Objective One funding, for example, the People in Communities (PIC) project and with improving the environment. Pupils' visits to local places of interest enhance their learning and increase their understanding of the community.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

80 The findings of the inspection team match the school's judgement in the self-evaluation report.

81 The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
32%	53%	13%	2%	0%

82 The percentage of teaching that is Grade 2 or better is considerably higher than the averages for the whole of Wales.

83 Teaching has many outstanding features including the high level of challenge, dynamic interaction with pupils and use of very effective strategies to ensure that teachers get the very best out of all their pupils. Creativity, investigation, experimentation and problem solving are strong features of lesson planning which encourage pupils to find out for themselves and take responsibility for their own learning.

84 The very strong and respectful relationships that pupils have with their teachers are also an outstanding feature of the teaching and learning. All adults are unfailingly pro-active in providing a haven of security for pupils in this very deprived area and a positive, supportive ethos prevails in lessons and throughout the daily life of the school. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons, appreciate their teachers and work hard for them.

85 Teachers are keen to keep abreast with new initiatives such as incorporating ICT into their planning. Teachers' planning is of very good quality and notes clearly the objectives for each lesson. Teachers' enthusiasm, dedication, and very good subject knowledge is communicated well to pupils and has a very positive impact in sustaining their interest and motivation. Teachers' questions are stimulating and challenging, helping to extend pupils' thinking and develop their ideas. Challenging questions are also well used to move pupils on to the next stage of their learning.

86 With very few exceptions, teachers have excellent class control. Explanations are clear and precise, with clarity in instructions. Work is very carefully structured and presented in a well-organised and methodical way. This ensures that pupils fully understand teachers' expectations and what they need to do next to enable them to work independently.

87 Teachers make very effective use of support staff to enrich pupils' learning. These staff are well trained and work harmoniously with teachers because they are well prepared for their tasks. Praise is given freely but appropriately and pupils respond well, demonstrating high levels of self-esteem and confidence.

- 88 Teachers have high expectations of all the pupils in their classes and seek to help them all to reach their full potential, whatever their race, learning difficulty, background or linguistic need. They help pupils to understand the principles of equal opportunity because they promote this so successfully throughout the daily life of the school. All pupils are encouraged to participate fully in all activities.
- 89 Teachers promote Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig effectively throughout the school. In the early years teachers develop children's bilingual skills very well because no opportunity is missed in lessons throughout the day to encourage children to use their Welsh words and phrases. As pupils move on up through the school, however, teachers are less inclined towards the regular use of incidental Welsh, thus missing many good opportunities to better promote pupils' bilingual Welsh skills.
- 90 Teachers are very good at catering for the needs of all groups of pupils within their care. This is another outstanding feature of the school. They plan meticulously to ensure that they cater for pupils with SEN and EAL pupils and to extend the learning of more able pupils. They also cater well for the learning needs of 'looked after' pupils. Well-thought-out strategies and resources are employed wherever necessary to boost the learning of less able pupils in order to ensure that they do not fall behind.
- 91 Assessment procedures meet statutory requirements. The quality of assessment and its use in helping the school to raise standards is exemplary. Teachers, the special needs co-ordinator [SENCO] and head all have a wealth of assessment data available to them in all subjects and in the early years. They use it wisely and rigorously to track pupils' progress from the nursery onwards and to set individual targets for improvement. Moderated portfolios of work in all subjects levelled against NC criteria have been carefully compiled to help teachers ensure consistency in assessment.
- 92 Teachers have an accurate picture of pupils' progress at any one time and are clear about standards. This is of considerable help to the school in its efforts to address issues such as the poor oral skills identified in many children in the early years. Through assessment the school has identified a significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment on entry to the nursery. Teachers are working hard to address this.
- 93 Pupils' work is marked regularly and positively and in the best practice pupils are shown how to plan to improve their work. Wherever possible work is marked with pupils present so that they can be helped to understand what they need to do to improve.
- 94 Pupils are fully involved in evaluating their own progress in other ways. Teachers help them to set their own targets for improvement in all subjects. They are keen to discuss their targets and to confirm their successes.
- 95 Annual reports to parents are of a good quality. Teachers strive to ensure that parents are kept fully up to date with information about their children's progress and where they need to improve. Parents visit regularly for formal and informal meetings with teachers and say they are happy with the information which the school provides.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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- 96 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgement of Grade 2 in the self-evaluation report. The team judged that the school makes outstanding efforts to provide the best possible experiences for pupils throughout the school.
- 97 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 in both the nursery and reception classes benefit from a very good start to their school life. They are eager to participate in the wealth of interesting and exciting experiences offered and to explore the world around them.
- 98 Throughout the school, teachers make outstanding efforts to provide the very best possible learning activities for all the pupils in their care including the more able. They have channelled much time and effort, not only into creating a curriculum that is progressive, well structured, broad and balanced, but also in providing rich and exciting experiences that interest and the motivate pupils including those with SEN. This is particularly important for this school as many pupils enter the nursery with exceptionally limited experiences of the world outside their immediate environment. The curriculum fully meets legal requirements
- 99 Pupils' basic and key skills are developed very effectively because these skills are threaded throughout teachers' planning and the curriculum. They are discussed at the beginning of each lesson where pupils try to identify, often with great accuracy, which key skills they will be using and developing during the rest of the lesson. The school has recently been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Award for the second time.
- 100 The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities both during and outside the school day. A technological and science programme operates through community regeneration funding. Visits are built into the curricular programme and include theatre, coracle building and residential visits for Y5 and Y6 with a focus on team building. Several clubs run by school staff use the school facilities after school hours and pupils are encouraged to participate in these activities.
- 101 Clubs include sport, musical activities and drama. Other opportunities for enrichment include Italian teaching in Y5 and Y6, through links with the Italian consulate. The school values the contribution that visitors from the community make. These include volunteers who support reading, police and fire fighters and the school nurse.
- 102 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. The personal and social education (PSE) programme of work is exemplary and enables pupils to think deeply about issues that affect their own and others' lives. It is helping pupils to become thoughtful, mature and responsible. They are polite, courteous and behave well. Acts of collective worship successfully promote pupils' spiritual development and the Christian ethos of the school.

