

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

**St Mary's V.R.C. School  
Britannia Road,  
SA72 6PD**

**School Number: 6683312**

**Date of Inspection: 28/11/05**

**by**

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W268/78706**

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- \* pupil referral units;
- \* independent schools;
- \* further education;
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- \* youth support services;
- \* LEAs;
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- \* work-based learning;
- \* careers companies; and
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St Mary's V.R.C. 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 V.R.C. School took place between 28/11/05 and 29/11/05. An independent team of inspectors, led by Dr David G Evans, 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 short 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

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Context</b>	1
<b>Summary</b>	3
<b>Recommendations</b>	9
<b>Standards</b>	10
Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?	10
<b>The quality of education and training</b>	13
Key question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	13
Key question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	14
Key question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	16
<b>Leadership and management</b>	19
Key question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	19
Key question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	20
Key question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	21
<b>School's response to the inspection</b>	23
<b>Appendices</b>	
A Basic information about the school	24
B School data and indicators	25
C National Curriculum assessments results	26
D Evidence base of the inspection	28
E Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	29

## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. St Mary's Primary is a voluntary- aided Roman Catholic school situated in the town of Pembroke Dock. The catchment area includes the town and the surrounding areas. A fall in the birth rate has seen a steady decline in numbers and this has had an impact on staffing and provision. In an effort to maintain numbers, the Governing Body decided to extend the Early Years provision and to establish a Playgroup. The closure of a neighbouring Infants School has meant that some children and nursery staff have transferred to the school in September 2005.
2. There have also been changes in the management of the school in recent months. The previous head teacher retired at Christmas 2004 after nearly thirty-one years in post. The deputy head teacher moved to another school at the end of the spring term 2005. A new head teacher was appointed in the summer term 2005 and commenced in September 2005.
3. Approximately 15 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. There are 31 per cent of pupils identified as having special educational needs. There are 5 pupils from European countries for whom English is a second language.

### The aims and priorities

#### Aims:

4. As a Catholic school, the overriding aim is to provide an atmosphere that reflects the love and care shown by Christians. The school endeavours to respect the uniqueness and the needs of the individual. It aims to create a happy, caring, stimulating and purposeful environment with mutual respect for all within the school community; encouraging all the children to reach their full potential spiritually, academically, socially and physically.

#### Priorities:

5. The School Development Plan(SDP) identifies the following priorities :
  - To develop the role of curriculum co-ordinators by ensuring that effective monitoring procedures are in place
  - To develop a whole-school approach to the progression of key skills
  - To develop the use of Information and Communications Technology(ICT) across the curriculum to enhance and support learning and teaching
  - To further develop pupils' involvement in their own assessment and target setting
  - To gain the Sustainable Development Bronze Award
  - To work towards the Investors in People Award

- To develop the role of the governors to ensure greater involvement with staff and pupils
- An outdoor learning environment to be developed to provide pupils with early and essential environmental experiences.

## Summary

6. St Mary's is a friendly, happy school that has many positive features. The school provides pupils with a wide range of good experiences and it exudes a calm, caring ethos.
7. The inspection team agrees with the school's self assessment on five of the key questions in the self-evaluation report. However, in key questions 3 and 6, the inspection team awarded lower grades than 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?	3
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

8. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
9. The under-fives make good progress in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and in using information technology. They make good progress in the development of their personal, social and creative skills. Their bilingual competence in both English and Welsh is developing well.
10. At key stage 1, pupils' standards and progress in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and using information technology are good. Their standards in personal, social, creative and problem-solving skills are also good with no important shortcomings.
11. At key stage 2, pupils make good progress in their English communication skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, and in their personal, social and creative skills. Their progress in numeracy, information technology and in problem-solving skills is appropriate.
12. Overall, pupils' bilingual competence is developing appropriately and their speaking and listening skills in Welsh at key stage 1 are good with no important shortcomings. However, there are shortcomings in pupils' speaking and listening skills in Welsh at key stage 2 and in their reading and writing skills at both key stages.

13. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress and achieve the targets set for them.
14. Those learning English as an additional language make good progress overall in their knowledge and understanding of subjects. They make good progress in learning English.
15. National Curriculum assessment conducted by teachers in 2005 indicates that, at the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment in the core subject of English was above both national and local education authority (LEA) averages, while results in mathematics and science were marginally below national and LEA averages. In comparison with schools of a similar type, English results were just below the median, while mathematics and science were in the third quartile. During the last three years, pupils' performance in key stage 1 has been consistently above the national and LEA averages. There were some differences in the performance of boys and girls in the 2005 results, with girls performing significantly better at the higher level 3 in mathematics and science. At key stage 1, in 2005, pupils far exceeded the targets set for them.
16. At the end of key stage 2, in 2005, National Curriculum assessment indicates that pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was above national and LEA averages, while in science their performance was below national and LEA averages. In comparison with schools of a similar type, pupils' results in 2005 were slightly above the median for English, near the median for mathematics and in the lower quartile for science. The results in mathematics and science were relatively lower largely because none of the girls attained the higher level 5 in either subject. Over the last five years, pupils' performance at key stage 2 has been consistently above national and LEA averages. At key stage 2, in 2005, pupils' performance exceeded the target set for them in English, while in mathematics and science pupils met their overall targets.
17. Throughout the school, pupils generally show positive attitudes to their learning and work productively. However, in some classes, there are occasions when a few pupils are slow to settle down to their work and there are low levels of restlessness when teachers are talking.
18. With a small number of exceptions, the overall behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils move around the school in a quiet and courteous manner. They are respectful to their fellow pupils and to adults.
19. Good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' ability to work independently. Although most pupils have appropriate organisational skills and participate enthusiastically in class activities, many older pupils find it difficult to stay on task when working individually or as part of a group. In some lessons, pupils do not sufficiently extend their exploratory and investigative skills. They do not have well-developed research skills and they do not consistently plan their own work without direct supervision.

20. Pupils' personal and social skills are good. They work and play together well and they respond well to the many rewards and celebrations of their development. Pupils participate fully in their various extra-curricular activities.
21. Pupils are well aware of equal opportunities and become involved equally in what is provided for them.
22. Attendance rates are good overall at approximately 96 per cent, with many pupils having excellent levels of attendance. Punctuality is also good with lessons starting promptly.

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

23. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
17%	39%	39%	5%	0%

24. The quality of teaching across the school is variable. Some good and outstanding teaching was observed, particularly in the Reception class and key stage 1.
25. A strong feature of teaching throughout the school is the good working relationships, teachers and support staff have with pupils. Teachers promote equality of opportunity and ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, irrespective of their abilities and backgrounds.
26. Lessons are generally planned well and have clear structure and purpose. Teachers usually share objectives effectively with pupils at the beginning and revisit them towards the end of lessons to monitor progress. Teachers have good, up-to-date subject knowledge and use this effectively in lessons.
27. Where appropriate, teachers show versatility in adapting lessons to accommodate the learning needs of all pupils. This is a particularly impressive feature of the lessons, which are judged to be good with outstanding features. Support staff are fully involved in planning and they effectively support individuals and small groups.
28. Most lessons challenge pupils to extend their understanding. However, in lessons judged to have shortcomings, pupils are not sufficiently well challenged or stimulated. Sometimes teachers take responsibility and independence away from the pupils and, as a result, pupils lack motivation and become restless and inattentive. In addition, in the lessons, which are less effective, the pace of learning is not as brisk and teachers often use a more limited range of teaching strategies.
29. Teachers assess pupils' achievements and progress in the core and some of the foundation subjects regularly and fairly and the school meets statutory requirements for assessment, recording and reporting.

30. Although there are areas of good assessment practice, as in science, whole-school assessment procedures and approaches are in the early stages of development. The school is also in the process of developing more rigorous approaches to tracking pupils' progress and to the analysis of assessment data. Individual target setting has operated in key stage 1 for some time, but it has only recently been developed in Years 5 and 6.
31. Parents and carers are regularly informed about the progress made by their children. Annual written reports meet statutory requirements. They do not, however, indicate clear targets for improvement or provide opportunities for parents to comment.
32. The aims of the school provide a good foundation from which to develop the curriculum and to further pupils' learning. Schemes of work are in place for all the National Curriculum subjects.
33. There are opportunities in the short-term planning to identify the key and basic skills. However, the school recognises that these skills are not yet planned well enough to enable pupils to apply and consolidate them across the curriculum.
34. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Visits to places of interest and visiting speakers extend pupils' experiences and support their learning well across the curriculum.
35. Provision for the development of pupils' personal and social development is good and the school effectively fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' understanding of environmental and sustainability issues is being promoted well.
36. Very good links with parents enable the school to work closely with families for the benefit of all. The school has effective links with the community, other schools in the area and with industry.
37. The school guides and cares for the pupils well in a happy and supportive environment. The head teacher, staff and governors work together effectively to provide good care and support for all pupils.
38. An audit of safety and security has led to effective alterations this term, which have been well received by parents.
39. Child protection arrangements are good and follow local guidelines. First aid is also well covered and several members of staff are fully trained.
40. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good overall. The school has well-organised and effective systems to identify pupils who require additional support for their learning.
41. Pupils learn the values of respect and tolerance and all pupils are given equal opportunities in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. The school has a

good policy to promote racial awareness and it effectively encourages all pupils to learn about other cultures and faiths.

