

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Blaenau Community Primary School
Pantyblodau
Blaenau
Ammanford
Carmarthenshire
SA18 3BQ**

School Number: 6692052

Date of Inspection: 12 May 2009

by

**Jeffrey Harries
78220**

Date of Publication: 15 July 2009

Under Estyn contract number: 1121108

© Queens Printer and Controller of HMSO 2009: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.

Copies of this report are available from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

Blaenau Primary 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 Blaenau Primary Community School took place between 12/05/09 and 13/05/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by Jeffrey Harries undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a 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

Contents	Page
Context	1
Summary	2
Recommendations	6
Standards	7
Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?	7
The quality of education and training	8
Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	8
Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	10
Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	12
Leadership and management	14
Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	14
Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	15
Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	16
School's response to the inspection	17
Appendices	18
1 Basic information about the school	18
2 School data and indicators	18
3 National Curriculum assessments results	19
4 Evidence base of the inspection	19
5 Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	20

Context

The nature of the provider

1. Blaenau Community Primary School is situated in the rural village of Blaenau near Ammanford and serves the villages of Blaenau and Caerbryn. The school states that the area is one which is neither prosperous nor subject to economic disadvantage.
2. Welsh is the medium of teaching in the foundation phase and key stage 1. In key stage 2 pupils are taught through the medium of Welsh and English with the aim that pupils become fully bilingual by the time they leave the school. Around 20% of the pupils use Welsh as the main language at home.
3. There are 86 pupils between three and 11 years old on the register, a figure slightly below that of the previous inspection with a significant number coming from outside the school's catchment area. They represent the full range of ability. Eight per cent have the right to free school meals, a significantly lower figure than the Carmarthenshire average (15.2%) and the whole of Wales (17.5%). Seventeen pupils (20%) are on the special education needs (SEN) register, one of whom carries a statement. All pupils are of white ethnicity.
4. Pupils are taught in four mixed age classes. The entry of nursery age children is controlled and administered by Carmarthenshire LEA (local education authority).
5. Since the last inspection in 2003, there have been developments to provide play areas and outdoor learning for the foundation phase. The Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark is regularly attained.
6. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007. At the time of the inspection, one full-time teacher was on short-term absence; a supply teacher taught her class.

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school's motto is 'Goleuo'r llwybr i'r dyfodol'(Lighting the pathway to the future).
8. The school's aims include:
 - providing a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum to satisfy the needs of all pupils;
 - developing lively, enquiring minds including the ability to question and argue rationally;
 - developing the use of language and number effectively and ensuring all pupils to be bilingual;
 - developing pupils' personal and moral values, respect for religious values and tolerance towards other religions and ways of life, and
 - developing pupils to be able to appreciate human achievements and aspirations.
9. The school's main priorities and targets for 2008-2009 are to:
 - further develop pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills in Welsh;
 - further develop assessment procedures;

- develop a more comprehensive system of evaluating and monitoring standards of achievements;
- address deficiencies in the interior of the accommodation;
- raise standards of behaviour, and
- further develop education for sustainable development, global citizenship and healthy schools.

Summary

10. Blaenau Community Primary School provides a happy and caring environment. It is managed by a supportive governing body. The headteacher and staff work conscientiously to ensure the school's clear values. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in improving the quality of teaching, however, pupils' key skills and the process of self-evaluation remain as recommendations for improvement.

Table of grades awarded

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

11. The inspection team agreed with the school's judgements in five of the seven key questions, awarding a higher grade for key question 2 and a lower grade for key question 3.

Standards

12. At the top end of key stage 1, in 2008, pupils' attainment according to teacher assessment in the National Curriculum (NC) core subject of mathematics was well above local and national averages, slightly below in science and well below in Welsh. Pupils' attainment at level 3 was well above the national percentage in all three subjects. When compared with all key stage 1 schools in Wales, the school's performance is in the lowest 25%. Over the last three years, standards of attainment have been similar.

13. At the top end of key stage 2, in 2008, pupils' attainment in science was higher than the local and national averages, slightly higher in English and similar in Welsh and mathematics. Pupils' attainment at level 5 was well above in all four subjects. When compared with all key stage 2 schools in Wales, the school's performance is in the top 50% but below the best performing 25%. The pattern is similar over the last three years.

14. The educational provision for under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards Foundation Phase outcomes.

