

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

**St Mark's V.A.Primary School  
St Issell's Avenue,  
Merlin's Bridge,  
Haverfordwest,  
Pembrokeshire.  
SA61 1JX**

**School Number: 668/3320**

**Date of Inspection: 21/11/05**

**by**

**Michael Thomas Ridout  
78730**

**Date of Publication: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2006**

**Under Estyn contract number: 1105405**

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- \* independent schools;
- \* further education;
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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gsi.gov.uk)

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St Marks V.A.P. 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 Marks V.A.P. School took place between 21/11/05 and 23/11/05. An independent team of inspectors, led by Michael Thomas Ridout undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

**Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All 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 Mark's is a voluntary aided Church-in-Wales primary school for boys and girls aged from three to eleven years. It is organised in five mixed-age classes. In addition, the local education authority (LEA) provides a class for up to eight pupils with special educational needs (SEN). In total, there are 120 full-time equivalent (fte) pupils on roll, including 14 nursery age children who attend part-time. The average class size, excluding the SEN class, is 23. There are five full-time and four part-time teachers (7.2 fte including the headteacher) plus five learning support assistants (LSA). The deputy is participating in a one-year teacher exchange. The governing body (GB) currently deploys his replacement in a supernumerary role.

2. The school, built in 1982 to a contemporary design, is situated in Merlin's Bridge, on the outskirts of Haverfordwest. The area is mainly residential and includes a number of business and manufacturing premises. The school is on the edge of a large housing estate of mostly rented homes. The area also includes a variety of owner occupied houses. The majority of pupils come from the immediate area with a number coming from further a field.

3. The school confirms that pupils come from a range of backgrounds with a number having relatively disadvantaged homes. Twenty-eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is above national and local averages. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities, a small number is in the care the local authority and around 10% are from Traveller families. No pupils come from homes where Welsh is the first language. English is the predominant tongue and the school teaches Welsh as a second language.

4. The school receives pupils from the full range of abilities. A range of assessment data confirms this. During the last academic year around 30% of pupils were identified as having SEN. A recent review (Autumn 2005) finds 52% of pupils with SEN. This is a significantly higher proportion than that found in most schools. No pupils have a statement of SEN.

5. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark. It was last inspected in November 1999. The number of pupils attending the school has declined in recent years. Following the appointment of the present headteacher a number of staff and organisational changes have been made.

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

6. The school has clear aims and its work is guided by its mission statement:  
*In partnership with the parents and local community, the Governors and staff of St Mark's School aim to equip pupils to be responsible, caring, independent and well educated, in accordance with a Christian lifestyle, founded in the Anglican tradition so that they can make a positive, worthwhile contribution to society.'*
7. The school development plan (SDP) 2005 – 2006 sets priorities to:
- significantly reduce the number of exclusions at the school through implementing a more successful behaviour modification programme;
  - further raise standards of teaching and learning at the school;
  - work towards a whole school approach to inclusion;
  - raise the profile of the school within the local community;
  - encourage a visually stimulating environment that is conducive to learning;
  - be more proactive regarding St Marks' status as a Church-in-Wales School;
  - promote family numeracy basic skills.

## Summary

8. Skilful leadership inspires an ethos of teamwork, high expectations and strong commitment to revitalise and enliven learning opportunities at Saint Mark's.

9. Recent and rapid improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes are reflected in a renewed sense of purpose and enthusiasm that permeates the school. Most importantly this change is recognised by pupils and puts the school in a good position to raise standards.

### Table of grades awarded

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

10. The overall judgements of the inspection, for the seven key questions, are largely in accord with the school's self-evaluation report. Inspectors judge a higher grade for key questions four and seven and a lower grade for key question three.

### Standards

11. In 30 lessons or parts of lessons observed standards in the areas of learning and the National Curriculum (NC) subjects inspected were judged:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	33%	47%	17%	-

12. The educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

13. Standards in the six areas of learning for the under-fives were judged:

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

14. Standards in the five NC subjects inspected were judged:

<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Key Stage 1</b>	<b>Key Stage 2</b>
English	Grade 3	Grade 3
Welsh second language	Grade 3	Grade 4
Design and technology	Grade 3	Grade 3
Geography	Grade 3	Grade 3
Music	Grade 3	Grade 4

15. In both key stages, standards of achievement are widely variable. Recent assessments indicate that many pupils' current levels of attainment are well below their capabilities and national expectations.

16. The strong emphasis on good behaviour and the development of learning skills is clearly reflected in pupils' current work and their approach to learning.

17. In English, speaking and listening skills are developing from a low base. Reading develops at a steady pace, but there are shortcomings in writing and presentational skills.

18. In Welsh as a second language, speaking, listening and writing skills are generally under-developed.

19. In design and technology, pupils achieve good results in making products, they recount recent work in geography well and in music they make good progress in learning new songs. However, their subject knowledge and ability to communicate information is limited. This hampers achievement in most subjects.

20. Pupils achieve well in using information and communications technology (ICT). Their competence in using the key skills of literacy and numeracy across other subjects is less well developed.

21. Pupils respond well to hearing Welsh phrases, but overall their competence in using bilingual skills remains under-developed.

22. The majority of pupils with SEN are now making good progress in relation to their needs and targets. To promote good progress for all, the school is also improving the match and challenge of work for pupils of average and above average ability.

23. The results of the 2005 end of KS1 and KS2 NC assessments in English, mathematics and science, when compared with national figures for the previous year, indicate results well below average. In comparison with similar schools having between 25% and 28% free school meals these results are in the lower quartile based on the 2004 figures.

24. Trends in performance have remained below the national picture over recent years.

25. The school is energetically tackling all aspects of underachievement. Progress in the acquisition of knowledge and skills is improving this term.

26. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. This is a huge improvement. High expectations of behaviour enable pupils to engage productively in learning for longer periods. The majority are developing the ability to sustain concentration but a minority sometimes presents challenging behaviour. This overall improvement must now continue.

27. Pupils' ability to work independently is under-developed.

28. The attendance rates for the past academic year average 90% and they are improving steadily this term. Despite the best efforts of the school, a minority of pupils arrives late for the start of the school day.

29. The school suitably prepares pupils to play an active role in the local community.

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

30. The proportion of Grade 1 and Grade 2 teaching observed is close to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) target of 65% Grade 2 or better teaching to be achieved by 2007.

31. In 33 lessons or parts of lessons across the school teaching was judged:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
6%	55%	39%	-	-

32. Teachers are skilful in establishing good working relationships with pupils and in most subjects they have good knowledge and expertise. They manage pupils' behaviour very well. The learning support assistants (LSA) make a very positive contribution to the quality of learning.

33. The updated lesson-planning frameworks used by teachers provide opportunity to define learning objectives, detail organisational arrangements and record day-to-day evaluations of progress.

34. Teachers are energetically developing both medium-term and short-term planning to match more closely the needs of pupils. However, developing the content and challenge of work in a flexible way needs to be continued.

35. There is increasing evidence of the use of targets and prompt sheets to help pupils understand the task, but such good practice is not yet securely established.

36. Whole-school initiatives to promote speaking and listening skills and to help pupils learn more effectively are well planned and implemented.

37. There are systematic arrangements to assess pupils' achievements and progress. The recent implementation of personal and learning targets for pupils is having a beneficial effect in helping them to understand how they can improve their work.

38. The annual written reports to parents are appropriate, but do not contain sufficient details of achievement and progress, particularly in foundation subjects.

