

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

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

**Gaer Infant School  
Melfort Road  
Newport  
NP9 3FP**

**School Number: 6802014**

**Date of Inspection: 10 November 2008**

**by**

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Gaer Infant 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 Gaer Infant School took place between 10/11/08 and 12/11/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Merfyn Lloyd Jones undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **short** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol y Gaer Infant school is situated in the city of Newport and lies in the area administered by Newport City Council.
2. The school caters for pupils between the ages of three and seven years of age. At the time of the inspection there were 184 full-time equivalent pupils on roll. Pupils in the nursery class attend for either morning or afternoon sessions. Pupils are admitted into the nursery class in the September following their third birthday and to the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. The number of pupils at the school is only slightly lower than at the last inspection.
3. Pupils represent the full ability range. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs although there are seventeen pupils either on school action or school action plus for extra support. The pupils are arranged into five classes.
4. Most pupils come from the immediate vicinity, which is an area described by the school as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Nearly all the pupils have English as their first language and are of white ethnicity and approximately twelve per cent come from ethnic minority groups. Fourteen per cent of the pupils are entitled to receive free school meals; this is below the Wales average.
5. Nearly all members of staff are new to the school since the last inspection. The school was last inspected in 2002. The current head teacher has been in post since September 1994.

### The school's priorities and targets

6. The school's main priorities and targets for 2008-09 include:
  - the professional development of members of staff;
  - upgrading the reading scheme;
  - developing a framework for key skills;
  - improving Welsh across the school; and
  - strengthening the involvement of parents, governors and the community in the day to day life of the school.

## Summary

7. Gaer Infant is a school with many good features. All pupils have access to a broad and interesting range of learning opportunities. Members of staff are hard working and very committed to the school. They have established good working relationships that foster learning. They are fully aware of the needs of individual pupils and provide good support and guidance for all pupils in their care. They work well as a team and are very supportive of each other.
8. The head teacher has a clear vision for the school and is very committed to this. The school's vision statement, 'respect and dignity everyday, no matter what it takes' promotes equality for all. This statement is well known, clearly understood by members of staff and governors and is reflected in day to day life of the school.

### Table of grades awarded

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

9. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils make good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. Baseline assessment indicates that pupils on entry have a wide range of ability and year on year they make good progress in all areas of learning.
10. Statutory teacher assessments in 2008 indicate that pupil attainment is above local and national averages and is in the top 25 per cent when compared with similar schools. Standards for the past three years have been consistently above the local authority (LA) and national averages for each core subject.
11. Pupils with English as an additional language, make good progress relative to their age and abilities.
12. Standards in personal and social development and also in the key skill of listening are good in the under-fives. Nearly all pupils make good progress in speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and in their use of information and communications technology (ICT). Their bilingual skills are progressing well.

13. At key stage 1, the development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills is good with no important shortcomings. Nearly all are well motivated and show a real interest in their work.
14. At key stage 1 the majority of pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills, read with fluency, confidence and understanding; write with accuracy and present their written work well. They show good ability when using their numeracy skills and can apply them well in different contexts. However, there is a small number of pupils in each class that find it difficult to listen with sustained concentration and they have to be regularly reminded by the teachers to focus on the task.
15. Most pupils across the age range demonstrate good ICT skills and use their skills to develop and communicate their ideas in different forms and in different contexts successfully.
16. Many pupils are establishing healthy living skills that include fostering good eating habits. They understand the importance of keeping healthy.
17. When provided with appropriate opportunities, most pupils collaborate well on creative and problem solving activities. However, their capacity to work with greater independence and to take responsibility for their own work is underdeveloped.
18. At key stage 1, the majority of pupils are beginning to make good progress in their bilingual competence. They speak well and are acquiring good vocabulary. However, they have yet to acquire the necessary confidence to move with ease between the two languages.
19. The school sets realistic targets for all pupils. They are based on a sound recognition of the ability of individual pupils. They are always challenging and consistently achieved.
20. Most pupils have a good awareness of equal opportunity and show respect for the diversity of beliefs and cultural traditions to be found in society.
21. Pupils' behaviour and the respect they show to adults and each other is good overall. The school has very high expectations of good behaviour. A few pupils in some classes have challenging behaviour. They frequently disrupt lessons and demand a disproportionate amount of adults' time.
22. At 91.18 per cent the average rate of attendance for the three terms before the inspection is below the LA and the national average.