15. The majority of pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress in relation to their specific targets.
16. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils succeed in attaining agreed learning goals.
17. Children's key skills develop well in the early years. Skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing Welsh develop well. Use of numeracy skills across the curriculum is good. Children make effective use of the interactive white board to further their learning but use of computers is limited. Children progress well their personal, social, moral and wider development.
18. In key stage 1, pupils' standards and progress in the key skills of listening and speaking in Welsh are good. Their reading and writing skills in Welsh are less well developed. The use of their mathematical skills across the curriculum is good, however, their use of ICT to support learning is underdeveloped. Their problem solving and creative skills are good.
19. In key stage 2, pupils listen attentively in Welsh and English lessons. Their speaking skills are good in English, however, in Welsh they do not converse confidently using a developing range of vocabulary. Their reading and writing skills in both languages are underdeveloped. They make good use of their numeracy skills across a widening range of NC subjects, however, their use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support learning is underdeveloped. The development of pupils' creative skills is good as are their problem solving skills.
20. Key stage 2 pupils' bilingual skills are good with some shortcomings. By the end of the key stage, in speaking and listening, pupils make effective use of details in Welsh to convey the essence of the meaning in English. However, they lack confidence in reading texts in English to convey the essence of the meaning in Welsh.
21. Pupils in both key stages are enthusiastic learners. Their behaviour is good and they are considerate and show respect and courtesy towards each other and towards all the staff and visitors to the school.
22. Attendance is good with an average of almost 94% over the last year. Registration meets statutory requirements in all classes.
23. Pupils in both key stages make good progress in their personal, social and moral development and in their wider development.

The quality of education and training

24. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	75%	25%	0%	0%

25. The quality of teaching is below the national average for primary schools in Wales reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) in his annual report for 2007-2008. However, these percentage figures show a significant improvement since the last inspection when the quality of teaching was judged to be Grade 2 in 50% and Grade 3 in the remainder.
26. Teachers are role models of a good standard and during the inspection good working relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils were observed across the school.

27. Lessons are generally well focused and succeed in interesting pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They are good language models for pupils to emulate in both Welsh and English. While they demonstrate positive attitudes towards the promotion of pupils' bilingual skills, the use of Welsh as a medium of teaching and learning in the upper part of key stage 2 is insufficient.
28. Lessons are generally well planned. While teachers' planning of tasks to match pupils' abilities is evident in the best examples, it is not a consistent feature of planning.
29. In lessons where teaching was judged to have shortcomings, these include insufficient levels of challenge for pupils and less effective organisation and management of lessons. Lessons do not develop at an appropriate pace and insufficient opportunities are made available for pupils to make decisions in relation to their learning.
30. Good features outweigh shortcomings in relation to assessment procedures. Teachers make appropriate use of evidence of aspects of the core subjects each term to identify strengths and areas for development. However, the moderating process to ensure their accuracy is not always sufficiently rigorous.
31. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in relation to identifying ways forward for pupils. While pupils across the school are beginning to play a more active role in relation to the setting of individual targets each term and reflecting on and evaluating their own progress, these are areas which the school has identified for further development.
32. Annual reports to parents comply with statutory requirements.
33. The curriculum for the Foundation Phase is well planned and provision for the under fives is appropriate to their needs. The curriculum in both key stages is broad and balanced and reflects the requirements of the NC and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Teaching time in key stage 2 does not meet the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) recommended guidelines.
34. Good features outweigh shortcomings in the provision for the development of key skills. Planning for progression in speaking and writing across the curriculum in Welsh in key stage 2 and the use of ICT across the curriculum in both key stages is insufficiently developed. The focus on problem solving is good and appropriate use is made of pupils' creative skills in a number of curriculum areas.
35. Offsite provision and a range of visitors make outstanding contributions to the learning experiences. Pupils are provided with a wealth of first-hand experiences.
36. The range of extra-curricular provision is good and makes an important contribution to learning. Homework for the most part is well targeted and builds appropriately on pupils' experiences in school.
37. The school has a clear Welsh ethos and places a good emphasis upon the promotion of Welsh culture and the heritage of Wales.
38. Whole school acts of collective worship which fulfil statutory requirements are of good quality and provide opportunities for quiet reflection and pupil participation. The promotion of pupils' moral and social development is also good.
39. The personal and social education (PSE) programme is integrated into school life and is a feature of provision which is in the process of being further developed.

40. The school's partnerships with parents are good and a constructive home-school agreement is in place. The quality of the school's links with the local community is very strong.
41. Links with the world of work and business partnerships are limited. Procedures to promote pupils' entrepreneurial skills are at an early stage of development.
42. The school provides a supportive and happy environment. The school council is functioning well and ideas and needs identified are forwarded to teachers by the officers.
43. There are clear procedures which contribute to ensuring the well-being of pupils. Matters relating to health and safety were discussed with the head teacher and the governing body. The headteacher is noted as the person with responsibility for child protection; however, not all staff members have received training.
44. Good features outweigh shortcomings in the school's provision for pupils with SEN. Appropriate strategies are in place to identify pupils at an early stage and they all have individual educational plans (IEPs).
45. Direct support for pupils on the SEN register takes the form of groups working in withdrawal sessions on language based activities with the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) for limited periods. This support is not offered to all pupils and overall the amount of support provided is insufficient to meet the needs of all pupils with SEN.