39. The curriculum for the under-fives is organised with imagination and care.
40. There are schemes of work in all NC subjects that provide a good basis for planning a broad and relevant curriculum. These are being revised and updated. However, planning has not yet developed sufficiently to ensure progression and coherence in the knowledge and skills promoted across the mixed-age classes.
41. Good attention is given to developing learners' basic and key skills.
42. Pupils are making good progress in their personal, moral and social development. This provision is having a most beneficial effect and their understanding of different cultures is being successfully developed. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is well promoted.
43. Pupils' learning experiences are greatly enhanced by the visits they make, by visitors to school and by the stimulating range of extra-curricular opportunities offered to them.
44. Pupils are responding well to the opportunities they have to take responsibility and share in making decisions within their school.
45. The school's partnerships with parents, the local community and other schools are good. Communication with parents is very effective.
46. Pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship is good.
47. The high quality of pastoral guidance is having a remarkable impact on the school's ethos this term. The school provides a supportive, safe and caring environment.
48. There is good liaison between the school and a number of support services. The regular involvement of specialists' impacts positively on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. High priority is given to implementing the personal and social education (PSE) programme.
49. A very good system for identifying pupil's individual learning needs has been implemented by the school. The organisation of the provision to support pupils with SEN is very well considered and promotes an inclusive approach.
50. The ethos of the school promotes acceptance and understanding of the diversity of pupils' own cultural backgrounds.

### **Leadership and management**

51. The recently appointed headteacher provides inspirational leadership in developing renewed confidence and vigour across the school. Anecdotal evidence consistently states the school has improved; *it's a different place*.
52. The recent impact of leadership is outstanding. In particular, clear direction and guidance for staff is now in place to promote pupils' good behaviour. The headteacher leads by example in implementing these procedures.

53. The leadership's vision for a calm well-ordered and purposeful school is effectively communicated across the school community. The drive to secure this vision needs to continue to impact fully on standards.

54. The assessment data available is now being analysed in order to set realistic and challenging targets to raise standards. This process is at an early stage.

55. The GB has supported the school well this term in ensuring expenditure and the deployment of staff is adjusted to meet particular needs. The strategic deployment of resources is having a very positive impact.

56. Systems to monitor and evaluate provision and standards are being developed. The school is now in a position to continue structuring the way ahead through more-detailed, strategic action planning in the areas already identified in the SDP.

57. The school is well staffed, there are sufficient learning resources and the accommodation provides a suitable setting for good teaching.

58. The school has made insufficient improvement since the last inspection in 1999. It has therefore failed to provide good value for money for some time. However, recent improvements place the school in a favourable position to provide value for money once standards rise.

## Recommendations

59. In order to raise standards further and improve the quality of education, the school should place particular emphasis on:

- R1 maintaining the recent improvements in, and improving further, pupils' attitudes and behaviour to ensure they develop the skills to enable them:
- to work productively and make good progress;
  - to study with appropriate independence both individually and collaboratively;
  - to build up the ability to use planning, research and problem-solving skills;
  - to organise and present their work well;
- R2 giving high priority to improving pupils' literacy skills and thereby raising standards in subjects where shortcomings are identified;
- R3 continuing to develop schemes of work to guide medium-term planning and ensure continuity and progression in learning across the mixed-age classes;
- R4 disseminating best practice in teaching and developing the use of lesson planning frameworks to match work more closely to pupils differing needs and abilities;
- R5 extending the school development plan (SDP) by structuring whole-school improvement initiatives through more-detailed, strategic action planning over the medium-term;
- R6 closely linking arrangements for monitoring and evaluation to the school's key priorities in an extended SDP.

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 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

60. The findings of the inspection match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. The overall grade for this key question takes careful account of the relatively low standards achieved by many pupils, in relation to their capabilities at the beginning of this term, and the recent improvements in their learning.

61. In 30 lessons or parts of lessons standards in the six areas of learning and the NC subjects inspected were judged:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	33%	47%	17%	-

62. Children under five achieve good standards in the six areas of learning and make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes. They achieve well in developing basic and key skills such as communicating their needs and using the computer to control and create effects on screen.

63. In both key stages, standards of achievement are widely variable. A recent audit of pupils' learning needs identifies that more than half of them have SEN. The results establish the extent of pupils' underachievement in relation to their capabilities, as evidenced through standardised assessments.

64. Although the school exceeded its 2005 end of Key stage 2 (KS2) targets in English, mathematics and science the standards attained were low compared with the national picture. The average for the number of pupils attaining expected levels in the three core subjects over the last three years is 45.7%. This is significantly below the average for Wales.

65. The strong emphasis on good behaviour and the development of learning skills this term is clearly reflected in pupils' current work and their approach to learning. In around one in three lessons observed the majority of pupils made good progress.

66. Gains in achievement across the five NC subjects inspected address shortcomings in pupils' prior attainment. In English and Welsh, oracy skills are under-developed, reading develops at a steady pace and both writing and presentational skills have weaknesses. In design and technology, pupils achieve good results in making products, but their knowledge of process and their ability to communicate ideas is limited.

67. In geography, pupils recall elements of fieldwork well, but their ability to use appropriate vocabulary and enquiry skills limits overall achievement. In music, pupils sing well as they learn new songs but their skills in composing, performing and appraising are at an early stage.

68. In using information and communications technology (ICT), pupils often achieve well in the key skills of using a range of programs to support their learning. Competence in the use of the key skills of literacy and numeracy across other subjects is less well developed. Pupils are responding to hearing Welsh phrases used informally during the day, but overall their confidence and competence in using bilingual skills remain under-developed.

69. The majority of pupils identified as having SEN are now making good progress in relation to their needs and targets. Pupils receiving tuition in the small *pride group* make good progress in their basic skills and because the success in their learning leads to increased self-confidence they develop a more positive attitude to their schoolwork. They are making very good progress in their personal skills, such as working cooperatively in practical tasks.

70. Effective strategies to promote inclusion this term increasingly ensure all pupils gain success in learning regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background.

71. The results of the 2005 end of KS1 NC teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science, when compared with national figures for the previous year, indicate results well below average. Half of the pupils did not attain the expected Level 2 in English and around three-eighths of them in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools having between 25% and 28% free school meals, these results are in the lower quartile based on the 2004 figures.

72. The 2005 NC results at the end of KS2 confirm attainment in English, mathematics and science is well below national figures for 2004. In comparison with the results of similar schools in 2004, performance is in the lower quartile. The proportion attaining expected levels in the three core subjects, 52%, is well below the national figure for 2004.

73. Trends in performance have remained consistently below the national picture over several years and confirm significant levels of underachievement for many pupils.

74. Analysis of the school's results shows that overall girls attain higher standards than the boys. The school is energetically tackling all aspects of underachievement.

75. Progress in the acquisition of knowledge and skills is improving this term. Pupils are learning how to learn more effectively; in particular they are increasingly supported through the discussion of personal and academic targets to help them understand what they need to do to improve.

76. The evidence of pupils' progress over time is mixed. In recent years, significant numbers have fallen short of their potential and as a consequence were not fully prepared for the next stage of their education.

77. The comments of staff, pupils, parents, governors and visitors to the school consistently confirm that throughout the school, since the beginning of this term, very good progress has been made in improving pupils' standards of behaviour and their

attitudes to learning. This good work needs to continue in order to impact fully on every aspect of the culture of learning in the school.

78. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. This is a huge improvement, as behaviour was judged unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The school now functions well as a caring, supportive and orderly community where pupils feel secure and valued.

79. During the previous academic year, 49 pupils were excluded from school on a temporary basis, a figure far in excess of typical levels of exclusions from primary schools. There have been no exclusions this academic year. The school is determined to maintain this position.

80. The very effective, recent measures put in place to promote good behaviour are consistently implemented and pupils' respond well to the high expectations of the headteacher, teaching and support staff.

81. A clear code of conduct exists and most pupils understand what is expected of them. They are aware of the sanctions imposed for inappropriate behaviour and appreciate the need for class and school rules, which they perceive as fair.

82. The school has successfully implemented a range of strategies to enhance pupils' self-esteem and confidence, especially through circle time and the PSE programme. This has contributed significantly to the positive behaviour of pupils and the quality of life in the school.

