

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**St Mary's Brynmawr C in W Voluntary Aided School
Intermediate Road
Brynmawr
Blaenau
Gwent
NP23 4SF**

School Number: 6773309

Date of Inspection: 02 July 2007

by

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St Mary's Brynmawr C in W Voluntary Aided 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 Mary's Brynmawr C in W Voluntary Aided School took place between 02/07/07 and 04/07/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Merfyn Douglas Jones undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School is situated in the small town of Brynmawr in the unitary authority of Blaenau Gwent.
2. The school caters for pupils aged between 3 and 11 years. Almost all the pupils live in the local catchment area, which is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. Thirteen per cent of pupils are eligible to free school meals. This is below the national average.
3. Currently, the school has 221 pupils on roll, including 25 nursery children who attend on a part-time basis.
4. The intake of pupils has a wide range of ability, both academically and socially but is similar to the average Local Education Authority level.
5. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs, 15 have been identified as having special educational needs are on 'school action' and 38 are on 'school action plus' stages.
6. Six pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language.
7. One pupil is 'looked after' by the local authority.
8. Nearly all the pupils come from English speaking homes. None speak Welsh as a first language. Three per cent are from an ethnic minority background.
9. Including the head teacher, there are 11 full-time teachers. There are also 7 full-time learning support assistants and 3 full-time nursery nurses
10. The school is a pilot setting for the Welsh Assembly Government's Foundation Phase. The Foundation Phase is being implemented in the under-fives classes and in years 1 and 2. In the meantime, the National Curriculum has been disapplied in years 1 and 2.
11. The present head teacher was appointed in September 1992.
12. The school was last inspected in May 2001 and was awarded the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark for the second time in 2007.
13. **Some of the school's main aims are to:**
 - educate pupils within a school which is firmly based on Christian principles;
 - provide a secure and happy atmosphere in which children can learn effectively and will be sensitively cared for;
 - help children express themselves creatively;
 - help children understand the world in which they live;

- help children develop an understanding of their own cultural heritage, and
 - develop in all children a tolerance of other races and ways of life.
14. The school's vision statement is to: "Raise standards and encourage learning for life in a Christian context."

The school's priorities and targets
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15. The school's priorities and targets outlined in the school development plan for 2006 – 2007 are to:
- extend coverage of multiculturalism;
 - develop bilingualism;
 - continue to implement the Foundation Phase, and
 - review assessment procedures.

Summary

16. St Mary's is an evolving but good school where the head teacher and staff work hard and are successfully piloting and implementing the Foundation Phase for the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). Pupils' personal and social development is an outstanding feature in the school.

Table of grades awarded

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

During the inspection, standards of achievement in the Foundation Phase pilot classes were as follows:

Area of learning	Grade
Personal and social development and well-being	Grade 1
Bilingualism and multi-cultural understanding	Grade 2
Language, literacy and communication	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2

Grades for standards in subjects inspected at key stage 2

Subjects	English	Science	History	Music
Key Stage 2	Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2

17. Baseline assessments and other school assessment data indicate that children enter the school with slightly above average abilities compared to local schools.
18. The overall quality of provision for children in the Foundation Phase pilot is good. It meets children's needs and they are making good progress. The good quality interaction between children and adults ensure that children

make outstanding progress in their personal and social development and well-being, and they make very good progress in listening skills.

19. Analysis of assessment results over the last three years indicates that pupils make good progress towards fulfilling their potential from their entry into school to the end of key stage 2.
20. In key stage 2, pupils' listening skills are an outstanding feature. They achieve good standards and make good progress in the key skills of speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and using information and communications technology.
21. Throughout the school, pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve well, relative to their abilities. This is also true of 'looked after' pupils and those learning English as an additional language.
22. All pupils succeed regardless of their ability, gender or social background. Discussions with a range of pupils of differing ages and abilities, indicate that they are aware that everybody is treated the same and given the same opportunities. However, pupils throughout the school, do not take a sufficiently active part in the development and direction of their work and, as such, are unsure of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
23. Pupils' creative and problem solving skills are good in the Foundation Phase and at key stage 2. However, throughout the school their entrepreneurial skills are underdeveloped. They have a good knowledge of the heritage and culture of Wales by the end of key stage 2 despite having a more limited awareness of some of the music of Wales. Pupils' bilingual skills are good in the Foundation Phase but not as strong in key stage 2.
24. Over the last three years, in key stage 2, assessment results have been above, and sometimes well above, local and national averages in English, above local and near to national averages in mathematics and well above both in science.
25. The percentage of pupils attaining level 4 and above in English, mathematics and science is generally well above the national average. In 2006, compared to similar schools, (that is, schools in the same free school meals band) results are above the average scores in English and science, and very close to average scores in mathematics.
26. In recent years, at key stage 2, boys outperformed girls in assessment results, which is opposite to national trends. However, this year, girls outperformed the boys.
27. All pupils have outstanding personal, social and moral and learning skills with well developed attitudes and values. Their behaviour and their attitudes to learning are outstanding features of the school and make a real contribution towards the good standards achieved and the special ethos evident

throughout the school. They collaborate extremely well and sensibly in pairs or in groups. Their multi-cultural understanding is good in the Foundation Phase but less well developed at key stage 2.

28. Despite applying a range of strategies to improve the situation, attendance levels consistently remains at about 93 per cent, which exceeds the local education authority (LEA) average and is broadly the same as the national average.

The quality of education and training

Grades for teaching

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	97%	3%	0%	0%

29. Teaching shows good features with no important shortcomings in 97 per cent of the lessons observed. This is well above the national average indicated in The Chief Inspector of Schools' most recent report.
30. Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Phase and mostly good in key stage 2, effectively promoting the skills, understanding and attitudes necessary for learning.
31. Throughout the school lessons are well planned with clear objectives and take account of the needs of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers make good use of open-ended questioning to elicit pupils' views and feelings and to develop their communication and investigative skills.
32. Planning in Foundation Phase classes is very detailed. An outstanding feature is the very detailed assessment undertaken in Foundation Phase classes. Resources in Foundation Phase classes are carefully organised to ensure that they are easily accessible to children. Teachers in these classes use Welsh words, phrases, songs and jingles frequently throughout the day to encourage children to use the Welsh language. However, the planning for the development of pupils' bilingual skills is underdeveloped in key stage 2 and the use of incidental Welsh is inconsistent.
33. Classroom assistants are very effective with individuals and groups of pupils, and routinely plan alongside the class teachers. Their work with the pupils makes a significant impact on standards.
34. Teachers know all the pupils in the school well and their good knowledge of their backgrounds provides a good foundation to the system of assessing individual pupil needs. Opportunity for pupils throughout the school to be involved in evaluating their own learning continues to be an area of school development.

