

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

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

**Cwrt-Yr-Ala Junior School  
Cyntwell Avenue, Caerau,  
CARDIFF, CF5 5QN**

**School Number: 6812068**

**Date of Inspection: 09/06/08**

**by**

**Robert Alun Isaac  
15942**

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**Under Estyn contract number: 1126307**

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Cwrt-Yr-Ala Junior 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 Cwrt-Yr-Ala Junior School took place between 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008. An independent team of inspectors, led by Robert Alun Isaac 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 **standard** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

- 1 Cwrt-Yr-Ala Junior School serves the Caerau and Ely housing development on the western outskirts of the city of Cardiff. The school describes its catchment area as economically disadvantaged. In total there are 216 pupils on the school roll. These numbers have remained stable over the last six years. The school is organised into eight classes, all of which comprise pupils from single age groups. All classes are 30 in number or below. In total there are twelve teachers, including the headteacher. They are helped by four teaching assistants. There are 80 pupils, or 37 per cent, with additional learning needs (ALN) or special educational needs (SEN). This is well above the national average. Two pupils hold formal statements of SEN. No pupils are withdrawn from the collective act of worship or religious education. None have been excluded from school in the last year.
- 2 At least 41 per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, a figure well above the national average. The current headteacher has been in post since 2004. English is the sole or predominant home language in virtually all of pupils' homes. Twelve per cent come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school was last inspected in April 2002.

### The school's aims and priorities

- 3 The school includes the following aims in its school improvement plan (SIP):
  - That children and staff have a thirst for knowledge and a desire for lifelong learning;
  - That children's talents are identified and opportunities given to nurture them;
  - That children feel safe and valued; and
  - That children are encouraged to develop positive attitudes to learning.
- 4 It establishes the following priorities in the SIP:
  - Implementing curriculum 2008;
  - Using writing as a focus for helping pupils in their transition from infant school to Year 3;
  - Improving parental involvement;
  - Raising the achievements of boys in English and mathematics; and
  - Developing the use of the outdoor classroom.

## Summary

- 5 Cwrt-Yr-Ala junior school provides its pupils with a stimulating curriculum and teaching which is often outstanding. This enables them to achieve good standards with outstanding elements and to enjoy positive well-being. The school equips its pupils with the skills for lifelong learning and they enjoy their studies very much. The quality of leadership and management is excellent and the school gives outstanding value for money.

### Table of grades awarded

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

### Grades for standards in subjects inspected

| Subject                     | Key Stage 2 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| English                     | Grade 1     |
| Mathematics                 | Grade 2     |
| Science                     | Grade 1     |
| History                     | Grade 1     |
| Information Technology (IT) | Grade 1     |
| Music                       | Grade 2     |

- 6 In the 41 lessons inspected, the grades awarded for overall standards achieved were as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 23%     | 70%     | 7%      | 0%      | 0%      |

- 7 This shows that in 93 per cent of lessons standards are at least good with no important shortcomings. Standards of achievement in 23 per cent of pupils' work have outstanding features. These standards are above the national figures quoted in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's (HMCI) latest report for 2006-7 of grade 2 or better in 80% of lessons, and 10% at grade 1. The percentages are also above the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) 2010 target that the quality of learning should be grade 3 or better in 98% of lessons.
- 8 In the 2008 key stage 2 teacher assessments, the proportion of pupils who attained at least Level 4 or higher was above national averages in English, mathematics and science. The proportion that attained the higher Level 5 was a little below national averages in English and mathematics and above average

in science. Girls attain more highly than boys, particularly in English and mathematics.

- 9 The 2008 key stage 2 collective results for pupils, who attained at least Level 4 in all three core subjects together, were well above the national averages. The school's results are above those of similar schools locally and nationally and have risen steadily over the last four years. Given the school's context, these results are a significant achievement in themselves and show how the school has improved under its new leadership.
- 10 Pupils progress well in their personal, moral, social and wider development. From Year 3 to Year 6, they make at least good and often outstanding progress in developing their personal and social skills.
- 11 Pupils' standards and progress in listening are excellent. Many older pupils speak well in discussion. Standards in reading and numeracy across the curriculum are at least good. Pupils achieve outstandingly well in the use of incidental Welsh. Standards in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) are often good with outstanding features. Bilingualism is integrated well into the life of the school and pupils' bilingual competence in Welsh and English is good.
- 12 Pupils with SEN make good progress relative to their abilities. They develop early literacy skills, read simple words and form letters. They also begin to develop basic number skills effectively in a range of contexts. With support they use a computer to operate simple educational programmes.
- 13 Pupils behave responsibly and show respect for others. They are well motivated, eager to learn and have very positive attitudes to learning. They work with enthusiasm, make good use of lesson time and maintain both effort and concentration well. Standards of behaviour and the levels of courtesy pupils demonstrate are exemplary. This is reflected in many aspects of school life.
- 14 Attendance levels are satisfactory, averaging 92 per cent over the last three terms. Ten per cent of pupils on the school roll have levels of attendance ranging from 54 to 85 per cent. Most pupils are punctual at the start of the day but there are still a small group of pupils who regularly arrive late. This is sometimes because they are responsible for providing breakfast for and taking younger siblings to infant school.

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

### **Grades for teaching**

- 15 In the 41 lessons observed, the grades awarded for the quality of teaching were as follows:

| <b>Grade 1</b> | <b>Grade 2</b> | <b>Grade 3</b> | <b>Grade 4</b> | <b>Grade 5</b> |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 46%            | 46%            | 8%             | 0%             | 0%             |

- 16 Teaching shows at least good features with no important shortcomings in 92 per cent of lessons observed, comparing well nationally where teaching is at least good in 79 per cent of lessons. Within this proportion, at Cwrt-Yr-Ala, 46 per cent of teaching has outstanding features. These figures are significantly higher than the national picture as reported by HMCI in her annual Report for 2006/2007 where the quality of teaching in primary schools was at least Grade 2 in 79 per cent of lessons with 17 per cent having outstanding features. These percentages are a significant improvement on those of the previous inspection and are above the WAG 2010 target for teaching to be 80% Grade 2 or better.

The outstanding features found in almost a half of the lessons seen include:

- Teachers stimulate and challenge pupils of all abilities well. They give clear and appropriate time limits and intervene sensitively to encourage pupils in their work.
- Outstanding lessons were observed in every year group.
- Teachers often have excellent subject knowledge and are well qualified. In the best lessons, teachers use drama and role play to outstanding effect.
- Many teachers use the interactive whiteboard outstandingly well.

- 17 The promotion of pupils' bilingual skills is outstanding. Teachers take advantage of many opportunities to use incidental Welsh. This is a common feature inside and outside the classroom and pupils are enthusiastic about their efforts.
- 18 Where teaching has shortcomings, and this is uncommon, it is usually because the teacher's introduction and explanations are too long before pupils are asked to contribute. Pupils occasionally do not have enough opportunities to take their learning, independently, to a higher level.
- 19 The quality of assessment and its use in planning, including SEN, is particularly good. Outstanding features include:

- An effective computerised pupil tracking system is well established.
- The school has received the AQAA award for assessment and the quality of portfolios for all core and foundation subjects.
- Assessment for learning is embedded in many lessons, ensuring learning objectives are clearly communicated to learners.
- Parental consultation, formal and informal meetings and annual reports keep parents fully informed of their children's progress.

- 20 The school's curriculum is broad, rich and balanced. It is suitably differentiated to meet the learning styles, needs and range of all pupils and staff have introduced various innovations to enhance the curriculum. The school provides an excellent variety of additional activities and clubs, which are open to all pupils. Staff organise sporting activities such as football, cricket, rugby, and

basketball. This has resulted in the school achieving highly in a number of sporting competitions. The school's links with the University of Wales Institute of Education at Cardiff (UWIC) enable pupils to take part in athletics within a university setting. Parents support the school by assisting in these activities, as well as in school visits.