83. High expectations of behaviour are enabling pupils to engage productively in learning for longer periods. The majority show interest and are developing the ability to sustain motivation and make good use of lesson time. A minority of pupils, on occasions, is reluctant to comply and sometimes present challenging behaviour.

84. Most pupils now have positive attitudes to learning, are interested in their work and want to succeed. They make good efforts to listen to their teachers and persevere with the tasks set them. This is especially evident when lessons proceed at a brisk pace and when tasks are challenging and well suited to pupils' abilities. On some occasions, when lessons are too long and pupils are required to sit still for too long a period, they become restless and lose interest.

85. Pupils' ability to work independently, to use their own initiative and to make decisions to improve their own learning within lessons is underdeveloped. However, with the improvements in behaviour, pupils are now well placed to develop these aspects of their learning.

86. The attendance rates for the past academic year average 90% and they are improving steadily this term. Around 10% of the registered pupils are traveller children who are absent for significant periods of the school year. This has an impact upon whole-school rates of attendance. Despite the best efforts of the school, a minority of pupils arrives late for the start of the school day.

87. Registration is conducted efficiently and lessons start promptly. The school is working hard to improve attendance rates and complies with attendance

requirements set out in the National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99, Pupil Support and Social Inclusion.

88. Pupils are making good progress in their personal, moral and social development. This development has been enhanced considerably by their access to an effective PSE programme. Pupils understand the need to take responsibility for their actions, to be honest and fair in their dealings with others and to show respect for everyone involved in the school community.

89. In discussion, pupils demonstrate a very clear awareness of equal opportunities issues and feel strongly that everyone should be treated fairly and without favouritism. They appreciate the inclusive nature of their school and value the way their teachers treat all pupils fairly and with respect.

90. The school prepares pupils to play an active role in the life of the local community, and good use is made of the locality as a learning resource. The school is committed to the local community and readily makes its facilities available to local community groups.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

91. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. Teaching builds particularly well on recent training and guidance in managing pupils' behaviour and increasingly provides structured lesson activities that impact positively on the quality of learning.

92. In 33 lessons or parts of lessons across the school teaching was judged:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6%	55%	39%	-	-

93. Teachers are skilful in establishing good working relationships with pupils that foster gains in learning. The experienced LSAs make a significant contribution to this process. This partnership between adults working in the classroom is a notable feature in changing the culture of learning and raising expectations in the school.

94. The recent success in creating calm, well-ordered and purposeful lessons including constructive dialogue with pupils and opportunity for them to achieve their best must now be continued. The enthusiasm and commitment to develop teaching methods further that is evident among staff provides a solid foundation.

95. In most subjects, teachers have good knowledge and expertise. They draw on their wide experience and are keen to embrace best practice, such as in introducing *guided reading*, consistently implementing positive behaviour management strategies and promoting collaborative work.

96. For the most part, lesson planning is appropriately guided by suitable schemes of work and curricular plans. The planning frameworks used by teachers have been updated and provide opportunity to define learning objectives, detail organisational arrangements, including resources, and to record day-to-day evaluations of progress.

97. The required emphasis on managing pupils' behaviour sometimes means that the objectives for lessons are not always clearly explained. There is increasing evidence of the use of targets and prompt sheets to help pupils understand the task but such good practice is not yet securely established.

98. In the most successful and effective lessons a very good range of teaching methods and organisational strategies are used. Lively pace and presentation together with the imaginative use of resources inspire pupils to learn. A key component of effective lessons is the guidance and support provided for pupils when working individually, with a partner or in a small group.

99. The clear focus for teaching and support observed in the *pride class* and in a number of lessons in other classes exemplify the good practice that is being developed in the school. Across the school, teachers frequently make good use of questioning to engage pupils and plenary sessions are used increasingly to assess what pupils have learned and understood.

100. There is good emphasis in all classes on promoting equality of opportunity with pupils often organised in mixed-age, ability and gender groups. The whole-school initiatives to promote speaking and listening skills and to help pupils learn more effectively, such as through working together on cross-curricular projects where pupils make African masks and instruments and create music and dance are being planned and implemented well.

101. Teachers are energetically developing both medium-term and short-term planning to match more closely the needs of pupils. The recent developments are successful in enlivening learning experiences. This was repeatedly confirmed in discussion with pupils.

102. However, developing the content and challenge of work in a flexible way needs to be continued to ensure even more precise account is taken of pupils' differing abilities and needs when setting work and focusing teaching. The use of targeted assessments to help plan subsequent work is at an early stage.

103. In addressing the whole-school priority of improving pupils' communication skills, strong emphasis is placed on developing oracy skills, such as through circle time sessions and class discussions. Appropriate emphasis is given to promoting pupils' bilingual skills. The provision of a specialist teacher for Welsh as a second language offers opportunity to enhance the competence of all staff in the language.

104. There are systematic arrangements to assess pupils' achievements and progress through the use of standardised tests. This process has recently been augmented through the implementation of a detailed screening procedure to identify specific learning needs.

105. The collation and analysis of assessment data is enabling the school to set more detailed, realistic and challenging targets and to focus teaching on particular groups of pupils with scope to improve their levels of attainment.

106. Teachers maintain a range of assessment records, often linked to the programs of study. A variety of systems are being developed. Recent work in compiling portfolios of assessed work demonstrates good use of NC assessment criteria and teachers are increasingly making effective use of marking to praise achievement and point the way forward.

107. The implementation of personal and learning targets for pupils is having a beneficial effect in helping them to understand how they can improve their work.

108. Parents and carers appreciate the opportunities provided to meet staff, both formally and informally, to discuss their children's progress. The provision of homework is appropriate. The annual written reports to parents are informative, but do not contain sufficient details of pupils' achievement and progress, particularly in foundation subjects. The new headteacher has already identified this shortcoming.

109. Taken overall, the school's arrangements for assessment and reporting comply with statutory requirements.

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

**Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings**

110. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report in that the school judged this key question Grade 2. Inspectors commend recent improvements to enrich and enliven pupils' learning experiences. However, the systematic review of whole-school curricular planning needs more time to become securely embedded and impact on standards.

111. The school plans appropriately, in line with pupils' needs and aspirations, to provide a broad and relevant curriculum to which all have equal access. This provision is in line with statutory requirements.

112. The curriculum for the under-fives is organised with imagination and care. The children experience their curriculum in a stimulating environment, both indoors and outside, and these experiences promote their all-round development effectively.

113. There are policies and schemes of work in place for all subjects and most aspects of learning. In general, these provide the necessary framework to guide teachers in planning for progression and continuity in the learning experiences provided for pupils across the school.

114. In the case of several schemes of work, there has been recent revision to make the learning experiences more relevant to the current needs of the pupils. These include English, Welsh as a second language and science, where the revised short-term planning is in the early stages of being implemented. In other areas, such as Early Years and art, the school plans to refresh and update the existing schemes.

115. The organisation of long-term curricular planning is generally based on single year groups and linked to a two-year rolling programme of thematic studies. This planning has not yet developed sufficiently to ensure flexibility and coherence in the knowledge and skills promoted across the thematic work undertaken in the mixed-age classes. This is particularly evident in the achievements of pupils in design and technology and in geography.

116. Good attention is given to developing learners' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Award and is committed to furthering learners' literacy skills. An example of this is the current project to develop speaking and listening skills with all pupils.

117. Opportunities to promote key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are noted consistently in teachers' plans; they are promoted well through subjects and through the pastoral curriculum. For example, many pupils have personal targets that focus on developing a specific key skill, such as listening. This recent initiative is central to the school's current planning to promote key skills effectively across the curriculum.

