

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

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

**Abercanaid Community School  
The Park  
Abercanaid  
Merthyr Tydfil  
CF48 1SZ**

**School Number: 6752000**

**Date of Inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008**

**by**

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Abercanaid Community 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 Abercanaid Community School took place between 23/06/08 and 25/06/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Linda Jane Williams undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **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	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. Abercanaid Primary School is a community school situated in the village of Abercanaid, two miles south of Merythr Tydfil. Shortly after the previous inspection in May 2002, the school moved to a new purpose-built building. The school has grown significantly since that time, partly as a result of the closure of Pentrebach Infants School and also with the establishment of a nursery class and a Learning Resource Base (LRB).
2. Pupils who attend the school come mainly from the villages of Abercanaid and Pentrebach, although pupils attend from all parts of the borough and beyond. The school considers the catchment area to be neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.
3. The school caters for children aged three to eleven years. Merythr Tydfil local authority (LA) controls admission to the school. Children are admitted to nursery at the start of the term following their third birthday and currently attend on a full-time basis.
4. At the time of the inspection, there were 173 pupils on roll, including 20 nursery-aged children. Six of the seven classes within the school have a mixed-age range.
5. Baseline assessments undertaken during the first term in reception indicate that the abilities of the majority of children are similar to the LA average. However, in recent years, a minority of pupils in most years admitted to the school have had significant needs and they are placed well below the LA average. Pupils represent the full range of ability.
6. English is the home language for 99 per cent of the pupils. One per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), and the first language for these pupils is Polish. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language.
7. Thirty-three pupils are identified as having special educational needs (SEN), which is broadly similar to other schools in Wales. No pupils have formal statements of SEN. No pupil has been excluded from the school in the past twelve months.
8. Approximately 9 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national and LA averages. This figure has halved since the last inspection.
9. The LRB, which takes up to eight key stage 1 pupils, is funded by the LA. It caters for pupils across the LA who are being assessed for their special educational needs at the stage of 'school action plus'. This provision is available only through referrals to the LA. Currently eight pupils attend the LRB.
10. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark on two occasions and the bronze Eco School award.

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

The main features of the school's agreed mission statement are as follows.

- Our Community purpose is to enhance children's quality of learning through the effective and efficient delivery and monitoring of the National Curriculum and any other curriculum aspects we consider necessary.
- As a staff we believe that a common approach should be adopted by all to create a caring environment where children are respected and their views valued.
- Our first responsibility is to meet the needs of our children educationally and developmentally. We will attempt to provide a range of educational and social experiences appropriate to the age, ability and needs of our pupils.
- We will have consistently high expectations and endeavour to match these with high quality resources and learning strategies.
- We are committed to honesty and responsibility in all relationships, respecting the legitimate rights of individuals and stressing the importance of social awareness and sensitivity.
- We will create opportunities for every individual in the school community to develop his or her potential.
- We will endeavour to influence positively the community in which we work, encouraging all parents to become part of the school community learning from their experiences and sharing ours.
- We will create and sustain a professional learning environment.
- We will adopt a philosophy of continuous improvement of every aspect of the school's work and life.

The school's priorities for development are:

- the introduction of the Foundation Phase;
- the introduction of the revised curriculum from September 2008;
- ICT development; and
- the further development of community education.

## Summary

11. Abercanaid Primary School is a very good school with outstanding features. The outstanding quality of leadership ensures high standards of pupil achievement.
12. The agreed aims of the school underpin the ethos of this exceptionally inclusive school. The school is a happy, safe, secure environment where pupils feel valued and are eager to learn.
13. The inspection team agree with the judgements made by the school in the self-evaluation report for four of the seven key questions. In two key questions, the inspection team awarded a higher grade, with a lower grade awarded in one key question.

### Table of grades awarded

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

14. The overall quality of 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. Assessments undertaken in the early years classes show that children under five achieve very well during their time in nursery and reception.
15. The results of on-going assessments and scrutiny of pupils' work show that all pupils make very good progress as they move through the school. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, their progress is outstanding. Pupils with SEN, including those who attend the LRB, achieve exceptionally well against the individual targets set for them.

16. National Curriculum assessment results at the end of key stage 1 in 2007 showed that 85 per cent of pupils achieved level 2 or above in each of the core subjects. Results are above the LA and national averages. In the mainstream classes, 100 per cent of pupils achieved level 2 or above in the core subjects. The number of pupils achieving the higher than expected level three at the end of key stage 1 is particularly high.
17. At the end of key stage 2 in 2007, the number of pupils achieving level 4 or higher was above both the national and LA averages. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher than expected level 5 was well above the national average in English and similar to the national average in science and mathematics. The results for 2007 were significantly affected by the high number of pupils with SEN in the particular year, whereas in 2006, 100 per cent of pupils achieved level 4 or above in the core subjects.
18. When the school's results at the end of key stage 1 are compared with similar schools, on the basis of free school meal entitlement, the school was in the lower 50 per cent for English and the lowest 25 per cent in mathematics and science. This comparison includes pupils attending the LRB
19. Results at the end of key stage 2, when compared with similar schools, show that in 2007 the school was in the lower 50 per cent for mathematics and English, and the lowest 25 per cent for science. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils entitled to a free school meal has reduced from 18 per cent to 9 per cent. In 2007, the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals placed the school within the highest band so that the school is compared with schools that have a percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals between 0 and 8 per cent.
20. The school has recognised that results in previous years have indicated that boys were achieving slightly less well than girls in English. The school has addressed this issue very effectively and results show that boys and girls now achieve equal success, relative to their abilities.
21. Trends in performance, as reflected in the detailed records maintained by the school, show that it is further improving its traditionally high standards. This is not always reflected in the end of key stage results due to the higher numbers of pupils with SEN who now attend the school.
22. Pupils across the school make outstanding progress in the key skills of information and communication technology (ICT), numeracy and communication. Pupils' problem-solving and creative skills are also outstanding.
23. As they move through the school, pupils make exceptional progress in acquiring bilingual competence and their knowledge of Welsh culture and heritage, *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*, are also exceptional.
24. During lessons, all pupils understand clearly what they are doing. On some occasions, when pupils are involved in assessing a particular piece of work, they show a good awareness of how well they have succeeded and

occasionally set themselves very focused targets for improvement. However, their on-going involvement in target setting is not consistently planned for and consequently pupils' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in a range of subjects is under-developed.