- 103 Teachers strive consistently to ensure that all pupils know that they are valued and that their views and needs are important. This is a great strength of the provision. The strong and supportive Christian ethos that pervades all activities helps pupils to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils respond well to this by showing a willingness to take responsibility for themselves and younger pupils and by supporting those who are less well off than they are.
- 104 Members of the School Council and Eco Committee say that their views are taken into account and they have made decisions which have improved their lives. Pupils value the Friendly Corner in the playground where members of the School Council make themselves available to help those pupils who are lonely or have some problem which they wish to share.
- 105 Pupils' cultural experiences are good. They are helped to develop a very good knowledge and understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales through occasions such as the school eisteddfod. In subjects such as geography and religious education, pupils learn about the faiths and cultures of the wider world. There is less evidence that pupils are taught to celebrate and value diversity in Wales or are well prepared to take their place in multi-cultural Britain. Throughout pupils' early years and often in KS1, teachers make a very good effort to develop pupils' bilingual skills. This becomes less evident in lessons as pupils move on up through the school, particularly in KS2.
- 106 The school is an integral part of the community and has good links with parents, many of whom support organised school events and activities. A small number of parents help in school on a regular basis in particular with early years pupils. During each of the autumn and spring terms the two parents meetings give parents opportunities to discuss their child's progress with teachers. Newsletters are distributed every two weeks and provide parents with information about school activities and events. The school operates an open-door policy.
- 107 Work experience placements are provided for NNEB students from the local Further Education College.
- 108 St Aloysius has very good links with the cluster of Roman Catholic primary schools and with the designated high school. The school has strong links with two Teacher Training establishments as part of an effective partnership arrangement.
- 109 Vocational aspects of the schools' PSE programme and the occasional visitors to the school help provide pupils with some work-related education. There are very few partnerships or formal links with employers, local industry or businesses and the current provision of effective work related education is, therefore, limited.
- 110 Although some teachers have previously undertaken industrial or commercial placements and used their experiences to enrich the curriculum, none have done so recently.
- 111 St Aloysius is an exceptionally inclusive school where all pupils are treated equally and have equal access to the curriculum and all activities that the school provides. Boys and girls are encouraged to participate in all sporting and other activities and do

so happily. Incidents of stereotyping are not permitted to influence provision and are rigorously challenged.

- 112 The school is exceptionally effective in accessing support and funding from a very wide range of agencies which enables staff to provide well for the needs of all groups of pupils at the school including those with SEN and pupils who have EAL. Pupils are encouraged to achieve success and to participate fully in all aspects of school life.
- 113 The school's promotion of education for sustainable development is good with no important shortcomings. Recently the school has obtained the bronze eco award and is working towards the silver award. Recycling of school waste is now normal practice and the school has continued to develop in other ways. A gardening project undertaken with community agencies has focused on ways in which pupils can further develop the school grounds. The school is equally enthusiastic about developing healthy lifestyles for its pupils but recognises that much still needs to be done in this area.
- 114 A very small number of pupils help run the daily tuck shop and a few Y6 pupils, members of the ECO committee, assist with fundraising. Opportunities to develop pupils' entrepreneurial skills, however, are not fully exploited and developed overall.
- 115 As they move up through the school pupils are increasingly encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, both in school and in the community, thus developing sound lifelong learning skills. By Y6 it is evident that the school does this extremely effectively. Pupils are fully involved in decision-making, for example, through the work of the School council. Their ICT skills are very good, enabling them to research and investigate the world around them with little help from adults.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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- 116 The findings of the inspection team match the school's judgement in the self-evaluation report.
- 117 The school's provision for the personal support and guidance of pupils is good with many outstanding features. The school has a positive ethos, which constantly assures pupils that they are valued and included. As a result they are happy and secure in their learning. Pupils say that they trust their teachers and would willingly bring any concerns to their attention. This is a significant strength of provision. Pupils are well taught in terms of the values of right and wrong and they demonstrate a strong sense of fair play.
- 118 The school operates as a very close community as it works hard to develop purposeful and productive links with parents and the wider community. It also works extremely closely with many professionals and support agencies and support programmes are carefully planned in order to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils and to ensure that they make the best progress possible; parents say they appreciate this. They are fully consulted about care and support arrangements and

say that the school is very quick to seek additional support for those pupils who need it.