118. Pupils' learning experiences are greatly enhanced by the visits they make, by visitors to school and by the enriching range of extra-curricular opportunities offered to them. These include sporting and musical activities, chess, Welsh experiences, *FROG Club*<sup>1</sup> and *Buzz Club*<sup>2</sup>. These activities are popular, well attended and contribute well to promoting pupils' personal, social, and cultural development.

119. The strong emphasis given to promoting the school's mission statement and aims, through a whole-school approach to promoting pupils' personal, moral and social development is having a most beneficial effect. This aspect is high on the school's agenda for improvement and the benefits of the consistent support given to pupils, and the high expectations of staff, are evident throughout the life and work of the school. The arrangements for a daily act of collective worship are in line with statutory requirements.

120. Pupils are responding well to the opportunities they have to take responsibility and share in making decisions within their school. Through the Eco, class and school councils, pupils experience the process of democratic elections and are learning to discuss ideas and plan outcomes that affect the school community.

121. The older pupils conscientiously further their personal and social development through taking responsibility for looking after others as playground Buddies, Junior Road Safety Officers, and helping with the under-fives. Younger pupils also enthusiastically undertake appropriate responsibilities, for example as monitors.

122. The school's partnerships with parents, the local community, the receiving secondary school and higher education institutions are good and enrich the work of the school. Many parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the new initiatives and the improvement in behaviour that the school has successfully achieved this term.

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<sup>1</sup> a Christian Club

<sup>2</sup> a club providing activities to challenge pupils' thinking and problem solving skills

123. Communication with parents is very effective. The quality of information provided in the new school prospectus, the annual report of the GB and in the monthly newsletters is of very high quality and provides parents with comprehensive information about the life and work of the school, as well as celebrating pupils' achievements. A constructive home-school agreement is in place, which has been well received by parents.

124. The school enjoys successful working partnerships with other schools in the locality; especially with the secondary school to which pupils transfer. Curriculum, pastoral and administrative links are well developed and help promote continuity of education as pupils move from KS2 to KS3. Close links have also been forged with the pre-school playgroup that meets at the school.

125. The school has an effective partnership with Trinity College, Carmarthen and regularly provides training facilities for student teachers. This partnership has been enriched through enrolment of the school with the college as part of the 'Children's University' programme.

126. The positive links with the community, including the parish church, are effective and the school and its various activities are well supported by the local community.

127. The school is improving pupils' access to the work related curriculum and links with local employers, businesses and industries are being developed. Two members of staff have undertaken relevant industrial placements, which have contributed to their professional development and enriched curriculum provision for pupils.

128. Pupils' understanding of different cultures is being successfully promoted through the cross-curricular focus on Botswana. They have a growing awareness of aspects of their own cultural heritage and traditions in Wales and of the place of the language in a bilingual society. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is well promoted and pupils are beginning to develop bilingual skills through hearing Welsh phrases as part of daily routines.

129. The school makes a strong, positive commitment to tackling social disadvantage and stereotyping. The whole-school focus on understanding issues of inclusion is enabling the school to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all learners.

130. High expectations of pupils with regard to behaviour, coupled with extensive work to enhance pupils' confidence and self-esteem ensure that all pupils know they are valued equally and as individuals.

131. Pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship is good. The school is committed to acting in a sustainable way and pupils regularly consider issues of sustainability and how to reduce energy and water consumption. The school is working hard to achieve the European Green Flag as recognition of its commitment to conservation and the environment through the *Eco-schools award scheme*.

132. Pupils have a good understanding of global citizenship and how global forces can shape the lives of people. Their understanding of life on other continents has

been enhanced by the links established with communities in Botswana and the United States of America.

133. Pupils' entrepreneurial skills are developing. Older pupils help run the school's tuck shop, which gives them insight into the running of a business. Pupils' decision-making and problem-solving skills are enhanced by their involvement in class and school councils, the eco committee and the playground friends initiative.

134. The headteacher and staff are committed to the national priority for lifelong learning. With the recent improvements in behaviour, the foundations for good learning are more secure, and the teachers are keen to see pupils taking more responsibility for their own learning as they progress through the school.

135. Through the community aspect of the PSE programme and through their involvement in the community, pupils are beginning to understand that they can contribute to its regeneration through active citizenship and partnership with others.

<b>Key question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>
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<b>Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings</b>
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136. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report in that the school judged this key question Grade 2/3. The higher overall judgement of inspectors reflects the recent and rapid improvement in the effectiveness of pastoral guidance and its remarkable impact on the school's ethos this term.

137. The school provides a supportive, safe and caring environment for the pupils. There are appropriate policies in place relating to the health, safety and well-being of the pupils and, in practice, care arrangements are managed well.

138. There is good liaison between the school and a number of support services. The regular involvement of individual specialists in the work of the school benefits pupils who are enabled to manage aspects of their behaviour and their learning positively. The ready co-operation between relevant support services, outside agencies and the school strengthens the provision of support and guidance made available to pupils and their families.

139. The school is pro-active in promoting effective working partnerships with parents and carers. It has established good procedures to nurture this partnership; they include an induction evening at the beginning of the term, a Parenting Skills class and regular informal contact with all teachers at the start of the school day.

140. Families are provided with detailed information about the school's care practices in the prospectus. A home-school contract sets out shared expectations and responsibilities, and the home-school diary is used well as a message board to facilitate two-way communication. Good arrangements are in place to provide and exchange information about pupils' progress.

141. Parents and carers indicated their support for the school through their responses and comments in a recent school questionnaire. The sure progress made in strengthening the partnership over a short period of time is an outstanding feature.

142. There are sound arrangements that help the three-year-olds settle quickly into the new routines of the nursery. Towards the end of KS2, the established programme of activities means that pupils are well-prepared to transfer confidently to the local secondary school.

143. The school gives very high priority to providing personal support and guidance to its pupils. Teachers and staff know them well and are sensitive to their needs. There are good systems to promote the personal and social education of the pupils that include effective Circle Time sessions in every class. Pupils are responding positively to the provision that promotes respect for each other, encourages appropriate responsibility, and acknowledges and values personal effort.

144. The headteacher has established effective systems to monitor pupils' behaviour, attendance and punctuality. All members of staff implement the school's behaviour policy fairly and consistently and the reward system works well. Systems to track and monitor pupils' performance over time are being developed as a whole-school system.

145. Pupils whose behaviour is giving cause for concern are counselled, parents are involved and support is sought from external agencies when necessary. These arrangements work well and with support, pupils' behaviour improves.

146. The headteacher, teaching and support staff consistently and sensitively encourage pupils to understand, manage and develop their standards of behaviour to the best of their abilities. When standards of behaviour fall below expectations, all members staff handle situations firmly, quietly and calmly.

147. The headteacher and administrative officer monitor attendance and punctuality carefully. Regular and effective liaison takes place with the Pupil Support Officer (PSO) from the education welfare service and every effort is made to ensure pupils attend school regularly.

148. The school has a clear policy and set of procedures to promote health and safety, including risk assessment, which are monitored by staff and the GB. As part of the *Welsh Network of Healthy Schools*, the school is successful in promoting healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle.

149. The duty of care is fundamental to the school's ethos and consequently all members of staff work in pupils' best interests to nurture their welfare and to protect them. The school's policy and procedures to deal with child protection issues are clearly understood by all staff and training is regularly updated. The headteacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection issues and she has established effective working partnerships with a range of external welfare agencies.

150. A very good system for identifying individual pupil's needs has been implemented by the school. The school has piloted a new LEA screening process that provides a diagnostic audit of each pupil's skills, ability and personal

development. The resulting, appropriate information about the pupils has enabled the identification of those pupils in need of support. These needs have been suitably included on the *special needs register* so that the learning support appropriate to the level of need is ensured. This information is effectively shared with parents and individual education plans (IEPs) are agreed.