25. The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary at all times. They behave with consideration, courtesy and regard for others.
26. Pupils throughout the school have very positive attitudes to learning. They demonstrate a high degree of motivation and interest in their work, completing their tasks with obvious enthusiasm. As they move through the school, pupils develop a very high level of independence in the way in which they approach their learning opportunities. This is a strong feature of the school.
27. The average attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection is 93 per cent. This is above the LA and all-Wales average attendance figures. The vast majority of pupils arrive punctually for school and at the start of lessons.

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

28. 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>
56%	31%	13%	0%	0%

29. The percentage of lessons where outstanding features were observed is exceptional. These figures are significantly above the national picture reported by HMCI in his latest annual report 2006-2007, where the quality of teaching is grade 2 or better in 80 per cent of lessons, including 14 per cent with outstanding features.
30. It also exceeds the target set in 'Vision for Action', which requires the quality of teaching to be grade 2 or better in 80 per cent of lessons by 2010.
31. Where the quality of teaching was judged to be grade 1, the outstanding features include imaginatively planned activities; lively and energetic lesson delivery; provision of an outstanding range of challenging and innovative activities; and very effective feedback given to pupils, taking all opportunities to extend their skills and learning.
32. There are excellent working relationships in all classrooms. Teachers display a strong commitment to maintaining standards within the school and have high expectations of their pupils. This is a strength of the school.
33. The assessment of children under five is very comprehensive. Statutory baseline assessment is supported by the school's own comprehensive baseline assessment undertaken within a few days of the children entering school. This ensures that children's needs are identified at a very early stage and is an outstanding feature.

34. The assessment of the core subjects in key stages 1 and 2 is very detailed and informative. The system established within the school to track pupils' progress is developing very well and is used effectively to ensure pupils are making good progress. Parents are provided with a detailed end-of-year report, which provides a good level of information on their child's progress. The school operates an open-door policy and encourages parents to visit the school at any time if they wish to discuss their child's progress.
35. The quality of the learning experiences that the pupils receive is outstanding. The school responds exceedingly well to the learning needs and interests of all pupils, including those with SEN, and those who are more able. Work is very effectively matched to the differing needs of pupils, and particular care is taken in the planning for mixed-age group classes.
36. Learning experiences promote pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, extremely well. Other outstanding features in the learning experiences provided for pupils include the wealth of extra-curricular activities, educational visits, highly effective partnerships with parents and the community and strong links with the local special school.
37. The school provides outstanding support and guidance for its pupils. Care arrangements are planned and managed extremely well. Outstanding attention is given to the healthy development and well-being of pupils, supported by clear, well-documented procedures.
38. The quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding, including the arrangements for supporting pupils in the LRB. The school is particularly effective in recognising the needs of pupils who have been identified as not achieving their full potential. It provides timely and effective support through an outstanding range of support strategies.
39. The school provides excellent support for pupils whose behaviour is likely to impede their own progress or the learning of others. Pupils receive very consistent support, with appropriate and clear guidance on how to manage their behaviour.
40. The school is exemplary in providing pupils of all abilities and backgrounds with equality of access to the curriculum and school life.

### **Leadership and management**

41. As a result of outstanding leadership and the full support of all staff, the school has maintained very high standards over a long period of time. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and a very purposeful sense of direction for the school. He is very well supported by all staff who work together as a very close team, with high expectations and a shared sense of purpose.
42. The expertise of the senior management team is used in an outstanding way to ensure that performance and standards across the school are subject to on-

going monitoring. The information gained is used systematically to identify any shortcomings and plan for improvement.

43. The quality of support and direction given by the governing body is good. Governors are well informed about standards within school and play a supportive part in the school's development. The governing body fully meets its statutory responsibilities.
44. The school has made outstanding progress in addressing issues raised following the last inspection. High standards and provision have not only been maintained but also improved.
45. The current self-evaluation report is concise and comprehensive. The school's self-evaluation process involves all members of the teaching staff in reviewing the school's provision and standards. The governing body has discussed and approved the current self-evaluation report. However, the school is not sufficiently proactive in seeking the views of pupils, support staff, parents and the community when planning for improvement.
46. Staffing levels are very good, and teachers have a wide range of specialist knowledge and expertise to meet the needs of all pupils. Classroom support staff greatly enhance standards in the school. Other non-teaching staff provide very effective support for the day-to-day running of the school.
47. The overall quality of accommodation at the school is outstanding. This new 'fit for purpose' school has large, airy classrooms, specialist rooms, digital facilities, group learning bays, and ample provision for practical activities. It is extremely well cared for, with lively displays in corridors and classrooms creating an attractive ethos. These are used most imaginatively as teaching and learning resources.
48. Resources for the early years are excellent, with an attractive garden area and plentiful play equipment. All subject areas have an abundance of good quality resources, with constant and effective use made of them in all classes.
49. The school budgets systematically for all expenditure with spending decisions well-matched to its priorities. The headteacher and governors keep its resources under regular review, and make excellent use of all its resources to achieve the best possible outcomes for all of its pupils. The school achieves very good value for money.

## Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve the current very good standards, staff and governors should:

- R1** Further involve pupils in the setting of targets, so that they clearly understand what they need to do in order to improve.
- R2** Continue to develop the process of self-evaluation to ensure that the views of all interested parties are taken into account.

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 1: Good with outstanding features.