- 119 Induction arrangements are very good. The majority of children enter the nursery from a pre-school group established on the school's site and it is at this point that the school actively seeks to build good relationships with parents and to find out about children who will be joining the school. Any concerns are carefully discussed and recorded. In this way pupils are already well known when they start in the nursery and they, in turn, are familiar with routines and expectations. Transition arrangements to help Y6 pupils transfer smoothly to the next stage of their education are also good.
- 120 The development of pupils' personal, and social education is very effective indeed and is an outstanding feature of the school's provision. It is well planned throughout the school and appropriate attention is given to sex and drugs education. The warm relationships that prevail between pupils and adults underpin the school's work and encourage pupils to seek help if they need it. In those instances where pupils and staff gather together to discuss important issues, pupils gain confidence to enable them to take control of their own lives; this raises their self-esteem.
- 121 Pupils and parents clearly understand that all pupils are expected to attend regularly and punctually. The system for monitoring attendance and punctuality is robust and effective with close and frequent liaison with the Educational welfare Officer (EWO). Registers are completed appropriately and quickly at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Procedures for following up lateness or unexplained absence are effective. Excellent attendance is recognised and rewarded at each Friday assembly.
- 122 The school expects high standards of behaviour and does not tolerate bullying or inappropriate behaviour. All staff consistently implement the behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Pupils understand and closely adhere to the established and agreed class rules.
- 123 The schools' system of awarding certificates in recognition of good standards of behaviour and achievement is effective and appreciated by pupils. Any inappropriate behaviour is recorded in the schools' 'behaviour log'.
- 124 There are extremely well planned policies to ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils. These are effectively implemented by all staff. Child protection procedures are excellent. They are fully documented and all staff are aware of the arrangements and know what to do should the need arise. The school makes every effort to deal with such issues sensitively and the procedures have been found to be very effective in practice. Pupils who become unwell or are hurt during the school day are well supported and comprehensive risk assessments are carried out regularly to ensure pupils' safety, particularly on school visits. All equipment is regularly checked and all teaching and non-teaching staff are trained in first aid. Fire drills are carried out regularly.
- 125 Healthy lifestyles and exercise are promoted suitably and the school has already achieved several awards for this. The school acknowledges that more needs to be done in this area.

- 126 The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding and is managed exceptionally well by the SENCO and the head. They are well organised, efficient and work conscientiously together. They know the needs of the pupils very well because they work closely with all staff and families, giving very good support and guidance.
- 127 Pupils' progress is meticulously assessed and monitored in all areas of difficulty. The views of outside professionals such as speech and language therapists and the educational psychologist are sought and effectively used. Learning assistants are enthusiastic and supportive and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. All procedures fully comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice for SEN.
- 128 Early intervention is a key feature of provision at the school. Staff are proactive in identifying concerns from the time children enter the pre-school provision on the site. Teachers work closely with parents so that by the time children enter the nursery support is ready and appropriate. Teachers in all classes give great consideration to preparing work that is at the right level to meet the needs of all pupils in their classes, including those pupils who are more able.
- 129 The school is proud of the successes which they have with SEN pupils. Evidence demonstrates that these pupils at the very least meet their targets and often exceed them. Many pupils are helped to move down or off the register, although they are still carefully monitored to make sure that progress is maintained. Individual education plans are updated regularly and targets are expressed in small, achievable steps. Parents are fully involved in any decisions that are made about their children.
- 130 One noteworthy feature of the school's success is its provision for a number of children in the early years who have been identified as having serious language difficulties. Effective strategies have been introduced in the nursery and reception classes, which are quickly improving children's oral skills.
- 131 This support is continued throughout the school, where a wide range of stimulating Catch-up programmes is operational. Teachers and learning assistants are knowledgeable because they are so well trained and they enable children to enjoy their work both in class and in withdrawal sessions and to leave with a sense of achievement.
- 132 Very effective support programmes are also in place to support those pupils whose behaviour and emotional difficulties threaten to impede their own and others' progress. The school's success in this area is outstanding. Intervention, supported by the LEA behaviour team, in conjunction with class teachers, is very effective in enabling these pupils to become well behaved, mature and thoughtful by the time they leave the school.
- 133 The quality of provision for equal opportunities is very good with the policies for equal opportunity and race relations being fully implemented. This is because full inclusion is at the heart of this very caring school, underpinning all its values, challenging stereotypes and permeating all aspects of its' work.
- 134 The school has recently integrated and effectively supported a number of pupils who have EAL. The head works closely with outside agencies such as social services to

support and guide 'looked after' pupils and to prepare personal support plans for them. Boys and girls work and play happily together and no pupils are prevented from taking part in any activity of the school because of their social, educational ethnic or linguistic background.

- 135 The school rightly considers oppressive behaviour, racism and bullying to be totally unacceptable and they are not tolerated. Any instances are dealt with swiftly and extremely effectively. Pupils express confidence in systems such as "Buddies" in the playground. The School Council also has an important role to play by gathering in the Friendship Corner at play time thereby making themselves available to support any pupils who are experiencing difficulty in this area.
- 136 The governing body has developed a suitable accessibility plan to adapt the building in order to make it more accessible to disabled learners and their parents and much has already been done. Some areas of the school, however, are not fully accessible to wheelchair users because the corridors are far too narrow and this poses a problem for the school.
- 137 The school is good at helping pupils to recognise and respect diversity in the wider world. The promotion of pupils' understanding of living as part of a multi-ethnic, multi-faith society, however, is underdeveloped.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 138 The findings of the inspection team match the school's judgement in the self-evaluation report.
- 139 The school is well led and the head teacher gives it positive direction and purpose. She has a clear vision which is set in the context of Christian values and is shared by the staff. The school's mission statement which reflects its Christian ethos and its role in the parish and in the community is translated into clearly expressed aims and objectives.
- 140 The head teacher displays a commitment to the school and her professional attitude provides a good role model for both staff and pupils. School documentation is thorough and meticulously kept. This sense of order and attention to detail is reflected in every aspect of the life and work of the school.
- 141 The head teacher and staff are successful in creating a good ethos based on sound values which are evident in the life and work of the school. They have succeeded also in creating a caring and stimulating environment which promotes effective learning and ensures equality for all.
- 142 The head teacher manages staff very well and members of staff share her values about teaching and learning and work well as a team. Subject co-ordinators have management roles which are clearly defined. They monitor their subjects in accordance with the school's monitoring programme; the core subjects are monitored every year and other subjects over a three year period. Co-ordinators produce effective, whole-school subject reports which identify strengths and weaknesses and they set targets for improvement; these targets are included in the SDP
- 143 All staff are involved in analysing performance data and in setting challenging yet realistic targets for improvement which acknowledge the nature of the cohort. End of key stage predictions are constantly kept under review and revised according to pupils' progress.
- 144 The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor the performance of individual members of staff and set targets which reflect both the school's priorities and individuals' needs.
- 145 The school responds well to national priorities and places particular emphasis on standards in literacy and numeracy which it constantly seeks to improve. The school effectively promotes pupils' awareness of sustainable development and pupils develop a good awareness of citizenship and responsibility through the work of the school council.