151. Where there is a concern for some aspect of a pupil's learning, class teachers suitably plan to address this through their lesson planning. For those pupils with more general learning needs, good learning targets are set and learning tasks are planned to meet these needs. Appropriate additional support is provided to meet the needs of those pupils with more persistent learning difficulties. This process fully meets with the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice.

152. A small special support group of up to eight pupils, the *pride group*, have lessons that focus on the key skills of literacy, numeracy or social and behavioural skills with a teacher specialising in learning support. Good and often very good progress is evident in both educational and personal skills with these pupils making good gains in self-esteem, self-confidence and in their attitude to learning.

153. Across the school, other individual needs are identified and lead to appropriate support from visiting specialists. These included specialist teachers for visual or hearing impairment, speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and behaviour support teachers. The latter provision is having a significant and positive impact on the substantial number of pupils identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The visiting specialists effectively share their skills with the school staff. The very good, rapid progress that has been made in addressing challenging behaviour needs to continue so that the diminishing incidents of unacceptable behaviour become rare occurrences.

154. The very good identification of pupils' learning needs shows that a significant minority of pupils has difficulties or delays in attainment of key skills, in particular reading and writing. The school is very much aware of this, but as yet there are insufficient structured learning programmes in place to address this aspect of provision.

155. The procedures adopted to support and guide pupils in their learning are developing well. These include the positive marking of pupils' work, careful record-keeping, and pupils' self-assessment of their individual targets for improving aspects of their work.

156. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to participate in all of its activities. It takes good account of pupils' social backgrounds, and organisational strategies that aim to alleviate barriers to achievement are generally managed very well. The school is aware that more-able pupils have not always achieved in line with their capabilities and having reduced levels of misbehaviour is beginning to provide more challenging work in order to accelerate progress.

157. A range of suitable school policies guides positive practice in relation to behaviour, anti-bullying and racial equality. These guides underpin the school's practices in fostering attitudes of respect and tolerance with the pupils.

158. The ethos of the school promotes acceptance and understanding of the diversity of pupils' own cultural backgrounds. Through their current thematic and cross-curricular work, pupils gain awareness and appreciation of the diversity of other cultures.

159. The school secures equal treatment for pupils with sensory impairment and is mindful of such pupil's needs. The school building, which is scheduled for remodelling, is accessible to pupils with physical disabilities.

## **Leadership and management**

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

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

160. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. The overall judgement for this key question reflects recent and marked improvements in the quality of life and learning in the school.

161. From the beginning of this term, the recently appointed headteacher has provided inspirational leadership in developing renewed confidence and vigour across the school community. Evidence from staff, governors, parents and pupils consistently states the school has improved this term, '*it's a different place*', and confirms the outstanding features of leadership brought to the school by the headteacher. In the words of a pupil, '*the school is now well good*'.

162. In particular, clear direction and guidance for staff is now in place to promote pupils' good behaviour. The headteacher provides excellent qualities of leadership in implementing these procedures. Her vision for a calm well-ordered and purposeful school where pupils achieve high standards is effectively communicated across the school community. The drive to secure this vision, together with the renewed purpose so clearly communicated to inspectors by staff and pupils, now needs to continue over time to impact fully on standards.

163. The school's ethos is clearly rooted in its mission statement, aims and values published in the prospectus. In line with the SDP, there is good evidence, such as in displays and through assemblies, that the school is becoming more proactive regarding its status as a Church in Wales School.

164. The leadership is well focused on national and local priorities in planning for improvements in the school. In particular, there is a strong push to promote lifelong learning skills and to ensure equality of opportunity for all to achieve good standards.

165. This is reflected in recent initiatives that successfully draw in expertise, such as from the LEA, to assist the school in raising pupils' self-esteem, enhancing curricular provision, strengthening partnerships with parents and ensuring the effective inclusion of pupils; especially those from Traveller families.

166. In recent years, the school has not set sufficiently challenging targets to raise standards. The assessment data available is now being analysed in order to target particular pupils and raise standards. This process is at an early stage.

167. In the short term, leadership is successful in enabling staff to rediscover their professional confidence and enthusiasm. This is most evident in the consistent use of positive approaches to managing and rewarding pupils' good behaviour and work. There is good provision for the staff's continuing professional development and the required arrangements for performance management are in place. The headteacher is proactive in monitoring and supporting the day-to-day work of the staff.

168. The GB is strongly supportive of the school. It is becoming more informed about the challenges facing the school in tackling underachievement and of their role in decision making and helping to set the school's strategic direction.

169. Recent meetings have discussed the school's self-evaluation statement and agreed the strategic priorities that form the basis of the SDP. The information provided for governors by the headteacher, and the LEA, provides a good basis to enable the GB to monitor the school's performance more effectively.

170. The GB has supported the school well this term in ensuring planned expenditure and the deployment of staff is adjusted to meet particular needs.

171. The GB appropriately monitors income and expenditure. The most recent auditors report (2002) notes a good awareness of financial procedures and control in the school and a positive response to the recommendations made.

172. The Chair of Governors maintains regular contact with the headteacher. The GB has the required arrangements in place for committees of governors and is successful in meeting its statutory obligations.

<b>Key question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?</b>
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<b>Grade 3 good features outweigh shortcomings</b>
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173. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report, in that the school judged this key question Grade 2. Systems to ensure the systematic monitoring and evaluation of provision and standards are being developed and require more time to become embedded within the school's practice.

174. There are appropriate systems in place to enable leaders and managers to gather information to evaluate standards and the school's performance. Some initiatives are at an early stage of development and therefore it is too soon to evaluate their full impact on quality and standards.

175. Curriculum co-ordinators are well-prepared to further develop their roles by building on their experiences of reviewing and auditing progress in their subjects and by continuing the planned programme for classroom observations.

176. The school is using information gained from a recent comprehensive screening exercise to plan learning improvement strategies for many pupils. Furthermore, detailed analysis of the data from standardised tests has enabled the school to make a positive revision to the predicted targets for attainment in 2007. This is a good example of purposeful leadership in raising expectations.

177. The views of all staff are valued in open discussions about ways to improve quality and standards in the school. Pupils are developing confidence in using council and committee structures to present opinions about school life and they see clearly that their decisions and actions contribute to improving aspects of the school community.

178. Parents are involved in sharing their views on the work of the school. The pre-inspection questionnaire was sent out in September and repeated in November. A similar number of parents responded each time. In September around 30% of responses indicated important concerns. In November the level of concern had halved with around 85% of parental responses being positive.

179. All teachers and non-teaching staff are fully involved in the self-evaluation arrangements and a culture of self-review is being firmly established. There is a strong ethos of teamwork among all staff and commitment to move the school forward.

180. The well-considered allocation of both human and financial resources contributes surely to the effective development of the school's current priorities.

181. Leaders and managers have set appropriate priorities and actions for the short-term. The positive impact of these short-term plans is clearly evident in the recent and rapid improvements that have benefited teachers and learners alike.

182. The school is now in a favourable position to continue structuring the way ahead through more-detailed, strategic action planning in the areas already identified for development and improvement. Leaders and managers are beginning to formulate medium-term and long-term plans to focus and guide the work of improvement across the school.

183. There is little evidence of measurable or sustained improvements in standards over recent years. Records indicate the school resolved through its action plan to tackle the significant issues raised in the last inspection report. However, this inspection finds the current leadership dealing with much the same issues. Therefore the school is unable to demonstrate sufficient progress in making the expected improvements.

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

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

184. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report, in that the school judged this key question Grade 3. The higher overall grade reflects the good improvements in the efficient organisation and use of resources implemented this term.

185. The school is well-staffed and the teachers well-qualified to teach pupils of primary age. Their range of subject knowledge is good, although expertise in teaching music and Welsh as a second language is less secure.

186. The LSAs provide invaluable, high-quality support for both pupils and teachers; they make a significant contribution to helping pupils of all ages learn and develop positive attitudes to learning.

