

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Hillside Primary School
Upper Hill Street
Blaenavon
NP4 9NN**

School Number: 6782109

Date of Inspection: 02/03/09

by

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Hillside 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 Hillside Primary School took place between 02/03/09 and 04/03/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by Peter Mathias 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 **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Hillside is a County Primary School situated in the once industrial town of Blaenavon. The local authority (LA) is Torfaen. The school provides education for boys and girls between the ages of four and eleven. There are 135 pupils on roll which is below the figure at the time of the last inspection in the spring term 2003, when the current headteacher was in post. Since 2006 the school roll has increased.
2. During this inspection, the school planned for and taught reception pupils in terms of the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. It has chosen not to adopt the Foundation Phase curriculum. It does not have a nursery.
3. Nearly all pupils come from the local area which is a Communities First area and is a mixture of private and social housing. Approximately 32% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the LA average of 17.7% and the Welsh average of 17.5%.
4. Most children enter the school in the reception class with below the levels of basic skills and experiences expected for their age. All pupils except one have English as a first language. No pupil uses Welsh as a first language.
5. Two boys and one girl have statements of special educational needs (SEN) and 27 pupils are identified as having some additional learning needs (ALN). No pupil has the National Curriculum (NC) disapplied. Five pupils are looked after by the LA. One pupil; was excluded in the previous school year.
6. During the inspection one member of the permanent teaching staff was absent due to long-term sickness. Her place was taken by a supply teacher.
7. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Eco-Schools (Silver) Standard.

The School's Aims

8. The school's aims are that: -
 - pupils have a positive attitude to learning and are confident learners, able to build upon success;
 - pupils are motivated, challenged and able to achieve their full potential;
 - pupils show a caring, thoughtful nature and are happy and self-confident in all they do;
 - pupils develop a pride and respect in their school and themselves;
 - each pupil is valued as an individual and is encouraged to work, share and play together;

- pupils are reliable, responsible and have a sense of belonging to the town and have the confidence to take part in events and activities offered within the community;
- pupils have a window on to other opportunities and experiences in the wider world; and
- the school encourages partnerships with pupils, parents, teachers and governors in order to give their children the best education possible.

The school's priorities and targets

9. The school's priorities for 2008/2009 are to: -
- raise standards of achievement in English, mathematics and science in KS1;
 - improve standards in mathematics in both key stages;
 - improve average annual attendance;
 - raise standards of teaching in KS1 and KS2 in all subjects;
 - ensure that the curriculum meets the needs and interests of learners;
 - raise pupil attainment by improving the rigour of annual performance targets;
 - raise pupils' attainment by setting realistic and challenging targets and goals for all teaching staff;
 - improve stakeholder involvement and strategic planning;
 - improve the analysis of performance indicated in whole-school self-evaluation;
 - develop the role of governors in whole-school evaluation; and
 - improve the monitoring of resource allocations and use.

Summary

10. Hillside Primary School has made good progress since its last inspection in January 2003. It is a good school. It is well led.

Table of grades awarded

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?	2

11. The inspection team agreed with six of the seven judgements in the seven key questions made by the school and about the standards pupils achieved and other areas of its work. Where the inspection team disagreed, this was because the school under estimated by one grade about how well learners achieved. Nearly all pupils, starting from a low base by the age of eleven achieve at least in line with what is expected of them and many exceed this.
12. In the end of Key Stage 1 (KS1) national teacher assessments for seven year olds in 2008, starting from a low base, the proportions of pupils attaining at least the expected level, (Level 2) in English and mathematics were below the LA and national averages. In science they were above. The combined results were below these averages. The proportion of pupils who reached the higher level (Level 3) in these subjects were below these averages in English and mathematics and well above in science. In these assessments girls were out-performed by boys. However, in 2007 girls out-performed boys and in 2006 boys out-performed girls.
13. In the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) national teacher assessments for eleven year olds in 2008 the proportion of pupils attaining at least the expected level (Level 4) in English and science were above the LA and national averages. In mathematics the results were just below these averages. Combined results were just above local and national averages. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) was just below the local and national averages in English, below in mathematics and above in science. In these assessments girls out-performed boys which reversed the trend set in 2006/2007. In 2008 the school exceeded its targets agreed with the LA.