- 146 The governing body is very supportive of the head teacher and staff and fully meets all statutory and legal requirements. All statutory and recommended policies, documents and procedures have been adopted and implemented.
- 147 Governors receive comprehensive reports from the head teacher who informs them of all aspects of the school's life and work and the head and chair of governors meet regularly to discuss management issues. Governors contribute to strategic planning through scrutiny of the SDP.
- 148 The governing body and its committees meet regularly and some governors visit the school regularly to monitor the work of the school. They scrutinise performance data and take part in annual performance reviews with the LEA adviser.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 149 The findings of the inspection team match the school's judgement in the self-evaluation report.
- 150 School self-evaluation procedures are well established. The school uses the LEA's comprehensive framework to analyse its performance. Staff meet on designated days to evaluate the work of the school. They agree on strengths and aspects for development. The headteacher and staff analyse NC results and review pupils' performance before setting targets for the end of both key stages.
- 151 Subject co-ordinators monitor standards in their subjects. They scrutinise teachers' termly planning, collect pupils' books and examine them and conduct classroom observations. They use the evidence gathered through monitoring to set targets for improvement. Pupils' progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy, is also monitored by the headteacher.
- 152 All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, complete individual questionnaires. These, however, are not always thoroughly analysed and the comments made by staff about the life and work of the school are not considered sufficiently. Parents' views are also gathered by questionnaire while pupils' views are sought through the school council. The views of individual governors, the parish and the community are not sought.
- 153 The school makes effective use of the information it collects and there is a close link between self-evaluation, the SDP, performance management and in-service training.
- 154 The SDP is a comprehensive document which notes clearly the school's priorities for improvement. It contains targets for each NC subject together with others which refer to whole-school aspects such as monitoring and attendance. The plan includes detailed success criteria and costs. It includes no quantitative targets, however, other than for attendance. Progress against the targets in the SDP is regularly reviewed.

- 155 The school has made a considerable investment in resources to support teaching and learning in the areas identified in its recent SDPs, for example, in mathematics, literacy, geography and IT. There is sound evidence that the actions taken have led to measurable improvements. For example, standards have risen in IT and pupils achieve very good standards by the end of KS2.
- 156 The school's self-evaluation report is a structured and comprehensive document. It clearly indicates the school's strengths and the areas where it needs to improve. The inspection team agrees with the school's judgements in six out of the seven key questions and has raised the grade in Key Question 3.
- 157 The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues in the last inspection report.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 158 The findings of the inspection team match the school's judgement in the self-evaluation report.
- 159 The school has adequate staff to support the number of pupils on roll. Teachers are suitably qualified and have detailed job descriptions which note their curricular responsibilities. The deployment of teachers, however, does not always make the best use of their expertise.
- 160 Teachers demonstrate commitment to the school and the classroom assistants work well alongside the teachers giving good support to the pupils; they make an effective contribution to the work of the school.
- 161 There are appropriate arrangements for the continuous professional development of staff. In-service training is held both in school and externally to meet the professional development needs of the staff and the programme is linked appropriately to the priorities in the SDP.
- 162 The secretary, midday supervisors, caretaker and cleaners fulfil their duties effectively. The school is kept in an orderly and clean condition.
- 163 The school has a good supply of resources to support the NC and for extra-curricular activities. The condition and quality of resources, all of which are easily accessible to pupils, reflect the school's commitment to high expectations and standards in all areas of the curriculum.
- 164 The classrooms are of appropriate size for the number on roll and the imaginative use of displays of pupils' work and other learning materials create a stimulating educational environment. The corridors, however, are extremely narrow and would make movement around the school by disabled pupils virtually impossible.
- 165 Effective use is made of all school resources in order to promote high standards. The school site is very pleasant being surrounded on three sides by mature, attractive

trees; the other side affords a magnificent view of the valley. There is also a playing field which is well used in summer but which tends to retain water in winter. The school makes effective use of its grounds and the surfaces of both KS1 and KS2 yards are in a good condition. The enclosed play area for the under-fives is spacious and the large, covered outdoor area is an asset and is used regularly.

- 166 The headteacher, governors and subject co-ordinators ensure that sufficient resources are available to support the school's curriculum priorities.
- 167 The school has adopted effective procedures for managing teachers' PPA time in accordance with statutory requirements.
- 168 The school monitors the use of its resources well. The headteacher and the governors manage the budget effectively and the school ensures good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Under 5s

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 169 Baseline assessments on entry to the nursery indicate that many children enter school with language skills that are below and often well below average and have a very limited knowledge and understanding of the world outside their own immediate locality.
- 170 Despite this fact, the overall quality of the educational provision for the under fives is appropriate to their needs and they make good, progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards of achievement across the early years are good and sometimes very good.