187. All members of the staff participate in a programme of professional development and the recent focus on training to meet specific whole-school needs has already resulted in positive changes which impact well on the quality of learning.

188. Arrangements that provide specific expertise in teaching Welsh are proving most beneficial in helping the school raise standards in that subject. Similarly, in music, a peripatetic specialist provides appropriate additional support in teaching the subject.

189. The school makes effective arrangements to enable a newly-qualified teacher to complete her induction year.

190. The administrative officer, caretaker, cleaners and ancillary staff provide an effective service that ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the school.

191. The well-maintained building and grounds provide spacious environments for teaching and learning. The dedicated area for the under-fives is used particularly well to further their learning and aspects of their development. Plans are to hand for the work of re-modelling the building.

192. A considerable amount of voluntary time and effort has been spent refreshing the interior of the school and making more efficient use of some spaces. Vibrant displays that celebrate pupils' work and achievements, and those which emphasise the school's Church-in-Wales foundation, contribute to the warm, welcoming ethos of the school.

193. The reorganisation of everyday routines, including the levels of supervision provided for pupils both in and around the school, impact positively on the quality of school life. Furthermore, the reorganisation of teaching arrangements, such as abandoning the regrouping of pupils for English and mathematics lessons, and the targeted deployment of LSAs, ensures consistency across teaching groups and less opportunity for disruptive behaviour.

194. The school makes increasingly effective use of learning resources such as ICT and the library. Staff are aware of the need to provide opportunities to develop pupils' research and enquiry skills through the more independent use of resources by the pupils and to review the length of some sessions in order to maintain good momentum in learning.

195. In their developing role as subject co-ordinators, teachers audit both subject and whole-school resources. The school has identified the need to augment the generally good level of learning resources in subjects such as English and design and technology. The purchase of *speaking and listening mats* and playtime games equipment are particularly apt in securing a positive school ethos.

196. Teaching and support staff are effectively deployed; they give generously of their own time to enhance levels of provision, such as playground supervision.

197. The headteacher skilfully motivates staff through example and provides good levels of support and training, especially in managing pupils' behaviour and raising their self-esteem. Furthermore, she effectively co-ordinates in-service training for staff to ensure both personal and whole-school needs are addressed.

198. Through careful consideration of the school's particular needs this term the GB has ensured the financial resources available are well matched to both short-term and longer-term priorities. In particular, the need to provide consistency in teaching has been resolved through the employment of an additional teacher on a temporary basis. At the same time, the professional development needs of a teacher new to the school have been sensitively managed, such as through opportunities to observe good practice.

199. There is little evidence from previous years of the rigorous review of resources in order to ensure value for money. On the basis of the judgements of the previous inspection report the school has made insufficient improvement since 1999 when significant shortcomings were identified. The lack of improvement is clearly reflected in the NC performance indicators over recent years. The school has therefore failed to provide good value for money in much of its work for some time.

200. Taking account of recent improvements that result from the rigorous targeting of resources, the quality of learning and indicators such as attendance have improved. This provides a favourable position for the school to provide value for money, over time, as standards rise.

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

### **Under-fives**

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

202. Children of nursery age attend part-time. They are taught in Class 1 alongside children of reception age. The rest of the under-fives are taught in Class 2 with pupils in Y1. The under fives learn together during the afternoons.

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

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

##### **Good features**

203. Children of nursery age generally listen well to the adults who lead their activities and respond readily to instructions. They follow stories with interest and, as they recall the main events by sequencing pictures, they show good understanding of what they have seen and heard. The children are gaining confidence in expressing themselves orally by responding to the sensitive support from the adults. The children recognise their own names.

204. Reception children listen well to the known adults and to each other. They carry out directions willingly and are keen to share their news. In a guided reading activity, the children follow their individual picture books attentively, answer questions readily and offer their own comments and opinions. They match some initial letters to sounds and practise forming them correctly. They often choose the activity of mark-making and enjoy *writing* letters, recipes and invitations, for example.

205. Both the Nursery and Reception children respond positively to the experience of learning Welsh. The older children are building up their vocabulary and they use familiar phrases with growing confidence.

### **Personal and social development**

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

##### **Good features**

206. Nursery children feel safe and secure in the school environment. They enjoy good relationships with the adults, understand the routines and expectations during lessons, and play harmoniously alongside each other, both indoors and outside. They are developing very good attitudes to learning and towards each other. As they sit in their own spaces on the *Speaking and Listening carpet*, they learn to take turns and to respect each other's needs. They manage dressing and their personal hygiene with appropriate help.

207. Reception children explore new learning opportunities confidently. They respond very well to the opportunities that give them independence to choose their own activities; they generally carry out their plans responsibly, sustain their interest well and help to tidy things away. The children learn to share, and understand that, on occasions, they must compromise. During *Circle Time*, they talk about friendships and readily identify acts of kindness towards each other. They dress and undress and manage their personal hygiene with growing independence.

208. Both nursery and reception children hear Bible stories regularly and they demonstrate appropriate behaviour during assemblies.

## **Mathematical development**

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

#### **Good features**

209. Children of nursery age are developing early mathematical concepts and vocabulary soundly, for example by singing action songs and rhymes, and counting and sorting objects into sets. Mathematical ideas are established in the context of meaningful activities, such as needing to add a quantity of liquid and 'one more' piece of fruit when making fruit *smoothies*.

210. Children of reception age build on their earlier experiences by recognising numerals 1 to 10, rearranging them on a number line accurately and learning to form them correctly. They recognise and name some simple two-dimensional shapes and in the context of painting and modelling activities, they learn the appropriate vocabulary to describe and compare length. They develop awareness of number and shape in the environment, such as on a walkabout in the school grounds.

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

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

#### **Good features**

211. Nursery children are beginning to understand some of the differences between where they live and where the story character *Handa* lives. They touch, smell and taste some exotic fruits, and learn that they grow in countries far away. The children gain knowledge by actively helping to look after their own garden area. They enjoy experimenting with magnets and make accurate, simple deductions about their properties. With guidance, they use a digital camera to take photographs of each other.

212. Reception children are developing good knowledge and understanding of some jobs people do, of caring for the environment, of growing vegetables and flowers, of seasonal changes and of different animal habitats. They observe changes that occur as they liquidise fruits and investigate which fabrics are suitable to make a handkerchief. During a walk to post letters, they notice features that characterise their local area. They are developing good computer skills and learning to programme a robotic device.

## **Creative development**

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

#### **Good features**

213. Nursery children are gaining confidence as they join in action songs, respond to the rhythm of singing in assembly, and learn to sing songs in Welsh. They enjoy making their own choices as they create paintings and collages, and talk with interest about their print-making activity and model-making. They choose from a good range of dressing-up clothes and accessories that help them sustain their role-play well. Outdoors, they enthusiastically use simple resources to promote their creative play.

214. Reception children enjoy singing and clap simple rhythms confidently. They explore the sounds made by some percussion instruments and, outdoors, by a range of saucepans and cardboard tubes. They use a good variety of materials to develop their artistic creativity and also use the computer to produce images. The children draw imaginative designs for their handkerchiefs and carefully transfer the details onto fabric using suitable crayons. In role-play outdoors, they co-operate to transform a cardboard box into an imaginary boat.

## **Physical development**

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

#### **Good features**

215. The many opportunities nursery children have to handle small-world toys; malleable materials, and a variety of mark-making tools help them gain mastery of manipulative actions. Their hand and eye co-ordination develops well. In the hall, they are learning to control their movements as they jump from the apparatus, stretch and slide along a bench, climb and roll. They are also learning to respond quickly to signals and to rest quietly at the end of the activities. The children confidently manoeuvre the wheeled toys in the space outside.