Leadership and management

46. The quality of the headteacher's leadership is good. In the short time he has been in post, he has a vision for improving and developing the school. During the inspection, he was ably supported by the teachers and the support staff.
47. Analysis of performance data is undertaken effectively. Whole-school quantitative targets are set for pupils in Y1 and Y5 but are not reviewed in Y2 and Y6 to ensure a more accurate reflection of attainment.
48. The governing body undertakes its duties conscientiously, is very supportive of the school and fulfils its legal and regulatory requirements. Its role in monitoring the quality of provision is less well developed. As individuals, they do not take a sufficiently active role as a critical friend in linking with curriculum co-ordinators to monitor subjects. This has been identified by the school as an area for development.
49. The headteacher, governors and staff are committed to improving standards of achievement. The role of curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating work is developing. They have a good overview of the education and the resources provided but their perceptions of standards of achievement are not developed as well.
50. The school development plan (SDP) is a detailed scheme which shows the school's priorities clearly. It outlines matters which are to receive attention in the short term but does not identify plans for the longer term.
51. Good features outweigh shortcomings in the school's progress since the last inspection. It has significantly raised standards in the quality of teaching by attending to the weaknesses noted. However, deficiencies remain in pupils' key skills of speaking in Welsh, reading, writing and use of ICT across the curriculum.

The self-evaluation procedures remain insufficiently comprehensive and systematic in order to evaluate standards pupils achieve.

52. The school has a good supply of teaching staff and learning support assistants (LSAs) who work well with the teachers and pupils. Teachers attend a good range of training courses and this has a positive effect on their skills and their understanding.
53. Apart from a few areas, the building is in a generally good condition and the caretaker ensures it is kept clean and tidy. Satisfactory use is made of the corridors and classroom walls to display pupils' work.
54. Overall, there is a range of appropriate resources for the NC including that of the Foundation Phase. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to support the teaching and learning, however, computers are under-utilised to support learning.
55. Spending decisions are well linked to priorities in the school's plans. The school operates effectively from day-to-day. The part time school support officer fulfils her duties very effectively and efficiently. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in the key skills of reading and writing in Welsh in key stage 1 and speaking, reading, writing and bilingual skills in key stage 2, and further develop pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum in both key stages;
- R2 further develop assessment procedures with particular reference to the moderation of pupils' work and the involvement of pupils in the assessment process;
- R3 ensure that the school adheres to the WAG recommended teaching time for pupils in key stage 2;
- R4 further enhance planning procedures for the promotion of key skills in both key stages and the development of bilingualism in key stage 2;
- R5 provide additional support for pupils with SEN;
- R6 ensure self-evaluation procedures are comprehensive and systematic in order to evaluate standards pupils achieve, and
- R7 ensure all staff are trained in child protection procedures.

The school is addressing aspects of recommendations 1, 2, 4 and 6 in its current SDP.

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

56. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
57. At the top end of key stage 1, in 2008, pupils' attainment according to teacher assessment in the NC core subject of mathematics was well above local and national averages, slightly below in science and well below in Welsh. Pupils' attainment at level 3 was well above the national percentage in all three subjects. When compared with all key stage 1 schools in Wales, the school's performance is in the lowest 25%. Over the last three years, standards of attainment have been similar.
58. At the top end of key stage 2, in 2008, pupils' attainment in science was higher than the local and national averages, slightly higher in English and similar in Welsh and mathematics. Pupils' attainment at level 5 was well above national averages in all four subjects. When compared with all key stage 2 schools in Wales, the school's performance is in the top 50% but below the best performing 25%. The pattern is similar over the last three years.
59. In 2008, there was no obvious difference in the performance of girls and boys in either key stage.
60. The educational provision for under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards foundation phase outcomes.
61. The majority of pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress in relation to their specific targets.
62. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils succeed in attaining agreed learning goals.
63. Children's key skills develop well in the early years. They listen attentively to their teacher and the support staff. Skills in speaking, reading and writing Welsh develop well. Use of numeracy skills across the curriculum is good. Children make effective use of the interactive white board to further their learning but use of computers is limited. Children progress well their personal, social, moral and wider development.
64. In key stage 1, pupils' standards and progress in the key skills of listening and speaking in Welsh are good. In lessons, pupils think carefully and express themselves confidently and clearly, and they listen attentively to the views of others. Their reading and writing skills in Welsh are less well developed. The use of their mathematical skills across the curriculum is good, however, their use of ICT to support learning is underdeveloped. Their problem solving and creative skills are good and pupils make a good effort to ensure tidy work.
65. In key stage 2, pupils listen attentively in Welsh and English lessons. Their speaking skills are good in English, however, in Welsh they do not converse confidently using a developing range of vocabulary. Their reading and writing skills in both languages are underdeveloped. The majority do not write and record extensively across the curriculum in both languages. However, the standard of presentation of their work is good. They make good use of their numeracy skills across a widening range of NC subjects, however, their use of ICT to support