- 50. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
- 51. The overall quality of 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.
- 52. Baseline assessments undertaken during the first term in reception indicate the ability of the majority of children is similar to the LA average. However, in recent years a few pupils in most years admitted to the school have had significant needs and they are placed well below the LA average. Assessments undertaken in the early years classes show that children under five achieve very well during their time in nursery and reception.
- 53. The results of on-going assessments and scrutiny of pupils' work show that all pupils make very good progress as they move through the school. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, their progress is outstanding.
- 54. Regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background, pupils make outstanding progress. Pupils with SEN, including those who attend the LRB, and EAL pupils achieve exceptionally well against the individual targets set for them.

55. The school sets challenging targets for improvement in the core subjects, which are agreed annually with the LA. The targets are firmly based on high expectations of individual pupils. They are consistently met and frequently exceeded.
56. Standards achieved in the key skills of numeracy and ICT are outstanding across the school. Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 are making very good progress in developing their numeracy and ICT skills across all areas of learning. Key stage 2 pupils continue to make very good progress, successfully developing their skills as they move through the school. They confidently and accurately use a wide range of ICT and numeracy skills, showing an outstanding level of independence in their ability to select appropriate skills and to apply their knowledge successfully.
57. Pupils make outstanding progress in developing their communication skills. In the early years and key stage 1, pupils' confidence in expressing their views is exemplary. They listen very well to their teachers and to their peers, considering the views of others with maturity. Children make exceptionally good progress in developing their early writing and reading skills across all areas of learning.
58. Key stage 2 pupils continue to develop their communication skills so that by the end of the key stage many speak very confidently both in class and when addressing a wider audience. They are particularly articulate when assuming a character within a role-play situation. Their listening skills are also exceptional.
59. The vast majority of older pupils read very confidently both to obtain information and for pleasure. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' writing skills are exceptionally well developed, with excellent presentation and very good use of appropriate vocabulary. They make very good use of their skills to present their work in a range of subjects.
60. Pupils make outstanding progress in developing their bilingual skills. Pupils' skills develop progressively throughout the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2, with evidence of outstanding listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in a variety of contexts. Pupils' knowledge of Welsh culture and heritage, *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*, are also outstanding.
61. National Curriculum assessment at the end of key stage 1 in 2007 show that 85 per cent of pupils achieved level 2 or above in each of the core subjects. Results are above the LA and national averages. In the mainstream classes, 100 per cent of pupils achieved level 2 or above in the core subjects. The number of pupils achieving the higher than expected level three at the end of key stage 1 is particularly high.
62. At the end of key stage 2 in 2007, the number of pupils achieving level 4 or above exceeded both the national and LA averages. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher than expected level 5 was well above the national average in English and similar to the national average in science and mathematics. The results for 2007 were significantly affected by the high number of pupils with SEN in that year, whereas in 2006, 100 per cent of pupils achieved level 4 or above in the core subjects.

63. When the school's results at the end of key stage 1 are compared with similar schools, on the basis of free school meal entitlement, the school was in the lower 50 per cent for English and the lowest 25 per cent in mathematics and science. These figures include pupils attending the LRB.
64. Results at the end of key stage 2, when compared with similar schools, show that in 2007 the school was in the lower 50 per cent for mathematics and English, and the lowest 25 per cent for science.
65. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils entitled to a free school meal has reduced from 18 per cent to 9 per cent. In 2007, the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals placed the school just within the highest band for this comparison, so that the school is compared with schools having a percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals between 0 and 8 per cent.
66. The school has recognised that results in previous years have indicated that boys achieved slightly less well than girls in English. The school has addressed this issue very effectively and results show that boys and girls now achieve equal success, relative to their ability.
67. Trends in performance, as reflected in the detailed records maintained by the school, show that it is improving its traditionally high standards. This is not always reflected in the end of key stage results due to the higher numbers of pupils with SEN who now attend the school.
68. Pupils across the school readily acquire new knowledge and build very successfully on the skills they are developing. This is particularly evident when pupils use their basic key and lifelong learning skills to support their work in subjects across the curriculum. The outstanding progress made by pupils as they move through the school ensures that they are very well placed to move on to the next stage of their education.
69. During lessons, all pupils understand clearly what they are doing. On some occasions, when pupils are involved in assessing a particular piece of work, they show a good awareness of how well they have succeeded. Occasionally, they set themselves very focused targets for improvement. However, their on-going involvement in target setting is not consistently planned for and consequently pupils' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in a range of subjects is under-developed.
70. Pupils throughout the school have a very positive attitude to learning and enjoy their lessons. They demonstrate a high degree of motivation and interest in their work, complete their tasks with obvious enthusiasm and sustain their concentration well. As they move through the school, pupils develop a very high level of independence in the way in which they approach their learning opportunities. This is a strong feature of the school.
71. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary at all times and this is an outstanding feature. Their behaviour and attitudes reflect the ethos of the school, which places a strong emphasis on consideration, courtesy and regard for others. They are

mindful of the needs of their peers and look out for each other. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting and in their responses to the parents' questionnaires praised the good behaviour of pupils in the school.

72. The average attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection is 93 per cent. Whilst attendance is below the target figure of 95 per cent set by both the school and the Welsh Assembly Government, attendance is above the LA average attendance figure of 92.7 per cent and the all-Wales figure of 92.5 per cent. Despite the school's best efforts, the percentage is affected by holidays taken during term time. The vast majority of pupils arrive punctually for school and at the start of lessons.
73. Pupils of all ages display an outstanding level of confidence in their ability to make choices and can work independently for sustained periods. They readily show initiative and seek opportunities to take responsibility.
74. All pupils, including those with additional learning needs, are making outstanding progress in their personal, moral, social and wider development. They freely express their views and collaborate exceptionally well in lessons and other activities. Pupils have a well-developed awareness of honesty and fairness, with even the youngest children showing care and respect for others.
75. Pupils' understanding of equal opportunities is outstanding. All pupils appreciate the need for everyone to be treated equally. Older pupils are able to discuss the issues with maturity, showing an exceptionally well-developed awareness of their rights and responsibilities. In discussion, pupils show a good awareness of diversity.
76. Pupils develop a good understanding of the world of work through a wide range of experiences and by listening to the visitors who come to school to talk about their roles.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

77. The inspection team's findings match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
78. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
56%	31%	13%	0%	0%

79. The percentage of lessons where outstanding features were observed is exceptional. These figures are significantly above the national picture reported

by HMCI in his latest annual report 2006-2007 where the quality of teaching is grade 2 or better in 80 per cent of lessons, including 14 per cent with outstanding features.