216. Children of reception age are developing more precise control of manipulative actions, for instance as they practise forming letters and numbers, and handle scissors with increasing dexterity. They understand the need to warm-up their bodies before energetic movements in the hall, then demonstrate good control, balance and co-ordination as they travel around, and increasing skill and confidence in using the apparatus. The children are aware of some safety rules when in the hall, and of the need to eat healthy foods.

## English

### Key stages 1 and 2 - Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

#### Good features

217. Across the school, pupils respond well to opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills such as during circle time. The majority generally listen well to their teachers and increasingly to each other. The younger pupils enthusiastically enact *We're going on a bear hunt* and older pupils confidently retell a Bible story in assembly, for example.

218. In Class 5, pupils are keen to answer questions and to contribute to discussions. They enjoy role-play and confidently enact dialogues they have written.

219. In Class 2, pupils use phonic and picture cues with increasing success to match and sequence phrases and pictures to retell a story.

220. In Class 3, pupils confidently read the book *What babies used to wear* with the teacher and in work linked to the text younger pupils successfully read compound words using picture cues and the more-able pupils sort words into alphabetical order and build up an index. The older pupils confidently read, sort and copy-write phrases. They use prior knowledge of the text well to order sentences and they demonstrate sound knowledge of basic punctuation in their writing.

221. In the *Pride class*, pupils follow the story of *The Selfish Crocodile* and with guidance most use picture cues to predict the plot. Pupils have a developing knowledge of punctuation and show increasing understanding of features such as speech marks as they identify them in the book.

222. Pupils in Class 4 improve their vocabulary and knowledge of words as they count syllables, search for rhyming words and powerful verbs in work linked to writing and performing a *Kennings* poem. More-able pupils collaborate enthusiastically to compile a list of descriptors for an antelope and they use a dictionary.

223. In Class 5, the more-able pupils enjoy talking about the books they read. They express preferences for particular authors and have a good understanding of basic library and reference skills. When reading, they confidently tackle unfamiliar words and make good use of letter sounds and picture and contextual cues to help them read the text.

224. With support, the less-able pupils successfully recall and sequence the story of *Jabulani and the Lion*. Working in different groups, pupils of average and above average ability progress well when recording ideas for a recount using bullet points, writing and performing a dialogue and writing thoughtfully from the viewpoint of a character. Pupils enthusiastically further this work when they are questioned as the chosen character

225. Across the school, pupils use the structured reading books well to improve their skills and they practice letter formation, handwriting and spelling appropriate to age and ability. In Class 3, the most-able pupils write in simple sentences including appropriate punctuation, such as a question mark. Across Classes 3, 4 and 5, pupils

distinguish between fiction and information texts and make appropriate use of 'writing frames' to help them write lists, instructions and recounts, for example.

### **Shortcomings**

226. Pupils do not progressively develop handwriting skills across the school and as a consequence, their presentation of written work is often untidy.

227. Although the progress of younger pupils in spelling and writing is improving, their skills in building on emerging writing skills to write at greater length for different purposes are at an early stage.

228. Many of the older pupils have limited skills in reading and writing. Their knowledge of different genre and writing styles is under-developed. Despite recent improvements, there is too little evidence of research and note taking before drafting and structuring a piece of writing.

### **Welsh second language**

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

#### **KS2 - Grade 4: some good features, but shortcomings in important areas**

#### **Good features**

229. Pupils in Y1 show good understanding of everyday words and phrases. They are acquiring vocabulary, for example, by singing action songs and naming objects. They use a range of suitable responses to give simple information about themselves and how they feel. As they follow picture stories shared with them, pupils confidently join in, repeating familiar phrases.

230. In Y2, pupils learn key words and patterns to express their likes and dislikes about food. They follow the text of a story read to them and begin to recognise familiar words and phrases linked to the characters of *Mr & Mrs Large*. They demonstrate their understanding of what they have read by naming foods and answering simple questions appropriately.

231. In KS2, pupils in Class 4 are actively involved in a good range of activities that enable them to communicate factual information about the weather. They recall known vocabulary quite well and read aloud a story on the interactive whiteboard, and phrases on flashcards, with good pronunciation and intonation. A group of confident pupils use prompt sheets successfully and write sentences using the past tense.

232. Pupils in Class 5 read descriptions of well-known characters and personalities, presented on the whiteboard. Individuals show their understanding of relevant vocabulary and descriptive phrases by expressing information about themselves and using appropriate questions and answers in role-play. They are becoming familiar with responding using both the affirmative and negative forms.

233. The great majority of pupils are responding very positively to the invaluable contribution made by the visiting teachers to promoting their progress.

### **Shortcomings**

234. In both key stages, pupils' writing skills are under-developed.

235. In KS2, pupils make slow progress in acquiring appropriate skills in oracy and reading. As a result, they lack confidence in speaking without considerable support and the range of their reading experiences is somewhat limited.

## **Design and technology**

### **Key stages 1 and 2 - Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

236. In Class 2, pupils use different methods to join a variety of materials; they successfully make hinge joints for example, when assembling jointed figures.

237. Pupils in Class 3 follow instructions and use prepared materials to make a mask. They extend their skills well through designing and making African masks. Pupils carefully build up the sculptured form and use suitable materials to decorate their products with authentic African designs.

238. In the *Pride group*, pupils make good observations and describe the materials, structure and finish of a traditional Botswanan mud hut. They use appropriate tools and materials to produce their chosen finish for a model.

239. In Class 4, pupils observe the construction of a torch and draw suitable designs in preparation for assembling a working model to their own design. They carefully consider the components needed and, having investigated switches, they choose appropriate materials to make a switch.

240. The older pupils in Class 5 prepare designs based on African instruments. They label their drawings appropriately and prepare a list of requirements. Once at the making stage, pupils carefully use appropriate jointing and decorating techniques to produce well finished products.

241. Across the school, previous work indicates that pupils follow instructions when making food items, they learn jointing techniques when making picture frames and incorporate simple mechanisms in a variety of products.

242. In current work, in line with age and ability, pupils produce suitably labelled designs and make simple oral evaluations. More-able pupils write instructions and are beginning relate their product to their design in written evaluations.

#### **Shortcomings**

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

244. Pupils' skills in communicating their design ideas, selecting materials and evaluating their products are at an early stage. In particular their knowledge of the subject vocabulary is limited.

245. The older pupils demonstrate insufficient understanding of the processes of designing and making; their knowledge of mechanisms, for instance, is under-developed and their products, although well finished, lack sufficient originality.

## **Geography**

### **Key stages 1 and 2 - Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

246. Pupils in Class 2 have a developing knowledge of place. They name features in the school and the local environment and observe changes in the weather. They know that symbols are used to represent features on a map and they draw simple route maps well.

247. In Class 3, pupils confidently describe where they live using place names correctly. They readily identify Pembrokeshire on a map of Wales, name the countries of the UK and identify Botswana on a map of Africa.

248. Pupils are beginning to identify similarities and difference between life in Merlin's Bridge and Gweta, Botswana. They compare such features as schools and consolidate their learning through making school brochures, for example.

249. In Class 5, several pupils confidently describe the main features of Gweta as they plan and make a model village and others discuss photographs of village features as they decide where to place them on a map of Gweta. In general, pupils confidently describe similarities and difference between life in the UK and Botswana.

250. Discussion with pupils in Y6 confirms they have sound recall of fieldwork undertaken in a coastal village. They confidently discuss the features of Dale, making appropriate comparisons with the town of Haverfordwest and noting human and physical features. They have a basic knowledge of maps, including how to use co-ordinates.

#### **Shortcomings**

251. Pupils' geographical knowledge and enquiry skills are under-developed. Previous work indicates geographical topics are seldom studied in sufficient depth.

252. Pupils seldom record geographical information using a sufficient variety of writing, graphical and ICT skills. Their use of appropriate geographical terms to describe environments and features is under-developed.

