

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Gilfach Fargoed Primary School
Vere Street
Bargoed
Caerphilly
CF81 8LB**

School Number: 6762121

Date of Inspection: 09 March 2009

by

**Glyn William Gaskill
5539**

Date of Publication: 14 May 2009

Under Estyn contract number: 1114808

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

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

Gilfach Fargoed Primary 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 Gilfach Fargoed Primary School took place between 09/03/09 and 11/03/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by Glyn William Gaskill undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **short** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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

Context

The nature of the provider

1. The school serves the community of Gilfach Fargoed, providing for boys and girls from the age of three to eleven. The number of pupils on roll is 149 which includes 10 children who attend full-time in the nursery. There is a high proportion of boys. Children are admitted to the nursery at the start of the term following their third birthday.
2. The socio-economic prosperity of the area is described as covering a wide range with areas of particular disadvantage. The school is within a Communities First Area. Twenty-three per cent of pupils claim free school meals entitlement. This is above the average for the local authority [21 per cent] and well above that for Wales [18 per cent] for all pupils aged five to fifteen. Some 27 per cent, a relatively high number, have special educational needs with three statements for special educational needs.
3. In recent times there has been a high number of pupils joining and leaving school at times other than the start of the school year, particularly in key stage 2.
4. Nearly all pupils are of a United Kingdom, white ethnic background. All pupils use English as their home language. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard.
5. The school was last inspected in February 2003. An internal appointment to the post of deputy head teacher has been made since the last inspection.
6. The school has received both the *Eco Schools* green flag and the *Basic Skills Quality Mark* on two occasions, *Investors in People* recognition on three occasions and *Healthy Schools* accreditation for the third year.

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school aims to help all pupils achieve their potential by all adults and pupils working and learning together.
8. Current priorities for development include the implementation of current national initiatives regarding the whole curriculum and assessment, bilingualism, aspects of management, accommodation and learning resources.

Summary

9. Gilfach Fargoed is a good school with many strengths. The management of resources is outstanding. Across the school, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are outstanding. The progress made by children in early years is exceptionally good. There is an outstanding sense of common purpose amongst all staff and governors to provide the best for all pupils. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The inspection team agreed with all but one of the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The team raised the school's judgement on key question 7 by one grade.

Table of grades awarded

10. The inspection team judged the school's work as follows:

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

Standards

11. Overall, pupils of all ages, abilities and backgrounds make good progress in their learning.
12. 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. When children start in the nursery, their baseline performance is very low. As they move through the nursery and reception class their acquisition of new knowledge and skills is outstanding.
13. Over the last three years, results of teacher assessments at the end of key stage 1 have been well above average for schools having a similar free school meals entitlement.
14. The three year average of the overall teacher assessment result [the core subject indicator] at the end of key stage 2, has been at least equal to and often better than local authority and national figures from 2002 onwards. In 2008, the overall teacher assessment at the end of key stage 2 was below average. However, a high proportion of this year group had joined the school

from year 3 onwards. Teacher assessment outcomes in 2008 significantly exceeded statutory targets set for all pupils so achievement was good.

15. The progress of boys and girls is similar but boy's attainment is mainly below that of girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils needing help with their language work make very good progress. Higher attaining pupils generally achieve well.
16. Across the school, pupils' achievement in speaking and listening is outstanding. Writing to support learning across the curriculum is good for the under-fives and in key stage 1. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' writing is outstanding. Across the school, standards in the key skill of reading are good.
17. Pupils use of mathematics to support their learning across the curriculum is good for the under-fives and in key stage 1. In key stage 2, pupils recorded use of mathematics in all subjects is limited and, at times, lacks accuracy.
18. Standards in the use of information and communication technology to promote learning across the curriculum are good. In all classes, pupils' creativity is outstanding and problem solving skills are good.
19. Across the school pupils' bilingualism is good with no important shortcomings. In all classes, pupils have a good understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales.
20. The overall development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills is very good and has outstanding features. Nearly all pupils' behaviour and their attitudes towards learning are outstanding.
21. The ability of the under-fives and pupils in key stage 1 to work independently is outstanding and in key stage 2 is very good. As pupils move through the school, they improve their ability to evaluate their own performance and plan for future progress which is done particularly well in year 6 English.
22. Nearly all pupils are well prepared to take an active role in the life and work of the local community. Their awareness of the world of work is well established.
23. Attendance rates for the past three terms average 92.6 per cent. These rates are below national rates for all primary schools (93.1 per cent), slightly above that of the local authority (92.4 per cent) and identical to attendance rates for schools that have a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
21%	79%	0%	0%	0%

25. The overall quality of teaching compares very well with the most recent report from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector for Education and Training which states

that in primary schools: *The quality of teaching is good or better [grade 1 and 2] in 83 per cent of lessons and the quality of teaching is outstanding [grade 1] in 16 per cent of lessons.*