learning is underdeveloped. The development of pupils' creative skills is good as are their problem solving skills.

66. Key stage 2 pupils' bilingual skills are good with some shortcomings. By the end of the key stage, in speaking and listening, pupils make effective use of details in Welsh to convey the essence of the meaning in English. However, they lack confidence in reading texts in English to convey the essence of the meaning in Welsh.
67. Pupils in both key stages are enthusiastic learners who enjoy their work and play. They listen carefully to their teachers, co-operate with adults and their fellow pupils, and are ready to engage in their work and concentrate. They have an interest in their work and are eager to do their best, and take pride in their achievements.
68. Pupils make good progress towards fulfilling their potential and moving forward to the next stage of learning. Key stage 2 pupils have a developing perception of the main factors which decide the standards they achieve. They set targets in literacy and numeracy to address their shortcomings.
69. Pupils' behaviour is good across the school and this has a positive effect on their learning. They are considerate and show respect and courtesy towards each other and towards all the staff and visitors to the school.
70. Attendance is good with an average of almost 94% over the last year. This figure is above the national average of 93.1% for pupils of primary school age. Nearly all pupils are punctual. Registration meets statutory requirements in all classes.
71. Pupils in both key stages make good progress in their personal, social and moral development and in their wider development. They show respect, care and concern for others and are responsible for their actions and work, showing honesty and fairness.
72. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of matters relating to equal opportunities and respect diversity in society.
73. Through some links with local businesses and running the fruit shop, pupils have a developing understanding of the world of work.
74. The school has a strong partnership with the community. Pupils participate in a number of local activities.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

75. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement of Grade 3 made by the school in its self-evaluation report. A significant number of good features were identified in the quality of teaching.
76. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	75%	25%	0%	0%

77. The quality of teaching is below the national average for primary schools in Wales reported by HMCI in his annual report for 2007- 2008. Nationally the quality of teaching was good or better (Grades 1 and 2) in 83% of lessons, with 16% having outstanding features. However, these percentage figures show a significant improvement since the last inspection when the quality of teaching was judged to be Grade 2 in 50% and Grade 3 in the remainder.
78. Teachers are role models of a good standard and during the inspection good working relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils were observed across the school. Their class management is fair and of a good standard. Equal opportunities are effectively ensured for all pupils.
79. Lessons are generally well focused and succeed in interesting pupils. Expectations of what pupils can achieve and the amount of work they can complete are in the main appropriate and pupils' efforts are praised.
80. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and demonstrate an appropriate familiarity with recent developments in primary education. They are good language models for pupils to emulate in both Welsh and English. While they demonstrate positive attitudes towards the promotion of pupils' bilingual skills, the use of Welsh as a medium of teaching and learning in the upper part of key stage 2 is insufficient to ensure that pupils achieve the school's aim of becoming fully bilingual by the age of 11.
81. Lessons are well planned and most have clear learning objectives which are, in the best examples, shared with pupils so that they are aware about what is expected of them. In some examples they are revisited effectively in plenary sessions. The structure and organisation of lessons is generally good and teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and relevant resources effectively. While teachers' planning of tasks to match pupils' abilities is evident in the best examples, it is not a consistent feature of planning.
82. When working alongside teachers, LSAs make a good contribution to the quality of the teaching and learning. They give well focused help to individuals and small groups of pupils within the classroom.
83. In lessons where teaching was judged to have shortcomings, these include insufficient levels of challenge for pupils, less effective organisation and management of lessons. Lessons do not develop at an appropriate pace and insufficient opportunities are made available for pupils to make decisions in relation to their learning.
84. The school has appropriate arrangements for informing those with a legitimate interest about pupils' progress and achievements and exchanges relevant data with the receiving secondary school and keeps governors well informed.
85. Good features outweigh shortcomings in relation to assessment procedures. A revised policy is in place and the school adheres closely to the LEA assessment programme and timetable.
86. Teachers make appropriate use of evidence produced from the baseline assessments undertaken with the under-fives and standardised NC tests in key stages 1 and 2 to identify strengths and areas for development. These are supported by assessments each term of aspects of the core subjects to identify strengths and areas for development.