35. Teachers have a good working knowledge of the standards achieved by the pupils in English and mathematics in key stage 2. Assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding in the non-core subjects is less well developed. The school's systems for reporting to parents are good and viewed positively by them.
36. The school is successfully piloting the Foundation Phase and the quality of the curriculum provided for this age group is good. It covers each of the areas of learning as required by the Welsh Assembly Government's draft guidance materials.
37. In each of the classes involved, children make choices and work independently during part of every session. However, opportunities for children to work in the outdoors, an integral part of the Foundation Phase philosophy, are not yet fully established.
38. In key stage 2, the school provides a well-organised, broad and balanced relevant curriculum that meets statutory requirements and the needs and abilities of the range of pupils. All pupils, including those with additional learning needs, have equal access to an interesting range of learning opportunities. The provision for key skills is good overall. The school has very strong links with parents and the community.
39. The school's provision to support all pupils' spiritual, moral and social development has a number of outstanding features. However, overall the promotion of diversity and awareness of life in a multi ethnic society is less well developed at key stage 2.
40. The arrangements to develop all pupils understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship are outstanding, whilst those for work related learning are good. However, provision to develop pupils' entrepreneurial skills throughout the school is more limited.
41. The pastoral care and the contribution the school makes to the well-being of all pupils is good. There are effective procedures to monitor and support pupils' academic progress, their social development and their personal welfare. The school monitors attendance, punctuality and pupils' behaviour very closely.
42. The arrangements for receiving new children into the nursery and the transfer of year 6 pupils to the secondary school are effective and ensure a smooth transition.
43. Appropriate measures are in place for ensuring the healthy development, safety and well being of all pupils. The school has in place detailed child protection procedures based on the local authority recommendations.
44. The quality of provision for all pupils with additional learning needs is good with no important shortcomings and the school has an appropriate and

informative policy in place in line with the Code of Practice and framework for inclusive education.

45. All pupils, regardless of their social, ethnic, educational or linguistic background are guided and valued equally and have equal access to all school activities.

Leadership and management

46. The school has a clear vision statement and appropriate aims regarding education and Christian principles.
47. The very experienced head teacher provides the school with a strong and effective professional leadership, promoting equality and respect. His management is purposeful and knowledgeable, and this is reflected in the recent implementation of the Foundation Phase. He has a clear vision and a determination to improve all aspects of school life for the benefit of all the pupils.
48. Leaders and managers have worked hard to establish the Foundation Phase pilot in the school. The head teacher and the Foundation Phase team leader have established a suitable framework that gives clear direction to all members of staff involved. They all work closely together to ensure the successful implementation of the pilot.
49. The hard working deputy head teacher is fully involved in all aspects of school life and provides good support to the head teacher.
50. The school takes good account of the national priorities for promoting pupils' awareness and understanding of "well being", healthy eating, sustainable development and global citizenship. However, the promotion of bilingualism, diversity and multi-cultural understanding is underdeveloped, at key stage 2.
51. The school governors are fully and effectively involved in contributing towards setting the strategic direction of the school. They regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and the standards the pupils achieve. This is particularly true of their involvement in and support for the school's role as a pilot for the implementation of the Foundation Phase. The school meets all of the regulatory and legal requirements.
52. Good procedures are in place to enable the school to evaluate its own work and to plan for improvements. The senior management and curriculum teams overlook and monitor developments across the school on a regular basis. However, regular monitoring of teaching and learning throughout the school is not fully established. The school development plan is a useful working document with clear priorities identified following the self-evaluation process.
53. Overall, the school has made good progress since the last inspection. All the key issues have been successfully addressed.

54. The inspection team agreed with all the judgements made by the school in all of the seven key questions.
55. There are sufficient numbers of teaching and support staff who are well qualified and suitably deployed. The school has benefited from additional numbers of teaching assistants to support the implementation of the Foundation Phase. This has had a significant impact on children's personal and social skills.
56. The school secretary, caretaker, cleaners, midday supervisors and canteen staff provide effective support. Day-to-day administration is smooth and efficient. The school is well maintained.
57. The indoor accommodation is reasonably spacious and kept very clean and in good order and sets the right tone for effective learning. Learning resources are of good quantity and quality. They are readily accessible to staff and pupils.
58. Spending is regularly reviewed and is matched to priorities identified in the school development plan following careful evaluation and review. Overall, resources are managed well and the school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

59. In order to further improve, the school now needs to:
- R1 *develop strategies to improve pupils' bilingual skills at key stage 2 and entrepreneurial skills throughout the school;
 - R2 ensure that pupils throughout the school are involved in evaluating their own learning so that they are clear how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
 - R3 further develop monitoring of teaching and learning in the various phases of the school, and
 - R4 *take more account of the national priorities of diversity and multi-cultural understanding at key stage 2.

* The school has identified these recommendations in its latest development plan.

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

60. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
61. Pupils' standards of achievement in the subjects and areas of learning inspected during lessons are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
5%	90%	5%	0%	0%

62. These figures compare very well with the Welsh Assembly Government targets for 2007 that 98 per cent of lessons should be grade 3 or better and 65 per cent should be grade 2 or better.
63. Grades for standards in subjects inspected at key stage 2.

Subjects	English	Science	History	Music
Key Stage 2	Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2

64. During the inspection, standards of achievement in the Foundation Phase pilot classes were as follows:

Area of learning	Grade
Personal and social development and well-being	Grade 1
Bilingualism and multi-cultural understanding	Grade 2
Language, literacy and communication	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2

65. Baseline assessments and other school assessment data indicate that children enter the school with slightly above average abilities compared to local schools.
66. The overall quality of provision for children in the Foundation Phase pilot is good. It meets children's needs and they are making good progress. The good quality interaction between children and adults ensure that children make outstanding progress in their personal and social development and well-being, and they make very good progress in listening skills.
67. In key stage 2, pupils' listening skills are an outstanding feature. They achieve good standards and make good progress in the key skills of speaking,

reading, writing, numeracy and using information and communications technology

68. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well, relative to their abilities. 'Looked after' children and children learning English as an additional language also make good progress.
69. Analysis of assessment results over the last three years indicates that pupils make good progress towards fulfilling their potential from their entry into school to the end of key stage 2.
70. All pupils succeed regardless of their ability, gender or social background. Discussions with a range of pupils of differing ages and abilities indicate that they are aware that everybody is treated the same and given the same opportunities. Pupils throughout the school have a good level of understanding of the work which they complete. However, all pupils do not take a sufficiently active part in the development and direction of their work and, as such, are unsure of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Older pupils however, are starting to become aware of the progress they are making because of the recently introduced arrangements to set targets for them in writing.
71. In the Foundation Phase and key stage 2, pupils' creative and problem solving skills are good. However, throughout the school their entrepreneurial skills are underdeveloped. In the Foundation Phase their bilingual skills are good but less well developed in key stage 2. All pupils have a good knowledge of the heritage and culture of Wales by the end of key stage 2, despite having a more limited awareness of some of the music of Wales.
72. There is no comparative data available for key stage 1 pupils because of the school's involvement in the Foundation Phase pilot. Children involved in the Foundation Phase pilot have been disapplied from the national curriculum and also its assessment. However, the school has undertaken formal assessments when children reach the end of the Foundation Phase using levels indicated in Foundation Phase outcomes. The school is carefully tracking the outcomes. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' results and fewer children achieve the higher levels particularly in writing.
73. Over the last three years, in key stage 2, assessment results have been above, and sometimes well above, local and national averages in English, above local and near to national in mathematics and well above both in science. The percentage of pupils attaining level 4 and above in English, mathematics and science is generally well above the national average.
74. In 2006, compared to similar schools, (that is, schools in the same free school meals band) key stage 2 results were above the average scores in English and science, and very close to average scores in mathematics.