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

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

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
0%	75%	19%	6%	0%

24. These percentages are below the national picture reported by HMCI in his annual report for 2006-07 where the quality of teaching is good or better (grade 1 and 2) in 80 per cent of lessons and a grade 1 in 14 per cent.
25. Where the teaching is good with no important shortcomings; lessons are well planned with a clear purpose; they are challenging and well suited to the needs of all pupils; the pace of learning is effective; good questioning skills are used to assess pupils' understanding; teachers use stimulating resources purposefully and pupils are actively involved in their learning. Very effective use is made of the outdoor environment.
26. The effective involvement of classroom support workers has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers and support staff have good working relationships with each other and with pupils.
27. Where there are shortcomings in teaching, long introductions and over-direction by teachers impact adversely on the pace of lessons. As a result, the active engagement of all pupils is not always secured and opportunities are missed for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
28. Generally teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and areas of learning they teach and are aware of recent developments.
29. The school's arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' attainment and progress meet statutory requirements.
30. The curriculum fully complies with statutory requirements and is well planned to ensure that learning experiences meet the needs of pupils with a range of abilities.
31. Across the school, pupils benefit from an outstanding range of out-of-school learning, which broadens and enriches their experience.
32. The development of pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Daily acts of collective worship make a positive contribution and enrich pupils' experience.
33. The overall quality of care, guidance and support is good. The school manages its care and support arrangements well and liaises effectively with a range of external agencies. The majority of pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and valued.
34. The quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Effective support is given by class teachers, support staff and the additional learning needs (ALN) co-ordinator who work together effectively to ensure that pupils are fully supported.

### **Leadership and management**

35. There has been a high turnover of staff at the school in the past twelve months and new teachers to the school have only just started in their new roles as

subject co-ordinators. They are keen and enthusiastic to carry these out effectively, but the full impact of these new duties is yet to be fully realised. The head teacher recognises the need to develop their skills. There is a good firm commitment to support the continuing professional development needs of members of staff.

36. Clear emphasis is placed on national priorities and local partnerships.
37. The Governing Body is very supportive and has a good understanding of how the school operates. Governors are well informed of the progress the school is making towards achieving its targets. Their role as a 'critical friend' is very well established.
38. The self-evaluation report prepared for the inspection is a thorough document making clear judgements on all aspects of school life identifying the school's strong features and areas for further development.
39. Appropriate systems are in place to enable curriculum co-ordinators to submit their subject audits to the head teacher for consideration. As many are new to their roles, they have yet to develop the skills and experiences necessary to have a clear view of the strengths and shortcomings in their areas of responsibility. Monitoring reports tend to focus on provision and methodology and not on how well learners achieve.
40. Priorities for development in the school improvement plan are a result of a careful analysis of the self-evaluation report, outcome of the subject audits and minutes of meetings. Targets have appropriate timescales, costings and indicator of success.
41. The school has addressed all the issues identified in the last inspection report and good progress has been made.
42. There are sufficient numbers of teachers to support the number of pupils on roll and to deliver the curriculum across the school.
43. The school has an excellent range of learning resources that fully meet the demands of the curriculum and are deployed effectively. The quantity, quality and variety of resources for the under-fives are outstanding and contribute well to effective learning and the good standards achieved.
44. The school building is welcoming, secure and well maintained. It is adequate for the number of pupils on roll and provides an outstandingly stimulating environment for teaching and learning.
45. Finances are well managed and resources are matched to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan and are regularly reviewed. There is a good balance between the governors' decision making and the head teacher's role and the school achieves value for money.

## Recommendations

46. In order to improve the school in the areas inspected, the staff and governing body need to:
- R1 improve pupils' bilingual competence;
  - R2 provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning;
  - R3 improve attendance;
  - R4 ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school;
  - R5 work with the Local Authority to maximise support for pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress and that of others; and
  - R6 develop the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators with an emphasis on 'How Well Learners Achieve'.

The school has already identified R1 as a priority within its own school improvement plan.