### **Leadership and management**

42. The newly appointed head teacher provides quiet, orderly and supportive leadership. An environment of trust exists among the staff, who work exceptionally well as a team and support each other effectively.
43. At present, there is no deputy head teacher, but the senior management team(SMT) offers appropriate expertise and plays an increasing and purposeful role in the school.
44. The governing body is supportive of the head teacher, staff, pupils and aims of the school. Although governors play an appropriate and enthusiastic role in setting the strategic direction of the school, they are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring pupils' standards and the overall quality of curricular provision. The governors are very keen to help the school move forward and they acknowledge that these are areas for development.
45. There are clear aspirations within the school community to establish a systematic and co-ordinated approach to self-evaluation. The school is making good progress in establishing comprehensive, systematic and first-hand monitoring and evaluation procedures to guide and inform its planning, but the school acknowledges that this is an area for further development.
46. The quality of the school's self-evaluation report has good features that outweigh shortcomings. However, the report often makes assertions that are not securely grounded in factual detail and data analysis.
47. The current school development plan(SDP) is a clear, long-term document with targets for improvement. However, it does not provide a sharp focus on school priorities and the links with the school's current self-evaluation are not consistently well established.
48. The school has made good progress in many areas since the last inspection. Shortcomings remain, however, in some areas, particularly with regard to planning for the development of key skills.
49. The school is appropriately staffed for the number of pupils on roll. Members of staff are sufficiently qualified and experienced. Support staff liaise closely with the teaching staff and positively contribute to pupils' learning during lessons.
50. The learning resources and the overall condition of books, materials and equipment in the classrooms and throughout the school are generally inadequate to support pupils' learning. The school library is only adequately resourced and much of the information technology(IT) is unsuitable and in need of updating.

51. The accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on roll. Attractive and informative displays in the classrooms and learning areas celebrate pupils' achievements and enhance the overall learning environment.
52. There is no dedicated, outdoor area available for the early years children on the main school campus. The school acknowledges that this is an area for improvement.
53. Funding and spending priorities are well matched to the current needs of the school, and the school makes good use of the available resources at its disposal. Through regular reviews, the school ensures that good value for money is obtained.

## Recommendations

54. In order to improve, the school needs to:
- R1 Continue to improve whole-school planning for the development of key skills and pupils' bilingual competence and address shortcomings identified in the use of key skills across the curriculum.
  - R2 Share good practices in teaching throughout the school
  - R3 Further develop whole-school assessment procedures and practices.
  - R4 Develop the role of the governing body in monitoring standards and the quality of curricular provision
  - R5 Continue to develop effective, whole-school self-evaluation arrangements and link self-evaluation closely to whole-school priorities
  - R6 Improve the overall quality and quantity of learning resources

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

55. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
56. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
57. The Under-Fives make good progress in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and in using information technology. They make good progress in the development of their personal, social and creative skills. Their bilingual competence in both Welsh and English is developing well.
58. At key stage 1, pupils' standards and progress in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and using information technology are good. Their standards in personal, social, creative and problem-solving skills are also good with no important shortcomings.
59. At key stage 2, pupils make good progress in their English communication skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, and in their personal, social and creative skills. Their progress in numeracy, information technology and in problem-solving skills is appropriate.
60. Overall, pupils' bilingual competence is developing appropriately and their speaking and listening skills in Welsh at key stage 1 are good with no important shortcomings. However, there are shortcomings in pupils' speaking and listening skills in Welsh at key stage 2 and in their reading and writing skills at both key stages.
61. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress and achieve the targets set for them.
62. Those learning English as an additional language make good progress overall in their knowledge and understanding of subjects. They make good progress in learning English.
63. National Curriculum assessment conducted by teachers in 2005 indicates that, at the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment in the core subject of English was above both the national and LEA averages, while results in mathematics and science were marginally below national and LEA averages. In comparison with schools of a similar type, English results were just below the median, while mathematics and science were in the third quartile. During the last three years, pupils' performance in key stage 1 has been consistently above the national and LEA averages. There were some differences in the

performance of boys and girls in the 2005 results, with girls performing significantly better at the higher level 3 in mathematics and science. At key stage 1, in 2005, pupils far exceeded the targets set for them .