Language, literacy and communication skills

Nursery	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Reception	Grade 1	Good with outstanding features

Good and outstanding features

- 171 Children in the nursery and reception classes are making good and very good progress respectively in this area of their learning. Their bilingual skills are developing well.
- 172 In the nursery, children listen attentively because they are interested and motivated. They are eager to speak in lessons and to each other because they are provided with so many interesting and stimulating experiences. They enjoy stories and books, becoming engrossed in the content, and understand that print carries meaning. They name many single letter sounds. They also enjoy trying out their early writing skills.
- 173 In the reception class, children build very well on their previous knowledge and skills. With few exceptions they speak clearly and express their ideas with a broader vocabulary, for example, when retelling in detail their experiences in a recent snowfall. They ask appropriate questions and listen very carefully.
- 174 Children enjoy the humour in their reading books and talk very confidently about characters and plot relating the main events in the story in great detail. Many already have a bank of familiar words and are extremely enthusiastic readers. They recognise simple rhyming sounds such as 'hat/ cat'. The vast majority form clear legible letters when they write simple sentences independently. They also write for a range of purposes, for example, lists, recipes and letters.
- 175 By the end of the reception class, standards of achievement in Welsh are very good.

Shortcomings

- 176 Many nursery children have a limited vocabulary when speaking and their speech is often unclear.

Personal and social development

Nursery	Grade 1	Good with outstanding features
Reception	Grade 1	Good with outstanding features

Good and outstanding features

- 177 This area is a great strength of the school's provision in the early years. In both the nursery and reception classes children make very good progress and by the end of the reception class their standards of achievement are very good. The strong, supportive relationships that prevail in both classes promote and greatly enhance the children's learning.
- 178 In the nursery children play happily and independently in their groups. They behave exceptionally well. They wait to take their turn and share materials and equipment very sensibly. They concentrate very well and show a very high degree of perseverance in their tasks. They are very curious and eager to find things out for themselves.
- 179 In the reception class children are very confident learners who are proud of their achievements and eager to show them off. Their behaviour is excellent; they respond well to the rules of the classroom and demonstrate great courtesy and consideration towards their friends. Children's role-play is purposeful and they co-operate very well. Children are actively engaged and very well motivated. They enjoy new experiences and engage in activities with high levels of confidence. Children work very well together, ask a variety of perceptive questions, for example, about the strength and suitability of materials for a specific purpose and try to solve independently any problems that they perceive.

Shortcomings

- 180 There are no significant shortcomings.

Mathematical development

Nursery	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Reception	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 181 In both the nursery and reception classes, children make good progress in their learning and standards of achievement are good. They sing a range of number rhymes and songs enthusiastically.

- 182 Nursery children count competently and recognise number symbols to 5. More able children count to 6 and beyond. They are beginning to develop vocabulary to describe shape and size and a number of positional words.
- 183 Reception children already display good mental agility. They count and recognise numbers to 20. More able children are familiar with higher numbers. They identify numbers that are one more or less than a given number and find the missing number in a sequence. They count back from a given number and identify when the numbers were getting bigger or smaller. They subtract by counting backwards and by taking one number away. The more able subtract mentally. Their concepts of shape, size and measurement are developing well.

Shortcomings

- 184 There are no significant shortcomings

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Nursery	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Reception	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 185 In both the nursery and reception classes children make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world around them because their experiences excite and motivate them. They are curious about the wider world and experiment and explore it as they go out into the school grounds and the locality, regularly visiting parks and shops.
- 186 In the nursery, children describe, in simple terms, how to journey from one part of the school to another. They identify parts of the school from photographs. Many describe features of their walk from home to school. They learn about the world of work through their topic work on people who help us. After a visit from the road safety officer they engage in role play in the outside classroom to help them develop suitable road safety skills. Children's technological skills are developing well and they use a mouse independently to move clothes across the computer screen to dress teddy.
- 187 In the reception class, children's learning is enriched through talking to visitors from outside the school. They display a good knowledge of road safety issues. Before making Welsh cakes they independently wash their hands because they are aware of the importance of hygiene. They begin to appreciate change over time when, after looking at growth and change in their own lives, they examine the life of a butterfly. They know a number of Old Testament stories, for example, the story of Moses. They further develop their knowledge of the Bible and Christianity by discussing the baptism of Jesus and important Christian ceremonies.
- 188 Children's geographical skills are developing well when, after a visit to the local park, they identify features they have seen on the way. Scientific skills develop effectively when children sort objects into magnetic and non-magnetic. They control a computer

mouse independently to draw a recognisable picture, select and change colour and print their work.

Shortcomings

189 There are no significant shortcomings.

Creative development

Nursery	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Reception	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

190 In both the nursery and reception classes, children make good progress in their learning and standards of achievement are good.

191 Nursery children name the musical instruments they choose to accompany their songs, and hold them appropriately. They think carefully about which instrument to choose to make splashing sound to accompany their frog song. They identify loud and soft sounds. They print, make 3D models, for example of the road crossing patrol person, and they play creatively in a range of role play situations.

192 Reception children correctly describe which instruments they can tap, shake or bang. They accurately sort instruments into those categories and identify which instruments make loud or soft sounds. They keep a steady rhythm and beat, use body actions confidently to accompany their songs and sing enthusiastically and accurately. They are eager to record their performance on the digital video camera and later they thoughtfully evaluate each other's work. They choose colour carefully to create imaginative paintings and their colour mixing skills are developing well. Children paint boldly and competently create a kite from recyclable materials.