75. In recent years, at key stage 2, boys outperformed girls in assessment results, which is opposite to national trends. However, this year, girls outperformed the boys.
76. All pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are outstanding features of the school and make a real contribution towards the good standards achieved and the special ethos evident throughout the school. They collaborate extremely well and sensibly in pairs or in groups.
77. Pupils throughout the school are courteous, considerate and interact well with each other, with teachers and with visitors. Pupils willingly undertake additional responsibilities such as becoming monitors. They understand the school rules, which they themselves have helped draw up, and the values the school encourages.
78. Both pupils and parents say that boisterous behaviour or harassment are rare and are dealt with promptly and firmly. There were no exclusions during the twelve months prior to inspection.
79. Despite applying a range of strategies to improve the situation, attendance levels consistently remains at about 93 per cent, which exceeds the LEA average and is slightly above the national average. With few exceptions pupils arrive on time.
80. Pupils' independent learning skills are good, particularly in the Foundation Phase. All pupils concentrate well and stay on task throughout lessons.
81. The vast majority of pupils have outstanding personal, social and moral skills with well developed attitudes and values. They are respectful to their peers and to other adults.
82. In all classes, pupils have a well developed sense of belonging, both to the school and to the wider community of Brynmawr and are well prepared to play a constructive role in the life and work of the community. By the end of key stage 2 they are well prepared for effective participation in the workplace.
83. All pupils' awareness of equal opportunity issues is good. However, their understanding of diversity in a multi ethnic society is underdeveloped at key stage 2.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

85. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	97%	3%	0%	0%

86. Teaching shows good features with no important shortcomings in 97 per cent of the lessons observed. This is well above the national average indicated in The Chief Inspector of Schools' most recent report.

87. Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Phase and effectively promotes the skills, understanding and attitudes necessary for learning.

88. Planning in Foundation Phase classes is very detailed. It is based on careful assessments of how children are progressing and includes details of activities the children will undertake, adults' responsibilities and specific language that is to be used and developed. All practitioners involved with the different year groups make a good contribution to the planning process.

89. Resources in Foundation Phase classes are carefully organised to ensure that they are easily accessible to children. Adults plan sessions carefully to ensure that there is enough stimulating equipment available to allow children to learn effectively through practical experiences. Practitioners make very effective use of resources, such as puppets, to motivate children as they introduce sessions and activities. They use Welsh words, phrases, songs and jingles frequently throughout the day to encourage children to use the Welsh language.

90. In all classes teachers have good relationships with their pupils and demonstrate good pupil management. They actively address the issues of gender, race and disability and promote equality of opportunity for all, well. They work hard to raise all pupils' self-esteem by showing concern and giving regular praise and encouragement.

91. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives and take account of the needs of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers demonstrate enthusiasm in their teaching and have good up-to-date subject knowledge through regular in-service training. Teachers make good use of open-ended questioning to elicit pupils' views and feelings and to develop their communication and investigative skills.

92. They use a range of appropriate resources and artefacts to enhance pupils' learning and pupils are well motivated by a variety of direct experiences, including local visits and the use of the immediate environment such as the wood area.
93. Classroom assistants are very effective with individuals and groups of pupils, and routinely plan alongside the class teachers. Their work with the pupils makes a significant impact on standards.
94. An extremely small per cent of lessons are overlong and this affects the pace of learning.
95. The planning for the development of pupils' bilingual skills is underdeveloped in key stage 2 and the use of incidental Welsh is inconsistent.
96. An outstanding feature is the very detailed assessment undertaken in Foundation Phase classes. Information is used extremely well to plan activities to meet the needs and abilities of the children. Due account is taken of Foundation Phase guidance that has been produced. Teachers have produced a detailed 'skills ladder' for each of the areas of learning and children's progress is carefully monitored. Specific targets are set for children that are reviewed frequently but are not routinely shared with them.
97. Reports to parents of children involved in the Foundation Phase pilot meet recommendations; they are based on the areas of learning, are informative and provide a judgement on individual children's progress.
98. All teachers know all the pupils in the school well and their good knowledge of their backgrounds provides a good foundation to the system of assessing individual pupil needs. The school's procedures for assessment, recording and reporting conform with statutory requirements.
99. Teachers have a good working knowledge of the standards achieved by the pupils in English and mathematics in key stage 2. They use this information well to plan for pupils' continuity and progression as they move through the school.
100. Assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding in the non-core subjects is less well developed. Teachers' expertise in the accuracy of identifying National Curriculum levels for pupils' work is developing appropriately. However, the school has not yet produced examples of levelled work in all subjects to help teachers to come to an understanding of the standards expected at different stages.
101. Results from a wide range of tests and teacher assessments are analysed carefully. The resulting information is used well to guide teachers' planning. As a result, the majority of activities are well matched to pupils' age and ability. Teachers keep detailed records of a number of tests that are used with the pupils. The results of these tests and assessment comments are kept in a useful special folder for each pupil and are the basis of reports to parents.

102. Reports to parents are detailed, informative and provide information about pupils' future targets. Parents are very positive regarding to the school's systems of reporting to them regularly and for being prepared to meet them if they have concerns for their child's development. Parents state they can interpret the comments in the reports clearly.
103. Opportunity for all pupils to be involved in evaluating their own learning continues to be an area of school development. At present this is a shortcoming in the school's overall assessment arrangements. However, the school has begun to set individual pupil writing targets in key stage 2. In discussions pupils report that these targets are helping them understand what they need to do to improve. As a result, some older pupils are beginning to be more aware of the progress they are making but this process is at the early stages of development and is yet to have its full impact.
104. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is conscientious and in the very best practice also includes comments that explain clearly how pupils can improve their work.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

105. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
106. The school is successfully piloting the Foundation Phase and the quality of the curriculum provided for this age group is good. It covers each of the areas of learning as required by the Welsh Assembly Government's draft guidance materials. It is based in the principles of 'active learning' and provides many opportunities for the range and ability of children in these year groups to work as a whole class, in small teacher 'focus' groups and as individuals.
107. In each of the classes involved, children make choices and work independently during part of every session. However, opportunities for children to work in the outdoors, an integral part of the Foundation Phase philosophy, are not yet fully established.
108. The school provides a well-organised, broad and balanced relevant curriculum at key stage 2 that meets statutory requirements and the age range and needs of pupils. All pupils, including those with additional learning needs, have equal access to an interesting range of learning opportunities.
109. Schemes of work for all subjects are of good quality and constantly under review. There have been a number of revisions to the schemes of work during the present academic year, notably English and mathematics at key stage 2.