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

## Standards

### Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

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

47. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report. The school awarded itself a grade 1 for this key question.
48. It is the judgement of the team that there are shortcomings in some aspects of key skills, attendance and in the behaviour of a few pupils.
49. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils make good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. Baseline assessment indicates that pupils on entry have a wide range of ability and year on year they make good progress in all areas of learning.
50. Standards in personal and social development and also in the key skill of listening are good in the under-fives. Nearly all pupils make good progress in speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and in their use of ICT. Their bilingual skills are progressing well.
51. At key stage 1, the development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills is good with no important shortcomings. Nearly all are well motivated and show a real interest in their work. Relationships are very positive and most pupils throughout the school have good self control. They co operate very well in small groups, take turns and share. They know the strategies to use to avoid distraction. Most pupils throughout the school are polite and friendly; they are very confident with adults. All pupils move sensibly in and around the school and are quick to remind others of the one-way system. The school's mission statement underpins the work of the school and successfully promotes these values.
52. Pupils are establishing healthy living skills that include fostering good eating habits. They understand the importance of keeping healthy.
53. At key stage 1, the majority of pupils have well-developed speaking and listening skills, they read with fluency, confidence and understanding and write with accuracy presenting their written work well. They show good ability when using their numeracy skills and can apply them well in different contexts. However, there are a very small number pupils in each class that find it difficult to listen with sustained concentration and they have to be regularly reminded by the teachers to focus on the task.

54. Most pupils across the age range demonstrate good ICT skills and use their skills to develop and communicate their ideas in different forms and in different contexts successfully.
55. When provided with appropriate opportunities, most pupils collaborate well on creative and problem-solving activities. However, their capacity to take responsibility for their own work is underdeveloped.
56. At key stage 1, the majority of pupils are beginning to make good progress in their bilingual competence. They speak well and are acquiring good vocabulary. However, many have yet to acquire the necessary confidence to move with ease between the two languages.
57. In 2008, end of key stage 1 teacher assessment, the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or better in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science was above the LA and national averages. The number of pupils achieving level 3 was well above the average for the LA and Wales. Boys do better than girls at this level.
58. When compared with similar schools (i.e. schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals) across Wales, the school was placed in the top 25 per cent of schools for English and mathematics and in the top 50 per cent of schools for science.
59. Standards for the past three years have been consistently above the LA and national averages for each core subject.
60. There is very little difference between the performance of boys and girls in English and mathematics but the boys do slightly better than the girls in science.
61. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress relative to their age and abilities.
62. The school sets realistic targets for all pupils. They are based on a sound recognition of the ability of individual pupils. They are always challenging and consistently achieved. Predicted outcomes are carefully recorded and progress regularly monitored. By the end of key stage 1, there are no differences in standards of achievement of pupils in terms of social background, language or race.
63. The majority of pupils understand what they are doing and how well they are progressing. Clear lesson objectives and successful plenary sessions support this understanding well.
64. Most pupils have good awareness of equal opportunity and show respect for the diversity of beliefs and cultural traditions to be found in society.
65. Pupils' behaviour and the respect they show to adults and each other is good overall. The school has very high expectations of good behaviour. The

foundations are laid very effectively in the early years and, as a result, children know the routines and are developing self confidence and independence at this early stage of the year. They understand what is expected of them and even the youngest children are beginning to show care and concern for others.

66. A few pupils in some classes have challenging behaviour. They frequently disrupt lessons and demand a disproportionate amount of adults' time.
67. At 91 per cent the average rate of attendance for the three terms before the inspection is below the Local Authority and national averages. Absences are caused mainly by the susceptibility to illness of the very young children but the overall rate is adversely affected by family holidays in term time: a very small number take extended holidays.
68. Despite the school's best efforts a small number of pupils in each class arrive late at the start of the day and many children attending the afternoon session are brought late. They miss the valuable social time and introduction to lessons and activities. This has an adverse effect on their learning.
69. Pupils have a good understanding of the world of work through participation in a range of interesting activities organised by the school. This enhances their skills and prepares them well to take their place in society.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

70. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

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

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	75%	19%	6%	0%

72. These percentages are below the national picture reported by HMCI in his annual report for 2006-07 where the quality of teaching is good or better (grade 1 and 2) in 80 per cent of lessons and a grade 1 in 14 per cent.

73. Where the teaching is good with no important shortcomings; lessons are well planned with a clear purpose; they are challenging and well suited to the needs of all pupils; the pace of learning is effective; good questioning skills are used to assess pupils' understanding; teachers use stimulating resources purposefully and pupils are actively involved in their learning. Very effective use is made of the outdoor environment.