Shortcomings

193 There are no significant shortcomings.

Physical development

Nursery	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Reception	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

194 Children make good progress in their physical skills and standards of achievement are good by the end of the reception class. In both classes children enjoy outdoor play.

195 In the nursery, children play confidently with a range of equipment and apparatus. They are learning how to experiment with different ways of moving. They show a good degree of co-ordination as they confidently jump using feet together and from one foot to the other, and as they run, hop and skip using bold arm movements while

playing with streamers. They show good control of their bodies when they balance on one foot for a short time.

- 196 Children are already developing a small bank of suitable positional language. They catch and throw a range of big balls with some accuracy. Some bat a ball with ease. They develop their hand-eye co-ordination skills well when they play with a range of jigsaws, small tools and equipment.
- 197 Reception children move spontaneously and with confidence within a given space. They respond well in dance to the rhythm of a song as they march around the hall and enjoy their activities. With few exceptions they adjust direction appropriately to avoid one another. They enjoy experimenting with different ways of moving and they combine and repeat movements well, demonstrating a good degree of control and co-ordination as they 'stretch tall and curl small'. Boys and girls work well together and evaluate each others' work sensibly. Fine motor skills are developing well and, with few exceptions, pencil control is good.

Shortcomings

- 198 The spatial awareness of some children in reception is underdeveloped.

English

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

Good features

- 199 Pupils make good progress in their speaking, reading and writing skills across the school. They make very good progress with their listening skills. They work productively and understand that language is used for a wide range of purposes. They use computer programs effectively to extend and develop their language skills.
- 200 KS1 pupils build on their skills of speaking across the key stage and by the end of Y2, with only a few exceptions, they speak clearly and are able to communicate their wishes and ideas well. They are extremely keen to contribute to discussion and they speak confidently to visitors.
- 201 Pupils' speaking skills are also good in KS 2, particularly towards the end of the key stage. Pupils contribute thoughtfully and confidently in lessons and they express their views and ideas articulately.
- 202 Pupils in KS1 have very good listening skills because they build continuously on the very good progress which they made in the early years. They listen attentively to their teachers and to the contributions of others.
- 203 In KS2, pupils listen with interest when others are speaking and they thoughtfully evaluate what has been said before they respond. Conversations with Y6 pupils are informative and lively.

- 204 Reading skills are good because pupils are encouraged to read daily, both in school and at home with their families. Reading records show that pupils across the school read a large number of both fiction and non-fiction books and pupils say that they enjoy both.
- 205 By Y2, many pupils read with accuracy and have the phonic skills to identify unfamiliar words. A large number read with expression and fluency and several pupils are proud that they only need help with a few words. They have good recall of stories they know and talk about the context and characters of their stories enthusiastically. Younger pupils identify a number of features which are found in traditional tales and, in 'talking pairs', they confidently create suitable characters for their own tales which they are keen to read to the rest of the class.
- 206 Pupils in KS 2 read with obvious enjoyment. They talk knowledgeably about their books, which are mainly self-chosen. They show more advanced reading skills when they use computers and books independently to search for information on their chosen topics in subjects across the curriculum. Many use the library van that calls at the school.
- 207 Pupils in KS1 progress well with their writing skills overall because they enjoy writing for such a wide range of purposes. More able pupils write at length, enthusiastically, quickly and fairly accurately. Spelling is often good and grammatical conventions are used appropriately. Handwriting is clear and shows consistent and accurate letter formation and work is always well-presented. Less able pupils are supported very well when they write and outcomes often match those of the more able pupils, although they do not write at the same length.
- 208 In KS2, pupils continue to build well on their writing skills to develop their poetry, character descriptions, narrative pieces, play scripts, reports and explanations. When older pupils record information they have researched about highwaymen they share their ideas competently and create powerful imagery in their own verses. They use adjectives and connectives effectively to make their text more interesting.
- 209 Pupils in Y6 show a good understanding of the differences between biographies and autobiographies. They empathise in their writing with the feelings of Gulliver when he is tied down and with Macbeth when he explores his conscience. They use a rich vocabulary to describe these feelings. Writing shows a logical organisation with an assured use of writing conventions. Pupils use a confident selection of vocabulary and dialogue is well used for effect and to engage the reader. After evaluating the quality of their writing, pupils are adept at making improvements and redrafting their work. In these instances written work is of a very high quality.
- 210 Pupils with EAL make good progress in their speaking, reading and writing.

Shortcomings

- 211 The speech patterns of a small number of pupils in KS 1 are immature, particularly at the beginning of Y1. Pupils use a limited vocabulary and their comments often lack detail.
- 212 Some pupils in both key stages do not read with fluency and expression.

- 213 Some pupils are not familiar with library coding systems and how this can help them to identify where books can be found.