26. Throughout the school, relationships between adults and pupils at all levels are outstanding. Learning support assistants are very effective in their work.
27. Planning for lessons successfully takes into account the needs of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. The detail for teaching the key skills has recently been taken into account.
28. In all classes, teachers have secure subject knowledge and apply this, and their good understanding of recent developments, in stimulating and effective ways. All teachers clearly explain what pupils are going to do in a lesson. Effective use is made of questioning techniques to challenge and move forward pupils' understanding.
29. Homework is routinely set and helps pupils make progress. The way in which pupils' personal reading is organised and checked is outstanding.
30. Where teaching is outstanding, imaginative use is made of programs on the interactive white board, plenary sessions are firmly linked to learning objectives and support staff are very well briefed.
31. The overall quality of assessment and its use in planning for pupils' learning is good and meets statutory requirements. Parents are well informed about their children's progress.
32. Baseline assessments and standardised assessments in the nursery and reception class has good features and no important shortcomings. At key stages 1 and 2, pupils' progress is recorded accurately and consistently in English, mathematics and science [the core subjects] on a termly and annual basis. Effective use is made of assessment results to promote pupils' progress. Arrangements for assessing pupils' progress in the remaining National Curriculum subjects and religious education lack a formal structure.
33. The school provides a curriculum which is broad, balanced and accessible to all pupils, effectively meeting their needs and interests. In all classes, there is an outstanding range of interesting and enjoyable experiences through clubs, visits and visitors.
34. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with outstanding features. Provision is outstanding for education for sustainable development and also for the way in which pupils take on responsibilities.
35. Overall, the school's partnership with parents, the community, employers, other schools and institutions is good with no important shortcomings. Links with the community are excellent.

36. The quality of care, support and guidance is good with no important shortcomings. The school has clear well documented arrangements which contribute to pupils' well being whilst in its care. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well provided for. There is good provision to ensure the inclusive education of all pupils, regardless of their background or ability.

Leadership and management

37. There is a strong sense of common purpose amongst all school staff and governors to provide the best for its pupils. The head teacher's leadership successfully promotes high expectations. The deputy head teacher effectively carries out responsibilities.
38. The work of teachers with leadership responsibilities has a positive impact on standards. Learning support assistants work very efficiently. The continuing professional development of all staff is well catered for.
39. The governing body is well organised and meets its statutory responsibilities well. The school takes good account of national priorities.
40. The school's systems for self-evaluation and development planning are good overall but parents and governors do not have a sufficient input into the self-evaluation process. Development planning is well thought out and effective in raising the quality of provision and standards.
41. The self-evaluation report produced for this inspection is very honest and covers all aspects of all the Estyn key questions, clearly identifying strengths and areas for development.
42. The school is staffed by a sufficient number of dedicated, experienced and suitably qualified teachers and learning support assistants. Teachers and learning support assistants are appropriately deployed to sensitively meet pupils' needs.
43. The school secretary, caretaker, cleaners and mid-day staff provide exceptionally effective support to the efficient daily administration and pupils well being.
44. The school is well resourced with appropriate equipment in all subjects. Learning resources are well organised. Outstanding use is made of the 100 year old building and grounds to effectively provide a stimulating teaching and learning environment.
45. A small but effective friends of the school group make significant contributions to funding. The school's finances are managed outstandingly well. The school provides value for money.

Recommendations

46. In order to further improve the school needs to:
- R1* In key stage 2, raise standards in the use of mathematics to support learning across the curriculum.
 - R2* In key stages 1 and 2, extend assessment procedures to include all National Curriculum subjects and religious education.
 - R3 Formally involve governors and parents in the self-evaluation process leading to school development planning.

*The school has already identified these aspects in its development planning.

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 match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
48. Overall, pupils of all ages, abilities and backgrounds make good progress in their learning.
49. When children start in the nursery, their baseline performance is very low. As they move through the nursery and reception class their acquisition of new knowledge, skills and understanding is outstanding.
50. 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.
51. Over the last three years, results of teacher assessments at the end of key stage 1 have been well above average for schools having a similar free school meals entitlement. At the end of key stage 1 in 2008, all teacher assessment outcomes at the higher level three were very similar to the national average for all schools. There is no significant pattern to the relative performance of boys and girls at key stage 1.
52. The three year average of the overall teacher assessment result [the core subject indicator] at the end of key stage 2, has been at least equal to and often better than local authority and national figures from 2002 onwards. In 2008, the overall teacher assessment at the end of key stage 2 was below average. Teacher assessment outcomes in 2008 significantly exceeded statutory targets set for all pupils so achievement was good, particularly in mathematics. The higher level 5 results in 2008 were below the national average for all schools.
53. Nearly 40 per cent of the pupils who were assessed at the end of year 6 in 2008 had joined the school from year 3 onwards. The overall performance of pupils who had been in this school for the whole of the key stage was better than the average for similar schools.
54. The school's assessment records show the progress of boys and girls is similar but boy's attainment is mainly below that of girls. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the realistic targets set for them. Pupils needing help with their language work make very good progress in their 'Catch Up' sessions. Higher attaining pupils generally achieve well.