110. The provision for key skills is good overall. These aspects have been carefully threaded through the medium term planning ensuring good development overall in pupils' learning. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the second time in 2007.
111. The school offers an extensive range of well-attended, good quality out-of-hours clubs which effectively promote pupils' learning after the school day. These include a comprehensive range of musical activities, football, rugby, choir, chess, computer and art clubs.
112. All pupils benefit from visits to places connected to their class topics including local museums. They have been involved with music festivals and this involvement has contributed to good levels of achievement in creative subjects such as music. After school clubs are mainly provided for key stage 2 pupils.
113. Throughout the school, provision to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a number of outstanding features. Daily acts of collective worship are of a Christian nature. The local vicar is a regular visitor to school taking assemblies. These occasions enrich pupils' experiences and reinforce the sense of the school as a community. Prayers are said at different times of the day and moments of quiet reflection and collaboration in music-making contribute very well in this area.
114. In all classes provision for pupils' moral development successfully promotes the values of honesty, fairness and respect for the truth. All pupils know that their views will be respected and this successfully develops their identity and self worth. They support each other and are well aware of right and wrong. This very successfully develops a framework of moral values in pupils that very effectively underpins their personal behaviour which is often exemplary. All pupils' work on display is respected and valued and pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school.
115. The school makes high quality provision for all pupils' social development that enables them to play a full part in the local community. All pupils know that they are valued as individuals and they accept and look forward to ways to take responsibility. This is a real strength of the school.
116. The school takes full account of the Personal and Social Education Framework and has an effective Personal and Social Education scheme of work that, amongst other things, successfully promotes pupils' understanding of substance misuse and sex education. In this and all other respects, the school complies with legal requirements.
117. The school provides effective work related education to develop all pupils' understanding of the world of work. However, throughout the school opportunities to develop pupils' entrepreneurial skills are limited.
118. Older pupils show good initiative, such as displayed in pupils' eager participation in groups such as the Eco Committee and School Council. Pupils in the Eco Committee are very committed and meet weekly and their work is

given value and status. In all classes the school's provision for sustainable development and global citizenship is well established.

119. Members of the School Council are given opportunities to develop their decision making skills and to understand the democratic process.
120. The school actively promotes the culture and heritage of Wales in the planning and delivery of *Cwricwlwm Cymreig*. Consequently, by the end of key stage 2, pupils have a good appreciation of their own culture and heritage through a good range of well-planned visits to places of local interest. However, opportunities to develop pupils' bilingual skills are often missed at key stage 2.
121. Pupils entering the school from other countries make the school community aware of the diversity in their other cultures. Visitors to the school successfully enrich all pupils' experiences through well-planned drama and music workshops. However, overall the promotion of diversity and awareness of life in a multi-ethnic society is under-developed in key stage 2.
122. The school enjoys an effective working partnership with other local schools, particularly the local comprehensive school, where very good transition arrangements have been developed. Successful partnerships have also been developed with higher education facilities that are equally beneficial and impacts positively on learning for all pupils. The school has very strong links with the community, for example with music and horticultural societies, and makes the most of opportunities as they arise.
123. There is a very strong partnership with parents. Parents are kept very well informed of events in school through several channels, including letters, newsletters and notice boards. The school's website, in both English and Welsh, is another source of useful information. Parents have been well informed of the school's involvement in the introduction of the Foundation Phase and fully support its philosophy.
124. The school has an established Parents and Friends association that organises social and fund-raising events. Moneys raised help in providing extra equipment and resources.
125. The school is committed to lifelong learning and to developing all pupils' awareness of their own school and local community.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

126. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
127. The pastoral care and well-being of all pupils is good. The school provides a very happy, secure and welcoming environment for pupils to learn and play.

128. All adults in the school provide consistently good care and support for the pupils. Relationships are good, the school has a positive ethos and every child is valued. Parents also report that their children are happy at school.
129. There are appropriate procedures, throughout the school, to monitor and support pupils' academic progress, their social development and their personal welfare. The school makes effective use of the available support services. All pupils benefit from the school's determination to include them fully in both its academic and social life.
130. The school is successful in its endeavours to develop a very strong partnership with parents and carers. The views of parents are sought through questionnaires and through personal contact. Their views are taken into account and the school acts upon them. Formal parent/teacher consultations occur each term. There is very effective informal access for parents to talk to staff on a daily basis or to meet with the head teacher. This aspect of the school's work is quite outstanding.
131. The arrangements for receiving new children into the nursery and the transfer of year 6 pupils to the secondary school are effective and ensure a smooth transition. Parents are issued with a helpful Nursery Handbook that clearly explains expectations and procedures. As a result, children feel safe and secure in their new school and settle quickly. Pupils who join at a later stage are warmly welcomed and quickly settle.
132. The school monitors the attendance, punctuality and behaviour of all pupils extremely closely; this is an outstanding feature. Information from the electronic registration system is used very well, from which statistical information is drawn and trends mapped.
133. Good attendance is acknowledged and rewarded. Most parents co-operate by informing school if their child is unable to attend. The school has in place procedures to pursue any unexplained absence on the day it occurs. The Education Welfare Officer routinely visits school each half term, and is on call at other times should the school have concerns.
134. Teachers apply the school's behavioural management policy consistently and act as positive role models. Older pupils acting as monitors, show maturity and care through their willingness to help younger ones and assist during break times. This too helps to promote good behaviour. All pupils are aware of the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.
135. Appropriate measures are in place for ensuring the healthy development, safety and well being of all pupils. Staff are trained in first aid and there are good procedures in place in all classes for meeting the needs of pupils who are unwell or who have an accident. Health and safety audits are regularly carried out within the school and suitable risk assessments are undertaken before school visits.

136. The school has in place detailed child protection procedures based on the local authority recommendations. The procedures are available and understood by all members of staff. The head teacher is the nominated person for child protection issues and he ensures teachers are vigilant and recognise the signs that a child may need protection.
137. The school is very involved in developing all pupils' understanding and awareness of healthy eating and healthy living. In all classes pupils learn about healthy issues, including the value of regular exercise, through lessons such as physical education and science.
138. St Mary's school has good measures in place to eliminate any discriminatory behaviour and all forms of harassment. Pupils of all ages understand the necessity to report immediately any such incidents.
139. The school is aware of statutory requirements regarding provision for disabled pupils and adults and has suitable accessibility plans to ensure that at any time disabled learners receive equal access to the curriculum.
140. The quality of provision in the Foundation Phase and at key stage 2 for pupils with additional learning needs is good with no important shortcomings and the school has an appropriate and informative policy in place in line with the Code of Practice and framework for inclusive education. The additional learning needs coordinator ensures that clear systems are in place to diagnose individual learning needs and the school's emphasis on early diagnosis ensures that pupils are assessed carefully at an appropriate stage and identified quickly. The assessment and record keeping system for tracking pupils' progress is thorough and shows a good level of liaison between the additional learning needs coordinator and relevant class teachers.
141. All pupils with additional needs receive well focused effective support. This varies from good quality in class support from well trained support assistants to withdrawal from class for specialist teaching by a visiting teacher twice weekly. Pupils with specific learning difficulties follow useful specialist programmes.
142. Individual education plans contain appropriate targets for development. They are of good quality and are reviewed and updated regularly in line with the Code of Practice.
143. Teachers and support staff know their pupils very well and learning tasks are well matched to individual educational targets and pose an appropriate challenge for pupils of all ages. Pupils with additional needs are generally well integrated into the life of the school and pupils benefit from effective support from a range of professionals such as speech and language therapists and the educational psychologist. Children with special needs in the Foundation Phase are equally well supported.
144. The school's behaviour management programme is effective, gives positive guidance to staff and is well understood by all. The school has high

expectations in terms of standards of behaviour and when problems arise, the school has clear strategies for ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to learn effectively without interference or disruption. Guidance and support on behavioural issues from relevant outside agencies is also sought and implemented.