- 21 The school promotes pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development very well. It has a very positive ethos and encourages pupils to discuss issues and to express their opinions. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. All adults and pupils demonstrate a mutual respect for each other and pupils feel that they are valued.
- 22 Pupils' awareness of the need for sustainable development is promoted through recycling, energy conservation and healthy eating projects. The school has formed an eco-committee which meets on a regular basis and pupils are fully involved in all aspects of its work.
- 23 The school has recently developed an outdoor classroom in its spacious playground and green, open spaces. This includes an amphitheatre, stage and seating which was installed by volunteers from all over Cardiff. Teachers and pupils use it effectively to enhance the work in a range of subjects.
- 24 The partnership the school has with parents is increasingly strong and parents' evenings, concerts and assemblies are becoming better attended. The school has recognized that the partnership with parents needed to be strengthened and has set about doing this with vigour. Parents have been consulted to ascertain their views about how the school can improve further. Open days and tours of the school have been conducted in which parents are informed about curriculum developments and improvements in the accommodation such as the new amphitheatre and the indoor carpeting. The school is also encouraging parents to attend evening courses in literacy and ICT. A significant number of parents help pupils during the school day including support in classes. A small minority of parents does not give the school or their children enough support in terms of attendance and punctuality.
- 25 The overall quality of care, guidance and support is excellent. The school has well established and effective systems in place to support all its pupils. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Pupils display very positive attitudes towards their learning and feel valued and respected by adults who work in the school. The school encourages pupils to express their opinions. They are listened to and feel secure.
- 26 The school has a well established and active school council. The school council is a good forum to improve pupils' personal and social skills and provides good opportunities for pupils of different ages to work together and contribute to decision-making. Councillors undertake their duties conscientiously and feel they make a real difference to their school.
- 27 The school council helps pupils gain a good understanding of citizenship. It is supervised well and the school nurtures its development. Pupils grasp this

opportunity willingly. They benefit from their involvement in the democratic process through the school council. This body meets regularly and has delegates from all year groups.

- 28 The school fully complies with the Framework for Personal and Social Education (PSE). PSE is taught across the curriculum in addition to regular circle time activities. The deputy headteacher plays a pivotal role in the provision for PSE. Her expertise has a significant impact on the high standard of care, support and guidance.
- 29 The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good with outstanding features. The SEN co-ordinator manages the programme of additional support well. Highly effective early identification, assessment and monitoring systems have a positive impact in raising pupils' achievements. Pupils are supported within their class group through differentiated resources and focused adult help. In addition, small groups of pupils are withdrawn for short periods for additional specialised teaching. Support staff are well trained and make an outstanding contribution to the improvements that pupils make.
- 30 The SENCO assists class teachers in drawing up and monitoring individual education plans (IEP) and, when necessary, individual behaviour plans (IBP). Parents are fully involved through regular meetings and reviews of progress. Effective use is made of additional support services when necessary.

### **Leadership and management**

- 31 The overall quality of leadership and management is outstanding in many ways. The quality of leadership has improved significantly in the last four years.
- 32 The school's leadership is characterised by a clear and well co-ordinated educational direction and an open culture of distributed management. The leadership of the headteacher is focused, purposeful, motivational, challenging and innovatory. Her leadership has been vital to the school's success. She has succeeded in reshaping, moulding and retaining a team with a high morale. The quality of mentoring in particular is outstanding. The deputy headteacher provides excellent support to the head in managing the school. They play an effective part together in planning, supporting, monitoring and evaluating the work of colleagues.
- 33 The co-ordination of subjects and the leadership of the provision for pupils with SEN is of a high order. Subject co-ordinators have been closely involved in policy-making and have designed and implemented good schemes of work. They are closely involved in monitoring and evaluating standards and teaching of their subjects. Effective governance further ensures that pupils achieve well and are well provided for.
- 34 The quality of the school's self-evaluation process is good as is the quality of its report. Self-evaluation procedures have improved greatly in recent years. The school's self-evaluation processes involve all members of staff, governors, parents and pupils appropriately. Assessment data analysis shows that pupils'

learning and achievement is improving steadily. The headteacher and senior managers monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching regularly. Subject leaders contribute to the process and take a full part in the monitoring of teaching. They have a good knowledge of their areas of responsibility.

- 35 The school has an appropriate level of teaching and support staff to deliver the curriculum to all its pupils. All staff are deployed effectively. They feel greatly valued and their contributions are much appreciated by senior staff. Performance management helps to identify training needs. All staff have job descriptions which reflect what they are responsible for. All are given relevant training opportunities. Training needs are monitored as part of an on-going process. Good arrangements are made to implement planning preparation and assessment (PPA) time for teachers according to current national agreements.
- 36 The indoor accommodation is spacious, well-lit, carpeted throughout and visually attractive. A computer suite enables pupils to have access to high quality resources but is poorly ventilated and overheated as a result. Interactive whiteboards in all classes allow staff to use a wide range of teaching resources to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. A multi-purpose hall provides plenty of space for indoor activities from physical education to assemblies. The school enjoys the use of its own kitchen facility. There are specialist rooms as well as classrooms. Well laid out playgrounds, an amphitheatre and very spacious sports fields provide excellent facilities for outdoor activities.
- 37 The high standards pupils achieve, the quality of teaching, care, guidance and support, leadership and management are of a high standard and show outstanding value for money. The school has made excellent progress in addressing the recommendations of its last inspection report and shows an outstanding capacity to improve further.

## Recommendations

- 38 The governors, headteacher and staff now need to address the following recommendations:
- R1 Continue to seek ways to improve the achievements of boys in English and mathematics;
- R2 Promote independent, extended learning which is led by pupils;
- R3 Improve pupils' attendance and punctuality; and
- R4 Continue the good work in building strong links with parents.

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

- 39 The findings of the inspection team do not match those of the school in its self-evaluation report. This is because the school underestimated the outstanding progress its pupils make in achieving highly by the end of Year 6. Overall, pupils' achievements have outstanding features and they make quick and effective progress from year to year. Standards have improved dramatically since the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory.
- 40 Initial assessments show that when children join the school, their attainments are often below average. However, from Year 3 onward they learn quickly and effectively.

#### Grades for standards in subjects inspected

| Subject                | Key Stage 2 |
|------------------------|-------------|
| English                | Grade 1     |
| Mathematics            | Grade 2     |
| Science                | Grade 1     |
| History                | Grade 1     |
| Information Technology | Grade 1     |
| Music                  | Grade 2     |

- 41 In the 41 lessons inspected, the grades awarded for overall standards achieved were as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 23%     | 70%     | 7%      | 0%      | 0%      |

- 42 This shows that in 93 per cent of lessons standards are at least good with no important shortcomings. Standards of achievement in 23 per cent of pupils' work have outstanding features. These standards are above the national figures quoted in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's (HMCI) latest report for 2006-7 of grade 2 or better in 80% of lessons, and 10% at grade 1. The percentages are also above the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) 2010 target that the quality of learning should be grade 3 or better in 98% of lessons.
- 43 In the 2008 key stage 2 teacher assessments, the proportion of pupils who attained at least Level 4 or higher was above national averages in English, mathematics and science. The proportion that attained the higher Level 5 was a little below national averages in English and mathematics and above average in science. Girls attain more highly than boys, particularly in English and mathematics.