64. At the end of key stage 2, in 2005, National Curriculum assessment indicates that pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was above national and LEA averages, while in science their performance was below national and LEA averages. In comparison with schools of a similar type, pupils' results in 2005 were slightly above the median for English, near the median for mathematics and in the lower quartile for science. The results in mathematics and science were relatively lower largely because none of the girls attained the higher level 5 in either subject. Over the last five years, pupils' performance at key stage 2 has been consistently above national and LEA averages. At key stage 2, in 2005, pupils' performance exceeded the target set for them in English, while in mathematics and science pupils met their overall targets.
65. Throughout the school, pupils generally show positive attitudes to their learning and work productively. However, in some classes, there are occasions when some pupils are slow to settle down to their work and there are some low levels of restlessness when teachers are talking. When engaged in stimulating, practical activities, pupils are enthusiastic and work well.
66. With a small number of exceptions, the overall behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils move around the school in a quiet, orderly and courteous manner. They are respectful to their fellow pupils and to adults, and they are considerate of others and of school property in general. Many take an increasing degree of responsibility for their own behaviour and attitudes.
67. Good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' ability to work independently. Although most pupils have appropriate organisational skills and participate enthusiastically in class activities, many older pupils find it difficult to stay on task when working individually or as part of a group. In some lessons, pupils need more time to explore and investigate. They do not have well-developed research skills and they do not consistently plan their own work without direct supervision. Pupils do not always know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their standards of achievement.
68. Pupils' personal and social skills are good. They work and play together well and they respond well to the many rewards and celebrations of their development, both in lessons and in assemblies. Pupils participate fully in their activities and enthusiastically describe their extra-curricular activities.
69. Pupils are well aware of equal opportunities and get involved equally in what is provided for them. They show very good levels of support and friendship for the five pupils from Europe who are new to the area and who are learning English as an additional language.

70. Attendance rates are good overall at approximately 96 per cent, with many pupils having excellent attendance. Punctuality is also good with lessons starting promptly. Systems to record attendance are clear and staff take appropriate account of NAW guidance.
71. Pupils are beginning to be prepared for the world of work when they rise to the challenge of entering a variety of local competitions. Recent involvement in 'Operation Jackpot', for example, was highly successful. Pupils enjoy visiting their community, local industry, shops and businesses.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

72. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
73. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
17%	39%	39%	5%	0%

74. The quality of teaching across the school is variable. Some good and outstanding teaching was observed, particularly in the Reception class and key stage 1.
75. A strong feature of teaching throughout the school is the good working relationships that teachers and support staff have with pupils. Teachers promote equality of opportunity and ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, irrespective of their abilities and backgrounds.
76. Teachers' use of the interactive whiteboard is having an increasingly good impact on teaching and learning.
77. Lessons are planned well and have clear structure and purpose. Teachers usually share objectives with pupils at the beginning and revisit them towards the end of lessons to monitor progress. Teachers' plans usually identify key skills that will be developed, but they do not closely knit with the long-term planning in policies and subject schemes.
78. Teachers have good, up-to-date subject knowledge and use this effectively in lessons. Questions are used skilfully to gauge pupils' knowledge and understanding.
79. Where appropriate, teachers show versatility in adapting lessons to accommodate the learning needs of all pupils. This is a particularly impressive aspect of the lessons, which are judged to be good with outstanding features.
80. In the lessons which are good or better, the pace of learning is brisk, all pupils know exactly what is expected of them and they strive hard to complete their work in the time set. Teachers manage pupils well and have a good range of strategies to stimulate and motivate the more passive or slower learning pupils, including those with SEN.
81. Support staff are involved in planning and they effectively support individuals and small groups.