145. The school is an inclusive community. It recognises the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and ensures that all pupils, regardless of their social, ethnic, educational or linguistic background are guided and valued equally and have equal access to all school activities. For example, free instrumental tuition is available for all who show an interest and aptitude. Staff know their pupils very well and ensure that support and guidance is given in an unbiased and consistent manner.
146. The school's policy and practice actively promotes gender equality across the whole school community and every pupil has access to all the school has to offer; this is an outstanding feature. Opportunities are taken in history for example, to counter stereotypical views and to promote gender equality. The school is very aware of the relative achievement of boys and girls and seeks to address any imbalance by careful planning and promoting equal access across the curriculum.
147. A suitable racial equality policy and action plan are in place with appropriate procedures for monitoring and recording complaints of a racial nature.
148. All school staff have received training on issues of diversity during the last school year. The school celebrates cultural differences related to pupils within the school and uses assemblies as a vehicle to extend all pupils' understanding of diversity. However, generally, there are too few opportunities for pupils in key stage 2, to experience ethnic diversity and to develop their multi cultural understanding; this is an area which the school acknowledges that it needs to extend further.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

149. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
150. The school has a clear vision statement and good overall aims regarding education and Christian principles. These have been drawn up and agreed by staff and governors who are committed to raising standards and to providing a caring and inclusive school.
151. The very experienced head teacher provides the school with a strong and effective professional leadership, promoting equality and respect. His management is purposeful and knowledgeable, and this is reflected in the recent implementation of the Foundation Phase.
152. Leaders and managers have worked hard to establish the Foundation Phase pilot in the school. The head teacher and the Foundation Phase team leader have established a suitable framework that gives clear direction to all members of staff involved. They all work closely together to ensure the successful implementation of the pilot.
153. The head teacher has a clear vision and a determination to improve all aspects of school life for the benefit of all the pupils. Staff, governors, parents and pupils demonstrate a high regard for his management and leadership skills.
154. The head teacher creates a climate in which staff, teaching and non-teaching, work together as part of a strong team; staff feel valued and are encouraged to give of their best. The hard working deputy head teacher is fully involved in all aspects of school life and provides good support.
155. There are agreed policies and shared values regarding equal opportunities, racism and personal and social development. These are well understood by staff and very well promoted across the school.
156. There is an effective staff appraisal system, which successfully links both teachers' professional development and the priorities set in its school development plan. A formal system of appraisal for non-teaching staff is in its developmental stage. Induction procedures for newly appointed staff are very supportive and effective.
157. The school takes good account of the national priorities for promoting all pupils' awareness and understanding of healthy eating, sustainable development and global citizenship. However, the promotion of bilingualism, diversity and multi-cultural understanding is underdeveloped in key stage 2.

158. Staff and governors set challenging and realistic targets and goals in the school development plan. These are regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure that they are successfully and fully met.
159. The school works closely with other local schools and takes good account of local partnerships and cluster initiatives.
160. Governors are very supportive of the school and are regularly provided with information about the school's operations and developments by the head teacher.
161. They are fully and effectively involved in contributing towards setting the strategic direction of the school, and monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and the standards the pupils achieve. This is particularly true of their involvement in and support for the school's role as a pilot for the implementation of the Foundation Phase. The school meets all of the regulatory and legal requirements.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

162. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
163. Good procedures are in place to enable the school to evaluate its own work and to plan for improvements. Teaching and non-teaching staff, governors, parents and pupils are given good opportunity to contribute to the process of self-evaluation.
164. Although the self-evaluation report is overlong and repetitive at times, it is extremely detailed and it identifies strengths and areas for improvement honestly and accurately.
165. The senior management and curriculum teams oversee and monitor developments across the school on a regular basis. Policies, schemes of work and curriculum planning are reviewed on a rolling programme. However, regular monitoring of teaching and learning is not fully established.
166. The school development plan is a useful working document with clear priorities identified following the self-evaluation process. It highlights costings, timescales and success criteria and is supported by well-resourced strategies. It is regularly reviewed by staff and governors.
167. The steady, and sometimes good, rise in pupils' standards of achievement in the targeted subject areas following the last inspection indicates the effectiveness of the school's planning for improvement.

168. Overall, the school has made good progress since the last inspection. All the key issues have been successfully addressed.
169. The inspection team agreed with all the judgements made by the school in all of the seven key questions.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

170. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
171. There are sufficient numbers of teaching and support staff who are well qualified and suitably deployed. Members of staff regularly update their skills and knowledge by attending in-service training sessions. Several have been involved in providing training for other schools, particularly regarding the Foundation Phase.
172. The school has benefited from additional numbers of teaching assistants to support the implementation of the Foundation Phase. This has had a significant impact on children's personal and social skills in particular, and speaking and listening skills too. All teaching assistants make a positive contribution to teaching and learning.
173. Teachers use their planning, preparation and assessment time efficiently. Arrangements for teachers' planning, preparing and assessing time have had a positive impact on standards in subjects such as music, where progress since the last inspection has been good.
174. There are appropriate job descriptions for all members of staff. The school secretary, caretaker, cleaners, midday supervisors and canteen staff provide effective support. Day-to-day administration is smooth and efficient. The school is well maintained.
175. The indoor accommodation is reasonably spacious and kept very clean and in good order and sets the right tone for effective learning. The classrooms, corridors, and communal areas are attractive and well organised and decorated. The many displays around the school highlight all pupils' work, celebrate their achievements and are of very good quality. Books, artefacts and displays associated with classroom themes are attractive and help to reinforce and extend pupils' learning.
176. Learning resources are of good quantity and quality. They are readily accessible to staff and pupils. Information technology equipment, musical instruments and foundation phase resources are of very good quality and the use of these resources is having a positive effect on pupils' standards of achievement. Resources in the library are also good. The school has a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts to enrich pupils' learning.