- 44 The 2008 key stage 2 collective results for pupils, who attained at least Level 4 in all three core subjects together, were well above the national averages. The school's results are above those of similar schools locally and nationally and have risen steadily over the last four years. Given the school's context, these results are a significant achievement and show how the school has improved under its new leadership.
- 45 The fractured lives of a minority of pupils are a factor which has an effect on the school's assessment results from year to year. The poor attendance of a few pupils, about ten per cent, also has an impact on how well those pupils achieve. However, many pupils, including those with SEN, make very good progress in that they start their education with low achievements.
- 46 The other factor, which has some impact upon standards, is the significant proportion of pupils, over a third, who have SEN. This is over twice as high as the national average. The attainments of these pupils are included in the overall analysis of key stage assessments and thus the fact that the school's results compare so well with similar schools is remarkable.
- 47 Pupils progress well in their personal, moral, social and wider development. From Year 3 to Year 6, they make at least good and often outstanding progress in developing their personal and social skills.
- 48 Many pupils have a sense of ownership and responsibility for the school and their community. The school has a strong sense of family and its ethos encourages pupils to care for individuals and to appreciate other people's values.
- 49 Pupils' standards and progress in listening are excellent. Many older pupils speak well in discussion. Standards in reading and numeracy across the curriculum are at least good. Pupils achieve outstandingly well in the use of incidental Welsh. Standards in the use of ICT are often good with outstanding features. Bilingualism is integrated well into the life of the school and pupils' bilingual competence in Welsh and English is good.
- 50 Pupils with SEN make good progress relative to their abilities. They develop early literacy skills, read simple words and form letters. They also begin to develop basic number skills effectively in a range of contexts. With support they use a computer to operate simple educational programmes.
- 51 Pupils behave responsibly and show respect for others. They are well motivated, eager to learn and have very positive attitudes to learning. They work with enthusiasm, make good use of lesson time and maintain both effort and concentration well. Standards of behaviour and the levels of courtesy pupils demonstrate are exemplary. This is reflected in many aspects of school life.
- 52 Attendance levels are satisfactory, averaging 92 per cent over the last three terms. Ten per cent of pupils on the school roll have levels of attendance ranging from 54 to 85 per cent. Most pupils are punctual at the start of the day

but there are still a small group of pupils who regularly arrive late. This is sometimes because they are responsible for providing breakfast for and taking younger siblings to infant school.

- 53 Pupils demonstrate a capacity to study independently, including the skills to maintain lifelong learning. They work well together. Pupils build good skills for learning and deploy these to good effect.
- 54 Pupils show good development in their personal, social, moral and wider development. They develop an understanding of equal opportunities and a sound understanding of the diversity of cultures within society.
- 55 The school has forged strong links with local businesses, industry and the community in general which prepares its learners for effective participation in the work place and the community.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 56 The findings of the inspection team do not match those of the school in its self-evaluation report. This is because the school underestimated the quality of its teaching. The quality of teaching has improved greatly since the time of the last inspection when there were shortcomings in at least half of lessons observed. In the 41 lessons observed, the grades awarded for the quality of teaching were as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 46%     | 46%     | 8%      | 0%      | 0%      |

- 57 Teaching shows at least good features with no important shortcomings in 92 per cent of lessons observed, comparing well nationally where teaching is at least good in 79 per cent of lessons. Within this proportion, at Cwrt-Yr-Ala, 46 per cent of teaching has outstanding features. These figures are significantly higher than the national picture as reported by HMCI in her annual Report for 2006/2007 where the quality of teaching in primary schools was at least Grade 2 in 79 per cent of lessons with 17 per cent having outstanding features. These percentages are a significant improvement on those of the previous inspection and are above the WAG 2010 target for teaching to be 80% Grade 2 or better.

The outstanding features found in almost a half of the lessons seen include:

- Teachers stimulate and challenge pupils of all abilities well. They give clear and appropriate time limits and intervene sensitively to encourage pupils in their work.
- Outstanding lessons were observed in every year group.
- Teachers often have excellent subject knowledge and are well qualified. In the best lessons, teachers use drama and role play to outstanding effect.
- Many teachers use the interactive whiteboard outstandingly well.

- 58 Lesson planning is effective and sets clear objectives which are often shared with pupils. In consultation with subject co-ordinators, teachers develop detailed medium-term plans that reflect well the programmes of study in subject schemes of work. They modify them appropriately to suit the needs of their class. Teaching assistants are often involved in this planning. They are well briefed about what is expected and are well managed in order to have the maximum impact on standards. Basic skills and key skills are identified in planning and referred to in lessons.
- 59 Teachers have good expectations of what their pupils are capable of achieving and engage them frequently with challenging work. They make good use of a

wide range of teaching methods and strategies. For example, pupils relish the practical aspects of subjects such as science. Care is taken to differentiate work and match it to individual pupils' needs. Explanations are generally good and clear. The school's system for grouping pupils is particularly effective.

- 60 The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN is good. Lessons show evidence of thoughtful planning and preparation to meet the complex SEN of these pupils. Teachers work collaboratively with teaching assistants to promote purposeful, motivating and enjoyable lessons.
- 61 The promotion of pupils' bilingual skills is excellent. Teachers take advantage of all opportunities to use incidental Welsh. This is a common feature inside and outside the classroom and pupils are enthusiastic about their efforts. The very good bilingual scheme gives clear guidelines and support in the use of Welsh. In this respect, all staff have a very positive attitude towards the Welsh language.
- 62 Where teaching has shortcomings, and this is uncommon, it is usually because the teacher teaches for too long before pupils are asked to contribute. Pupils occasionally do not have enough opportunities to take their learning, independently to a higher level.
- 63 The quality of assessment and its use in planning, including SEN, is particularly good. Outstanding features include:

- An effective computerised pupil tracking system is well established.
- The school has received the AQAA award for assessment and the quality of portfolios for all core and foundation subjects.
- Assessment for learning is embedded in many lessons, ensuring learning objectives are clearly communicated to learners.
- Assessment is used well to ensure that pupils are given appropriate levels of support.
- The school is effective in meeting statutory assessment and reporting requirements.
- There are excellent assessment links with transitional infant and high schools.
- Parental consultation, formal and informal meetings and annual reports keep parents fully informed of their children's progress.

- 64 The school has made outstanding progress in developing its monitoring of pupils' progress especially in the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators ensure that there is consistency of provision.
- 65 Moderation of work at school level is well developed. It is used effectively to inform planning for learning and target setting for individual pupils. Also, pupils' work is collated and well-organised into portfolios for each subject.

- 66 Teachers plan for and meet pupils' needs well. Pupils with SEN play a full part in learning. The arrangements for organising these pupils are particularly effective. For example, the school has set up a number of target groups where individual and small group needs are met effectively.
- 67 The school has very effective and efficient monitoring strategies in place that track pupils' achievements and attainments from class to class. Teachers use these records to create ability-based teaching groups, to set for literacy and mathematics and to identify pupils with SEN in need of intervention programme.
- 68 Assessment and recording procedures are effective in ensuring that all pupils have equality of opportunity and that they are provided with learning experiences which match their needs and abilities.
- 69 Pupils are generally made aware of assessment criteria before they complete their tasks. They are involved in their own target setting in class. Pupils are encouraged to monitor and review their progress during lessons. They are becoming more aware of what they can do to improve aspects of their learning.
- 70 The school's marking policy is well established and its use and effectiveness is monitored regularly. Teachers' marking is usually helpful in guiding pupils on how to improve their work. Pupils also get very good individual and group support from teaching assistants to keep them on track.
- 71 Annual reports to parents conform with statutory requirements and are of exceptional quality. They contain evaluative comments about pupils' achievements in all NC subjects and in their personal and social development. They focus clearly on areas for improvement.
- 72 Parents' evenings are held each term and opportunities for both parents and pupils to feedback on the end of year report are given. Good links with parents of pupils with SEN or those in vulnerable circumstances ensure that they are well informed about their children's progress and how they can help them further.