Welsh second language

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

Good features

- 214 In KS1, pupils sing a range of Welsh songs enthusiastically and with obvious enjoyment.
- 215 They confidently read a big book with the teacher. They also read individual words on flashcards confidently and accurately and match words well to objects.
- 216 Pupils state their preferences by saying accurately and, in many instances, with good pronunciation, 'Dw i'n hoffi ...' using their vocabulary, for example, names of foods, to complete the sentence.
- 217 They have a good knowledge and understanding of some basic sentence patterns and are able to hold simple conversations in pairs such as 'Prynhawn da, pwy wyt ti? Sut wyt ti? Wyt ti'n hoffi...? Da bo chi.' Partners ask and respond accurately and the conversation flows well.
- 218 Pupils use their knowledge and skills in Welsh incidentally during the day. For example, they ask 'Ga i fynd i'r ty bach?'
- 219 Their knowledge of sentence patterns and vocabulary is reinforced effectively by recording them in writing.
- 220 In KS2, pupils extend their knowledge of sentence patterns to include 'Beth wyt ti'n gwisgo?' and use this in conjunction with their vocabulary related to clothes. Their vocabulary includes various foods and most name an item of food.
- 221 Some pupils respond accurately to questions such as 'Wyt ti'n hoffi ...?' using the correct forms 'Ydw' or 'Nag ydw.'
- 222 Some pupils are able to ask the time correctly using 'Faint o'r gloch ydy hi?' and make correct responses such as 'Mae hi'n un o'r gloch.'
- 223 Throughout the key stage, pupils complete many interesting written exercises some of which reinforce their studies in other subjects, for example, locating towns on a map of Wales and using the patterns 'Ble mae ...?' and 'Rwy'n byw yn ...'
- 224 Pupils with EAL make good progress in learning what is for them a third language.

Shortcomings

- 225 In KS2, some pupils have an insecure knowledge of sentence patterns and vocabulary which limits their ability to speak in Welsh.

226 Pupils make insufficient progress as they proceed through KS2.

Information technology

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

Good and outstanding features

- 227 In both key stages pupils make good progress in the development of their information technology skills across the school. Pupils towards the end of KS2 make very good progress.
- 228 Younger pupils in KS1 have good keyboard skills and they are adept at using the mouse. They confidently demonstrate these skills when using an interactive white board and controlling a digital video camera to record, save and display their work in music. They use art and modelling programs effectively to drag and drop graphics to a suitable position and to create interesting patterns. Their self-portraits are well formed and colourful and pupils are skilled at changing colour.
- 229 Older pupils work independently, collaboratively and effectively to create their own writing on a word program. They confidently use the appropriate keys to change font, correct mistakes, save their work and print it. They further develop their skills when they create a recognisable portrait of a fire fighter. They fully understand that pictures can be created using the pen, brush and other tools. They navigate a suitable website to access information, and copy and paste it into their own work.
- 230 Younger pupils in KS 2 understand well that messages can be sent long distances as they write to pupils in their partner school. They know when new mail has arrived, open it, read it and save it on a memory stick or floppy disk. They clearly understand how to create and attach photographs and other attachments onto their e-mails. They improve the quality of their history work when they competently insert graphics to support their own writing on The Plague.
- 231 Older pupils in KS 2 enhance their mathematical skills well when they construct a spreadsheet to calculate proposed holiday expenses for a family showing a very good understanding of the layout of cells. They quickly and accurately change the formula to enter new data, modify data where necessary and calculate the sum. They use a range of programs in geography, for example, to create plans of their living rooms. They demonstrate a very clear understanding of use of a multi-media template when they build backgrounds, borders and graphics to illustrate their stories, reports and poetry.
- 232 KS2 pupils use a search engine successfully and independently to research and gather data in order to produce an information sheet on Wales. They display excellent skills when using the minimise function to incorporate texts, graphics, and pictures into their work. They reorganise and analyse information very well, working effectively between two programs at any given time. They use correct terminology when they describe the recent Power Point presentation which they compiled and

when describing how they gathered information and photographs for the school website. They are very skilled at using the digital video camera and are eager to take turns to record aspects of their work in lessons which they evaluate together later when they present it on the interactive whiteboard. In these instances, work is outstanding because pupils control and use the software and hardware completely independently.

233 Pupils with EAL make good progress in acquiring IT skills.

Shortcomings

234 There are no significant shortcomings

Geography

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

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

Good features

235 In KS1, pupils make effective use of second hand evidence and recall in detail what they saw on their visit to the local park including the various signs they saw both in the park and on the road.

236 Pupils list and describe accurately the features they saw in the park and confidently express their opinions of these.

237 They thoughtfully consider the improvements they would like to make in order to make the park a more attractive and interesting place and confidently share their views with their peers.

238 Pupils accurately record temperatures over one week and note the areas of the school grounds which are in sunshine or shadow during the day.

239 They develop good geographical skills by drawing a plan of their classroom and of various objects when viewed from above. Their understanding is reinforced by examining aerial photographs of the school and its environment.

240 In KS2, pupils know well the weather symbols used by weather forecasters and use related terminology accurately.

241 They have a good knowledge and understanding of differing weather patterns across the world, for example, extreme conditions which caused land slides in Brazil, bush fires in Australia and flooding in the UK.

242 Pupils understand the different uses of land and, following detailed discussion of the issues, they present sensible arguments for and against the building of houses on the local park.

- 243 They know the meaning of the term 'regeneration' and have a good understanding of the impact of a new retail park on the environment and the economy of their town.
- 244 Pupils develop their geographical skills well, for example, when locating Merthyr Tydfil on a map of Wales. They then make effective use of local maps and use grid references accurately to locate features in the local area. They understand symbols found on Ordnance Survey maps.
- 245 They listen attentively to a radio bulletin indicating conditions on the roads of Wales and advising drivers to take alternative routes where possible to avoid delays. On the basis that an accident has closed a main road, they use maps to plan alternative routes to school from a given location giving accurate directions.
- 246 Pupils produce good written reports in the style of a radio bulletin using words like 'congestion' accurately in context.
- 247 Pupils accurately compare and contrast the area of Cardiff Bay with their own town.
- 248 Older pupils in KS2 have a good knowledge of the island of St Lucia. They accurately compare its geographical features with that of Wales.
- 249 Pupils with EAL make good progress in developing their geographical knowledge and skills.