87. While use is made of portfolios of levelled work in the core areas to help set end of key stage individual pupil targets, the moderating process to ensure their accuracy is not always sufficiently rigorous. A new electronic tracking system has been introduced to focus more effectively on pupils' progress in the core areas and there are plans to involve all staff members in tracking procedures.
88. Assessment procedures for pupils with SEN are for the most part appropriate.
89. While aspects of progress in the foundation subjects and religious education are recorded, assessment procedures in these areas are more informal.
90. The focus on the assessment for learning initiative is in its early stages. While short term planning often identifies assessment opportunities, evaluations of learning experiences are often informal and insufficiently rigorous in informing future planning.
91. Pupils receive appropriate feedback in lessons in relation to progress. The marking of pupils' work is however inconsistent in relation to identifying ways forward for pupils. While pupils across the school are beginning to play a more active role in relation to the setting of individual targets each term and reflecting on and evaluating their own progress, these are areas which the school has identified for further development.
92. The school meets statutory requirements for recording and accrediting learners' achievements. Annual reports to parents outline pupils' skills and achievements well in the core subjects, however, the focus at times is insufficiently detailed in some foundation subjects. Targets for further development in the core areas are set out in the best examples. Parents have good opportunities to comment on reports and to discuss them with teachers.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

93. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement of Grade 1 made by the school in its self-evaluation report. While some outstanding features in relation to curricular provision were noted, shortcomings were also identified.
94. The curriculum for the foundation phase is well planned and provision for the under fives is appropriate to their needs. Children make good progress towards foundation phase outcomes.
95. The curriculum in both key stages is broad and balanced and reflects the requirements of the NC and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Teaching time in key stage 2 does not meet the WAG recommended guidelines.
96. Continuity and progression in learning experiences across the school are supported by appropriate policies and schemes of work which are being updated in line with recent curricular revisions. The percentage of teaching time through the medium of Welsh in the upper part of key stage 2 does not as yet reflect expectations for a category A school although the school has appropriate procedures in place and is making positive progress in addressing this aspect.
97. Good features outweigh shortcomings in the development of key skills. While references are made to the key skills in mid and short term planning, the focus is

insufficiently rigorous and planning for progression in speaking and writing across the curriculum in Welsh in key stage 2 and in the use of ICT across the curriculum in both key stages is insufficiently developed. The focus on problem solving is good and appropriate use is made of pupils' artistic skills in a number of curriculum areas. Pupils are given opportunities to be involved in a range of musical performances, services and concerts for a variety of audiences. In addition, appropriate opportunities are provided to enable pupils to develop skills of working independently as well as in pairs or groups.

98. Offsite provision and a range of visitors make outstanding contributions to the learning experiences. Pupils are provided with a wealth of first-hand experiences. A very good range of visits are arranged to places of educational interest to supplement and enhance their class studies particularly in history and religious education. Pupils' achievement in climbing the three peaks of Wales and visiting all the national parks are notable examples of these enriching experiences. Pupils also learn much from the school's many visitors, including local clerics, craftsmen, sportsmen and members of the caring services.
99. The range of extra-curricular provision is good and makes an important contribution to learning. Homework for the most part is well targeted and builds appropriately on pupils' experiences in school.
100. The school has a clear Welsh ethos and places a good emphasis upon the promotion of Welsh culture and the heritage of Wales resulting in the requirements of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig being well met. The Welsh dimension features prominently in a number of subject areas and in the general life of the school and the school's involvement in activities associated with the Urdd movement plays an important role.
101. There are well focused procedures to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures, particularly through studying other religions. The school's developing focus on the European dimension is beginning to make a relevant contribution.
102. Whole school acts of collective worship which conform to statutory requirements are of good quality and provide opportunities for quiet reflection in the context of a worshipful atmosphere which includes music and singing. The promotion of pupils' moral and social development is also good. Acts of worship, religious education lessons and the general ethos of the school place an important emphasis on the differences between right and wrong and on the promotion of caring values. Pupils are aware of those less fortunate than themselves locally and in the wider world and focus well on charitable ventures. There are very good opportunities for effective co-operation within groups in the classroom and through the playground "buddy system". Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take on responsibilities and exercise initiative through their involvement in the school council, eco council and the prefect system.
103. The PSE programme is integrated into school life and is a feature of provision which is in the process of being further developed. A new policy is in place, a revised scheme of work has been introduced and more discrete teaching times are being timetabled to further promote these aspects of provision. The community police officer and members of the caring services make important contribution in this context. Pupils' focus on health promotion is being further

developed through the school's participation in the LEAs health promoting programme.