80. It also exceeds the target set in 'Vision for Action', which requires the quality of teaching to be grade 2 or better in 80 per cent of classes by 2010.
81. Where the quality of teaching was judged to be grade 1, the outstanding features include:
  - imaginatively planned activities, which very successfully develop pupils' creative and problem-solving skills;
  - lively and energetic lesson delivery that motivates and enthuses pupils;
  - provision of an outstanding range of challenging and innovative activities, which capture and sustain pupils' interest, promoting independent and active learning;
  - high expectations and skilful questioning techniques, which develop pupils' thinking skills;
  - excellent understanding of pupils' needs, which supports the setting of work at a very appropriate level for pupils of all ages and abilities;
  - a high level of independence encouraged, with pupils challenged to resolve problems for themselves; and
  - very effective feedback given to pupils, taking all opportunities to extend their skills and learning.
82. Good features in lessons include:
  - clear learning objectives shared with pupils;
  - good use of the interactive whiteboard;
  - time constraints made clear to pupils, which supports a good pace to learning;
  - strong links to previous learning;
  - high expectations clearly communicated to pupils;
  - all pupils given time to contribute to lessons; and
  - misconceptions dealt with effectively.
83. In the very small number of lessons where shortcomings were observed, these included a lack of pace, resulting in inattentive behaviour; missed opportunities for pupils to contribute their own ideas; and insufficient encouragement to ensure that all pupils participate effectively.
84. Teaching for the under-fives and for pupils in the LRB is consistently good, with a very high percentage of lessons having outstanding features. In the early year's classes, all opportunities to develop children's independent learning skills are fully exploited.
85. Staff in the LRB take very careful account of pupil's independent learning needs and targets. Shared sessions, where pupils in the base work alongside pupils from mainstream classes, are highly successful learning opportunities for all the pupils involved.
86. There are excellent working relationships in all classrooms. Teachers take every opportunity to promote equality of opportunity and ensure that all pupils

are treated fairly and with respect. The planning of lessons is exceptionally detailed in all classes and caters well for the differing needs of all pupils. Teachers display a strong commitment to the raising of standards within the school and have high expectations of their pupils. This is a strength of the school.

87. Teaching assistants provide extremely effective help and guidance for individuals and groups of pupils in all areas of the curriculum. They show good initiative and sensitivity in their dealings with pupils.
88. The school successfully meets the language needs of EAL pupils. All teachers show an outstanding awareness of these pupils' needs and plan carefully to ensure that they are able to gain full access to all learning opportunities.
89. The promotion of bilingualism is an outstanding feature of the school. Pupils' ability to use the Welsh language is very well developed, and this is a reflection of teachers' active encouragement and purposeful use of the language in classes.
90. The rigour of the school's assessment procedures, and the use made of assessment in planning and improving learning, is good. The school meets its statutory requirements for assessing and reporting on National Curriculum subjects. Assessment procedures are well established and play a strong role in achieving high standards.
91. The assessment of children under five is very comprehensive. Statutory baseline assessments, undertaken within the first half term of a child's entry into reception, are supported by the school's own comprehensive baseline assessments undertaken within a few days of the children entering school. This ensures that children's needs are identified at a very early stage and is an outstanding feature.
92. Extensive records are maintained for each child in the early year's classes and records are very well used to ensure the progress and development of children can be tracked effectively over a period. Information obtained through the assessment of children under five is used exceptionally well to prepare rich and meaningful experiences and to identify and plan for the children with additional needs.
93. The assessment of the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) in key stages 1 and 2 is very detailed and informative. The information is used very effectively, particularly to place pupils in ability groups for mathematics and English lessons in key stage 2.
94. A system established within the school to track pupils' progress is developing very well. It provides detailed information, which is used very systematically to ensure pupils are making good progress, and for identifying pupils who are under-achieving.
95. Effective assessment of pupils' progress in the foundation subjects, such as history and music, is undertaken through a range of methods, including

structured discussion with pupils; and the use of video and photographic evidence.

96. Detailed marking of pupil's work is undertaken regularly in key stage 1 and key stage 2. It provides clear guidance for pupils on strengths and areas where improvements are needed. On occasions, pupils are involved in detailed self-assessments of particular pieces of work. However, pupils' involvement in setting and using clear targets for improvement on a regular basis is under-developed. Consequently they do not have a clear understanding of what they need to do in order to improve.
97. Teachers accurately assess pupils' work against levels of the National Curriculum. They are well supported by planned sessions within the school when teachers work together to assess pupils' work. Extensive sets of pupils' work have been compiled by the school and the work is currently being matched to National Curriculum levels in order to further support the process of moderation, so that there is a shared understanding of what each NC level means.
98. Parents are provided with annual end-of-year reports, which meet statutory requirements. Reports are informative and provide a good level of detail on pupils' achievements in all subjects or areas of learning, and in their personal and social education. Targets are included for the next steps in pupils' learning.
99. The school operates an open-door policy and encourages parents to visit the school at any time if they wish to discuss their child's progress. A formal parents' meeting is held at the beginning of each academic year and parents are also invited to make an appointment to discuss issues arising from pupils' annual reports issued at the end of summer term.

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

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

100. The inspection team's findings do not match the grade 2 judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team identified a number of outstanding features in the learning experiences provided for pupils and graded the school higher.
101. The quality of the learning experiences that the pupils receive is outstanding. The school responds exceedingly well to the learning needs and interests of all pupils, including those with SEN and those who are more able. Pupils in the three classes in key stage 2 benefit from being taught in ability groups for English and mathematics.
102. The overall quality of 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. In the early year's classes, teachers take full account of

children's needs and interests to plan activities that are exciting and challenging. Provision for the under-fives and key stage 1 pupils includes an extensive range of indoor and outdoor activities.