55. Across the school, pupils' achievement in speaking and listening is outstanding. Children under the age of five pay close attention to what is said to them and make their views very clear. Many pupils in years 1 and 2 readily answer questions and explain how they have arrived at their answers. In years 4 and 5, pupils use a wide range of appropriate language and clear reasoning when they answer questions. Year 6 pupils are exceptionally skilled in organising and speaking convincing arguments for debating issues. Nearly all pupils listen exceptionally carefully.
56. Writing to support learning across the curriculum is good for the under-fives and in key stage 1. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' writing is outstanding with most pupils using a very wide range of styles, imagination and humour to effectively promote their learning. Across the school, standards in the key skill of reading are good. By year 6, pupils are confident readers and are skilled in finding relevant information in the library.
57. Pupils use of mathematics to support their learning across the curriculum is good for the under-fives and in key stage 1. For example, year 2 pupils make accurate use of Venn diagrams when they compare Iron Age houses with their own. In key stage 2, pupils' recorded use of mathematics to support their leaning across the curriculum is limited and, at times, lacks accuracy.
58. Standards in the use of information and communication technology to promote learning across the curriculum are good. The under-fives make good use of programs on the computer and interactive white board. In key stage 1, pupils make full use of computer drawing programs to record their educational visits. In key stage 2, there are many examples of pupils making very effective use of text and images to support their learning in history and religious education.
59. Problem solving skills are good across the school. For example, in both key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils successfully carry out investigating in their science. Most pupils make good use of predications and explanations for what they observe. Pupils carry out very good problem solving in their in design technology work
60. In all classes, pupils' creativity is outstanding. For example, the under-fives make excellent use of agreed rules in their role play. Year 1 pupils show exceptional imagination when they make musical instruments and shelters in their outdoor education. In key stage 2, there are outstanding standards in pupils' art work such as their work after the style of Picasso. Older pupils perform very well controlled dance movements and aspects of their drama work and presentations are exceptional.
61. Across the school pupils' bilingualism is good with no important shortcomings. In all classes, pupils have a good understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales, known as *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*.
62. The overall development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills is very good and has outstanding features.

63. Nearly all pupils' behaviour and their attitudes towards learning are outstanding. This contributes significantly to pupils standards of achievement and to the good quality of life in the school. Across the school, pupils are eager to answer questions, show a very positive interest in their tasks, work productively and concentrate for extended periods. They work extremely well in pairs and groups and support one another's learning effectively.
64. The ability of the under-fives and pupils in key stage 1 to work independently is outstanding. For example, in their *Forest School* activities pupils show positive self-confidence, make reasoned choices and work for sustained periods of time. In key stage 2, pupils' ability to work independently is very good. The vast majority organise their work effectively and make sensible decisions for themselves. Many pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve as they are familiar with learning objectives [what they are expected to learn] in their lessons. As pupils move through the school, they extend their ability to evaluate their own performance and plan for their future development in English and mathematics. This is done particularly well in year 6 English. These skills effectively prepare pupils for lifelong learning.
65. Nearly all pupils' progress in their personal, social, moral and wider development is outstanding. Positions of responsibility, such as school councillors, Eco committee membership, library monitors and playground buddies, are taken up by many pupils with a high level of commitment.
66. Throughout the school, pupils' understanding of equal opportunity issues is good. Most pupils recognise and respect the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions.
67. All pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming to visitors and readily engage in conversation. They have a good understanding of what is expected of them with regard to behaviour and are courteous and considerate towards adults and each other.
68. Nearly all pupils make good use of the locality as a learning resource and many regularly serve the community by supporting cultural, environmental and charitable projects. They are well prepared to take an active role in the life and work of the local community. Their awareness of the world of work is well established.
69. Attendance rates for the past three terms average 92.6 per cent. These rates are below national rates of attendance for pupils of primary school age (93.1 per cent), slightly above that of the local authority (92.4 per cent). They are identical to attendance rates for schools that have a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are punctual and keen to attend school.

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
21%	79%	0%	0%	0%

72. The overall quality of teaching compares very well with the most recent report from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector for Education and Training which states that in primary schools: *The quality of teaching is good or better [grade 1 and 2] in 83 per cent of lessons and the quality of teaching is outstanding [grade 1] in 16 per cent of lessons.*

73. Throughout the school, relationships between adults and pupils at all levels are outstanding. This contributes significantly to pupils very positive attitudes to learning. Teachers and learning support assistants work very closely together and know the pupils very well. This has a very significant impact on pupils' academic and personal development. Learning support assistants are very effective in their work.

74. Planning for lessons successfully takes into account the needs of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. The detail for teaching the key skills has recently been included. Lesson plans are routinely reviewed and, where needed, changes made to future planning to effectively promote pupils' progress.