104. The school's partnerships with parents, the local community, other schools and higher education institutions, and the LEA are good and parents are supportive of the school. In the pre-inspection meeting and in the questionnaires returned to the inspection team, the vast majority of parents expressed satisfaction with the school. The school keeps parents well informed through regular and well focused newsletters and the web site. A home-school contact book is operated and a constructive home-school agreement is in place. The school has established a breakfast and after school club.
105. The school works closely with other primary school in its cluster group. The quality of the pastoral, administrative and curriculum arrangements with the receiving secondary school is good with outstanding features. The school enjoys a partnership with an initial teachers training college and a college which focuses on the provision of vocational courses.
106. The quality of the school's links with the local community is very strong. The school contributes very effectively to many facets of community life and works closely on initiatives such as developing the community garden. There are also strong links with the local rugby club. The community in turn is very supportive of the school. Elements of the curriculum are based on a study of the local area and pupils contribute to the cultural life of their community.
107. The focus on education for sustainability is a developing feature of school life and the school has received the Eco-Schools bronze award. Pupils are developing a good awareness of conservation issues through recycling projects. The school promotes global citizenship well and pupils are developing a good understanding of the lives of people in different countries and an awareness of global issues. The school has recently become part of the Comenius project and pupils benefit from receiving visits from visitors from a number of countries.
108. While pupils visit local shops and businesses, links with the world of work and business partnerships are limited. Procedures to promote pupils' entrepreneurial skills are at an early stage of development and currently include opportunities for pupils to be responsible for a fruit shop at the school. There are no policies and strategies to promote these areas which have been identified for further development.
109. Overall, the school is successful in laying the foundations for lifelong learning and community regeneration, and national priorities are appropriately reflected in its life and work.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

110. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
111. The school provides a supportive and happy environment. Attention was drawn to the respect shown to pupils, and the focus on developing an awareness of the needs of others as important elements of the school's life. All the staff know their

pupils well and the school provides a good level of personal support for individual pupils. Pupils of all abilities are included well in the life and work of the school.

112. In discussion, pupils note that they are confident in turning to adults for help and support and are listened to and treated with respect.
113. For the most part, the school enjoys sound working partnerships with parents and carers and takes account of their views. The school also works in partnership with relevant outside agencies and draws on the expertise of external support services when required.
114. Appropriate induction procedures are in place for pupils to enter the nursery - reception class and there are close links with the pre school nursery which is based at the school. There are appropriate procedures to support pupils who join the school at a later stage of their education and these include opportunities to spend time in a special language class to improve their grasp of Welsh.
115. Pupils are encouraged to gain positive attitudes at all times and high expectations are placed on personal, moral, social and wider development within school and in the community. Timetabled PSE sessions are well focused and supported by the community, police officers and school nurse. As part of the healthy schools initiative, the school is involved in promoting healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. Pupils regularly partake of fruit at break-time. The school council is functioning well and ideas and needs identified are forwarded to teachers by the officers.
116. The school monitors pupils' punctuality, attendance, behaviour and performance, and takes early and appropriate action where necessary.
117. The school has a health and safety policy and all staff members have received updated training in first aid. Matters relating to health and safety were discussed with the head teacher and the governing body. There are clear procedures which contribute to ensuring learners' welfare.
118. A child protection policy has been adopted. The headteacher is noted as the person with responsibility; however, not all staff members have received training.
119. Overall, good features outweigh shortcomings in the school's provision for pupils with AAA. There is an appropriate policy document to guide teachers and the school generally adheres to the SEN code of practice. Pupils with additional learning needs have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The school has appropriate links with relevant outside agencies and use is made of the expertise on offer when this is required. Appropriate strategies are in place to identify pupils with AAA at an early stage.
120. All pupils on the AAA register have IEPs which identify specific needs and contain targets which are reviewed each term. For the most part, targets relate to linguistic needs only and are at times insufficiently specific. The school states that parents and carers have opportunities to come to the school to view the IEPs and to discuss targets and progress with teachers, however, not all parents have signed them.
121. For the most part, direct support for pupils on the AAA register takes the form of groups working in withdrawal sessions on language based activities with the SENCO for limited periods. This support is not offered to all pupils and overall the amount of support provided is insufficient to meet the needs of all pupils with AAA.