253. The older pupils lack experience of gathering evidence from a sufficient variety of sources, forming conclusions and answering geographical questions in sufficient depth.

## **Music**

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

### **KS2 - Grade 4: some good features, but shortcomings in important areas**

#### **Good features**

254. In whole-school gatherings, pupils demonstrate that they have good, clear voices; they sing in tune well and quickly learn a new Welsh song. In Class 4, pupils maintain their parts confidently as they sing a round in Welsh.

255. Pupils in Y1 understand how to interpret graphic symbols to clap short rhythm patterns. They create different patterns by rearranging the symbols themselves. Pupils choose a range of non-pitched percussion instruments, explore the sounds they produce and make good attempts to play the patterns.

256. In Class 4, pupils build on previous work to perform an African chant. They provide rhythmic accompaniment using traditional percussion instruments and respond to the rhythms by performing appropriate movements.

257. Pupils in Class 5 listen well to group performances of African chants that they have planned and created. The range of authentic percussion instruments used adds colour to the performances and pupils move rhythmically to the beat of suitable recorded music.

258. Good cross-curricular links with science, design and technology and art are evident in music lessons; for example, for their performance, pupils in Class 5 wear T-shirts bearing African scenes they have designed and made themselves.

259. All pupils have enjoyed attending a performance by a visiting drumming expert and some pupils continue this interest by attending the after-school club led by Bongo Clive. A small number of pupils benefit from receiving instrumental tuition from a visiting teacher.

#### **Shortcomings**

260. In both key stages, pupils do not acquire the necessary vocabulary to enable them to perform, compose and appraise music by focusing appropriately on the musical elements in all their activities.

261. Pupils' skills in appraising music are under-developed.

262. Pupils' musical skills are not developed progressively enough through a wide range of musical experiences. As a consequence, their knowledge of musicians and different musical styles is limited.

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

263. The Staff and Governors at St. Mark's School are very pleased with our inspection report. The school has experienced very many changes this term, in particular a new headteacher is in post. The recent and rapid improvements and initiatives that the school has taken on are reflected throughout the report.

264. The Inspection was carried out in a meticulous manner, Inspectors were courteous and highly professional throughout the inspection period, making staff and pupils feel at ease. The school appreciates the manner in which even our youngest pupils were made to feel comfortable.

265. The school realises that there are many shortcomings that need to be addressed, particularly with standards being significantly low during the last few years and all comments made by the Inspectors regarding these shortcomings are fair.

266. The school has already embarked upon addressing many of these shortcomings, but it will take time for the success of any changes that have been implemented to have impact on standards and to be measured accordingly.

267. The recommendation regarding the high priority that needs to be given to Literacy Skills has been a focus this term with our Speaking and Listening Project. This needs to continue and permeate into all areas of Literacy. The school is aware that this is a process to be developed over time.

268. The school has worked extremely hard this term at improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour and there has been significant improvement in a short time. We are delighted that the Inspectors have recognised this and made continuous reference to this aspect. We know that this needs to continue and this good practice will allow our school to grow. As a consequence the first key recommendation regarding attitudes and behaviour is the natural progression for us.

269. The report consistently celebrates the school's recent achievements. It truly reflects the renewed vigour and enthusiasm that is so apparent amongst staff and pupils at the school this term and for this we are extremely pleased.

270. The references to aspects of outstanding leadership, teamwork and commitment that are celebrated throughout the report have acknowledged the huge efforts made by all at the school – a team that is committed and determined to bring the school forward to greater success.

271. This experience has been for our school, one which an Inspection should be about – a highly professional team conducting a very professional task, listening sensitively to learners and staff and reflecting in the report a true account of where the school is; celebrating achievements, acknowledging hard work and ethos and directing the school towards the natural next steps.

272. The staff and Governors at St. Mark's would like to sincerely thank the Inspection Team for their whole approach during the Inspection process.

## Appendix A

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	St Mark's Church-in-Wales Primary School
School type	Voluntary Aided Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3 – 11 years
Address of school	St Issell's Avenue, Merlin's Bridge, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire
Postcode	SA61 1JX
Telephone number	01437 767623

Headteacher	Mrs. D. Davies
Date of appointment	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2005
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs. L. S. Hughes
Registered inspector	Mr. M. T. Ridout
Dates of inspection	21 <sup>st</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2005

## Appendix B

### School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	7	18	14	14	12	24	12	19	120

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	6	4	7.2

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	16 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	-
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	3:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	23
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.2 : 1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of School
Autumn 2004	86.3	91.3	91.8
Spring 2005	89.8	94.8	90.1
Summer 2005	90.2	88.8	90.0

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	28
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	30

## Appendix C

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 1: 2005 with National figures for 2004

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results:			Number of pupils in Y2: 13					
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
		National	0.3	3.5	13.3	63.0	19.9	0.0
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
		National	0.3	3.8	14.0	55.3	26.5	0.1
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0.0	0.0	57.0	43.0	0.0	0.0
		National	0.3	5.1	14.4	68.8	11.3	0.0
EN: Speaking & listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0.0	0.0	43.0	57.0	0.0	0.0
		National	0.3	2.5	11.2	62.9	23.0	0.0
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0.0	0.0	43.0	57.0	0.0	0.0
		National	0.3	2.2	10.5	62.5	24.4	0.0
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0.0	0.0	43.0	57.0	0.0	0.0
		National	0.3	1.6	9.5	65.2	23.4	0.0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school:	43	In Wales:	80

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

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 2: 2005 with National figures for 2004

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results:			Number of pupils in Y6: 24									
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.0	60.0	4.0
		National	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.7	5.0	16.4	46.1	30.4
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.0	60.0	4.0
		National	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.4	2.6	16.0	48.1	31.8
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.0	60.0	4.0
		National	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.2	1.2	9.6	50.5	37.6

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment			
In the school:	52	In Wales:	71

- 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  
B Pupils not entered for the tests because they are working outside the set levels of the tests.  
W Pupils who are working towards level

## Appendix D

### Evidence base of the inspection

- The inspection team consisted of four inspectors who worked for seven inspector days (over three days) gathering first-hand evidence. In total, 33 lessons or parts of lessons were observed and standards and teaching graded. Inspectors evaluated the pupils' work.
- The headteacher took the role of nominee, ensuring effective communication with the inspection team. The nominee attended meetings with inspectors and contributed fully to the discussion of inspection evidence.
- Inspectors observed registration sessions, school assemblies and break-times. Teachers present were observed teaching. Discussions were held with members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, representatives of the GB, parents and others, both during initial inspection visits and during the inspection.
- All the available work and records of a representative sample of pupils from all year groups were scrutinised. A number of pupils were heard to read both formally and informally. Inspectors sought the views of a number of pupils in discussions with them.
- A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection.
- There was limited evidence of pupils' previous achievements in design and technology and music. During the inspection it was not possible to observe the lessons timetabled in design and technology and geography in KS1.
- The registered inspector held a meeting attended by six parents before the inspection and considered 16 parents' responses to a questionnaire.
- At the end of the inspection, the main findings of the inspection were discussed with the headteacher and staff. A short time after the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the staff and the governors to report the findings of the inspection.

## Appendix E

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr M. T. Ridout Registered Inspector	Context Summary Recommendations Key question 1: How well do learners achieve? Key question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment? SEN aspect of Key question 4; Key question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management? Efficiency aspects of Key question 7; English Science Physical Education
Mrs R. Steeds Team inspector	Key question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community? Key question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? Key question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards? Key question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources? Early Years Welsh as a second language Music
Mrs J. Warr Lay inspector	Aspects of Key questions: 1, 3, and 4.

**Inspection Contractor:** Baker-Phillips Educational Communications Ltd.

**Address:** Oaks Lea, Higher Knolton, Overton, Wrexham. LL13 0LF

#### Acknowledgement:

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