75. In all classes, teachers have secure subject knowledge and apply this, and their good understanding of recent developments, in stimulating and effective ways. All teachers clearly explain what pupils are going to do in a lesson but the use of precise and realistic learning objectives [what pupils are to learn] is variable.

76. Teachers make effective use of questioning techniques to challenge and move forward pupils' understanding. This is particularly successfully in promoting pupils' speaking and listening. The use of Welsh is actively encouraged by all teachers and used purposefully in all classes.

77. Pupils' work is regularly marked in all classes often with encouraging comment. In the best examples, marking provides good, clear guidance for pupils on their strengths and areas where improvements are needed.

78. Homework is routinely set and helps pupils make progress. Nearly all parents are satisfied with the quality of homework. The way in which pupils' personal reading is organised and checked is outstanding. Learning support assistants play a key role in this area.
79. Where teaching is outstanding, imaginative use is made of programs on the interactive white board, plenary sessions are firmly linked to learning objectives and support staff are very well briefed.
80. The overall quality of assessment and its use in planning for pupils' learning is good and meets statutory requirements.
81. Baseline assessments and standardised assessments in the nursery and reception class has good features and no important shortcomings. These are used effectively to monitor children's progress. Observational assessment of learning in the Foundation Phase is an integral part of the daily routine. These assessments are closely linked with planning for the next steps in children's learning.
82. At key stages 1 and 2, pupils' progress is recorded accurately and consistently in English, mathematics and science [the core subjects] on a termly and annual basis. Arrangements for assessing pupils' progress in the remaining National Curriculum subjects and religious education lack a formal structure.
83. Completed standardised tests and assessed pieces of class work in the core subjects are consistently kept in an individual Record of Achievement for each pupil from reception to year 6. Outcomes of these tests and assessments are effectively summarised on a single card for each pupil. Good use is made of these cards to set targets for each pupil at the start of every year and check their progress as they move through the year. This arrangement has a positive effect on standards for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. The school is at an early stage of testing and developing an information technology based system to track and analyse pupils' progress to replace the card system.
84. The effective way in which teachers assess pupils' work against National Curriculum levels of attainment is supported by good quality portfolios of assessed work in the core subjects. These have been produced by the school in collaboration with other local schools. In particular, a common understanding of attainment in English has been developed with the associate secondary school and a similar exercise planned for mathematics. Portfolios are used effectively to ensure consistency of standards and levels awarded.
85. A good feature of the assessment process is the way in which pupils are given regular opportunities to be involved in evaluating their own learning. Pupils are increasingly involved in setting their own short term targets for improvement in mathematics and writing and these are displayed in classrooms and in pupils' books. The involvement of pupils in this process has a positive impact on encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning.

86. Annual reports to parents meet statutory guidance. They give a clear picture of their children's progress and helpfully indicate ways in which pupils may improve. Most parents consider they are well informed about their child's achievement. They appreciate opportunities to meet with staff at regular formal meetings and also informal occasions, should the need arise.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

87. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
88. The school provides a curriculum which is broad, balanced and accessible to all pupils effectively meeting their needs and interests. The school ensures that there is a good balance of learning activities which appeal to both boys and girls. The curriculum meets legal requirements.
89. The overall quality of learning experiences made available to pupils is good with no important shortcomings. The school ensures equality of opportunity for all through experiences that are planned and structured carefully. All schemes of work are being systematically updated to comply with recent, nationally set curriculum orders, skills framework and Foundation Phase.
90. The overall quality of the educational for under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children are making good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. The provision meets children's needs and covers each area of learning very effectively. All children have full access to a well planned and meaningful range of indoor and outdoor learning activities.
91. The school has recently implemented a skills framework grid set effectively against new curriculum orders to ensure suitable and progressive development in skills across all areas of learning. Across the school, overall good and at times excellent opportunities are provided for pupils to make effective use of communication, information and communication technology, problem solving and creative skills across the curriculum. The promotion of mathematics to support learning across the curriculum is good for the under-fives and key stage 1 but is limited in key stage 2.
92. The curriculum is supported by an outstanding range of interesting and enjoyable additional experiences both within the school and off-site. Carefully planned educational visits linked to classroom topics are made to the Welsh Assembly Government, Llancaiach Fawr and Blaenavon. School clubs, such as science, gardening and drama, are well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by pupils. Numerous sporting clubs effectively support the school's commitment to the importance of a healthy lifestyle. These, together with visits to Ynys Hywel Outdoor Activity Centre, have an extremely positive impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.

Visitors to the school, such as by members of Cardiff City AFC, representatives from local and international charities and drama groups, bring a further particular relevance and stimulus to learning.