122. While the majority of teachers' planning identifies tasks to match pupils' needs, this is not always the case and tasks for pupils with AAA and work to extend more able pupils is not a consistent feature in all short term plans.
123. There is an appropriate system of record-keeping to monitor the progress of pupils with AAA which includes evaluative comments relating to specific targets.
124. Overall appropriate strategies are in place to provide support for pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress or that of others. The school has worked with the behaviour support team and staff have benefited from training in assertive discipline. The school's positive ethos, reward system and behaviour policy make important contributions in this context. Measures taken to eliminate oppressive behaviour, bullying and all other forms of harassment are appropriate.
125. Strategies to ensure equal opportunities for pupils are good and they participate in a range of activities on an equal footing. During the inspection however, a small number of examples of gender stereotyping were observed.
126. Appropriate procedures are implemented relating to racial equality. The school focuses appropriately on the importance of good race relations and effectively celebrates cultural diversity through the curriculum.
127. The school has taken positive action to ensure that pupils with physical disabilities are not treated less favourably and has a disability equality scheme with a clear accessibility plan.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

128. The inspection team's findings correspond to the judgement expressed in the school's self-evaluation report.
129. The quality of the headteacher's leadership is good. In the short time he has been in post, he has a vision for improving and developing the school. During the inspection he was ably supported by the teachers and the support staff. His positive leadership gives a clear sense of direction to the work of the school.
130. The school is beginning to take account of national priorities, for example, it is developing a number of enterprises to improve pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship and the development of the foundation phase. At the school, links with other educational providers are good. The school council helps pupils to contribute to, and influence directly the decisions that affect them.
131. Analysis of performance data is undertaken effectively. Benchmarking information is used to compare the school's performance with the performance of other schools. Whole school quantitative targets are set for pupils in Y1 and Y5 but are not reviewed in Y2 and Y6 to ensure a more accurate reflection of attainment.
132. In judging success and evaluating its performance, the school uses a developing range of strategies, based on a range of data and qualitative evidence. Subject co-ordinators undertake sampling of work, visit classes and monitor lessons.

133. An effective system of staff appraisal promotes the teachers' and support staff's continuing professional development. As a result, this has led to an improvement in the provision.
134. The governing body undertakes its duties conscientiously with members having a good awareness of their responsibilities; they are very supportive of the school. The governors ensure that the school's aims and objectives are fulfilled and they are active in setting the school's strategic direction. Members meet regularly and through the headteacher's reports, they have comprehensive information about the life and work of the school.
135. The role of the governing body in monitoring the quality of provision is less well developed. As individuals, they do not take a sufficiently active role as a critical friend in linking with curriculum co-ordinators to monitor subjects. This has been identified by the school as an area for development.
136. The governing body fulfils legal and regulatory requirements appropriately and its annual report to parents and school prospectus conform to statutory requirements.
137. The governors have a good overview of the budget and they supervise expenditure very well. Spending decisions are closely linked to priorities noted in the SDP and governors make every effort to ensure the best value for money.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

138. The inspection team's findings correspond to the judgement expressed in the school's self-evaluation report.
139. The headteacher, governors and staff are committed to improving standards of achievement. The whole staff are involved in the self-evaluation process, with parents and pupils' points of view considered by means of questionnaires.
140. Through the headteacher's reports, governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the priorities to be acted upon through the SDP.
141. The role of curriculum co-ordinators with regard to monitoring and evaluating work is developing comparatively effectively. They have a good overview of the education and the resources provided but their perceptions of standards of achievement are not developed as well. Their plans for improvement are acted upon through the SDP.
142. The SDP is a detailed scheme which shows the school's priorities clearly, with timetables, success criteria and agreed costs indicated. There is a detailed outline of matters which are to receive attention in the short term but does not identify plans for the longer term.
143. The school works closely with the LEA link adviser. Regular reviews are held and these give the school a better appreciation of the quality of its provision and the standards achieved.
144. A detailed assessment is made of a wide range of assessment and test results including baseline tests in the reception class, teacher assessment at the end of

key stages 1 and 2, and the results of other assessments. The school makes good use of this analysis to earmark strengths and weaknesses.

145. Performance management procedures have a good effect on staff development; they contribute effectively to the identification of the professional needs of all staff.
146. The self-evaluation report, produced by the school before the inspection, is comprehensive. It indicates strengths and matters for improvement and it is supported by a wide range of documentary evidence.
147. The inspection team agrees with the school's judgement of its strengths and its areas for improvement and the judgements made by the school in five of the seven key questions, awarding a higher grade for key question 2 and a lower grade for key question 3.
148. Good features outweigh shortcomings in the school's progress since the last inspection. It has significantly raised standards in the quality of teaching by attending to the weaknesses noted. However, deficiencies remain in pupils' key skills of speaking in Welsh, reading, writing and use of ICT across the curriculum. The self-evaluation procedures remain insufficiently comprehensive and systematic in order to evaluate standards pupils achieve.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