177. The school benefits from large outdoor areas that provide good opportunities for sports, study and recreation. The woodland area provides a stimulating outdoor classroom that is frequently used by all ages of pupils and particularly those in the Foundation Phase. The school also has an allotment that is used effectively to develop pupils' understanding of sustainability and healthy eating issues.
178. Each of the Foundation Phase classrooms has an enclosed outdoor area, although one does not have direct access from the class. These are generally used effectively. However, the school has recognised that opportunities for children to work in the outdoors, ('the outdoor classroom') an integral part of the Foundation Phase philosophy, are not yet fully established.
179. The head teacher and governing body make good efforts to use resources (including those additional resources for the implementation of the Foundation Phase pilot) wisely and efficiently.
180. Spending is regularly reviewed and is matched to priorities identified in the school development plan following careful evaluation and review. Overall, resources are managed well and the school provides good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Foundation Phase

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

181. The overall quality of provision for children in the Foundation Phase pilot is good. It meets children's needs and they are making good progress. Children's overall standards of achievement in their personal and social development and well being are good with outstanding features.

Personal and social development and well-being

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

182. Even the youngest Foundation Phase children are very well behaved at all times. They are extremely attentive during whole class sessions and during adult led 'focussed' activities. They wait their turns patiently, listen to others and do not interrupt. They are very confident in their environment and very quickly make choices or take decisions such as when they choose activities.
183. By the end of the Foundation Phase, children have a very good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and its effect on their bodies. They are very mature in their views and are able to see things from the point of view of others. They demonstrate skills of perseverance and concentration and remain at their tasks for considerable lengths of time whether they are activities they have chosen themselves or they are working with adults.

Good features

184. The youngest children are willing to experiment and try new things such as tasting different types of food. They also use appropriate social skills when eating their snacks or sandwiches they have made.
185. Younger Foundation Phase children show genuine independence when they dress themselves to go outside to play or engage in dressing up activities. They are aware of the importance of washing their hands before eating food or after using the toilet. They appreciate the need to use sun-cream in foreign countries or when the weather is hot.
186. As they listen to Bible stories, children develop a good understanding of what is acceptable behaviour. They appreciate the moral theme in the story of 'The Good Samaritan' for example.
187. Older children work well together and show enthusiasm for their tasks. For example, they co-operate effectively on their activities, sharing and taking turns and trying to improve their work. They show genuine respect for the adults in their classrooms.

188. By the end of the Foundation Phase, pupils are confident in tackling problems and devising their own solutions. They use a range of strategies for recording their findings for example.

Shortcomings

189. There are no important shortcomings.

Language, literacy and communication

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

190. Children's listening skills develop very well throughout the Foundation Phase. They listen very well to adults, to instructions, during whole class and whole school events and particularly during story sessions. When required they respond appropriately showing a real understanding for what has been said.
191. The youngest children willingly engage in conversation with familiar adults and visitors to the school. They talk spontaneously about their experiences and the things that interest them. They adapt their language well to suit different scenarios such as role-play or more formal discussions with adults.
192. Older children develop a growing range of vocabulary that they use confidently. They speak at length and convey information logically. The oldest children ask sensible questions and the most able clarify their thinking well.
193. When they first start school, children quickly develop an interest in books. They enjoy listening to stories and handle books correctly, recognising the significance of word and print. The youngest children are familiar with a range of fairy tales and talk about the storyline.
194. Through participation in a carefully structured programme, children begin to recognise different sounds and their associated letters. They read their own name and that of others. By the end of their second year in school, the majority of children read simple books using appropriate strategies to read unfamiliar words.
195. By the end of the Foundation Phase, children read well. They are familiar with many of the key features of books such as author, illustrator and glossary. The oldest children read for a variety of purposes and show genuine understanding of what they read when following instructions or reading lists for example. They are confident using dictionaries and are well aware of alphabetic order.
196. During their time in the Foundation Phase, children become confident writers. The youngest children make their own attempts at mark making in their role-play for example and the majority include recognisable sounds and letters. By the end of their second year in school, children write short sentences with

reasonable degrees of accuracy. They begin to appreciate the need to end a sentence with a full stop.

197. Older children write for a variety of purposes, often constructing their own methods of recording their work. They know that lists, instructions, invitations and menus require different styles of writing. They are reasonably confident using the computer for their writing. By the end of the Foundation Phase, children write short sentences, using capital letters and full stops consistently. Their handwriting is usually legible and the spelling of common words is generally accurate.

Shortcomings

198. There are no important shortcomings; however, a minority of older pupils are reluctant to write at length.

Mathematical development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

199. From the time children start school, they develop a good understanding of number. The youngest children count in sequence in Welsh and English. They count sets of objects accurately often counting beyond 10. The more able children in their first year at school correctly identify numbers symbols to five and match the symbols properly to the objects counted.
200. Children make good progress in their numerical understanding and by the end of their second year in school, children count to 100 in 10s without hesitation. They read larger numerals correctly including numbers beyond 20.
201. In their first year in the Foundation phase, children develop an appropriate awareness of 'measures'. The youngest sort clothes by size, recognising which would belong to adults and which to children. Their understanding of 'measures' develops well and they quickly begin making sensible estimation of length. They differentiate between 'long, short and shortest' and order objects correctly by length. Children are also well aware of the concept of 'symmetry' and 'co-ordinates' and use their understanding effectively in their creative work for example.
202. Older Foundation Phase children use their mathematical knowledge well in their activities. For example, their understanding of fractions is well developed as they make sandwiches using produce grown in their allotment. They 'manipulate' numbers confidently recognising number sequences and knowing key facts about different numbers.
203. By the end of the Foundation Phase, children begin to use non-standard and standard measures accurately in their work on measures. Children are effective in presenting their mathematical work, particularly when they are explaining their work orally. They interpret data and graphs logically. They

recognise and correctly identify common two and three-dimensional shapes and understand the concept of 'quarter' and 'half turns'.

Shortcomings

204. There are no important shortcomings.

Bilingualism and multi-cultural understanding

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

205. Throughout the Foundation Phase, children have a growing understanding of their Welsh identity. They become familiar with Welsh books and traditions and by the age of seven, they have a good understanding that Wales is part of the United Kingdom but has its own separate culture.
206. Children of all ages enthusiastically join in with Welsh songs and rhymes. They are confident responding to adults using simple words and phrases. They show good levels of understanding to instructions issued in Welsh and react appropriately. Their pronunciation is generally accurate.
207. The youngest children have a growing Welsh vocabulary and name colours, numbers and parts of the body correctly. Older children use short sentences and phrases.
208. Older Foundation Phase children are genuinely interested in Welsh books and stories and often select them to read. They are confident reading familiar simple stories independently and do so with appropriate degrees of accuracy. They all understand the storyline.
209. In their first two years in school, children begin to develop an appropriate appreciation of differences between cultures. They are aware of some of the traditions of America and India for example and know how they differ from those in Wales. They are aware that people in other countries eat different types of food from us and they use different methods to eat the food.
210. By the end of the Foundation Phase, children treat all their peers respectfully including those from different cultures. They talk with pride about what their peers from other backgrounds offer and are really interested in their different traditions.