93. The overall provision for pupils` spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with outstanding features. Assemblies are held daily and offer relevant experiences in a wide range of themes. There is a daily act of collective worship which meets statutory requirements and contributes well to pupils` personal development. Good opportunities are provided for pupils during for example, *Forest School* activities and involvement in the school garden, to reflect on the importance of caring for the natural world and on the wonders of nature around them. These aspects contribute effectively to developing the spiritual awareness of pupils.
94. The school has a caring ethos and adults in school are very good role models. This leads to pupils being polite, helpful and have a clear sense of belonging to the school and its environment. Pupils are successfully encouraged to nurture respect for others, for property and to develop a sound awareness of the difference between what is acceptable and unacceptable. Regular charitable fund-raising activities succeed in raising pupils` social awareness and they contribute generously to several worthy causes. These aspects are outstanding features of provision.
95. The school provides a carefully structured and good quality personal and social education framework which permeates the life of the school and successfully provides pupils with a variety of learning experiences. There is very effective provision for the under-fives, through specific schemes which are effectively used to promote social skills. Circle time sessions are positively used to discuss areas of concern in a supportive way. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop an understanding of their role in the community, for example as librarians, buddies or tuck shop duties. The formal written and oral presentations pupils enthusiastically make for these posts, together with formal interviews or voting, contribute significantly to pupils` personal and social development. Taken together, these aspects make an outstanding feature of provision.
96. The school`s promotion and development of pupils` understanding of the cultural heritage of Wales through *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is good and incorporated in all schemes of work. Pupils` awareness and appreciation of the culture of Wales is enhanced through celebrating St. David`s Day, membership of the Urdd and through visits to places of cultural interest such as Castell Henllys. Displays around the school give pupils a valuable insight into their own local heritage. The school makes a positive effort to promote learners` bilingual skills and the use of incidental Welsh during school routines and lessons is effective. Pupils` knowledge and competence in the use of the language is effectively supported through initiatives such as *Helpwr Heddiw*.
97. The school`s partnership with parents, the community, employers, other schools and institutions is good with no important shortcomings. These

partnerships enrich the learning experiences of pupils and have a positive impact on the life and work of the school.

98. Nearly all parents are supportive of the school, express satisfaction with the aims and values that the school promotes and particularly appreciate the sense of community fostered by the school. Parents value the ready access they have to head teacher and staff, and a constructive home/school agreement is in place that has readily been accepted by parents. The school provides good information to parents regarding school events and procedures through newsletters and on its website.
99. The school has developed close partnerships with other schools in the local cluster of schools, particularly with the secondary school to which pupils transfer. Pastoral and administrative links are well developed and curriculum links continue to improve, supported by a well-focused transition plan. The school benefits from several placements from secondary school and colleges but there are no links with teacher training institutions.
100. The school's partnership with the local community is excellent. The school is highly successful in encouraging local community members to become involved in the school and share their talents and expertise with pupils. Staff take full advantage of all that the community has to offer to extend pupils' learning experiences and to develop their understanding of the community in which they live. The school is very well supported and valued by the local community. Pupils are made well aware of their own community and how they can contribute to its care and development.
101. There is a successful family learning group which effectively promotes pupils' progress through regular, well structured sessions with small groups of parents and pupils. The school has recently been involved in setting up a pre-school group in a redundant classroom which shares outdoor learning facilities with the school. This arrangement is effective in the induction of children into the nursery.
102. The school's commitment to work-related education is good. Pupils' learning is enriched by a range of productive partnerships with local employers and relevant agencies, including the local education business partnership. Pupils' understanding of the world of work is successfully promoted through a range of well planned visits to commercial sites and visitors to the school. Several teachers have been on a range of relevant business placements which have enhanced professional development and enriched curriculum provision for pupils.
103. Provision for education for sustainable development is outstanding and fully embedded in the life and work of the school. The school's commitment to environmental and conservation issues is exemplary. As part of *eco-schools award scheme* the school is preparing for its third *European Green Flag*. This is an exceptionally impressive achievement.

104. The eco committee is very active in promoting sustainability throughout the school with the caretaker making an excellent contribution. His enthusiasm and commitment in working with pupils to develop the school grounds and their general eco work is exemplary. Pupils are involved in recycling, composting, water and energy monitoring and conservation and in waste minimisation schemes. These activities are exceptionally effective in promoting pupils' understanding of local and global environmental and conservation issues. The promotion of pupils' understanding of global citizenship is further promoted through subjects such as geography and religious education and the active support given to relevant charities.
105. Pupils' entrepreneurial skills are good. Pupils make decisions and organise events such as fundraising for local and national charities. These events range for talent shows to non-uniform days. Older pupils are responsible for running the healthy foods tuck shop.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

106. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
107. The quality of care, support and guidance provided by the school is consistently good. Effective procedures are in place to monitor and support pupils' academic progress, social development and personal welfare. Pupils say that they feel secure, safe and respected in school.
108. Pupils have regular opportunities to voice their views and opinions and do so with confidence through the school council. The council is a very good forum for the development of pupils' personal and social skills and provides a good opportunity for pupils of different ages to work together. Councillors undertake their responsibilities seriously and feel they can make a real difference to their school. They are good ambassadors for their school.
109. The personal support and guidance provided to pupils of all ages is good. The induction procedures for children entering the school are effective. As they move classes through the school and as they prepare to leave for secondary school, pupils are well supported as they move on to the next stage of their education. These procedures are appreciated by parents.
110. Pupils have access to an effective personal and social education programme, including health education, in line with national guidelines, which contributes well to pupils' emotional, personal and social development.
111. The monitoring of behaviour, attendance, punctuality and performance is thorough and rigorous and early intervention ensures any issue is dealt with quickly and efficiently. The school complies with the requirements set out in *National Assembly for Wales Circular 47/06, Inclusion and Pupil Support*.