103. The school states that its primary purpose is to enhance children's quality of learning; this mission statement underpins the effective and efficient delivery of the curriculum. A notable feature of the provision is inviting past pupils who have achieved highly, for example, the singer Petula Clark, to talk to pupils and inspire them.
104. The curriculum is broad, balanced and complies with all legal requirements. There are clear policy documents and detailed schemes of work based on topics, which ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning experiences as they move through the school. Learning experiences are well planned and the time allocation for each subject area is carefully monitored to ensure fairness and breadth to the overall curriculum.
105. Homework is set regularly from the time children enter nursery, with purposeful tasks to support work done in class.
106. Short-term planning is well focused, with clear objectives for teaching sessions. Work is very effectively matched to the needs of all pupils, and particular care is taken in the planning for mixed-age group classes to ensure that there is appropriate progression in the development of skills.
107. The planning of a whole-school approach to the development of the key skills is outstanding. Basic and key skills development is clearly identified in termly and weekly planning. In addition, records are maintained to ensure the skills are developed across a full range of subjects. The school recently achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the second time.
108. Planning for personal and social education is excellent, with all aspects incorporated successfully into pupils' experiences across the curriculum.
109. Learners' experiences are greatly broadened and enriched by the provision of a wealth of extra-curricular activities. A wide range of activities, including sports clubs, drama club, dance clubs and choir are organised by teachers, and are well attended. These activities complement and extend the curriculum, contributing exceptionally well to the standards pupils achieve.
110. Pupils benefit enormously from educational visits to such places as Castell Coch and the Museum of Welsh Life in St. Fagan's. Residential visits by pupils in key stage 2 to an outdoor adventure centre enhance their work most effectively. Positive working links with environmental and local groups, the probation service and a local garden centre, extend and enhance the curriculum greatly, contributing effectively to pupils' personal and social development.
111. Learning experiences promote pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, extremely well. The school's

ethos is led and enriched by a system of values and a moral code that permeates the school. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good, with collective worship providing opportunities for them to reflect upon issues of current importance. Pupils experience feelings of awe and wonder through a wide and exciting range of creative activities.

112. Regular fund-raising activities succeed very well in raising pupils' social awareness and help them reflect on their role as global citizens. Their involvement with a residential care home and a special school gives pupils a sense of responsibility, providing opportunities for them to show initiative and to develop a very good understanding of living in a community.
113. The excellent quality of relationships in the school results in very good social behaviour and self-discipline of the pupils. Cultural development is promoted in an outstanding way through various schemes of work and visits. For example, older pupils have the opportunity to experience a theatre show in London. There is an excellent emphasis on developing the Welsh dimension through *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*.
114. The curriculum is enriched by highly effective partnerships with parents and the community, who are most supportive of the school. The 'Friends of Abercanaid' provide additional funding for the school and many parents, grandparents and friends are involved in helping and working with pupils on a regular basis. Termly newsletters, the school website and the 'open door' policy are some of the very effective ways in which the school communicates with parents, ensuring that they are well informed about activities and events.
115. Links with local primary schools are extremely successful in promoting curricular initiatives. Many productive partnerships also exist between the school and external agencies, such as a teacher training university and other colleges. This has a positive effect on standards in the school.
116. The school enjoys strong links with local industry and the Education Business Partnership (EBP). Local business people and parents come to school to talk to the pupils about their work including, the Community Police and Fire Service officers, the local Welsh Assembly Member, storytellers and artists. The Groundwork Trust and local garden centre have worked with the school and together they have established a garden for the children.
117. The school has ensured that a number of educational, vocational and cultural visits for the pupils are effectively linking the curriculum to workplaces. Visits to places of interest, such as local factories and the salmon hatchery at Welsh Water, successfully inform pupils about work and the wider world.
118. The school succeeds in an outstanding way to develop the bilingual competence of pupils. The school's policy is implemented most effectively, with planning for very good quality provision in both languages in all subject areas. *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is well integrated into all schemes of work, and contributes very well to the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of various aspects of Wales.

119. Policies and procedures to tackle social disadvantage, and to promote equal access and opportunity for all, are outstanding. The school ensures that pupils with SEN are integrated into all activities, and that pupils with particular talents are given individual attention. All pupils are encouraged to achieve success.
120. The school successfully promotes sustainable development and global citizenship across the curriculum. There are a number of informative displays around the school produced by pupils promoting the Eco theme, sustainability and Global Citizenship. The school, with its active Eco warriors, has achieved the Eco Schools Bronze Award.
121. As part of their studies, pupils have been involved with the Welsh Water Authority in the study of the migration of salmon. Pupils have played an active part in looking after the salmon fry, prior to these being released into the rivers. The school acts in a sustainable way, for example, pupils undertake a variety of recycling activities.
122. As part of the provision for developing pupils' understanding of different cultures, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and other visitors have given talks to class groups about their own cultures and lifestyles. The school has also ensured that learning resources in a number of languages are used within the school.
123. Pupils raise money throughout the year to support children and others less fortunate than themselves, including raising money for the annual Romanian Appeal, Red Nose Day and other national and international charities. This provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their role as global citizens.
124. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their entrepreneurial and leadership skills, for example, through organising their own dance club. Effective links with industry, established through EBP, help raise pupils' awareness of economic development. School council members are able to develop skills, such as those for problem-solving and decision-making, as they seek to enhance their budget by organising book and toy sales.
125. The learning experiences provided for pupils reflect national priorities for lifelong learning and community regeneration well. The curriculum helps lay the foundation for their lifelong learning by ensuring that pupils acquire appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. The school encourages pupils to be aware of the needs of the community through inviting all sectors of society into school.