Shortcomings

- 250 There are no significant shortcomings

Physical education

- 251 The full range of the work was not seen during the inspection, but in the work seen standards were judged as follows:

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

Good features

- 252 In KS1, pupils display good spatial awareness and make effective use of the whole floor area.
- 253 Pupils understand well the effect of exercise on the body. They extend their limbs in order to warm their muscles and move lightly on the spot, shifting their weight easily from one foot to the other.
- 254 They move well around the hall with good control of speed and direction demonstrating a good awareness of others.
- 255 Pupils bounce balls accurately demonstrating good control and hand-eye co-ordination. They work effectively in pairs bouncing balls to each other with good control of the direction and height of the bounce.

- 256 In KS2, pupils demonstrate a good awareness of health and safety issues when working outdoors.
- 257 Some pupils display good ball-control and apply these effectively in a game situation. They run well into space to receive a pass. Some demonstrate good passing skills in football using the side of the foot for accuracy.
- 258 Most pupils understand well that players must communicate with one another, making eye contact and being prepared at all times to receive the ball.
- 259 School records show that pupils in KS2 make good progress in swimming.
- 260 Pupils with EAL make good progress in developing their physical education skills.

Shortcomings

- 261 In KS2, some pupils do not concentrate or make sufficient effort to improve their skills and this impairs standards achieved.
- 262 Some KS2 pupils cannot control or pass a ball accurately over a short distance and their ball skills are underdeveloped.

School's response to the inspection

The governors and staff are delighted that the inspection findings recognise that the school has made good progress in addressing the key issues of the last inspection report. The inspectors describe St Aloysius as a good school with a number of outstanding features. Particularly pleasing is the recognition that the standard of teaching has many outstanding features including the high level of challenge, dynamic interaction with pupils and the use of very effective strategies to ensure that the teachers get the very best from all their pupils. The percentage of teaching that is Grade 2 or better is considerably higher than the averages for the whole of Wales. Standards in lessons observed, judged to be grade 2 and above are much higher than the Welsh Assembly Government targets for all Wales by 2007.

The report acknowledges that the provision for pupils' additional learning needs is outstanding and that pupils make outstanding progress in their personal and social skills. The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is also outstanding. This acknowledges the school's effort to live its mission statement which places the child's Christian and educational development at its core. The report confirms the excellent relationship between staff and pupils which contribute significantly to the quality of life in the school where each member of the school community feels valued and respected. It confirms that the school has a warm, caring ethos.

An Action Plan to address the recommendations in the report will be prepared by the Governing Body and will constitute an important part of the School Development Plan for 2007/2008 and beyond. The school has begun to introduce strategies to improve standards in Welsh Second Language and pupils' bi-lingual skills. A review of staff deployment in order to maximise teachers' expertise has already commenced.

A copy of the school's actions to implement the inspectors' recommendations will be sent to all parents. The Governors' annual report to parents will report on the progress the school is making in addressing those recommendations.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	St Aloysius Primary School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3 – 11 years
Address of school	Cedar Way, Gurnos Estate Merthyr Tydfil
Postcode	CF47 9PA
Telephone number	01685 721741

Headteacher	Mrs C A Bowen
Date of appointment	January 1995
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs Faye Wallen
Registered inspector	Mr Robert Jones
Dates of inspection	26 – 28 February 2007

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	27	16	19	22	17	22	20	27	170

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)	20:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	13:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	n/a
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	28
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of School
Spring 2006	88	90	89
Summer 2006	89	89	89
Autumn 2006	91	94	94

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	43
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 2006			Number of		17		
			pupils in Y2:				
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	4	12	64	20
		National	0	4	12	64	20
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	4	14	56	26
		National	0	4	14	56	27
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	5	14	69	12
		National	0	5	14	69	12
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	11	64	23
		National	0	2	11	64	23
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	10	63	24
		National	0	2	10	64	24
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	9	65	24
		National	0	2	9	66	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	71	In Wales	81

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

National Curriculum Assessment Results
End of Key Stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2006			Number of pupils in Y6		17						
Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	6	0	0	0	0	0	23	47	24
		National	0	0	2	0	1	4	15	46	31
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	6	0	0	0	0	0	29	41	24
		National	0	0	2	0	1	3	15	47	32
Science	Teacher assessment	School	6	0	0	0	0	0	29	30	35
		National	0	0	2	0	0	2	11	51	34

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	65	In Wales	72

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

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

The inspection team included three inspectors who were present for a total of seven inspection days. A peer assessor joined the team for three days and took a full part in the inspection. During the inspection:

- pre-inspection meetings were held with the head teacher, teachers, parents and the governing body to discuss the life and work of the school;
- 33 questionnaires were completed by parents and thoroughly analysed;
- school policies and documents were examined;
- discussions were held with the head teacher and curriculum co-ordinators;
- 34 sessions or part-sessions of teaching were observed;
- pupils were heard reading and discussions were held with them about their work as part of the examination of standards in National Curriculum subjects;
- examples of the pupils' work were studied in each class;
- attendance registers, pupils' records and teachers' planning files were inspected;
- inspectors were present at all whole-school acts of collective worship;
- post-inspection meetings were held with the staff and the governing body.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Robert H Jones Registered Inspector	Context Summary and Recommendations Key Questions 1, 5, 6 and 7 Welsh second language Geography Physical Education
Mrs Kay Andrews Team Inspector	Key Questions 2,3 and 4 Under fives English Information technology
Mr Kerry Jones Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3 and 4
Mrs Karen Evans	Peer Assessor
Mrs Ann Bowen	Nominee

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

Acknowledgement

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