Standards

14. Overall standards of achievement in the subjects and areas of learning inspected are as follows: -

Grades for subjects inspected

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	83%	13%	0%	0%

15. These figures are close to those reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) in the Annual Report 2007/2008 (Primary) where standards were good or better in 84% of lessons. In this inspection 87% of lessons were Grade 2 or better.

Subjects and areas of learning for the under fives

	Reception
Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 2
Personal and social development	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2

16. The overall quality of education provided for children under five is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
17. Many children begin school with levels of basic skills and experiences which are below those expected and generally found amongst children of this age. They make good progress and are ready to begin the next stage of their education.

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	N	R	KS1	KS2
Under fives		2		
Mathematics			2	2
Science			2	2
Design technology			2	2
Information and communications technology			2	2
Physical education			2	2

18. Pupils with SEN and those who have ALN make good progress as do those who have English as an additional language.
19. When the results for KS1 are compared to schools considered to have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the school performed below these similar school in English and science and well below these schools in mathematics. The combined results were low. The KS2 combined results were very high in English and science and above most of these schools in mathematics.

20. Overall, pupils' standards and progress in the key skills are good. In communication in English and in Welsh, from lower than expected starting points, children in reception speak and listen well. In KS1 and KS2 they build successfully on these skills and reach good standards. However, particularly in KS2 while pupils read and write for a wide-range of reasons using both key skills, their overall levels of skills are limited. Many do not show sufficient pride in presenting their work neatly. They lack expression when reading aloud.
21. Bearing in mind the starting points of pupils and the setting of the school, pupil's bilingual skills have some shortcomings. Across the school responses are often too brief and many pupils do not use Welsh and English together in their lessons and in their day-to-day activities.
22. Pupils' mathematical and their problem-solving skills are good. In the reception class, children make good progress in their play in measuring and in resolving practical problems. In KS1 and KS2 nearly all pupils use their mathematical skills well to measure and to quantify information. They find out for themselves and use their own strategies to solve problems in mathematics and in other subjects notably in design technology.
23. Across the school, pupils' skills in information communications technology (ICT) are good. In reception children use their computers confidently when making their way through simple programs to develop their skills in a wide-range of areas. In KS1 and KS2 pupils use ICT well across the curriculum.
24. Pupils' personal and social skills, their creative skills, their ability to work with others and their knowledge of how to improve their own learning and performance are also good.
25. Pupils behave well and have a good appreciation of the importance of treating each other fairly and equally. They have a growing understanding of how the world of business and commerce work.
26. Attendance at 92% is close to the LA and national averages. Most pupils arrive punctually and the school day starts on time.

The quality of education and training

Grades for teaching

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
11%	82%	7%	0%	0%

27. These figures are better overall than the national picture reported by HMCI in the Annual Report 2007/2008 (Primary) when the quality of teaching was good or better, that is Grade 1 or Grade 2 in 83% of lessons and outstanding (Grade 1) in 16% of lessons.
28. In the reception the planning and organisation of a wide-range of suitable activities is in line with the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

29. In KS1 and KS2 in the best lessons, the outstanding features include: -
- Well structured planning leading to the systematic introduction and development of tasks;
 - positive encouragement to give pupils confidence that they can succeed;
 - very good examples to copy and very good subject knowledge;
 - very clever questioning which encourage pupils to make thoughtful responses;
 - lively and infectious enthusiasm for the topics being taught which makes learning fun;
 - careful inclusion of all pupils in the learning; and
 - very positive and constructive relationships between adults and pupils.
30. Where teaching has some shortcomings the lessons are slow to start and lack a real sense of purpose. Pupils sit passively for too long. Opportunities to develop pupils' bilingual skills are missed.
31. Arrangements for assessment and its use in planning and improving learning meet statutory requirements. There are good arrangements in place for teachers to agree the standards pupils achieve both within the school and with other nearby schools including the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. The progress of children in reception is regularly reviewed and recorded as is pupils' progress in KS1 and KS2. All pupils are made well aware of what they need to do to improve. Reports are of a good quality and meet statutory requirements. They provide parents with sufficient detail to judge the progress of their children.
32. The curriculum meets the needs of all learners as well as all legal requirements of the NC and the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. The curriculum for children in the reception provides appropriately for them. Across KS1 and KS2 the curriculum is carefully planned and it is broad, balanced and interesting. Policies for each subject are in place and are well-used. Homework is appropriate and is set regularly. The curriculum is accessible to all pupils including those with SEN and ALN and those pupils who do not have English as their first language.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Acts of collective worship meet legal requirements and are of a broadly Christian nature. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. These values are regularly reinforced through the curriculum and in the day-to-day life of the school. Pupils are sociable, polite and welcoming. All are given good opportunities to appreciate the culture of Wales and to experience the richness and diversity of modern society as well as to learn more about their responsibilities as citizens of the world.
34. There are good arrangements in place including the eco-committee and gardening club to promote successfully understanding of the importance of sustainability and conservation.

35. Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported. Support for pupils with SEN is of a high quality. The school is a very caring place and there are good links with local support services. Pupils' well-being and safety are rigorously reviewed. Pupils have a good understanding of how to eat and live healthily. The school council is well-established and is effective in making pupils aware of the democratic process. All pupils, including those with English as an additional language have the same opportunities to be included in all school activities.
36. The school positively encourages tolerance of others and has good guidelines to address any issues of bullying or of other forms of harassment. Child protection arrangements meet local guidelines and recommended good practice.
37. There are very good arrangements for monitoring pupils' punctuality and attendance. A detailed survey of the school site has been undertaken to review accessibility for those with physical disabilities. There is a suitable accessibility plan in place.

Leadership and management

38. The headteacher gives the school a purposeful and effective lead. Much has been achieved since the last inspection in raising standards in teaching and learning. Staff morale is high and teachers work closely and effectively together. They have high expectations of their pupils.
39. There are good arrangements for the senior management team and teachers to manage their responsibilities well. These are carried out conscientiously and form the basis for well informed decision making.
40. The school takes careful note of local initiatives and national priorities. However, pupils' bilingual skills are not encouraged sufficiently both in lessons and in the everyday life of the school. Arrangements to provide teachers with time during the taught week to plan, prepare and assess are very effectively organised, managed and well used.
41. The governing body is very supportive of the school and meets all of its statutory duties. Governors are well informed about the life of the school. The school's finances are carefully managed and well-focused on its educational needs. However, the governing body does not hold the professional leadership of the school sufficiently and constructively to account. They lack the means and experience to judge the success of decisions they have made. They do not review the outcomes of their spending decisions rigorously enough to determine whether these have produced best value for money.
42. The process of self-evaluation is well-established and sufficiently detailed. It is based on a wide-range of first-hand information. The views of staff, governors, pupils and parents are considered. The self-evaluation document is carefully constructed and is closely linked to the school improvement plan (SIP) and the school's performance management arrangements. The document is sufficiently detailed and broadly accurate.
43. Day-to-day administration is efficient and provides a positive welcome to all visitors. The school runs smoothly.

44. A wide range of colourful displays generally provide an attractive environment for learning. However, as a whole the school buildings are old and damp. The school is kept clean and tidy.
45. The school is well staffed and resourced. Workforce remodelling has resulted successfully widening the role of the special needs co-ordinator (SENCo). Resources are readily available and are well used. They are of a good quality and quantity to support learning.
46. Bearing in mind the overall quality of education provided and the good progress pupils make, often from low starting points, the school gives good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school in the areas inspected, the staff and governing body need to: -

- R1 raise standards in the key skills of communication in English and Welsh, particularly in reading and writing skills and in pupils' use of incidental Welsh where they are Grade 3; and
- R2 strengthen the governing body's procedures and understanding of how to judge the outcomes of their spending decisions against the money spent. *