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

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

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

127. The school is an exceptionally inclusive community, which provides outstanding support and guidance for its pupils. It is a happy, safe, secure environment where pupils feel valued. Care arrangements are planned and managed extremely well. Learning support is of a very high standard, and pupils are exceptionally well supported by all adults who work in the school.
128. The school makes extremely effective use of care and support agencies, such as the educational psychology service, to support staff in caring for pupils who have very specific needs. The day-to-day care and personal guidance for pupils is of a high quality. Additional help and support ensures that all pupils have access to the curriculum. In discussion, pupils confirm that they feel very safe and well cared for, and that they can turn to any adult for help should they need it.
129. The school works very closely with parents to ensure the care and support needed for pupils, and takes appropriate account of their views. The 'open door' policy ensures that parents' concerns are dealt with promptly and effectively.
130. Arrangements to help children settle into school are extremely well organised; the induction programme is one of the strengths of the school. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in the process, and the school operates an effective staggered entry programme. Older pupils help new children settle happily in school, using the 'buddy system' to very good effect, resulting in pupils settling into the life and routine of their new school extremely well. Pupils who join the school at different times say that they are offered very good support by the school. The home/school agreement is most effective in setting out expectations for parents, pupils and the school.
131. The school provides excellent personal support and guidance through its personal and social education programme, which is well integrated into all aspects of the school's activities. It makes very effective use of specialist services, such as the police, school nurses and other specialist agencies, including the Pyramid Initiative, which develops pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
132. The school carefully monitors pupil's attendance, punctuality, behaviour and performance. Good links exist with the Education Welfare Officer and other agencies should the non-attendance, punctuality or behaviour of a pupil give rise to concern. The school expects pupils to be well behaved and makes every effort to support them in this. School rules are displayed around the school.
133. Pupils, parents, carers and staff are all aware that the school does not tolerate bullying and poor behaviour. The policy and procedures for dealing with any incidents of bullying and unacceptable behaviour are clearly understood by all. These policies are reiterated to the school community through regular newsletters, praise assemblies, 'circle time' class discussions, personal and social (PSE) lessons and letters home to parents. Appropriate rewards and sanctions are operated by the school to support the policies.

134. The school rightly considers bullying and bad behaviour as serious matters and any instances are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school's behaviour policy is based on mutual respect and consideration for others. Staff constantly remind pupils, through the PSE programme, of the general expectation of tolerance towards all members of the school community.
135. The school council is effective and comprises of democratically elected members from each class and the LRB. The council meets regularly and other pupils are aware that they can bring matters to the attention of their elected member. Members of the school council have received 'buddy training' and pupils know that they can speak with a buddy, or member of staff, if they have any concerns.
136. Outstanding attention is given to the healthy development and well-being of pupils, supported by clear, well-documented procedures. During recent years, nutritional experts have been working with pupils and their parents in an effort to combat obesity and ill-health through encouraging participation in sports clubs and the eating of healthy snacks.
137. Health and safety arrangements are very well documented. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly for all the main school activities, including educational visits. Excellent attention is given to first aid and other medical support. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents stated that staff are very helpful when pupils feel unwell.
138. Child protection procedures are appropriate and are familiar to all who work in the school. The headteacher is the named member of staff responsible for child protection issues and is specifically supported by a named member of the governing body. All staff receive appropriate training in child protection matters.
139. The quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding and all statutory requirements are fully met. An outstanding number of support services are accessed by the school and these links are used very effectively. The school gives equally good attention to pupils with severe learning difficulties, under-achievers, those who are more able and EAL pupils. All these groups of pupils are fully integrated into the life and work of the school.
140. Highly effective identification procedures are in place. All documentation is carefully compiled and well organised. Pupil-friendly individual education plans are in place for pupils with SEN and these are very effective in providing clear targets for improvement, which are easily understood by pupils. They are reviewed regularly, with parents and pupils playing a full part in the process.
141. The school is particularly effective in recognising the needs of pupils who have been identified as not achieving their full potential and intervening to provide timely and effective support, through an outstanding range of support systems,

including individual support in class and working with small groups of pupils while withdrawn from the main classes.

142. Arrangements for supporting pupils in the LRB are outstanding. The teacher and support staff all make a very valuable contribution to the learning and assessment of these pupils, who have a wide range of severe difficulties. Staff are thoroughly dedicated, very experienced and well qualified, and show great commitment. Planning is very detailed and thorough for each pupil and very well-matched to need. Pupils are developing a suitable understanding of their own targets for improvement.
143. The school provides excellent support for pupils whose behaviour is likely to impede their own progress or the learning of others. Programmes for supporting pupils with behavioural difficulties are clear and regularly monitored. All members of staff have a well-developed understanding of the needs of these individual pupils and, as a result, they receive very consistent support, with appropriate and clear guidance on how to manage their behaviour.
144. The school is exemplary in providing pupils of all abilities and backgrounds with equality of access to the curriculum and school life. It actively promotes tolerance and multi-cultural understanding through role-play and through various subject areas, for example, the study of African music. Many parents feel that teaching children about other cultures is a great strength of the school.
145. Gender equality is implicit in all aspects of school life, and is an outstanding feature of the school. Boys and girls have equal access to all activities; stereotypical images are challenged and discussed by pupils, and teachers present subjects and materials in such a way as to help tackle stereotyping.
146. The school ensures that it promotes race and gender equality through its PSE programme. There are a number of displays around the school recognising different races and cultures. Pupils have undertaken studies comparing lifestyles in Abercanaid with those of people in St Lucia and other parts of the world.
147. Good provision was made during the school's design and construction to enable it to accept physically disabled pupils, ensuring that any pupil attending at the school is not prevented from fully accessing the curriculum on account of their disability. The school has a clear Disability Equality scheme and action plan. Pupils from the near-by Greenfields Special School are regular visitors at the school.
148. Pupils show respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within society, and a good awareness and concern for others, for example through raising money for more disadvantaged people in society at local, national and international level.