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

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| <b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b> |
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- 73 The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in its self-evaluation report. The school's curriculum is broad, rich and balanced. It is suitably differentiated to meet the learning styles and needs of all pupils. The curriculum has been much improved since the time of the last inspection.
- 74 Staff have introduced various innovations to enhance the curriculum. These include:

- Teaching groups of pupils how to improve their reading and spelling through the RAISE programme, thus helping these pupils to reach the expected levels for their age group.
- Providing an opportunity for pupils to make a presentation to the Director of Education for the LEA outlining the changes they would like to see in Caerau and Ely by taking part in the Children's Partnership project run by the Schools Council.
- Improving the science curriculum which resulted in pupils being winners, at national level in a science investigation competition, sponsored by British Telecom.
- Gaining support from Communities First and local businesses which has enabled the library to be greatly improved.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to work with their peers in other schools on an African Dance and Music project.
- Developing links with Trelai Sports Barn so that older pupils could use the facilities for physical education.

- 75 Pupils are suitably grouped by ability in English and mathematics lessons in order to ensure they make maximum progress. This works well. Those pupils who need additional support in their learning benefit from extra adult attention within their own classes, as well as being withdrawn for more focused sessions where necessary.
- 76 The school fully complies with the Framework for Personal and Social Education (PSE). PSE is taught regularly across the curriculum in addition to regular circle time activities. Teachers also identify potentially gifted and talented pupils in older and younger year groups. Then, through additional sessions in small groups, they get good opportunities to extend their learning.
- 77 The school has good links with the infant feeder school. Pupils and teachers from both schools visit each others' classes at transitional times. Continuity and progression in learning is also promoted through the provision of similar reading schemes.
- 78 The school has good systems in place for the planning and monitoring of key skills within the curriculum. It achieved the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark in 2006 and has done so again in 2007 and 2008. Lesson plans highlight the key skills to be used and pupils are encouraged to identify some of the skills they will be using within the lesson.
- 79 The school provides an excellent variety of additional activities and clubs, which are open to all pupils. Staff organise sporting activities such as football, cricket, rugby, and basketball. This has resulted in the school achieving highly in a number of sporting competitions. The school's links with UWIC enable pupils to take part in athletics within a university setting. Parents support the school by assisting in these activities, as well as in school visits.

- 80 The school has a well-established choir which performs in a number of local concerts, as well as providing an enjoyable addition to school assemblies. Pupils benefit from the teaching of peripatetic teachers of guitar and brass instruments.
- 81 A number of pupils attend an after-school French club which is run by one of the teachers. Pupils enjoy these sessions, and make good progress. They then put their language skills into practice during the school visit to Belgium.
- 82 The school promotes pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development very well. It has a very positive ethos and encourages pupils to discuss issues and to express their opinions. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. All adults and pupils demonstrate a mutual respect for each other and pupils feel that they are valued.
- 83 Acts of collective worship are of a broadly Christian character. Pupils take an active part in them and are provided with opportunities to reflect on issues within a calm reflective atmosphere. Whole school assemblies are further enhanced through a variety of visitors and guest speakers. These include spiritual leaders as well as community police and theatre groups.
- 84 The school's provision is inclusive of many national priorities to promote lifelong learning skills. It is outstanding in the way it raises pupils' awareness of community regeneration and the impact of social and economic changes in society. The school follows a series of initiatives instigated by the Welsh Assembly Government. These include a positive approach to key skills and bilingualism as well as the achievement of outstanding standards in science and literacy, especially reading.
- 85 Incidental Welsh is promoted well in daily activities to ensure that pupils develop their bilingual competence. Indeed, some members of staff are passionate in their promotion of Welsh. Provision for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is included in all schemes of work and bilingual signs in many areas of the school help pupils' acquisition of both languages. However, evidence in short term planning and in the display of pupils' work is limited.
- 86 The school enriches the curriculum through a range of educational visits to local places of interest such as St Fagan's Museum of Welsh Life or Amgueddfa Werin, Big Pit at Blaenafon, Cardiff Castle and the Millennium Stadium. This gives pupils good opportunities to learn about their Welsh heritage. A number of pupils experience visits further afield in organised trips to Holland and Belgium. These promote pupils' awareness of the wider European community and provide them with a range of rich educational experiences. The school is also developing links with a number of other European countries, such as Italy, and senior staff have visited the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in America as well as schools in Houston, Texas.
- 87 The partnership the school has with parents is increasingly strong and parents' evenings, concerts and assemblies are becoming better attended. The school has recognized that the partnership with parents needed to be strengthened

and has set about doing this with vigour. Parents have been consulted to ascertain their views about how the school can improve further.

- 88 Open days and tours of the school have been conducted in which parents are informed about curriculum developments and improvements in the accommodation such as the new amphitheatre and the indoor carpeting. The school is also encouraging parents to attend evening courses in literacy and ICT. A significant number of parents help pupils during the school day including support in classes. Although only 16 parents completed and returned the Estyn pre-inspection questionnaire, they were all very positive about the school's provision.
- 89 Parents were highly positive about the school's approachability and the degree to which their children enjoyed coming to school. Their views were wholly supported by inspection findings. A small minority of parents does not give the school or their children enough support in terms of attendance and punctuality.
- 90 The school welcomes regular visits from a wide range of organisations which enrich pupils' learning experiences. Good links have been established with Glyn Derw High School where most pupils transfer to at the end of key stage 2. The school also maintains good links with the University of Wales Institute of Education at Cardiff (UWIC) and offers support, guidance and encouragement to student teachers on placement. There are good curricular links with local business and industry which promote pupils' awareness of the workplace.
- 91 The school is outstanding in tackling social disadvantage and stereotyping and successfully presents pupils with equality of access and opportunity across the full range of its provision.
- 92 Pupils' awareness of the need for sustainable development is promoted through recycling, energy conservation and healthy eating projects. The school has formed an eco-committee which meets on a regular basis and pupils are fully involved in its work.
- 93 The school provides an appropriate range of opportunities for pupils to experience work-related education and to develop entrepreneurial skills. Opportunities include a wide range of fund raising projects.
- 94 A particular strength of the school is the way in which it promotes equality of access and the achievement of high standards for all. The school has strong links with the community and with outside agencies and businesses.
- 95 The school has recently developed an outdoor classroom in its spacious playground and green, open spaces. This includes an amphitheatre, stage and seating which was installed by volunteers from all over Cardiff. Teachers and pupils use it effectively to enhance the work in a range of subjects.
- 96 The school has a number of allotments where pupils are involved in a gardening club. Pupils develop a good understanding of sustainable development but a less well-developed understanding of global citizenship through a range of

experiences. These include a recycling scheme, classroom projects, and visits to the Cog Moors Education Centre where they study sustainability and the environment. The recycling scheme involves the re-use of paper and cardboard as well as the monitoring of electricity usage around the school.

- 97 The school provides a breakfast club which is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. It promotes healthy eating and achieved the third phase of the Cardiff Healthy Eating Initiative in summer 2007.
- 98 Communities First funding has been used to install and develop a well stocked and accessible library in the foyer. This provides pupils with a very pleasant reading environment and promotes reading for enjoyment. Learning support staff and parents are receiving training on the Junior Librarian Program.
- 99 There are detailed and effective procedures in place to support Year 6 pupils during their transfer to secondary school.