82. Most lessons challenge pupils to extend their understanding, particularly in Reception and key stage 1. However, in lessons judged to have shortcomings, pupils are not sufficiently well challenged or stimulated and the lessons lack vigour. On occasions, teachers take responsibility and independence away from pupils and, as a result, pupils lack motivation and become restless and inattentive. In addition, in lessons, which are less effective the pace of learning is not as brisk and teachers often use a more limited range of teaching strategies.
83. Teachers assess pupils' achievements and progress in the core subjects and some other foundation subjects regularly and fairly and the school meets statutory requirements for assessment, recording and reporting. In the core subjects, teachers have a clear understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum, but there is often a lack of consistency in how they judge levels of pupils' work. They collate work achieved in the core subjects and samples of levelled work are included in pupils' profiles.
84. Although there are areas of good assessment practice, as in science, whole-school assessment procedures and approaches are in the early stages of development. The school is also in the process of developing more rigorous approaches to tracking pupils' progress and to the analysis of assessment data.
85. Individual target setting has operated in key stage 1 for some time, but it has only recently been developed in Years 5 and 6.
86. Although teachers mark pupils' work regularly and comment positively, the policy is not applied consistently throughout the school. Comments do not always show pupils how to improve their work.
87. Parents and carers are regularly informed about the progress made by their children. Annual written reports meet statutory requirements. They do not, however, indicate clear targets for improvement, provide opportunities for parents to comment or include any self assessment by the pupils.

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

<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
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88. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement of grade 1 made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
89. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
90. The aims of the school provide a good foundation from which to develop the curriculum and to further pupils' learning. The planned curriculum is

sufficiently broad and balanced, meets the needs of the pupils and is equally accessible to all.

91. Schemes of work are in place for all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The school is beginning to audit the effectiveness of these schemes of work in order to improve pupils' standards still further.
92. Children in the early years receive a wide range of experiences. The teachers and support staff work effectively together to review provision and to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning.
93. There are opportunities in the short-term planning to identify the key and basic skills in outline form. However, the school recognises that the development of these skills is not yet sufficiently well planned to enable pupils to apply and consolidate them across the curriculum and throughout the key stages. In addition, the school does not, as yet, systematically plan for the development of pupils' bilingual skills. The school acknowledges that these are important priorities for development.
94. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Musical, sporting and cultural activities are available for all pupils in line with the equal opportunities policy. These activities are well attended and fully appreciated by the pupils. Visits to places of interest and visiting speakers extend pupils' experiences and support their learning well across the curriculum. Visits to Caldey Island, local castles and an involvement in the Heritage project provide a meaningful basis for study, make a valuable contribution to the standards that pupils achieve and enhance their personal and social skills.
95. Provision for the development of pupils' personal and social development is good. The school successfully focuses on the development of a healthy lifestyle, with an appropriate emphasis placed on the benefits of a healthy diet.
96. The school effectively fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school ethos, links with the parish church and daily acts of collective worship combine to provide pupils with a clear set of values, which help them to think sensitively about relationships in the school and the wider community. Pupils have a definite sense of right and wrong and take their responsibilities seriously.
97. Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture through *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* and activities such as the celebration of St David's Day and visits to the Urdd centre at Llangrannog. They have a growing appreciation of other cultures through links with Eritrea and Kenya.
98. Very good links with parents enable the school to work closely with families for the benefit of all. Parents speak very positively about the school and have every confidence in staff, who keep them well informed. Many parents, including friends from within the community, help voluntarily in school, become involved as governors and support the Parent Teacher Association.

Family literacy and numeracy courses are well established in the school community.

99. The school curriculum meets the statutory requirements and takes good account of national initiatives, including conservation issues, the global community and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.
100. Effective community links are also evident, including with the parish church. The quality of links with other schools, including the secondary school, is good. Students from a local teacher training college are often in school to complete work placements.
101. Links with industry are good and contribute to the range of experiences planned for pupils. Members of the fire service, national parks wardens and local police visit regularly to talk to the pupils. In addition, local industry has donated resources to the school and welcomed school visits to support pupils' geography lessons. However, staff have not recently been on placements in industry.
102. The school policy for the promotion of equal opportunities is effective. All pupils, irrespective of gender, ability or additional learning needs, take an active part in all aspects of school life and relationships are good throughout the school
103. Pupils' understanding of environmental and sustainability issues is being promoted well when they take part in various projects and competitions and when the school council talk about how they can improve the school. The school has applied for a bronze award for progress and success in this area.
104. Entrepreneurial skills are also being given good attention and pupils enjoy the responsibility of selling fruit to their friends during break times. They are currently planning how to spend a large sum of money, which they won when they designed a new playground. This project involved pupils using problem-solving, research and computer skills.

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

<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
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105. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
106. The school guides and cares for the pupils well in a happy and supportive environment. The head teacher, staff and governors work together effectively to provide good care and support for all pupils. Care arrangements are well planned and managed.
107. The school works closely with parents when decisions are made on how to best meet individual and specific needs. Medical, health and learning needs

are supported very well and the views of families are given every consideration.