Shortcomings

211. There are no important shortcomings.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

212. Throughout the Foundation Phase, children gain a very good understanding of the environment through their work in the school allotment and the woodland area. For example, they begin to estimate the age of trees by looking at the number of 'rings' in the trunk. They understand the key elements for successful growth of plants. They also have a good understanding of the impact of the weather on their environment and understand the need to act in a sustainable manner.
213. Children are confident when classifying different foods and realise which are the ones that encourage growth and healthy development. The oldest Foundation Phase children quickly differentiate between vegetables, fruits and plants, recognising their key features.
214. By the end of the Foundation Phase, children have a good knowledge of the town of Brynmawr through visitors to the school and walks in the community; they begin to recognise key geographical features. Even the youngest children begin to develop an awareness of places that are more distant. They look at maps and name countries such as India and Egypt, recognising how they could travel to these various countries. They correctly name other towns in Wales such as Tenby and Barry Island, recognising that they are seaside resorts.
215. All children confidently experiment with different materials, appreciating that some can change shape by squashing, bending or twisting. Older children understand that some materials change state by solidifying or melting for example. They have a developing appreciation of the difference between natural and man-made materials through their work in the garden or allotment.
216. The youngest children begin to develop a sense of time. They are aware of the days of the week and the seasons of the year. By the end of the Foundation Phase, children have a good understanding that things were different in the past, particularly in their home town of Brynmawr.
217. As they progress through the Foundation Phase, children develop a respect for and sensitivity towards religious and moral questions. They discuss issues sensibly and relate what they have found out to their own action and behaviour.
218. All children are confident devising appropriate strategies for recording their work, for example role-play, art-work, videoing work and creating simple books, including the use of computers. They are confident in their investigations asking pertinent questions and looking closely for similarities and differences.

Shortcomings

219. There are no important shortcomings, but all children's awareness of the past is at an earlier stage of development.

Creative development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

220. As they move through the Foundation Phase, children become increasingly skilful and confident experimenting with creative materials to record their ideas and feelings. They use their imagination and their own creative ideas to produce artistic work of good quality.
221. Children begin to show awareness of the work of other great artists such as Monet and Van Gogh and produce their own realistic interpretations of their work. The artistic work children produce using computer programs shows good levels of control and high levels of detail.
222. All children are confident using a good range of artistic media and tools and they adapt their work sensibly in order to improve the quality of what they produce.
223. All children in the Foundation Phase enjoy singing in both Welsh and English and they keep broadly in tune. They are confident singing both accompanied and unaccompanied. They handle percussion instruments properly and maintain a steady beat when clapping to accompany their singing. They experiment enthusiastically when choosing instruments to produce a specific sound.
224. The youngest children show great imagination in their role-play and move creatively when developing their ideas. By their last year in the Foundation Phase, children work well with each other and are confident and imaginative when developing movement to respond to music or re-create stories for example.

Shortcomings

225. Although there are no important shortcomings, children's awareness of art and music from Wales is less well-developed.

Physical development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

226. All children in the Foundation Phase classes enjoy exploring their indoor and outdoor learning environments. They develop a good awareness of health, fitness and safety, of adventurous and physical play and control body movements well. Children are very aware of the space around them and

control their movements successfully to avoid each other, such as when they are using wheeled toys.

227. At different levels, children work safely with each other and with equipment. They are confident in the outdoor environment running, jumping and landing off equipment and they handle apparatus such as hoops well. They show good body control and balance when moving to music.
228. Children generally develop appropriate manipulative skills. They use scissors correctly managing to cut on a defined line. They use knives and forks properly at snack and dinner-time. The majority of children have sufficient control to use pencils and crayons successfully to include detail in their work. All children are very competent using a computer mouse. Children willingly help with moving apparatus and handle it properly as helping to take it out and put it away.

Shortcomings

229. There are no important shortcomings, however less able younger children have difficulty holding pencils and pens correctly.

English

Key stage 2: Grade 2 – Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

230. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils listen attentively to presentations by teachers and each other. Most pupils speak clearly and confidently and enjoy contributing to discussions. Older pupils begin to realise the need to adapt their spoken language and intonation of voice for different situations.
231. Pupils develop very good skills in supporting arguments; for example, when evaluating advertisements linked to persuasive writing. The most able pupils are very articulate.
232. The majority of pupils make good progress in reading clearly and accurately. Pupils make good use of their access to the developing wide range of books available. Subsequently, their reading skills develop well. Most pupils demonstrate good understanding, discussing characters, plots and their favourite authors sensibly. Most pupils make good quality predictions about the outcomes of stories.
233. In year 3, pupils use simple index pages effectively, while in year 4, pupils make good progress in identifying relevant information in texts related to the life of Henry VIII.
234. Older pupils demonstrate good skills in gathering information in a range of subjects including local myths and legends. Pupils' reading skills are well developed, enabling them to retrieve information successfully and accurately from a range of sources such as non-fiction texts.

235. Standards of writing across the key stage are good, with some very good examples of extended writing.
236. Pupils produce a wide variety of creative and factual work including letters, biographies, newspaper reports and poetry.
237. By the end of the key stage they use paragraphs effectively, using a variety of sentence patterns. They use interesting and imaginative language, for example adverbs, to create effects when writing extended narratives.
238. Most pupils develop appropriate skills in drafting and redrafting their work. By the end of key stage 2, the majority of pupils have a good standard of handwriting, generally joined, consistent and legible.
239. Those pupils with additional learning needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well.

Shortcomings

240. There are no important shortcomings. However, a small minority of pupils' written work is presented in an untidy manner.

Science

Key stage 2: Grade 2 – Good features and no important shortcoming

Good features

241. Pupils' investigative and experimental skills are developing well. When brainstorming ideas, pupils draw successfully on the knowledge and understanding they acquired in earlier lessons.
242. They work extremely well in groups, listening to each other's ideas and coming to corporate decisions. They make sensible predictions using the correct scientific vocabulary and draw conclusions consistent with the evidence.
243. Following a range of practical investigations and problem solving activities, pupils have developed a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test. They understand that the accuracy of results is affected by any small change in the conduct of an experiment.
244. Pupils successfully construct simple electrical circuits and correctly explain how switches control the flow of electricity. Older pupils know the difference between circuits in parallel or in series and are aware of the significance of these in every-day life.
245. Through well-planned investigations, they accurately sort a variety of materials according to their properties, including their use as conductors or insulators of electricity or whether they are magnetic or non-magnetic.

246. Pupils correctly identify and name the organs of flowering plants and explain the different methods of seed dispersal. They are well aware of the different types of environment that plants and animals need to survive successfully.
247. They know the requirements of a healthy diet, the importance of exercise and the harmful effects of smoking and drugs on the body.
248. Older pupils correctly explain the relationship between the earth, the moon and the sun, and its effect on 'night' and 'day'.