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

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| <b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b> |
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- 100 The inspection findings match the school's judgments in its self-evaluation report. This has been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
- 101 The overall quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The school has well established and effective systems in place to support all its pupils. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Pupils display very positive attitudes towards their learning and feel valued and respected by adults who work in the school. The school encourages pupils to express their opinions. They are listened to and feel secure.
- 102 The school makes regular and effective use of a number of support services when these are required. Visits by the school nurse, the healthy eating officer, the community police officer, the road safety officer and local clergy all contribute to pupils' overall well being.
- 103 Parents and carers are encouraged to work in partnership with teachers and can be fully involved in discussions about the care of their children. The school holds a series of information sharing meetings with parents whose children are moving into the school from the infant school prior to their admission.
- 104 Staff in the main infant school visit Year 3 pupils shortly after their move to see how they are progressing. There are similarly good transition links in Year 6 for those pupils moving onto the local secondary school with projects such as the Enterprise Week, a drama group and a mathematics project. Regular meetings and school and class newsletters keep parents informed of the work pupils are undertaking and of events at the school. There is a Parents Teachers and Friends Association which supports the school through fund raising. It provides parents with good opportunities to become actively involved in school life.

- 105 Staff are available to speak to parents as they collect their children from school in the afternoon. This provides a good opportunity for the sharing of any concerns.
- 106 The school has a well established and active school council. The council is a good forum which helps to improve pupils' personal and social skills and provides good opportunities for those of different ages to work together and contribute to decision-making. Councillors undertake their duties conscientiously and feel they make a real difference to their school. The school council helps pupils gain a good understanding of citizenship. It is supervised well and the school nurtures its development. Pupils grasp this opportunity willingly. They benefit from their involvement in the democratic process through the school council. This body meets regularly and has delegates from all year groups.
- 107 The school has effective procedures in place to identify and monitor pupils' needs and progress. The school takes part in a programme to improve reading and spelling and pupils benefit from this specialised teaching programme. It is very effective in raising pupils' attainments.
- 108 The school identifies a number of pupils who benefit from additional support in developing their self confidence. They work with the Pyramid Trust in providing a weekly activity session for pupils. It also provides parents with additional support and guidance in how they might further help their children's development.
- 109 The deputy headteacher plays a pivotal role in the provision for PSE. Her expertise has a significant impact on the high standard of care, support and guidance.
- 110 The school actively promotes healthy eating, and has been awarded a certificate of achievement by the local health board in recognition of its efforts.
- 111 There are effective systems in place to monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality, the school works closely with the education welfare officer where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality. Pupils with 100 per cent attendance for the term receive a celebratory certificate.
- 112 Staff have high expectations of behaviour and pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. There are effective systems in place to reward and celebrate good behaviour. Class and playground rules are clearly displayed. There is a weekly praise assembly where certificates are awarded for effort, for improvement, for showing kindness to others, and for sporting achievements.
- 113 Pupils who need additional support to manage their behaviour are provided with targeted help, additional input from staff, and when needed, outside agencies. This usually results in improvements in behaviour and allows the pupil to make good progress.

- 114 The deputy headteacher is the designated child protection officer. She has received relevant training, along with other senior members of staff and governors. The school's policy provides good guidance for all staff, and staff at the school are aware of how to report concerns. The school works closely with other agencies to ensure that appropriate action is taken to ensure the well being of the pupils. As part of their PSE lessons pupils in Years 5 and 6 have guidance on personal protection.
- 115 The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good with outstanding features. Provision has been greatly improved in the time since the last inspection. The SEN co-ordinator manages the programme of additional support well. Highly effective early identification, assessment and monitoring systems have a positive impact in raising pupils' achievements. Pupils are supported within their class group through differentiated resources and focused adult help. In addition, small groups of pupils are withdrawn for short periods for additional specialised teaching. Support staff are well trained and make an outstanding contribution to the improvements that pupils make.
- 116 The SENCO assists class teachers in drawing up and monitoring individual education plans (IEP) and when necessary individual behaviour plans (IBP). Parents are fully involved through regular meetings and reviews of progress. Effective use is made of additional support services when necessary.
- 117 The school works hard to ensure that all pupils have equal access to school activities, whatever their ability, background or need. It also promotes gender and race equality, and appropriate policies and procedures are in place to address these issues. It also complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2001 and the Disability Equality Scheme. The school ensures that pupils with diverse needs are welcomed and integrated into its life.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 118 The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in its self-evaluation report. The overall quality of leadership and management is outstanding at a range of levels. The quality of leadership and management has improved significantly in the last four years.
- 119 The school's leadership is characterised by a clear and well co-ordinated educational direction and an open culture of distributed management. The leadership of the headteacher is focused, purposeful, motivational, challenging and innovatory. Her leadership has been vital to the school's success. She has successfully led it for four years through a period of intense change and improvement. She has succeeded in reshaping, moulding and retaining a team with a high morale. The quality of mentoring in particular is outstanding. The deputy headteacher provides excellent support to the head in managing the school. They play an effective part together in planning, supporting, monitoring and evaluating the work of colleagues.
- 120 The co-ordination of subjects and the leadership of the provision for pupils with SEN is of a high order. Subject co-ordinators have been closely involved in policy-making and have designed and implemented good schemes of work. They are closely involved in monitoring and evaluating standards and teaching of their subjects.
- 121 The essence of the school's effectiveness is in the excellent teamwork between teachers and learners, teaching assistants, senior managers and governors.
- 122 Senior managers support student teachers well and induction procedures for members of staff new to the school are excellent. The school takes very good account of national priorities, local partnerships and cluster arrangements.
- 123 Effective governance further ensures that pupils achieve well and are well provided for. The governing body (GB) is very committed to the school and the chair of governors provides a strong and caring lead. Governors are well informed of the needs of the school through their own involvement and by regular meetings with both professional and support staff. They recognise and support the role of the school council. They help to determine the school's strategic direction through their work in setting and costing targets for improvement in the SIP.
- 124 Governors make regular visits to the school and have formal links with subject co-ordinators and members of staff with other areas of responsibility. Governors take a close interest in their particular areas, such as for pupils with SEN. Newly elected governors are developing their roles by liaising with relevant subject leaders and monitoring the quality of education and standards of achievement. The GB meets regulatory and legal requirements.

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

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

- 125 The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team agrees with the school judgment in five out of the seven key questions and awarded a higher grade for key questions 1 and 2. The school knows itself well. The quality of the school's self-evaluation process is good as is the quality of its report. Self-evaluation procedures have improved greatly in recent years.
- 126 The school's self-evaluation processes involve all members of staff, governors, parents and pupils appropriately. Assessment data analysis shows that pupils' learning and achievement is improving steadily. Information about the school's performance is based on a careful analysis of assessment data available and information from class teachers. The headteacher and senior managers monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching regularly. Subject leaders contribute to the process and take a full part in the monitoring of teaching. They have a good knowledge of their areas of responsibility. Subject leaders produce an evaluative report of their subjects and an annual action plan.
- 127 Subject leaders collate pupils' work to exemplify standards. As a consequence, they have sufficient first hand evidence of standards in the subjects for which they are responsible. School governors are involved in the process through evaluation reports, improvement plans and presentations by staff.
- 128 The school is proactive in seeking the views of parents and pupils. This is an outstanding feature. Parents' views are sought and account taken of the issues they raise. The school council is an excellent forum that allows pupils' views to be heard constructively. The views of governors, LEA link advisers and all members of staff help to inform and influence the school's educational direction. Members of the wider community are encouraged to offer their views, giving a broader perspective on aspects of the school's work.
- 129 The self-evaluation report (SER) identifies clear priorities for development and sets out the school's strengths and areas for further development. The headteacher and senior management team set clear priorities based upon subject leaders' views, issues arising from questionnaires and Welsh Assembly directives. The SER helps the momentum for improvement through its honest and rigorous approach.
- 130 The school has made excellent progress in addressing the recommendations of its last inspection report and shows an outstanding capacity to improve further.