112. The school has established and appropriate arrangements that contribute effectively to the well being of pupils. The school has a detailed policy and set of procedures to promote health and safety, including risk assessment, which are monitored and implemented consistently by the head teacher, staff and the governing body.
113. Excellent efforts are made to promote healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle and pupils respond positively to this. Pupils are encouraged to eat fresh fruit and healthy snacks, and fresh water is readily available. The breakfast club is very well supported and valued by pupils. Pupils also have access to a wide range of physical and sporting activities, which contribute significantly to their well being.
114. The school has appropriate measures to deal with appeals and complaints and to promote the protection of children. The head teacher has designated responsibility for child protection issues and there is a nominated governor for child protection issues. National child protection guidelines are followed, training is regularly updated and all adults in the school are made aware of the correct procedures to be followed.
115. Teachers recognise the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and all pupils are treated equally and with care and respect. Gender equality is promoted well and boys and girls work and play co-operatively together, valuing what each has to offer. Mixed team games, extra curricular activities and mixed gender groups in the classroom help promote equality and challenge stereotypical views. Good race relations are promoted successfully and the school recognises, respects and celebrates diversity.
116. There are appropriate measures in place to eliminate oppressive behaviour, including bullying, racial discrimination and all forms of harassment. Pupils and parents have confidence in these arrangements. The school monitors and responds to any incident promptly. School records indicate such incidents are infrequent and the school functions well as a supportive and happy community.
117. The school takes all reasonable action to secure the equal treatment of disabled pupils and to welcome disabled visitors to the school. The disability equality scheme and action plan clearly outline the school's commitment to ensuring disabled pupils are not treated any less favourably than other pupils. The school is accessible to wheelchair users, and toilet facilities are available for disabled persons.
118. The quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good with no important shortcomings. The school's arrangements meet the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales.
119. The individual special needs of pupils are identified from an early age with well developed systems in place to support their learning and behavioural needs. There is effective liaison with a wide range of specialists to ensure pupils' particular needs are met.

120. Individual education plans and individual behaviour plans for pupils with special needs are of good quality, with achievable but challenging targets. Class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator work productively together to ensure provision matches need. There are effective termly reviews of these targets and new ones devised where appropriate. Where appropriate, external agencies are involved in reviews. Parents are invited to these reviews and older pupils are becoming more directly involved. All parents are suitably informed of any new plan. Provision for statutory reviews is met.
121. The school has very effective schemes to support those pupils who are not on the special educational needs register but would benefit from additional help in their English and mathematics. The very good progress made by these pupils is carefully monitored. Learning support assistants have a very effective role in this successful provision.
122. When the school considers particular pupils have made sufficient progress from additional provision they are taken off plans or schemes but a careful eye is kept on their progress.
123. The school has clear criteria to identify more able and talented pupils. Individual action plans for these pupils are well matched to their particular needs and used effectively.
124. The school's provision for equal opportunities is good and the school places a high priority on the social inclusion of all pupils. The school makes good provision to ensure the inclusive education of all pupils, regardless of their ability or background.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

125. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
126. The grade 2 given for this question does not match the grade 1 given for key question 7. The difference between these grades is that the outstanding features of accommodation and financial management are only considered under key question 7 and not key question 5.
127. There is a outstanding sense of common purpose amongst all school staff and governors to provide the best for its pupils. There are clear aims, values and policies which appropriately support pupils' well being and the fulfilment of the potential of all pupils.
128. The head teacher's leadership successfully promotes high expectations for provision and the positive achievement of all pupils and staff. The deputy head teacher effectively carries out her significant whole-school management responsibilities. The head teacher and deputy work well together.
129. Teachers with leadership and management responsibilities know their roles very well and their work has a positive impact on standards. These aspects are a significant improvement since the last inspection.
130. Staff with responsibility for subjects or whole school aspects, maintain documentation relevant to their responsibilities. These documents vary in quality but there are outstanding examples. The development of particular subjects and aspects is well managed with clearly laid out and agreed schedules.
131. The continuing professional development of all teachers is catered for well by an established performance management system. Outcomes of the system suitably meets whole school needs, as identified in the school development plan, and also the needs of the individual teacher. Provision for newly qualified teachers meets requirements.
132. Learning support assistants provide very well structured support and have a very positive influence on pupils' academic and personal development. Whilst there is no formal performance management for learning support assistants their continuing professional development needs are effectively met. For example, two learning support assistants have attended an intensive course in the use of the Welsh language with the remaining assistants booked in when the course is repeated.