Shortcomings

249. There are no important shortcomings.

History

Key stage 2: Grade 2 – Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

250. Across the key stage, pupils make good use of timelines and are developing their understanding of chronological awareness well.
251. Younger pupils in the key stage demonstrate a good level of awareness of differences in life in Roman Britain in comparison with their own lives. They successfully discuss sources of evidence showing a good awareness that artefacts can help them to find out about the past.
252. In year 4, pupils correctly recall monarchs of the Tudor period in chronological order. They consider portraits of Tudor times and look beyond the face value for elements such as symbolism.
253. Pupils show good evidence of making informed judgements from historical sources. Many pupils understand that there are often different interpretations of people and events from the past and suggest plausible reasons for the inclusion of Gods and Goddesses in Tudor portraits.
254. In upper key stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of social conditions and industrialisation in Victorian times. Pupils correctly recall many interesting facts about key features of Victorian childhood and education, and draw out differences and similarities.
255. Pupils have a good knowledge of the growth of Brynmawr during the 19th century and confidently find information from census records of the period. They put forward sensible reasons why so many families had servants and recount their findings and ideas with confidence.
256. In year 6, pupils have made appropriate timelines and talk knowledgeably about the causes of the second world war. They explore the impact of the war on social life and show good use of ICT in making identity cards and in using the internet to research related topics.

257. Pupils in year 6 compare and contrast an immigrant's environment in the West Indies with life in Britain in the 1960s. They make good use of written and photographic sources to find similarities and differences and put forward sensible reasons for the differences they find. Pupils use the source materials with confidence and many show a developing understanding of prejudice and racism with the more able putting forward their ideas why people may have been prejudiced against immigrants. Many understand that people in the 1960s held different views from views held today.

Shortcomings

258. There are no important shortcomings.

Music

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

Good features

259. Throughout the key stage, pupils really enjoy singing. They sing enthusiastically and with gusto both accompanied and unaccompanied. They generally have good diction and sing a range of songs from Europe and other cultures. By the end of key stage 2, pupils sing in two parts managing to maintain their own particular line of the tune. More able pupils are confident singing individually.
260. As they move through the school, pupils enjoy playing a wide range of instruments, including recorders, percussion instruments and keyboards and make good progress in playing them with dexterity and control.
261. Pupils begin to develop an awareness of musical vocabulary, for example *pitch, tempo and dynamic*, and they recognise them in pieces of music. Whether singing or playing instruments, pupils generally maintain a steady beat.
262. Extra-curricular musical tuition has a positive impact on standards in performance. More able pupils' ability to play orchestral instruments, such as guitars, violins and brass instruments, enables them to read notation and to take the lead in class lessons.
263. Younger key stage 2 pupils are aware of the sounds that different instruments make and correctly identify various techniques that may be used to play untuned percussion instruments. Many confidently use computer programs to 'compose' simple repetitive tunes.
264. By the upper end of key stage 2, pupils appreciate differences in musical styles and express their preferences sensibly and logically. They respond appropriately to music in imaginative ways such as words and movement.
265. Throughout the key stage, pupils compose simple pieces of music to represent different scenarios, for example, animal movements. They sensibly

select suitable instruments to make specific sounds. By the end of key stage 2, pupils use tuned instruments in their compositions and follow graphic or pictorial scores properly when performing music. They make sensible evaluations of each other's compositions, including suggestions for how they may be improved.

Shortcomings

266. Although there are no important shortcomings, generally pupils are not aware of the effect of good posture on their singing and they do not alter the dynamics sufficiently to convey the mood of the music or the lyrics. They are also not very aware of the music of Wales.

School's response to the inspection

The Head teacher, staff and governors at St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School welcome the Estyn report following their inspection in July 2007.

The inspection report fully supports the school's own self-evaluation report, acknowledges the successful progress made since the last inspection and highlights the many outstanding features of the school.

The school is particularly pleased with the outstanding quality recognised in the pupils' personal and social, moral and learning skills and in the well-being of our pupils and children, and the recognition given to the high quality of interaction between teachers and pupils in order to achieve this level of aptitude.


The inspection team acknowledges that the school is successfully piloting the Foundation Phase and that the strong and effective professional leadership and management in the school are instrumental in this. In addition the purposeful and knowledgeable leadership of the school contributes to the good progress made since the last inspection.

The inspection team also recognises that the good features displayed in the teaching in the school are well above the National average, and that the quality of planning and assessment evident in the Foundation Phase is outstanding.

The school is also pleased that the team recognises the full and effective involvement of the governing body.

The Head teacher, staff and governing body will develop a plan to address the recommendations made in the report and will inform all stakeholders in the school in due course.

The school would like to thank the inspection team for their courtesy and professionalism throughout the time of the inspection.



Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	St Mary's Brynmawr C in W Voluntary Aided School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3 – 11 years
Address of school	Intermediate Road, Brynmawr, Blaenau Gwent
Postcode	NP23 4SF
Telephone number	01495 310525
Head teacher	Mr Ian Forbes
Date of appointment	September 1992
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs Lindsay Sims Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Registered inspector	Mr Merfyn Douglas Jones
Dates of inspection	2 nd – 4 th July 2007

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	12.5	28	29	30	30	30	32	30	221.5

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	11	0	11

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	26:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	1:8
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	n/a
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	26
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.25:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Summer 2006	89.9%	93.3%	93.3%
Autumn 2006	87.8%	90.9%	94.4%
Spring 2007	88.2%	88.3%	92.6%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	13%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of key stage 1:

The school is a pilot for implementing the Foundation Phase for the Welsh Assembly Government and therefore this key stage is disappplied from the National Curriculum. No comparison data is available.

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of key stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2006							Number of pupils in Y6		30		
Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	57	30
		National	0	0	2	0	1	4	15	46	31
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	50	33
		National	0	0	2	0	1	3	15	47	32
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	63	30
		National	0	0	2	0	0	2	11	51	34

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by teacher assessment		by test	
In the school	78	In the school	n/a
In Wales	74	In Wales	n/a

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

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

A team of five inspectors, including a lay inspector, and a peer assessor inspected the school over eleven inspector days.

The head teacher was the nominee and played a supportive and active role during the inspection.

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

Thirty-five questionnaires were completed and returned by parents, and carefully analysed by the inspection team.

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

Thirty-nine lessons were observed over the three days.

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

Pupils' behaviour was observed at various times during the school day.

Inspectors attended acts of daily worship.

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

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

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Merfyn Douglas Jones Registered Inspector	Key Questions 1, 2, 5 and 6 Subject: Science
Mr Peter Clarke Team Inspector	Key Question 3 and supporting key questions 2 and 4 Subject: English
Mrs Sue Parsons Team Inspector	Key Question 4 Supporting key question 2 Subject: History
Mrs Maggie Morgan Team Inspector	Key Question 7 and supporting key questions 1,2,3 and 5 Subject: Areas of Learning in Foundation Phase, Music
Mr Charles Brentnall Lay Inspector	Supporting key questions 1, 3, 4 and 5
Mr Ian Forbes Nominee	Providing evidence and support
Mrs Justine Proctor Peer Assessor	Contributing to subjects and aspects.

The contractor was

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Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, head teacher, members of staff, parents, other members of the community and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.