## Leadership and management

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

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

149. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 2 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. Outstanding features were identified in many aspects of the way in which leaders and managers provide clear direction and promote high standards within the school.
150. As a result of outstanding leadership and the full support of all staff, the school has maintained very high standards over a long period of time. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and a very purposeful sense of direction for the school. He is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and the senior management team. All staff within the school work together as a very close team, with high expectations and a shared sense of purpose.
151. The school has an exceptionally clear focus on the values that underpin its philosophy. All policies and practices are clearly based on the school's agreed aims. The outstandingly inclusive nature of the school very successfully promotes equality of opportunity and a respect for all, which is evident in its everyday life.
152. Subject co-ordinators have clear responsibilities, which they undertake conscientiously. They work very closely with colleagues and provide very effective leadership. The impact of the work of co-ordinators is also reflected in the high standards achieved by the school.
153. The school takes good account of national priorities. It has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark on two occasions, the bronze award for Eco Schools and promotes the importance of healthy lifestyles through a number of school initiatives. The school has systematically prepared for the introduction of the Foundation Phase, including the development of outdoor areas.
154. The school works closely with other providers of education, including the consortium of local primary schools and colleges of further education. Staff from the school regularly contribute to training arranged by the LA to support the sharing of good practice. Links with the local special school are particularly well developed.
155. Challenging targets for improvement are set annually based on high expectations of pupils in each year. Specific targets for development are also included in the School Development Plan, successfully providing a clear focus for maintaining high standards and developing provision within the school.
156. All staff have clear areas of responsibility appropriately outlined in their job descriptions. Procedures in place for undertaking the performance management of teaching staff are well established and are used very effectively to support the aims of the school. Support staff work closely with teachers, and receive constructive and regular feedback on their performance.

157. All staff are involved in on-going training and are well supported by the management of the school. Strong links are evident between staff training and many of the outstanding features identified during the inspection.
158. The school has responded fully to the requirements of workforce remodelling and for reducing teachers' workload. The way in which the school has arranged planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) cover for teaching staff supports professional development in an outstanding way. The senior member of staff who provides cover in all classes works closely with the headteacher to support and improve the performance of staff across the school.
159. The quality of support and direction given by the governing body is good. Governors are well acquainted with the school and co-operate effectively with the headteacher and staff in order to set a strategic direction for its development. They are well informed about standards within school and play a supportive part in the school's development.
160. A number of governors visit school on a regular basis and use informal lesson observations to monitor standards. The governors have a Curriculum Working Group and, whilst individual governors do not have a direct responsibility for specific areas of the curriculum, through this group they are kept informed about the targets and performance of the pupils. The governing body fully meets its statutory responsibilities.

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

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

161. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 1 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. Although outstanding features were identified in how well the senior managers monitor and improve performance; and in the progress made by the school since the last inspection, they were insufficient to award a grade 1 to the overall key question.
162. In recent years, the school has extended the senior management team to include three members of staff who work as 'Leaders of Learning'. The expertise of the senior management team is used in an outstanding way to ensure that performance and standards across the school are subject to on-going monitoring.
163. Subject co-ordinators have a good awareness of strengths and weaknesses in the subjects for which they are responsible. They evaluate standards and the quality of teaching through the monitoring of planning, the observation of lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work. The information gained through monitoring is used systematically to identify any shortcomings and plan for improvement.

164. The current self-evaluation report is concise and comprehensive. Strengths and areas where improvements are needed are clearly identified. The report draws on first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching and learning, as well as judgements based on performance data and trends over time.
165. The inspection team agree with the judgements made by the school in the self-evaluation report for four of the seven key questions. In two key questions a higher grade was awarded by the inspection team, with a lower grade awarded in one key question.
166. The school's self-evaluation process involves all members of the teaching staff in reviewing the school's provision and standards. The governing body has discussed and approved the current self-evaluation report.
167. Although pupils are aware that they can voice their opinions through the school council, systems are not sufficiently developed to ensure that their views are canvassed as part of the self-review process. Similarly, any issues or suggestions that are brought to the attention of the school by support staff, parents or the community are acted upon and used to inform the self-evaluation process, but the school is not sufficiently proactive in seeking the views of all interested parties.
168. Clear links are evident between the outcomes of self-evaluation and the School Development Plan. The current School Development Plan is a three-year strategic document with detailed action to address areas identified for improvement in the current year and a brief outline of development areas for the following two years.
169. For the current year, the plan contains a good level of detail, identifying action to be taken, timescales and success criteria. The acquisition of resources is accurately costed and linked to the school's priorities. Clear monitoring procedures to evaluate progress against the plan are also included. Recent improvements in standards, particularly in developing bilingualism and ICT, are the direct results of actions taken by the school, based on its development planning.
170. The school has made outstanding progress in addressing issues raised following the last inspection. Only two key issues were identified, which were to maintain the very good standards of achievement; and also maintain the good standard of education provision noted by the inspection team. Although the school has grown significantly since that time, standards and provision have improved. In addition, the school has rigorously and systematically addressed all minor shortcomings noted within the report.