133. The school sets demanding targets for improvement which it successfully meets. Statutory targets for National Curriculum assessments at the end of year 6 in 2008 were significantly exceeded.
134. The governing body is well organised and effective in its work. Governors are kept well informed about standards through regular detailed reports from the head teacher and discussion with staff who have subject or whole school aspect responsibility. In addition, governors make their own visits to classes linked to their particular responsibilities. Governors have limited involvement in identifying areas for development but governors are kept well informed about development planning produced by staff.
135. The school development plan is effectively used in governing body meetings to judge progress made against targets. Governors are familiar with the self-evaluation report produced for this inspection. The governors' annual report to parents is a very well presented document.
136. Overall, the school takes good account of national priorities. The governing body meets its statutory duties well.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

137. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
138. There is a very positive climate for self-evaluation and continuing improvement of provision and standards in the school. There are effective, formal procedures for taking the views of most school staff and pupils into account but these arrangements are not extended to parents and governors.
139. Teachers with leadership and management responsibilities have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their areas of responsibility through a well structured system of monitoring. The information gained, together with the views of pupils and any local or national initiatives, is thoughtfully put into an order of priority for action. Major issues are formally included in the school development plan and minor issues are timetabled for action by leaders throughout the year. These aspects are fully discussed and agreed by all staff.
140. The school development plan is clearly laid out and contains a useful summary of the previous year's targets and how they have been met. The plan sets out the school's priorities for development over a three-year period in broad terms and for the current school year in sufficient detail to make it a useful working document. Actions to be taken, those responsible, timescales, success criteria, training needs and costs are clearly outlined. Measurable

improvements in standards do not feature but the plan suitably focuses on raising standards in all aspects of the school's work.

141. The self-evaluation report produced for this inspection is very honest and covers all aspects of all the Estyn key questions but is very long. The report clearly identifies strengths and areas for development. The inspection team agreed with all the school's judgements except for key question 7 where the team raised the judgement from grade 2 to grade 1. Overall, the school has made good progress since the last inspection.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
--

142. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 2 judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team judges there are sufficient outstanding features in the efficient management of resources to merit a grade 1.
143. Whilst the grade for this key question does not match the overall grade 2 given to each of key questions 1 and 5, there are particular aspects of these two key questions which are outstanding.
144. The school is staffed by a sufficient number of dedicated, experienced and suitably qualified teachers and learning support assistants. Staff have a secure knowledge of the curriculum and the ways pupils learn. The outstanding team spirit within the school ensures that staff work very well together, sharing views and experience in the best interest of pupils.
145. All staff have relevant job descriptions, clear roles and responsibilities and are managed very effectively to maximise the use of their expertise, experience and time. Teachers and learning support assistants are appropriately deployed to sensitively meet pupils' needs.
146. The school is well resourced with appropriate equipment in all subjects. Pupils have ready access to a wide range of learning resources appropriate to their age and needs. The well organised and attractive libraries are very effectively used by pupils to read for pleasure and also to seek out and research information.
147. Considerable investment has been made in information and communication technology resources. The new computer suite and interactive whiteboards are used to effectively support teaching and enhance standards across the curriculum. The use made of learning resources in the Foundation Phase is very effective and ensures that children receive learning experiences of a high quality.
148. The accommodation provides excellent facilities for teaching and learning for pupils of all ages and backgrounds. Very imaginative and outstanding use is

made of the 100 year old building to provide a welcoming and warm environment for all pupils. One particular example is the rapid conversion of a surplus classroom into a very effective mathematics learning area. Exceptional use is made of all available accommodation. Toilet facilities are outstanding. It is to the credit of staff and the governing body, together with the outstanding contribution of the caretaker, that the buildings and grounds are in such good condition and very well cared for. The interior of the school buildings are spacious and clean. Heating systems in the school are noisy and distracting. Staff manage this unwelcome noise by sensibly turning these heaters off when lessons are in session and turn them back on when the temperature falls.

149. Very effective learning areas have been developed both inside and outside in order to implement the Foundation Phase and they are managed exceptionally well. The school grounds and allotment areas are very well maintained and are effectively used to provide plentiful experiences for environmental education such as the Forest School initiative and gardening activities. Outdoor play areas have a good range of equipment which is very well managed with the help of older pupils. Pupils are eager to talk to visitors about the work they undertake in the school grounds. Extremely attractive and colourful displays around the school highlight pupils' work and celebrate their achievements. This creates a positive learning environment.
150. The school secretary, caretaker, cleaners and mid-day staff provide exceptionally effective support to the efficient daily administration and pupils well being.
151. The arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time are well managed and productive. Effective use is made of staff employed to cover for colleagues during these sessions. This ensures continuity and progression in pupils' learning and has a positive impact on standards of achievement. Workload initiative funding is well used to provide support for teachers and to reduce their administrative load.
152. The school budget is managed extremely efficiently. The head teacher is very enthusiastic about managing the budget to the best advantage of the school and is adept at seeking additional funding from a wide range of sources. The school's spending decisions are well linked to plans for future development. The very effective partnership that exists between the governing body and head teacher ensures that resources are reviewed and monitored in accordance with the school development plan in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for all pupils. A small but effective friends of the school make significant contributions to funding. Taken together, financial management is an outstanding feature of the school. The school provides value for money.