* Which the school has already identified as a priority

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 did not match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report. This was because the school under-estimated by one grade how well learners achieve and the progress they make.
48. In the 2008 national teacher assessments for seven year olds, starting often from a low base, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2) in English and mathematics were below the LA and national averages. In science they were above. The combined results were below these averages. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) was below these averages in English and mathematics but well above in science. Boys attained better than girls which is the reverse of the position in 2007 and a repeat of the pattern of 2006.
49. In the 2008 national teacher assessments for eleven year olds, the proportion of pupils attaining at least the expected level (Level 4) in English and science was above the LA and national averages. In mathematics it was just below these averages. The combined results were just above the local and national averages. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) was just below the local and national averages in English, below in mathematics and above in science. In these assessments, girls out-performed boys, which was the reverse of the pattern in 2006 and 2007.
50. When the school's KS1 results in 2008 are compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, results in English and science were below most of these schools and well below in mathematics. The combined results were also low. In contrast the KS2 results were very high in English and science and above in mathematics. The combined results in KS2 were very high.
51. Compared to the previous inspection, there has been a sharp rise in the trend of improvement in the KS2 results in English and a significant improvement recently in mathematics and science. The school exceeded its targets in the KS2 assessments in English, mathematics and science. The combined results were also above the targets agreed with the LA.
52. Many children begin school with skills and experiences which are below expected levels for this age. They make good progress in the reception and KS1 but remain below national and local averages at the age of seven. Pupils continue to build successfully on what they already know and can do during KS2. They make good progress to reach levels of attainment which are well above schools considered to be broadly similar.
53. Nearly all pupils, including those who do not have English as a first language make good progress and by the age of eleven, many exceed the standards predicted for them at the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils of all abilities, including those who are identified as more able and talented generally achieve well.

54. Across the school, pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them and how well they are achieving. They know what they could do to improve.
55. The school plans and teaches children in the reception class in terms of the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. The overall quality of education provided for children under five is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
56. Standards of attainment in the lessons in the subjects inspected were as follows: -

Subject grades for subjects inspected

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	83%	13%	0%	0%

57. These figures are similar to those reported in HMCI's Annual Report 2007/2008 (Primary) where standards were good or better in 84% of lessons. This is a significant improvement on the standards of achievement in the previous inspection.

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	N	R	KS1	KS2
Under fives		2		
Mathematics			2	2
Science			2	2
Information communications technology			2	2
Design technology			2	2
Physical education			2	2

58. Overall, pupils' achievements in the key skills are good. However, standards of communication in English and Welsh have some shortcomings. In communication in English and Welsh pupils speak confidently and listen well. Their reading and writing skills are limited. In the reception children make good progress often from below expected starting points in these key skills. In KS1 and KS2 pupils speak clearly and confidently in both languages. In Welsh, bearing in mind their limited knowledge of the language, children in the reception classes are beginning to recognise simple words and to count in Welsh.
59. In KS1 pupils write reasonably confidently for example, in science and in design technology when recording their observations or when planning a design. In KS2 they write for a range of reasons and in different styles. However, their presentational skills at both key stages are limited. Many pupils do not show sufficient care and pride in presenting their work neatly and legibly.
60. Younger pupils are beginning to read for information using reference books and the Internet. However, older ones do not build sufficiently on what they already know and can do. Many lack confidence to use the index speedily and efficiently. Many older pupils read accurately but lack expression and understanding of why they prefer some writers to others.

61. Across the school competence in Welsh and English has some shortcomings. While children in the reception are beginning to communicate in Welsh as well as English, in KS1 and KS2 pupils do not use Welsh and English together. Their responses are often limited to short answers in Welsh to simple questions. They do not regularly use both languages in their lessons and in their day-to-day lives in school.
62. Pupils' mathematical skills are good. In the reception children make good progress in learning how to count and how to weigh and measure in a variety of activities and in their play. In KS1 and KS2 pupils use their mathematical skills well, for example to collect and interpret data they have found for example, in geography, history and science. They measure accurately in design technology.
63. Across the school, pupils' skills in ICT are good. Children in the reception use the mouse confidently and accurately to find their way through simple programs to help them recognise words, to count and to create pictures. In KS1 and KS2 pupils work independently and use a wide-range of programs confidently to reinforce their work in other subjects such as science, history, design technology and art. Older pupils in KS2 present information effectively using multimedia programs. They compose, draft, edit and print their work accurately.
64. Pupils' understanding of their Welsh cultural heritage is good. Nearly all pupils know about their local heritage and have a good understanding of the wider history of Wales through visits to a number of places of interest. They have a good understanding of the work of some Welsh artists, composers, musicians and writers.
65. Pupils' personal and social skills are good. From reception all show positive attitudes to adults and to each other. They co-operate together willingly, often working successfully in small groups. They take on responsibilities readily and carry them out carefully. They show a proper regard for each others' feelings and are sensitive to the needs of others.
66. Problem-solving skills are good. In reception all children solve practical problems enthusiastically in their play and in a wide-range of carefully constructed activities. In KS1 and KS2 nearly all pupils make well thought out plans, for example in design technology to solve practical problems. In science they think things out for themselves, findings their own answers based upon what they have discovered.
67. Across the school pupils' creative skills are good. In reception children experiment with a wide-range of art materials and design and make in two and three-dimensions. In KS1 and KS2 they respond well to music when they perform with confidence. They work creatively using a range of media in art and in design technology.
68. From reception nearly all are willing to work together collaboratively. They express their thoughts and opinions readily and are constructive when evaluating the work of others.
69. Across the school, many pupils have a clear idea of how to improve their work. All pupils are aware of their own targets and work enthusiastically to achieve them both in the shorter and longer term.