108. Induction arrangements for children entering the school are good and ensure that they settle happily into their new school environment. Visits by parents and children before they enter the school provide a sound foundation and contribute positively to the pastoral care of the children. Arrangements are effective when pupils move to their next stage of education. Visits to the comprehensive school by Year 6 pupils, good curriculum and pastoral links and effective staff exchanges ensure smooth transition between the key stages.
109. The school has a well-structured and co-ordinated guidance programme that takes good account of health education and personal and social education. The school has developed effective links with specialist agencies such as the health and social services. Teachers monitor pupils' needs and progress well.
110. The head teacher plays a key role in monitoring standards of behaviour informally, and staff share and discuss information well and provide consistent support for those pupils with more challenging behaviour. Playground monitors keep a watchful eye on their friends during break times and they are quick to act if the need arises.
111. Attendance is recorded accurately and plans are in hand to install a new computer system very soon which will enable even closer and quicker monitoring of absences over time.
112. An audit of safety and security has led to alterations this term, which have been well received by parents. The caretaker is vigilant in ensuring that procedures are followed throughout the day to keep entrances secure. Governors are fully involved in meeting their responsibilities with regard to health and safety matters. The policy is reviewed every year and risks assessed to promote good standards of care and welfare.
113. Child protection arrangements are appropriate and follow local guidelines. The teacher with named responsibility for child protection is experienced and fully trained. A rolling programme has begun to ensure that all members of staff receive appropriate training. First aid is also well covered and several members of staff are fully trained.
114. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good overall. The school has well-organised and effective systems to identify pupils who require additional support for their learning. The SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) manages the procedures and systems very well. Support staff are well trained and there is good liaison between the SENCo and the class teachers.
115. The programme of withdrawal sessions and in-class support is well organised across the school and has a positive impact on standards. Initiatives such as

the 'Catch Up' mathematics programme help pupils with additional learning needs achieve good progress. Pupils with SEN have good quality Individual Education Plans (IEPs) with well-planned targets that enable them to achieve well. These IEPs are reviewed each term and parents and carers are fully involved in the reviews. Pupils are well integrated into the life and work of the school. Good use is made of the support services, where appropriate.

116. Overall, the school has effective policies and procedures to deal with any incidents of inappropriate behaviour or bullying that may arise. In lessons, the great majority of pupils have positive attitudes and approach the tasks that are set for them with enthusiasm and diligence. However, there are a few pupils who exhibit restlessness when they are not sufficiently challenged in some lessons. Teachers are aware of these difficulties and are working hard to overcome them.
117. Pupils learn the values of respect and tolerance and all pupils are given equal opportunities in lessons and in extra-curricular activities, regardless of their ethnic or linguistic background.
118. The policy for equal opportunities actively promotes gender equality and this is reflected well in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities throughout the school. .
119. The school has a good policy to promote racial awareness and it effectively encourages all pupils to learn about other cultures, faiths and religions. Assemblies are also effective in addressing issues of racial awareness. Donations are raised for CAFOD and colourful photographic displays in the school highlight this aspect of the school's work. Racial incidents are very rare but, if they occur, they are recorded by the head teacher in accordance with the school's effective policy.
120. Bullying is taken seriously if pupils or parents do report any issues. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe when, for example, they take part in 'Crucial Crew'. In addition, the programme for personal, social and health education is meeting pupils' needs well.
121. The school has conducted an audit of the effectiveness of its facilities to ensure that it can accommodate disabled pupils and a suitable action plan has been submitted to the LEA. Reasonable action has been taken to ensure that any disabled pupils admitted to the school would not suffer from less favourable treatment.