74. Where there are shortcomings in teaching, long introductions and over-direction by teachers impact adversely on the pace of lessons. As a result, the active engagement of all pupils is not always secured and opportunities are missed for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

75. Generally teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and areas of learning they teach and they are aware of recent developments.

76. All teachers regularly use Welsh to promote pupils' bilingual skills and this has a positive impact on development. However, these skills are not consistently and progressively developed as pupils move from class to class. This adversely affects pupils' confidence in the language.

77. Teachers and learning support assistants (LSA) have established good working relationships that foster learning. They are fully aware of the needs of individual pupils and provide good support. Pupils' achievements in a whole range of different aspects are recognised and celebrated. Pupils are very proud of these.

78. The school's arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' attainment and progress meet statutory requirements. Baseline assessment is undertaken in the nursery and reception classes, results are carefully analysed and the information is used very well to identify children's strengths

and areas for development. The new system of tracking pupils' progress at key stage 1 is comprehensive and purposeful. Pupils' individual progress files are regularly reviewed and updated.

79. Teachers find the portfolios of moderated work in the core subjects useful when determining attainment levels at the end of key stage assessment. They are used purposefully for this exercise but they have not yet been moderated at LA level.
80. Pupils' work is marked regularly and, in the best practice, teachers make useful comments that provide clear guidance for improvement.
81. The majority of pupils as they progress through the school are becoming more confident in evaluating their own work. They have a good understanding of their strengths and what they need to do in order to improve their work.
82. Annual reports to parents meet statutory requirements. They contain useful evaluative comments on pupils' achievement and progress and clearly highlight what pupils need to do in order to improve their work. Parents are provided with good opportunities to attend meetings to discuss their children's progress.

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

<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
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83. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report. The school awarded itself a grade 1 for this question. It is the judgement of the team that, although there are several strong features in curriculum provision, opportunities for pupils to develop the capacity to work independently need to be further developed throughout the school.
84. The curriculum fully complies with statutory requirements and is well planned to ensure that learning experiences meet the needs of pupils with a range of abilities. Projects carefully build on existing skills, knowledge and understanding to provide progression and continuity in learning and to motivate pupils to want to learn. All pupils have access to a broad and interesting range of learning opportunities both inside and outdoors.
85. The school has produced its own schemes of work for literacy and numeracy and pupils are grouped according to their ability rather than age. This enables pupils to work at their own level of development. This effectively ensures good provision for pupils of varying ability including those with additional learning needs.
86. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children are making good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. All children make a good start at the school

and children in both the nursery and reception classes have access to an exciting range of activities, with a good balance between adult and child-initiated activities.

87. Provision for the development of key skills across all classes, including those for the under-fives, is good and there are no important shortcomings. Opportunities for the development of key skills are built into long, medium and short-term planning. The school is proud to have been awarded the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark on four occasions.
88. Across the school, pupils benefit from an outstanding range of out-of-school learning, which broadens and enriches their experience. Educational visits are made each term, linked to the curriculum work being undertaken in each class. A very good variety of extra-curricular clubs contributes well to children's standards of achievement and personal development.
89. The development of pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A sense of community is effectively developed throughout the school and planned experiences, such as circle time, contribute to pupil's understanding of self-esteem. Whole-school acts of collective worship encourage pupils to show curiosity and to reflect on their experiences. The school fully complies with statutory requirements in this respect.
90. The school actively encourages pupils to show understanding and respect for different faiths and cultural traditions. Visitors, such as storytellers from a range of cultures, are invited into school and pupils from cultures other than Wales are invited to share their experiences during assemblies.
91. There are very effective links with parents, the local community, the neighbouring playgroup and receiving junior school as well as with an initial teacher training university and colleges of further education.
92. The quality of information for parents is very good. Weekly newsletters provide very valuable information about the topics and projects being taught. Family homework themes are based on the projects and include advice on how parents can help their children. The separate newsletter for parents of children in the nursery contains interesting reports on activities and plans for the next project. There is very good daily informal contact between adults and parents of these very young children.
93. The school works hard to encourage parents in the education of their children. The family partnership literacy sessions are well attended and beneficial and parents appreciate the support given. There are also strong links with local organisations, such as Action Earth, that involve parents and the community.
94. The school works closely with the local cluster of primary schools to share good practice. It provides good quality training and work experience for child care students and student teachers.