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

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

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

172. Staffing levels are very good. All teachers are experienced and well qualified to teach all aspects of the curriculum very effectively. Teachers have a wide range of specialist knowledge and expertise to meet the needs of all pupils. The teaching of pupils with SEN is integrated and co-ordinated within the work of the school in an excellent manner.
173. Classroom support staff greatly enhance standards in the school, through working in close partnership with teachers to plan, teach, assess and record pupils' progress for individuals and groups. They show a sensitive appreciation of the needs of pupils, and make an outstanding contribution to teaching and learning.
174. The two secretaries, caretaker, cleaning staff, lunchtime supervisors and canteen staff provide very effective support in the day-to-day running of the school. The caretaker, in addition to ensuring that the building and grounds are clean, contributes very well to pupils' well being through his valuable work with the Eco Warriors.
175. All subject areas have an abundance of good quality resources, and constant and effective use is made of them in all classes. Libraries are well stocked, and extensive use is made of ICT resources in classrooms and in the ICT suite. Resources, such as the interactive whiteboards in every classroom, support learning in an outstanding way, and contribute most effectively to raising standards of achievement.
176. Resources for the early years are excellent, with an attractive garden area and plentiful play equipment. The school is very well equipped with tools, apparatus and materials for practical and creative work.
177. Excellent use is made of resources outside the school, including sports facilities, museums, theatres and field centres to enrich the curriculum. The school shares a great deal of expertise with neighbouring schools and benefits from joint projects, such as the ICT/website development.
178. The overall quality of accommodation at the school is outstanding. Indoor and outdoor areas provide a stimulating, tasteful setting for teaching and learning, and are used most effectively. This new 'fit for purpose' school has large, airy classrooms, specialist rooms, digital facilities, group learning bays and ample provision for practical activities. It is extremely well cared for, with lively displays in corridors and classrooms creating an attractive ethos, which are used most imaginatively as teaching and learning resources.
179. Extensive use is made of outside areas, which include marked outdoor play areas, quiet zones, garden areas and the use of a large playing field.
180. The school is very well integrated into the life of the community, and an extensive number of community classes and activities take place in the school.
181. Economic, efficient and effective use is made of available resources. Because of this good practice, all classes are generously resourced and achieve high standards. Appropriate use is made of grant funding, for example, EBP grants and Community Education funding.

182. Teaching and support staff are deployed, managed and developed effectively. The outstanding way in which the school organises and implements the PPA time for teachers allows an experienced teacher to share her expertise in music, ensuring that high standards are maintained.
183. Very effective use is made of the PPA cover teacher to allow time for meetings of SEN personnel, and also for subject leaders to monitor their subject areas. The school is using its resources for workforce remodelling in a very efficient and carefully considered manner.
184. Visiting teachers, such as the peripatetic choir tutor, have a positive impact on pupils' learning. The *athrawes fro* makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning of Welsh. Effective systems are in place to identify and meet the development needs of all staff. Excellent effects of continuing professional development are evident in many subject areas, for example, in the teaching and learning of ICT and Welsh.
185. The school budgets systematically for all expenditure. Spending decisions are well matched to the school's priorities, as identified in the School Development Plan. Budgetary control is stringent, and the governing body, headteacher and an LA officer monitor spending very effectively.
186. The school keeps its resources under regular review, and makes excellent use of all its resources to achieve the best possible outcomes for all of its pupils. The school achieves very good value for money.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors have carefully considered the outcomes of our inspection. The report provides an objective, measured view of school life and of pupils' achievements at the school.

The inspection was comprehensive, rigorous and efficiently undertaken. Care was taken to arrive at very balanced and considered views, with time given to corroborate judgements where necessary. The headteacher, in his role as nominee, felt that the process was open and transparent and that he was given the opportunity to be involved in constructive and productive discussions. We are therefore confident that the findings of this report are soundly and fairly founded.

The inspection team identified the good progress that the school has made since its last inspection. The report, gratifyingly, exemplifies the high expectations and good standards that are features of life for all, at Abercanaid Community School. The report notes the strengths and, many outstanding features in the school. The report is vitally constructive in that it identifies areas for further development, in a positive manner. An action plan will be formulated to address the issues in the report and a new SDP will unambiguously reflect its recommendations.

The school would like to thank Mrs Linda Jane Williams, the registered inspector, for her skilful management of the process of inspection. Thanks are similarly extended to the inspection team for their positive contribution to future school improvement.

Courtesy, professionalism and rigour, combined to become the hallmark of this inspection. This is a fact greatly appreciated by the headteacher and staff of Abercanaid Community School.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Abercanaid Community School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11 years
Address of school	The Park, Abercanaid Merthyr Tydfil Mid Glamorgan
Postcode	CF48 1SZ
Telephone number	01443 690254

Headteacher	Mr Mike Sullivan
Date of appointment	September 1989
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Cllr. Harvey Jones
Registered inspector	Mrs Linda Jane Williams
Dates of inspection	23 <sup>rd</sup> - 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2008

## 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	20	24	26	24	19	11	20	29	173

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	9	0	9

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	21:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	7:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	2.5 :1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	28
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Summer 2007	89	85	92
Autumn 2007	89	91	95
Spring 2008	90	90	93

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	9.00%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

### Appendix 3

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2007			Number of pupils in Y2:		20		
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	5	10	60	25
		National	0	3	13	63	20
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	5	10	55	30
		National	0	4	14	55	27
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	5	10	60	25
		National	0	5	14	68	12
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	5	10	50	35
		National	0	2	10	63	24
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	5	10	40	45
		National	0	2	10	64	23
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	5	5	40	50
		National	0	2	9	66	24

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	85	In Wales	81

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

#### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2007			Number of pupils in Y6		20						
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	20	40	40
		National	0	0	0	1	1	4	16	48	30
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	50	30
		National	0	0	0	1	1	3	14	48	33
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	50	35
		National	0	0	0	0	0	2	12	52	34

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment	
In the school	80
In Wales	74

D Pupils who are exempted 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

Three inspectors spent a total of 6 inspector days in the school and met as a team before the inspection.

These inspectors visited:

- sixteen lessons or part lessons;
- all classes;
- acts of collective worship; and
- extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- staff, governors and parents;
- senior managers, teachers and support staff; and
- pupil groups, including the School Council and 'Eco Warriors'.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- thirty-six responses to parents' questionnaires;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection; and
- a wide range of pupils' past and current work, over all year groups.

The inspection team also:

- held discussions with pupils about their work; and
- observed pupils' behaviour throughout the day.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mrs Linda Jane Williams Registered Inspector	Context Summary and recommendations Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6
Mrs Zohrah Evans Team Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 3, 4 and 7.
Mr Reg Cawthorne Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4 and 5.
Mrs Louise James Peer Assessor	Contributions to all questions by providing information.
Mr Mike Sullivan Headteacher / Nominee	Team support and contributions to team meetings.

### **Acknowledgement**

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