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

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| <b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b> |
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- 131 The inspection findings match those of the school in its self-evaluation report. The school's efficiency in using its resources has improved greatly in the last four years. The quality of the accommodation and resources for learning has been much improved in the last four years.
- 132 The school has an appropriate level of teaching and support staff to deliver the curriculum to all its pupils. Staff are well qualified and have a good range of experience, expertise and skills, as well as good subject knowledge. Both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher have achieved nationally recognised school leadership qualifications. There is a good gender balance within the team and its morale is high.
- 133 The school helps develop the expertise of both teachers and teaching assistants in a highly inclusive way. Performance management procedures successfully promote teachers' continuing professional development. The arrangements for workload remodelling are very helpful and teachers have good opportunities for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA). The school's leaders keep a good balance between meeting the professional needs of individual teachers and achieving its educational priorities.
- 134 Staff undertake a good range of professional development in order to update their skills. These are matched to their own personal goals as well as to priorities identified within the SIP. The staff team works outstandingly together, sharing expertise and providing each other with professional support.
- 135 The school has skilled support staff who have been trained appropriately. They work closely with teaching staff to ensure that lessons function well. They make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and to the smooth running of the school.
- 136 The school's administrative staff deal effectively with day to day procedures. The caretaker and the cleaning staff ensure that the school is clean and tidy and the canteen staff provide a good variety of healthy food. Lunchtime staff contribute towards pupils' learning by encouraging attitudes such as sharing and caring. All this contributes positively to a happy and co-operative atmosphere.
- 137 All staff are deployed effectively. They feel greatly valued and their contributions are much appreciated by senior staff. Performance management helps to identify training needs. All staff have job descriptions which reflect what they are responsible for. All are given relevant training opportunities. Training needs are monitored as part of an on-going process. Good arrangements are made to implement planning preparation and assessment (PPA) time for teachers according to current national agreements.

- 138 The indoor accommodation is spacious, well-lit, carpeted throughout and visually attractive. A computer suite enables pupils to have access to high quality resources but is poorly ventilated and overheats as a result. Interactive whiteboards in many classes allow staff to use a wide range of teaching resources from the internet to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. A multi-purpose hall provides plenty of space for indoor activities from physical education to assemblies. The school enjoys the use of its own kitchen facility. There are specialist rooms as well as classrooms.
- 139 Well laid out playgrounds, an amphitheatre and very spacious sports fields provide excellent facilities for outdoor activities. Playing fields are regularly used for inter-school competitions.
- 140 All classrooms are of adequate size. Year 3 and 4 are accommodated on the first floor and can only be accessed by single stairways. The demountable building used for the breakfast club can only be accessed by steps which would make entry difficult for wheelchair-bound users.
- 141 ICT resources are good and teachers use them increasingly to promote learning. The school has a good range of high quality resources. These include good, well-stocked libraries for pupils of different ages and abilities. Resources are readily available. Pupils make good use of dictionaries, thesauri, maps and globes to support their learning. Attractive displays reflect the work of pupils throughout the school and greatly enhance the learning environment.
- 142 A programme of spending is carefully managed showing a very good awareness of trends, needs and changes in pupil numbers and staff requirements. The budget is managed very effectively. Financial planning and control is an outstanding feature. External audits are favourable and the school has addressed the recommendations made.
- 143 Excellent use is made of the local community and other educational locations to enrich pupils' learning. Pupils, parents, school and members of the local community all benefit from their close and effective partnership.
- 144 The high standards pupils achieve, the quality of teaching, care, guidance and support, leadership and management are of a high standard and show outstanding value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### English

#### Key stage 2: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

145 The standards achieved have risen since the time of the last inspection.

#### Good and outstanding Features

146 Pupils make outstanding progress in reading. Younger pupils are fluent in reading aloud. They self-correct and employ a range of strategies to decipher unfamiliar words very effectively. They explain the function of punctuation marks, including ellipsis. Pupils retell stories with confidence, predict events, and comment on characters' actions and events, justifying their responses very convincingly.

147 Pupils in Year 6 enjoy classic texts such as *Treasure Island* and *Gulliver's Travels*, as well as modern stories. Their reading is accurate, lively and expressive. They use inference and deduction and show understanding of key themes and features in a range of genres, such as mystery, horror, and adventure. They refer to the text to support their views. Year 5 pupils summarise a text in writing and Year 6 pupils provide in-depth oral commentaries on their favourite authors, identifying the styles and themes of their books.

148 By the end of the key stage pupils have a clear understanding of the purpose and organisational features of fiction and non-fiction books, such as the blurb, the glossary, the index and footnotes. They use a wide range of strategies, including skimming and scanning, to read selectively.

149 Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed. They are attentive and listen acutely. They speak clearly and confidently with a wide vocabulary. They learn much about recitation and writing poetry from visits by poets such as Kate Williams and projects which are supported by the Welsh Books Council.

150 Year 6 pupils enjoy lively discussions. They pay close attention to what others say and ask questions to develop their ideas. They evaluate the quality of discussion and comment perceptively upon the features and highlights of a successful interview.

151 Pupils' answers to questions are often supported by well-reasoned arguments. They use some of the characteristics of standard English vocabulary and grammar appropriately.

152 By the end of Year 6, pupils produce a range of lengthy pieces of writing, such as narratives in different genres, play scripts, poetry, journalistic and discursive writing. Their writing is well structured and accurate with a good awareness of purpose and audience shown. They often draw upon content from other

curriculum areas. They use vivid descriptions and powerful imagery in their creative writing and personification poems.

- 153 In Year 3 pupils explore and understand homophones and connectives. By Year 4, pupils' understanding and use of punctuation is good. Spelling of common, polysyllabic words is usually accurate. By Year 6 simple and complex sentence structures are evident and ideas are organised into paragraphs. Vocabulary choices are often imaginative. Handwriting is legible and joined in most instances. Pupils enjoy improving their handwriting until they have earned a "pen licence". This strategy works very well in helping to raise standards of handwriting.

### **Shortcomings**

- 154 There are no important shortcomings.

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| <b>Mathematics</b> |
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| <b>Key stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b> |
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- 155 The standards achieved have risen since the time of the last inspection.

### **Good features**

- 156 Pupils are well motivated during mathematics sessions. They take care in the presentation of their work and achieve a good standard.
- 157 In Year 3 pupils can identify the four points of the compass. They make good progress as this work is developed in Year 4 where they solve problems using the eight points of the compass. They describe and use directions such as clockwise and anti clockwise. They use an interactive white board to find the direction of travel between two countries. Using a map of India they identify the directions between cities using the eight points of the compass.
- 158 The majority of pupils develop good numeracy skills and mentally add and subtract a hundred to a four digit number.
- 159 They develop their knowledge of measuring the perimeters of regular shapes, and use their problem solving skills to work out the perimeters of irregular shapes.
- 160 Pupils in Year 5 are able to identify negative numbers in the context of measuring temperature. They use an interactive white board to support this work. They use their knowledge of addition and subtraction to solve problems. They use appropriate mathematical language and their mental calculations are accurate.
- 161 Pupils recall multiplication facts, and use games to reinforce their knowledge of the five times table. They draw around shapes and then use estimate and

predict the differences in perimeter. They construct and calculate the perimeters of shapes and then explore patterns through multiplication, using their findings to predict the perimeters of shapes.