95. The school's partnership with industry is very good. The school has an effective policy for industrial links and strong links with the Education Business Partnership. Three teachers have benefited from industrial placements to enhance their professional development and to support their teaching skills.
96. A carefully planned programme of visits and visitors to the school enhances pupils' understanding of the jobs that people do. As a result pupils benefit from working with a wide range of adults in school as well as from a good programme of visits to places of employment. This starts in the Early Years when children work with "people who help us". Pupils throughout the school have been involved in the production of a BBC television programme.
97. The police liaison officer, school nurse and road safety officer support the school's personal and social education and healthy school's programme.
98. The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is integrated into all schemes of work and experiences in curricular areas such as art, music, geography and history provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding and awareness of Wales today and in the past.
99. There are a number of opportunities to develop pupils' bilingual competence. However, the school recognise that this is an area that requires further development.
100. The school recognises and respects diversity and has adopted policies on equal opportunities and racial equality. All pupils are equally valued and the school makes positive attempts to eliminate discrimination of any kind. Pupils learn about the needs and rights of others through their work in religious education and personal and social education lessons. They know about world and current affairs such as the very recent presidential election in America.
101. The school has a clear written policy for global citizenship and sustainable development. It has achieved the Green Flag status and has recently been nominated for a teaching award for sustainability. Pupils have a very good understanding of sustainable development through their roles on the Eco Committee and recycling and composting projects. Pupils care for the environment; they grow vegetables and flowers and they have won many awards in the Newport in Bloom competition.
102. The development of pupils' entrepreneurial skills is promoted well through a range of activities such as making and selling biscuits and creating an art gallery to exhibit their paintings. Pupils are also involved in many creative projects using recycled materials to produce models of outstanding quality.
103. The school is effectively laying the foundations for lifelong learning and community regeneration through its strong links with a number of community initiatives, such as the playgroup and after school club. The school has also actively developed the school grounds with input from the community.

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

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

104. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report. The school awarded itself a grade 1 for this question. However, the team judged that, although there are strong features in the provision for the care and guidance for pupils, the school has not yet reached its target for pupils' attendance and the provision for additional learning needs does not always fully meet the needs of all pupils whose behaviour impedes their learning.
105. The overall quality of care, guidance and support is good. Teachers and teaching assistants form good relationships with pupils and have effective procedures in place to monitor and support pupils' progress. The school manages its care and support arrangements well and liaises effectively with a range of external agencies including a family support worker. The majority of pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and valued.
106. The school works well with parents, carers and the wider community and sees communication as an important priority. The nursery teacher and head teacher are available at the start of every session to meet with parents and carers and induction arrangements for the early years and for pupils moving from key stage 1 to key stage 2 are carefully planned and implemented. As a result of the flexible entry arrangements children quickly become independent and settle well in the nursery. The separate nursery and reception classes welcome packs and parent partnership sessions in language and number in play provide parents with valuable information.
107. There are suitable arrangements for pupils who join the school at a later date and good links with the receiving junior school. Pupils are involved in a successful transition plan that includes curriculum links and a buddy system.
108. The school has set up a school council even though this is not statutory for a school of this age group. Pupils are selected for this role and meet regularly with the head teacher to discuss events such as Children in Need activities. In time it is planned that the school council will take on a wider role which will involve them in decision making.
109. There are effective policies and procedures in place to monitor pupils' attendance, punctuality, behaviour and performance. The appropriate procedures have been followed in the case of fixed-term exclusion. Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality, however, there are no incentives or rewards to improve and celebrate good attendance and punctuality and the school has not reached its targets. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Officer when necessary.