## Leadership and management

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

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

122. The overall finding of the inspection team matches the judgement of the school in its self-evaluation report.
123. In a short space of time the school has overcome the difficulties which arose from the changes in leadership and staffing during the last year.
124. The school has agreed aims and values, which promote equality of opportunity for all and are well reflected in the work and life of the school community.
125. The newly appointed head teacher provides quiet, orderly and supportive leadership; an environment of trust exists among the staff, who work exceptionally well as a team and support each other effectively.
126. At present, there is no deputy head teacher on the staff, but the Senior Management Team (SMT) offers appropriate expertise and plays an increasing and purposeful role in the school.
127. The school takes good account of national priorities. Initiatives for literacy, numeracy, family learning and education for sustainable development help pupils to achieve higher standards and make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills.
128. An effective staff performance management system promotes teachers' continuous professional development well and is helping to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum.
129. The school recognises that, as it develops a whole-school approach to assessment, it will be in a position to set more realistic and challenging targets for pupils' improvement and progress.
130. The governing body is supportive of the head teacher, staff, pupils and the aims and objectives of the school. Governors meet regularly and are supplied with comprehensive information about the life and work of the school.
131. Although governors play an appropriate and enthusiastic role in setting the strategic direction of the school, they are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring pupils' standards and the overall quality of curricular provision. The governors are very keen to help the school move forward and they acknowledge that these are areas for further development.
132. Overall, the governors fulfil their legal and regulatory requirements.

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

**Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

133. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation report in that the school judged this key question as Grade 2
134. There are clear aspirations within the school community to establish a systematic and co-ordinated approach to self-evaluation. However, as yet, there is little evidence of detailed and rigorous action planning. The school is making good progress in establishing comprehensive, systematic and first-hand monitoring and evaluation procedures to guide and inform its improvement planning, but this is still in the process of development.
135. Senior managers and subject leaders are gradually improving their understanding of pupils' performance and developing appropriately their knowledge of what they need to do to secure further improvement. Regular opportunities to monitor teachers' planning and pupils' work, together with assessment information where available, have provided a sound starting point. However, a shortcoming is that there has been little opportunity for curriculum co-ordinators to observe teaching and learning first hand and at regular intervals, and this has led to an incomplete overall analysis.
136. The school is in the process of establishing a monitoring programme for each subject to enable curriculum co-ordinators to focus on classroom practice. The school is planning the development of subject links with governors to add further value to this process. The quality of recent subject reviews and evaluations shows an improved focus by curriculum co-ordinators on raising standards.
137. The quality of the school's self-evaluation report has good features that outweigh shortcomings. However, the report often makes assertions that are not securely grounded in factual detail and data analysis. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report in five out of the seven key questions. In the two questions where there were differences, the inspection team allocated one grade lower than those allocated by the school.
138. At present, the school is working hard to canvass the views of pupils, parents, governors and other stakeholders and it is actively considering ways in which they will be able to play a full part in implementing plans for improvement.
139. The current SDP is a clear, long-term document with targets for improvement, time scales and approximate costings. However, it does not provide a sharp focus on school priorities and the links with the school's current self-evaluation are not consistently well established.

140. Overall, the school has made good progress in many areas since the last inspection. However, shortcomings remain in some areas, particularly with regard to planning for the development of key skills.

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

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

141. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
142. The school is appropriately staffed for the number of pupils on roll. There are sufficiently qualified, experienced and specialist teachers and support staff to deliver the curriculum and to meet the needs of the pupils well. Support staff effectively provide additional help for both SEN and mainstream pupils; they liaise closely with the teaching staff and positively contribute to pupils' learning during lessons.
143. Part-time administrative support is provided to help the head teacher and staff with school routines. This support is very effective, but, when it is unavailable, the head teacher has to spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with routine matters in school.
144. The caretaker, cleaning, supervising and catering staff are valued members of the school community and discharge their duties efficiently and sensitively.
145. The level of provision and the overall condition of books, materials, equipment and resources in the classrooms and throughout the school are generally inadequate to support pupils' learning. The school library is only adequately resourced and the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment is unsuitable and in need of updating. There is a long-term programme to provide interactive whiteboards for all the classrooms, but this can only be achieved as part of a rolling programme as funds become available. The head teacher, curriculum co-ordinators and governors regularly review available resources to ensure that they are efficiently used and updated within the constraints of the available budget.
146. The accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on roll. The buildings are generally well maintained and decorated. The attractive and informative displays in the classrooms and learning areas celebrate pupils' achievements and enhance the overall learning environment. The nursery classroom, which is separate from the main building, has a small, secure outdoor play area for the children. This is functional, but it does not provide the children with the stimulating environment required for learning through play. There is no dedicated outdoor area available for the early years' children on the main school campus. The school acknowledges that this is an area for development.

147. The school site is secure with a fence surrounding the school perimeter and an efficient entry system for the main entrance. Gates are locked at appropriate times of the day.
148. Funding and spending priorities are well matched to the current needs of the school. The school makes good use of the available resources at its disposal. The deployment of staff and the organisation of classes and teaching groups are carefully planned. Since her recent appointment, the new head teacher has worked closely with the governing body to discuss a range of resource matters. Budget expenditure is reported to the governing body at regular intervals. Through regular reviews, the school ensures that good value for money is obtained.