- 162 Year 6 pupils demonstrate a good recall of number facts during an exercise using an interactive white board. They explain a variety of methods to calculate the answer to number questions. The majority demonstrate sound number skills.
- 163 Pupils use appropriate mathematical vocabulary during work on reflective symmetry. They use mirrors and rulers to draw and demonstrate their understanding of vertical and horizontal reflection and then use a four quadrant grid to draw in reflected shapes.
- 164 Pupils play stimulating board games prepared by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) to further reinforce their knowledge of reflective symmetry.

### **Shortcomings**

- 165 There are no important shortcomings.

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| <b>Science</b> |
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| <b>Key Stage 2: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b> |
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- 166 The standards achieved have risen since the time of the last inspection.

### **Good and Outstanding Features:**

- 167 Pupils have good knowledge of most key ideas in primary science by the end of Year 6. Across the key stage they cover a range of scientific enquiry, record for themselves and draw logical conclusions about what they see.
- 168 Pupils use appropriate equipment for accurate observations and measurement, appreciate the need for a fair test and present their findings clearly.
- 169 Throughout the key stage pupils carry out investigations showing great interest and enthusiasm. They use their literacy and mathematical skills accurately to explain and measure things as they happen. They test their predictions well. The presentation of the majority of pupils' work is to a high standard.
- 170 Pupils achieve increasingly high standards of work. This is mainly because they are highly motivated and also they are encouraged to do their best at every opportunity.
- 171 Year 3 pupils categorise materials according to their properties. They recognise that materials may share some, but not all, properties with others. They examine the elements of items used to protect someone and identify the

materials that offer the most protection. They understand the importance of eating a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. They name the main bones in the body successfully.

- 172 Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate good investigative skills when they focus on factors which affect plant growth. They plant up a 'root window' in the school garden to see what happens underground. They make slides using PowerPoint about their project 'Growing Plants'. They know the main features which all living things possess. They have very good knowledge of the different habitats preferred by animals and that all living things have an effect on the environment.
- 173 Year 5 pupils build effectively on their previous knowledge of the human body as they closely examine a sheep's lung, heart, windpipe and tongue as part of their study of the function of hearts and lungs. They effectively measure their own lung capacity. They extend their knowledge of life and living processes when they study the life cycle of giant African land snails they have reared in their classroom. They avidly collect materials for recycling because they know this will help the world enjoy a more sustainable environment.
- 174 Year 3 and 4 pupils effectively use equipment borrowed from Techniquet to enhance their learning in Science. Year 5 & Year 6 pupils took part in a 'forces' presentation at Techniquet, Cardiff Bay and they know that forces operate in different ways and that objects in motion can be speeded up, slowed down or diverted by the application of different forces.
- 175 Pupils in Year 6 develop their understanding still further, looking again at forces and learning about measuring forces in Newtons. They experiment with the friction capabilities of different materials to discover which surfaces grip best and which might slip. They plan, carry out and record practical investigations extremely well. They have a good understanding of how to plan a fair test and take this carefully into consideration when planning an experiment.
- 176 Pupils make very good gains in their scientific knowledge through the reinforcement of links with other subjects. They have many opportunities to develop skills in speaking, listening, writing, reading, numeracy and ICT in Science lessons.

### **Shortcomings**

- 177 There are no important shortcomings.

## Information technology

### Key stage 2: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

178 The standards achieved have risen significantly since the time of the last inspection.

#### Good and outstanding features

- 179 Older pupils are outstandingly fluent in using the advanced features of PowerPoint so that their slideshows use transition effects and hyperlinks skilfully. They expertly insert sounds, still and moving images, maps, cartoons and text in different fonts and sizes. They download a wide range of clipart and text from commercial websites.
- 180 Pupils learn to use computers to communicate and handle information, to some degree, in a range of subjects. They occasionally use a digital camera well to record their work.
- 181 Pupils program a robotic toy to move backwards and forwards and make right-angled turns. They develop their understanding of mathematics as well as ICT through learning how to control this robot.
- 182 Pupils develop a number of basic skills such as executing program commands, saving their work and operating a number of facilities on the tool bar such as the airbrush, the spray, the borders tool, the fill tool and the pen expertly.
- 183 Pupils use a digital mouse, icons and the screen pointer competently. They draw themselves using electronic imaging software to replicate images in patterns to good effect. They have also developed skills in word-processing, creating and printing simple sentences. Pupils use Welsh incidentally in their digital work.
- 184 Pupils with SEN make good progress with good support from teaching assistants. They know that people communicate via the telephone or electronic mail as well as by writing. They are competent when highlighting blocks of text and change the colour, type and size of font carefully.
- 185 Pupils research the internet for information about social or educational conditions in the past. They access appropriate sites on the Internet and manipulate digital imagery skilfully.
- 186 Pupils find appropriate files on a hard disk and open and use them. They use computers well to support their research, for example, by using digital encyclopaedias on compact discs.
- 187 Pupils improve their capability in information technology from year to year. In their word-processed writing, for example, they use a range of fonts and styles of text in poetry and letters. They use computers to combine text and images of good quality. They manipulate sounds and explore simulations cleverly.

- 188 Pupils explain the meaning and purpose of different file commands such as edit and print. They use the CAPS LOCK key to type a capital letter or the CTRL key combinations to type shortcuts. They suggest appropriate names for different fields in setting up a file to store information about themselves.
- 189 Year 6 pupils create a branching database which has field names. They find it easy to add fields or records to their databases and design the attributes of fields to receive either colour or text input. They input data in records to build up their databases and sort and classify information.

### **Shortcomings**

- 190 Some older pupils have an underdeveloped knowledge of web page design.

## **History**

### **Key Stage 2: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

- 191 The standards achieved have risen since the time of the last inspection.

### **Good and outstanding features**

- 192 Pupils have a pronounced sense of chronology and use time lines adroitly to place famous figures from the past in various periods of history. They record their work appropriately, with a good balance between free writing and worksheets. They write fluently in a variety of styles and present their findings systematically.
- 193 Pupils' historical knowledge and understanding of times past is enhanced by 'hands on' experiences such as handling artefacts, role play, and visits to places of historical significance such as the Welsh Museum of Life at St. Fagan's, Big Pit at Blaenavon, Caerleon Roman Remains and Llancaiach Fawr Manor House.
- 194 Year 5 pupils embarked on a successful educational visit to St. Fagan's where they experienced life in a Victorian classroom. Pupils were thus able to extend their understanding of life in Victorian times. One Year 5 classroom has on display a Bayeaux-style Tapestry completed some years ago which is of excellent quality.
- 195 Year 6 pupils interviewed two adults who had lived through World War II. This proved a valuable source of evidence and enhanced pupils' already very good understanding of life in the 1940s. Year 6 pupils understand the need for primary and secondary evidence in historical research. They use historical sources such as Kelly's directory to research the types of shops which were on Wilson Road, Ely in the 1950s. They are aware of changes in food shopping over decades and how hygiene has improved greatly over time.

196 Across the key stage pupils make good progress in extracting accurate and relevant information from a range of sources of evidence. They use subject specific vocabulary well and have good recall of previous learning.

### **Shortcomings**

197 Pupils' skills of independent historical enquiry are underdeveloped.

|              |
|--------------|
| <b>Music</b> |
|--------------|

|                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Key Stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|

198 The standards achieved have risen since the time of the last inspection.

### **Good features**

199 Year 3 pupils make their own broad distinctions within musical elements such as rhythm, pitch and tempo. They create their own simple rhythmic patterns using body percussion. They chant to a steady beat and alter the tempo when instructed. Working in pairs they invent their own playground games creating rhymes and rhythms and perform them effectively using body percussion. They enjoy their work.