110. Arrangements to ensure the health and well being of pupils are good overall. There is a clear health and safety policy. Risk assessments are systematic and four members of staff, including the mid-day supervisors, have been trained successfully in first aid. There are clear policies for areas such as fire and sun safety, misuse of drugs, smoking, transport and working alone.
111. The school is in its third year of the Healthy Schools initiative. It promotes health and fitness for pupils very well through a range of initiatives such as fruit only at snack and break times, the development of the school grounds and a very good range of outdoor play equipment and activities including after hours sports clubs. All adults in the school including the canteen staff are aware of pupils with particular needs and are very knowledgeable about procedures in the event of accidents and emergencies.
112. Although the hall has been repaired and refurbished following a recent arson attack the school continues to use the canteen facilities at the neighbouring junior school for pupils who request hot meals, while pupils who bring a packed lunch eat in the school hall. As a result very young pupils are unnecessarily exposed to inclement weather and are often rushed to eat their lunch and they miss invaluable social time with their friends. Parents, in their responses to pre-inspection questionnaires and in discussions during the inspection say they are unhappy with these arrangements.
113. There is an appropriate policy and clear procedures for child protection. The head teacher and a senior teacher are the designated child protection officers and there is a named designated link governor. All teachers, support staff and mid day supervisors are well trained in these procedures.
114. The quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. There is an effective policy of early intervention based on information from baseline assessment, classroom observations, parents and the health authority. These assessments inform the co-ordinated programme of support, which the school puts in place. Effective support is given by class teachers, support staff and the additional learning needs co-ordinator who work together effectively to ensure that pupils are fully supported. On occasions, the individual attention required of the learning support assistants to support the small number of pupils with behavioural problems left the class teacher with very little help with the others.
115. Regular monitoring of individuals ensures that pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in meeting their targets. In addition, they receive effective support in literacy and or numeracy on a daily basis.
116. Pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are clearly written by class teachers, following discussion with the additional learning needs co-ordinator. Individual targets are regularly reviewed and updated with parents and pupils. Parents are consulted informally as necessary and are invited twice annually to attend the formal review meetings. The school receives good support from a range of specialist staff, including speech and language therapists, the educational psychologist, behavioural support adviser and the visual impairment service.

The school complies fully with the Code of Practice for Wales and the statutory framework for inclusive education.

117. Pupils with English as a second language receive additional weekly support from the LA and the school feels that pupils benefit enormously from this. Language assessments in the early years are conducted in the child's first language and a translation service is provided if necessary.
118. The school has well planned and documented procedures for dealing with race equality, disability discrimination, bullying, and equal opportunities. All pupils are encouraged to take part in the activities provided by the school. Resources and relationships throughout the school community help to promote good race relations.
119. There are effective policies in place for areas such as bullying, disability and fire prevention. There are no pupils with mobility disabilities currently attending the school but there is a suitable Disability Equality Scheme and action plan in place that takes account of the school site and buildings should this arise in the future.
120. The school promotes diversity and equal opportunities very well. A good range of activities are provided for pupils through personal and social and religious education that enable them to develop a sound understanding of diversity and equal opportunities.

## Leadership and management

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

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

121. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report. The school awarded itself a grade 1 for this question. The team judged that teachers who are new to the school have yet to develop their leadership and mentoring role fully.
122. The head teacher has a clear vision for the school and is very committed to this. The school's vision statement, 'respect and dignity everyday, no matter what it takes' promotes equality for all. The vision is well known, clearly understood by members of staff and governors and are reflected in day to day life of the school.
123. There has been a high turnover of staff at the school in the past twelve months with several gaining promotions due to their effectiveness. The new teachers to the school have only just started in their new roles as subject co-ordinators; they are keen and enthusiastic to carry these out effectively, but the full impact of these new duties is yet to be fully realised. They are hard working and very committed to the school and the pupils in their care. Subject co-ordinators work well as a team and are very supportive of each other. The head teacher recognises the need to develop their skills.
124. Clear emphasis is placed on national priorities and local partnerships. The school has successfully introduced initiatives such as performance management, workload remodelling including planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) arrangements. It has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark four times and the Investor in People (IIP) award three times. The school works successfully with other schools in its cluster, local colleges, local churches and community services.
125. The target setting process is systematic and begins as pupils start school. The targets ensure high expectations, are realistic and challenging and match the abilities of individual pupils. Similarly, targets are set for the end of key stage 1.
126. There is a good commitment to support the continuing professional development needs of members of staff. The appraisal system results in all members of staff having agreed targets, which focus on whole-school priorities or individual needs. These are often based on the Investor in People programme for staff development. A number of professional development training courses has had a positive impact on practice at the school.
127. The Governing Body is very supportive and has a good understanding of how the school operates. Governors' role as a 'critical friend' is very well

established. Regular meetings to discuss for example, policies, planning and target setting help the governing body to influence the strategic direction of the school. They have a good oversight of the budget and supervise expenditure well. The governing body fully complies with all its legal responsibilities.