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

The staff and Governing Body of St. Mary's School felt that the recent Inspection was a very positive and supportive experience. The judgements and observations were generally matched to the priorities highlighted in our self review report.

All recommendations will be incorporated into our development plan and we will start to address the issues in the forthcoming year.

In particular we will work towards addressing standards in the key skills of mathematics, information technology and problem solving at key stage 2 and promote the development of Bilingualism throughout the school.

The provision of a friendly, caring, Christian atmosphere is an overriding aim of the school. It was pleasing that the Inspectorate recognised this as a good feature of the school. With Christ as the basis of its existence the school endeavours to respect the uniqueness and the needs of the individual, encouraging all the pupils to reach their full potential. Our school is committed to creating a community which fosters Christian relationships based upon the Gospel values of truth, holiness, justice, love, forgiveness and peace.

The Inspectors acknowledged that the school ethos, links with the Parish Church and daily acts of collective worship combine to provide the pupils with a clear set of values.

They also acknowledged the very good links with parents, enabling the school to work closely with families for the benefit of all.

The school was particularly pleased to have the good working relationships between teachers, staff and pupils acknowledged as a strong feature throughout the school.

St. Mary's is proud of its achievements and the continuing good standards. The Inspection and the analysis of our performance set against the background of the seven key questions has been a useful exercise for us. It has been an excellent opportunity to examine what we do – to evaluate our teaching and learning and other aspects of our school life, and as a result, establish that we acknowledge the weakness and targets / recommendations for improvement that we need to address.

It has been a catalyst for action. We as a school community; staff, pupils, parents and Governors, are determined to move the school forwards to improve what has already been achieved.

## Appendix A

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	St Mary's V.R.C. School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Britannia Road, Pembroke Dock
Postcode	SA72 6PD
Telephone number	01646 682879

Head teacher	Mrs S Nicholas
Date of appointment	01-09-05
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs W O'Driscoll
Registered inspector	Dr David G Evans
Dates of inspection	28-29 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	9	13	14	13	15	15	11	17	107

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	4	2	5.3

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	18.1:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	8.5:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	24
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.3:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of School
Summer 2005	94.9	93.1	96.5
Spring 2005	95.6	94.2	96.0
Autumn 2004	93.5	97.4	95.6

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	15%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0%

## Appendix C

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2005			Number of pupils in Y2:		14		
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	14	57	29
		National	0	4	14	63	20
En: reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	14	50	36
		National	0	4	14	55	27
En: writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	14	72	14
		National	0	5	14	69	11
En: speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	14	50	36
		National	0	3	12	63	22
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	14	50	36
		National	0	2	11	63	24
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	14	50	36
		National	0	2	10	66	22

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	86%	In Wales	80%

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

**National Curriculum Assessment Results  
End of Key Stage 2:**

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2005							Number of pupils in Y6		11		
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	18	36	46
		National	0	0	0	0	1	6	16	45	31
	Test/Task	School									
		National									
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School									
		National									
	Test/Task	School									
		National									
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	9	9	64	18
		National	0	0	0	0	0	4	19	46	30
	Test/Task	School									
		National									
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	73	9
		National	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	49	35
	Test/Task	School									
		National									

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	81.8%	In the school	N/A
In Wales	70%	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 D

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

- A team of three inspectors were present at the school for five inspector days.
- Pre-inspection meetings were held with parents and the governing body to discuss the life and work of the school.
- 31 questionnaires were completed by parents and analysed
- Discussions were held with the head and the staff
- 18 lessons or part sessions were observed
- School documentation and samples of pupils' work from across the ability range in each group were examined
- Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils reading
- Discussions were held with pupils about their work and life in school
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during break periods, at lunchtimes and at the beginning and end of the school sessions
- Inspectors attended assemblies and observed extra-curricular activities
- Post-inspection meetings were held with the staff and the governing body.

## Appendix E

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Dr David Evans, Registered Inspector	Context, Summary and Recommendations Key Questions 1, 2, 5 and 6
Mr C Brace, Team Inspector	Key Questions 3, 4 and 7
Mrs C Roberson, Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4 and 7
Mr K Hughes, Peer Assessor	Contributions to all the key questions
Mrs S Nicholas, Nominee	

The contractor was:

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### Acknowledgement:

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