200 Year 3 pupils compose rhythmic music on the theme of Dragons. They perform their work in school assemblies enhancing their performance with art and dance. Year 4 pupils sing confidently in two parts. They keep to a regular beat and use tuned percussion instruments to accompany their performance. Pupils know a range of songs, most are able to sing tunefully. They perform African call and response songs, accompany themselves with rhythmic clapping and move to a steady beat.

201 Pupils listen and respond to The Dance of the Firebird by Stravinsky. A number identify some of the instruments playing. They use their imagination and bodies to express the mood and atmosphere of the music and develop an understanding of musical terms through discussion.

202 Year 5 pupils listen to, identify and connect sounds to written symbols. They invent their own symbolic representation for sounds performed on the saxophone. Pupils explore the sounds in the outdoor environment and devise ways of performing and recording them with symbols. They develop their inventions into class compositions.

203 Year 6 pupils enjoy composing. They experiment with a variety of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, as well as body sounds, to invent an accompaniment to a cartoon strip. They discuss the meaning of musical elements such as metre, tempo, pitch and dynamics. Working in small groups they develop a simple score and perform their compositions. They appraise their own and others' performances and reflect on and identify how they might improve their compositions.

- 204 A number of pupils attend guitar and brass instrumental lessons provided by the LEA music service. Pupils enjoy drumming in Gamalan workshops and perform their musical compositions in a variety of settings with a sense of occasion.
- 205 The school choir provides musical performances of good quality in school assemblies. It has taken part in a number of outside events such as the Ely Festival and performed in concerts at the City Hall and St. David's Hall. Its singers achieve a good standard.

### **Shortcomings**

- 206 There are no important shortcomings.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors of Cwrt-Yr-Ala Junior School are delighted with the inspection report. The awarding of the highest grade in all seven key questions is something the school is extremely proud of as it recognises the hard work and dedication of the team.

The inspection report recognises that the essence of Cwrt-Yr-Ala's effectiveness is in the excellent teamwork between teachers and learners, teaching assistants, senior managers and governors. The many outstanding features highlighted throughout the report are a direct result of this teamwork and the dedication of all who work at the school, and others who contribute to it, including parents and other local community stakeholders.

We are particularly pleased that the report states teaching standards at Cwrt-Yr-Ala are significantly higher than the national average and well above the Welsh Assembly targets, with outstanding lessons observed in every year group.

We are delighted that the report acknowledges that pupils make outstanding progress in developing their personal, moral and social skills. It is a great tribute to our pupils that exemplary standards of behaviour and courtesy were observed.

We are also grateful for the constructive feedback we received from the inspection team. The report makes four recommendations which are currently being addressed to further raise standards and will form part of the School Improvement Plan.

The staff and governors would once again like to thank the inspection team for the professional manner in which they conducted the inspection. Their positive endorsements will enable our team to build on the very high standards we have achieved and will hopefully spur us to further improvement in the future.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

|                     |                                       |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Name of school      | Cwrt-Yr-Ala Junior School             |
| School type         | Nursery and Primary                   |
| Age-range of pupils | 3 – 11                                |
| Address of school   | Cyntwell Avenue,<br>Caerau<br>CARDIFF |
| Postcode            | CF5 5QN                               |
| Telephone number    | 02920 591585                          |

|                      |                                               |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Headteacher          | Mrs Helen Turner                              |
| Date of appointment  | September 2004                                |
| Chair of governors   | Mrs Pamela James                              |
| Registered inspector | Mr Rob Isaac                                  |
| Dates of inspection  | 9 <sup>th</sup> to 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2008 |

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

| Number of pupils in each year group |     |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |       |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Year group                          | N   | R   | Y1  | Y2  | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 | Y6 | Total |
| Number of pupils                    | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 47 | 50 | 60 | 59 | 216   |

| Total number of teachers |           |           |                            |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
|                          | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time equivalent (fte) |
| Number of teachers       | 12        | 0         | 12                         |

| Staffing information                                               |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes) | 18 : 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          | 27      |
| Teacher (fte): class ratio                                         | 1.5 : 1 |

| Term        | Key Stage 2 |
|-------------|-------------|
| Spring 2008 | 93          |
| Autumn 2007 | 93          |
| Summer 2007 | 91          |

|                                                                |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals             | 41% |
| Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection | Nil |

## Appendix 3

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

| National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2008 compared with National Averages 2007 |                    |          |   |   |   |   | Number of pupils in Y6 |   | 59 |    |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|---|---|---|---|------------------------|---|----|----|----|
| Percentage of pupils at each level                                                   |                    |          |   |   |   |   |                        |   |    |    |    |
|                                                                                      |                    |          | N | D | F | W | 1                      | 2 | 3  | 4  | 5  |
| English                                                                              | Teacher assessment | School   | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0                      | 0 | 15 | 61 | 24 |
|                                                                                      |                    | National | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1                      | 4 | 16 | 50 | 29 |
| Mathematics                                                                          | Teacher assessment | School   | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0                      | 0 | 15 | 63 | 22 |
|                                                                                      |                    | National | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1                      | 3 | 15 | 50 | 30 |
| Science                                                                              | Teacher assessment | School   | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0                      | 0 | 8  | 56 | 36 |
|                                                                                      |                    | National | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0                      | 2 | 12 | 52 | 32 |

| Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| In the school                                                                                                                               | 85% |
| In Wales                                                                                                                                    | 74% |

N Not awarded a level for reasons other than disapplication  
D Pupils who are disapplied under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum  
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

Six inspectors spent a total of sixteen inspector days in the school and met as a team before the inspection started.

The inspectors visited:

- forty-one lessons or parts of lessons;
- all classes;
- three acts of collective worship; and
- a range of extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- staff, governors and parents before the inspection began; and
- senior managers, teachers, support and administrative staff and groups of pupils, including the school council, during the inspection.

The team considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- responses to a questionnaire from 16 parents;
- documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection; and
- a wide range of pupils' past and present work.

The inspection team also held post-inspection meetings with the staff and governors.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

| Inspector                | Type                  | Aspect and Subject Responsibilities                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mr Rob Isaac             | Registered inspector  | Pre-inspection Commentary<br>Context and Aims<br>Key Question 1<br>Key Question 5<br>Key Question 6<br>Summary and Full Reports<br>Editing report<br>English<br>Information Technology |
| Mr John Foley            | Lay Inspector         | Contributing to:<br>Key Question 1<br>Key Question 3<br>Key Question 7 (Accommodation)                                                                                                 |
| Mr David Beaumont Morgan | Team Inspector        | Key Question 2<br>Key Question 7 (Resources & Finances)<br>Bilingualism<br>Science<br>History                                                                                          |
| Mrs Gillian Unwin        | Team Inspector        | Key Question 3<br>Key Question 4<br>Key Question 7 (Staffing)<br>Mathematics<br>Music                                                                                                  |
| Mrs Elizabeth Barry      | Peer Assessor         | Observation of lessons in English and other subjects.<br>Post-inspection contributions                                                                                                 |
| Mrs Helen Turner         | Nominee & Headteacher | Self-evaluation Report<br>Contributing to all key questions<br>School's Response to the report                                                                                         |

### Acknowledgement

The visiting inspectors wish to thank the headteacher, the governors, all the staff and the pupils for all the co-operation and courtesy they received during the inspection.

### Inspection Contractor:

Baker-Phillips Educational Communications Ltd.  
Oaks Lea  
Higher Knolton  
Overton  
Wrexham  
LL13 0LF