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

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

128. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report. The school awarded itself a grade 1 for this question. However, the team judged that teachers who are new to the school require further support and training in evaluating standards and the quality of education.
129. The self-evaluation report prepared for the inspection is a thorough document making clear judgements on all aspects of school life and identifying the school's strong features and areas for further development. However, the inspection team's judgements differ from those of the school's in 6 out of the 7 key questions. The inspection team awarded a lower grade for key questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.
130. Appropriate systems are in place to enable curriculum co-ordinators to submit their subject audits to the head teacher for consideration. As many are new to their roles, they have yet to develop the skills and experiences necessary to have a clear view of the strengths and shortcomings in their areas of responsibility. Monitoring reports tend to focus on provision and methodology and not on how well learners achieve. There are no formal arrangements in place to seek the views of parents, pupils and other interested parties.
131. Strategies for assessing and evaluating pupils' standards of achievement in the core subjects are effective. Teachers' analysis of assessment records helps to identify strengths and shortcomings and to set individual targets for pupils. There is very good awareness of performance in county and national contexts.
132. Priorities for development in the school improvement plan are a result of a careful analysis of the self-evaluation report, outcomes of the subject audits and minutes of meetings. Targets have an appropriate timescale, costing and indicator of success.
133. The governors are well informed of the progress the school is making towards achieving its targets. They contribute to the process of self-evaluation through their own monitoring arrangement. They are knowledgeable and committed. The governing body and head teacher provide good resources to support priorities in teaching and learning.

134. The school has addressed all the issues identified in the last inspection report and good progress has been made.

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

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

135. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report. The team did not identify a sufficient number of outstanding features to agree with the grade 1 the school awarded.
136. There are sufficient numbers of teachers to support the number of pupils on roll and to deliver the curriculum across the school. Teachers are suitably qualified with a balance of newly qualified and experienced staff who work together well. All have appropriate job descriptions, which identify their roles and responsibilities. Learning Support Assistants are appropriately qualified and play a significant role in supporting the curriculum.
137. The school also employs an artist in residence for three days each week who works with the three year 1 and year 2 classes. Local authority staff teach regularly at school each week to provide good support for pupils whose first language is not English.
138. Arrangements are in place to provide all members of staff with the required preparation, planning and assessment time and very good use is made of this. However, monitoring of the effectiveness of the cover needs to be developed.
139. Teachers attend relevant training courses regularly to update their knowledge and there are also in-house staff development initiatives, which provide a useful forum for sharing good practice. Learning Support Assistants attend appropriate training and find this beneficial.
140. The school secretary makes a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school and carries out her responsibilities efficiently and effectively. Ancillary staff, including the caretaker, mid-day supervisors and cleaners, are also valued for their positive contribution to the school.
141. The school has an excellent range of learning resources that fully meet the demands of the curriculum and are deployed effectively. The quantity, quality and variety of resources for the under-fives are outstanding and contribute well to effective learning and the good standards achieved. ICT is well resourced and interactive white boards, an interactive museum, digital movie cameras, digital microscopes, laptops and other equipment are used very effectively to support pupils' learning across the school.
142. Library provision is available with a good range of books in both English and Welsh. An art room has been equipped with resources to deliver the creative areas of learning and pupils enjoy using this area.

143. The school building is welcoming, secure and well maintained. It is adequate for the number of pupils on roll and provides an outstanding, stimulating environment for teaching and learning. Classrooms are arranged along two corridors and there are colourful and purposeful displays throughout the school and many examples of outstanding three dimensional models which stimulate pupils' imaginations. The school hall has been recently refurbished following an arson attack in 2007 and provides appropriate accommodation for whole-school collective worship and physical education lessons. It also serves as a suitable dining area for pupils who bring a packed lunch to school.
144. All classrooms have external doors, which lead onto enclosed outdoor areas in line with the school's philosophy of using the outdoors as an integral part of the learning environment. The outdoor areas are well maintained and provide an exciting environment in which to learn and play. The school has a large playing field but there is no exterior fence and parents and staff have concerns about the open nature of the site.
145. The school has no facilities for the disabled apart from a ramp at the rear of the school; however, improvements in this area are planned during 2009. A useful medical room is also available.
146. Finances are well managed and resources are matched to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan and are regularly reviewed. The Governing Body Finance Committee meets regularly, reviews expenditure and value for money and maintains a modest contingency. The last audit showed a number of significant issues, which needed attention and these are being addressed. There is a good balance between the governors' decision making and the head teacher's role and the school achieves value for money.