School's response to the inspection

The governors, staff and pupils of Gilfach Fargoed Primary School welcome the findings of the inspection team and are particularly pleased that Gilfach Fargoed is described as a good school with many strengths.

We are very pleased that the inspection report reflects the schools' good progress since the last inspection. Also that relationships between adults and pupils at all levels are outstanding.

The inspection team recognised the overall good progress made by pupils and the fact that the quality of teaching across the school compares very well with the most recent report from her Majesty's Chief Inspector for Education.

We are very pleased that the inspectors recognised the excellent links the school has with the community. Also that the accommodation provides excellent facilities for teaching and learning for pupils of all ages and backgrounds.

Staff would like to thank the registered inspector and his team for the most professional way that the inspection was conducted.

Following receipt of this report the governors will put in place an action plan to address all recommendations in the report. This will involve:

- raising standards in the use of mathematics to support learning across the curriculum;
- extending assessment procedures to include foundation subjects and religious education.
- formally involving governors and parents in the self evaluation process leading to school development planning.

A copy of the action plan will be sent to all parents and the local authority. The governors' annual report to parents will report on progress made in addressing the inspection recommendations.



Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Gilfach Fargoed Primary School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Address of school	Vere Street Bargoed Caerphilly
Postcode	CF81 8LB
Telephone number	01443 875510

Head teacher	Mrs Christine Lewis
Date of appointment	April 2001
Chair of governors	Mr Ian Bartlett
Registered inspector	Mr Glyn Gaskill
Dates of inspection	9 to 11 March 2009

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	10	20	18	22	15	17	19	28	149

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	6	1	6.8

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	24:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	8:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	28
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.13

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Spring 2008	90.6	89.2	91.8
Summer 2008	91.7	94.4	92.3
Autumn 2008	82.0	90.8	93.8

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	23
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results: 2008			Number of pupils in Y2:		11		
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
ENGLISH:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	9	73	18
		National	0	4	14	63	19
EN: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	82	18
		National	0	4	15	55	26
EN: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	9	91	0
		National	0	5	16	68	11
EN: Speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	27	55	18
		National	0	3	11	63	28
MATHEMATICS	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	9	73	18
		National	0	2	11	65	22
SCIENCE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	82	18
		National	0	2	9	66	23

Numbers have been rounded to nearest whole number so may not add to 100%
D- disapplied or absent. W- working towards level 1

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school:	91	In Wales:	81

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2008			Number of pupils in Y6		21					
Percentage of pupils at each level										
		D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	School	0	0	0	0	0	4	24	62	10
	National	0	0	0	1	1	3	16	51	29
Mathematics	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	67	14
	National	0	0	0	1	1	3	15	51	30
Science	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	62	10
	National	0	0	0	1	1	2	11	54	32

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school:	71%	In Wales:	76%

Numbers have been rounded to nearest whole number so may not add to 100%
D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors who spent a total of seven inspector-days in school. Estyn did not appoint a peer assessor to the inspection.

Before the inspection:

- The school produced a self-evaluation report.
- Separate meetings were held with the head teacher, members of staff, governors and parents.
- Forty-two questionnaire responses from parents were analysed.
- All documentation made available by the school was examined.
- A pre-inspection commentary outlining preliminary views from the inspection team was shared and discussed with the school.

During the inspection:

- Pupils were observed several times throughout the school day.
- Fourteen lessons or part lessons were observed covering all classes.
- Inspectors had formal and informal conversation with pupils about school life and listened to several reading.
- Inspectors had formal and informal conversations with members of staff regarding different aspects of the school.
- Registration sessions and assemblies were observed.
- Samples of pupils' work from all classes were examined.
- Attendance and budget data, pupils' records and other evidence made available by the school were examined.
- The head teacher was the school's nominee and was present when inspectors held meetings.

After the inspection:

- Findings were shared with the school staff and the governing body in separate meetings.
- The school received a near final draft of the report for comment and response before final publication.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Glyn Gaskill Registered Inspector	Context. Summary and Recommendations. Key Question 5 and 6. Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2 and 4.
Mrs Eleri Honour Team Inspector	Key Questions 7. Contributions to Key Question 1, 2 and 3. Bilingualism.
Mrs Janet Warr Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3 and 4.
Mrs Christine Lewis School's nominee	Liasing between the inspection team and the school. Provision of information.

The contractor was:

Evenlode Education Ltd
Little Garth
St John's Close
Hawarden
Flintshire
CH5 3QJ

Acknowledgement:

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