149. The inspection team's findings correspond to the judgement expressed in the school's self-evaluation report.
150. The school has a good supply of teaching staff who have appropriate qualifications to present the curriculum. Planning for the delegation of responsibilities is good and the job descriptions that everyone has give a clear outline of their responsibilities.
151. The school has invested in good provision of LSAs who work well with the teachers. They give good support to small groups of pupils in the classes as well as supporting individuals and pupils who need additional encouragement to cater for their SEN.
152. Teachers attend a good range of training courses and this has a positive effect on their skills and their understanding.
153. The building is in a generally good condition apart from a few areas where there is dampness around the windows, scaling of paint work, and dry rot in one classroom which is being attended to as a matter of urgency. The location for teaching foundation phase children is good with appropriate use made of both the indoor and outdoor facilities. Throughout the school satisfactory use is made of the corridors and classroom walls to display pupils' work. The security of the building is appropriate and the caretaker ensures it is kept clean and tidy.
154. The school and the governing body help to ensure that resources correspond to their priorities for development. Annual reviews are held to ensure the sufficiency and suitability of the resources. Overall, there is a range of appropriate resources for the NC and the Foundation Phase. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to support the teaching and learning, however, use of computers to support learning is under-utilised.

155. The school has adopted effective procedures for managing teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time (PPA) in line with statutory requirements. The school uses resources appropriately for remodelling the workforce.
156. Spending decisions are well linked to priorities in the school's plans. The latest LEA audit in September 2008 states that regulatory arrangements for the budget are good and the shortcomings noted have been corrected.
157. The governing body is diligent with regard to its monitoring role in reviewing and directing significant expenditure areas.
158. The school operates effectively from day-to-day. The part time school support officer fulfils her duties very effectively and efficiently.
159. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

School's response to the inspection

The school was invited to respond to the inspection report, however, on this occasion, it declined to do so.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Blaenau Community Primary School
School type	Primary inc Foundation Phase
Age-range of pupils	3 – 11
Address of school	Pantylodau Blaenau Ammanford Carmarthenshire
Postcode	SA18 3BQ
Telephone number	01269 850583
Headteacher	Mr Mathew Jones
Date of appointment	September 2007
Chair of governors	Mr Michael Morgan
Registered inspector	Mr Jeffrey Harries
Dates of inspection	12 th -13 th May 2009

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	8	11	9	15	6	12	14	11	86

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	5	0	5

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	17:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	N/A
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	21.5
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.25 :1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Spring 2009	N/A	90.5%	94.1%
Autumn 2008	N/A	89.2%	94.6%
Summer 2008	N/A	91.6%	93.1%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	8%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	1

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of key stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2008	Number of pupils in Y2	7
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of key stage 1 was greater than four but fewer than 10, overall performance indicators only are included		

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	71.4%	In Wales	80.7%

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of key stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2008		Number of pupils in Y6	12
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 18 64
		National	0.2 0 0 0.5 0.6 3.1 15.6 51.3 28.5
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0 0 0 0 0 0 27 18 55
		National	0.3 0 0 0.8 0.8 4.4 16.7 53.4 23.6
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0 0 0 0 0 0 18 36 45
		National	0.2 0 0 0.5 0.6 2.7 14.7 51.4 29.9
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0 0 0 0 0 0 9 45 45
		National	0.2 0 0 0.5 0.5 1.8 11.4 53.9 31.7

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment			
In the school	81.8%	In Wales	75.5%

- 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

The school was inspected by a team of three inspectors who were present in the school for a total of five inspection days.

Before the inspection:

- meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, governing body and 22 parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting;
- questionnaires were distributed to all parents and the 29 questionnaires that were returned were analysed and the team considered the results; 91.6% of the responses were positive, and
- school documentation was examined.

During the inspection:

- evidence was gathered based on inspecting classes in a total of 16 lessons or sessions across the age range;
- other observations were undertaken including collective worship, registration, play time and lunch time;
- discussions were held with pupils on aspects of their life and work in the school;
- inspectors listened to a representative sample of pupils reading;
- inspectors examined pupils' work from each age group, in addition to work in the classroom and being displayed around the school; and
- post-inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and governing body.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Jeffrey Harries Registered Inspector	Context, Summary, Recommendations and Appendices Key questions 1, 5, 6 and 7
Brinley W Jones Team inspector	Key questions 2, 3 and 4
Gwynoro Jones Lay inspector	Contributions to key questions 1, 3, and 4
Mathew Jones Headteacher	Nominee

Acknowledgement

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

Contractor: EPPC/Severn Crossing Ltd
Suite F2A
Britannic House
Llandarcy
Neath SA10 6JQ