## School's response to the inspection

The governors, head teacher and staff are pleased that the inspection team found Gaer Infant School to be a good school. We are proud that the report acknowledged that the school promotes diversity and equal opportunities very well and that the school's mission statement is well known and understood by all and is reflected in the day to day life of the school.

We are pleased that the report highlights the broad and interesting range of learning opportunities that the school provides and its outstandingly stimulating environment for teaching and learning both indoors and outdoors. The school is proud of the excellent range of learning resources that fully meet the demands of the curriculum and are deployed effectively.

The school notes that the standards for the past three years have been consistently above the LA and national averages for each core subject. The school will continue to work to maintain this high quality of education. However, the school will include in its School Improvement Plan, strategies to provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and ensure that there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school. We will share good practice and visit other schools in order to reach the national picture of targets as recommended by HMCI.

As an Investors in People school, we have a commitment to the professional development of staff and we enthusiastically take on board the development of new teachers. We will develop the role of curriculum teams with the emphasis on 'How Well Learners Achieve' in order to support and develop the role of the teacher as a manager and leader.

The school acknowledges that in this present year, there are a few pupils who have additional needs who can present challenging behaviour in the school's normal day to day routines. Strategies and support for these children have been put into place, however because of the complexities the children demonstrate, the school welcomes the recommendation that there is a need to maximise the support from the LEA in order for these children to be included and for the progress of the majority not to be impeded. The school is committed to providing further training and support for staff in order to focus on the needs of the individual child in order to avoid confrontation and conflict.

The school had highlighted the need to improve pupil's bilingual competence: this will be continued in the new School Improvement Plan as a key skill with the aim of the children moving with ease between the two languages.

Attendance will continue to be a focus with parents with the emphasis on dealing with individual absences as they occur. The application for term time holidays will be carefully monitored by the head teacher balanced with the understanding of the ethos of the school supporting family life and the benefits that a family holiday can bring to the child.

Recommendations from the report will be incorporated into the School Improvement Plan. A summary will be circulated to all parents and carers and progress in implementing the recommendations will be reported in the governors' annual report and the school prospectus.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Gaer Infant School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3-7
Address of school	Melfort Road, Newport.
Postcode	NP9 3FP
Telephone number	01633 265620

Head teacher	Mrs Marilyn Biddle
Date of appointment	January 1994
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs J Morgan
Registered inspector	Merfyn Lloyd Jones
Dates of inspection	10 – 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2008

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	56	41	50	37	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	184

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	0	7

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	26:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	13:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	n/a
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	26:1
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Autumn Term 2007	86	91	92
Spring Term 2008	85	92	92
Summer Term 2008	83	90	91

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	14%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	1

## Appendix 3

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2008			Number of pupils in Y2:					44
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	7	54	39	
		National	0	3	14	63	20	
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	7	52	41	
		National	0	4	15	55	26	
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	7	77	16	
		National	0	5	16	68	11	
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	7	48	45	
		National	0	2	11	64	23	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	54	45	
		National	0	2	11	65	22	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	2	45	52	
		National	0	1	9	66	24	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	93.2	In Wales	80.1%

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

## **Appendix 4**

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

A team of three inspectors inspected the school over a period of 7 inspector days.

The head teacher was the nominee and she played an extensive role during the inspection.

Sixteen lessons or part lessons were observed and a selection of the pupils' practical and written work was scrutinised.

Registration, collective worship and extra-curricular activities were inspected.

Discussions were held with staff and pupils about their work.

All documents presented by the school prior to and during the inspection, were scrutinised.

Meetings were held prior to the inspection with the head teacher, staff, parents and the governing body.

Two parents attended the meeting held prior to the inspection, and the parents' responses (30 in all) to the questionnaires distributed were analysed.

Post inspection meetings were held with the head teacher, staff and governors.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Members	Responsibilities	Subjects/areas of learning
Mr. Merfyn Lloyd Jones Registered Inspector	Context Summary and recommendations Key questions 1, 2, 5 and 6.	N/A
Mrs. Sue Parsons Team Member	Key questions 3, 4 and 7.	N/A
Mrs. Caterina Lewis Lay Inspector	Contributions to key questions 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7	
Mrs. Marilyn Biddle Nominee	Contributions to all questions by providing information	

#### The contractor was:

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#### Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, the head teacher, the staff, pupils and parents/carers for their co-operation during the inspection.