70. The pupils' behaviour in class, at playtime and around the school is good. Pupils in both key stages are motivated in class to carry out the tasks set by the teacher. Most show good levels of concentration but a very few are overly chatty and do not get on with their work. This is well managed by the teachers. Pupils are helpful and courteous and look after one another.
71. The school is very proactive in ensuring that pupils attend school regularly and, as a result, attendance levels over the last year are consistently around the Welsh average for primary schools of 92%. Most pupils arrive punctually and the school day starts on time. They have a good understanding of the equal opportunity issues and of the need to respect the views and backgrounds of others. They have a growing understanding of the world of business and commerce.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

72. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation.
73. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
11%	82%	7%	0%	0%

74. The overall quality of teaching is good or better, that is Grade 1 or Grade 2 in 93% of lessons. These figures are close to the national figure reported by HMCI in the Annual Report 2007/2008 (Primary) when the quality of teaching was good or better, that is Grade 1 and Grade 2 in 83% and outstanding (Grade 1) in 16% of lessons.
75. In the reception, teaching is well organised around a good range of interesting, stimulating and appropriate experiences. There is a close and effective partnership between all staff so that children enjoy coming to school and they make good progress.
76. Teachers' planning in KS1 and KS2 is well-structured and organised. Lessons are systematically introduced and developed. Tasks are well-matched to the different ages and abilities of pupils including those with SEN and ALN. When the lessons begin, teachers emphasise very clearly what the objectives of the lessons are. They regularly remind pupils of the time they have to complete particular parts of their tasks. They positively encourage pupils to achieve well and to reach their goals.
77. The best lessons which have outstanding features are found in KS1 and KS2. In these lessons teachers set very energetic and high quality examples, for instance in a physical education lessons. They question cleverly to elicit thoughtful responses from their pupils. They show very good subject knowledge and through their infectious enthusiasm make the lessons come to life. They effectively include all pupils in lessons so that all feel that they have important parts to play.

78. Teaching in the best lessons very successfully succeeds in making learning an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Teachers very successfully encourage even the youngest pupils to evaluate their own work against agreed criteria. The pace of learning is brisk and teachers ensure that pupils work purposefully throughout the time available. Relationships between teachers and all pupils are very positive. All pupils, including those with ALN, are very well supported. In the best lessons, teachers use a wide-range of techniques to evaluate what has been taught including digital cameras.
79. Where teaching had some shortcomings the lessons were slow to start and lacked a real sense of purpose. Pupils spend too much time listening passively. They lacked opportunities to be actively involved in their own learning or to use Welsh incidentally and naturally in their lessons.
80. The school's provision to meet individual pupils' needs of all abilities, to monitor and review progress over time is good and meets statutory requirements. Children in the early years are closely monitored and the standards of ongoing assessment and recording in reception are good. The assessment includes regular testing and recording in English, mathematics and science. Every half term during an assessment week, teachers together with their pupils use a program which tracks individual pupil progress. These assessments inform teaching, individual pupil target-setting and the basis of the targets which are set for whole school improvement.
81. There are well established and effective arrangements to agree the standards pupils attain between year groups and between the school and other schools in the area including the local secondary school in English, mathematics and science.
82. The quality of assessment and feedback to pupils that encourages and enables them to understand what they need to do to improve and make progress is good. Recent initiatives introduced, such as the critical skills curriculum and assessment for learning procedures, enable pupils to have an idea of what they need to do to improve. Teachers use a good marking system to guide pupils and this is effective across both key stages.
83. Assessment for learning targets are presented and recorded in their books, giving pupils ownership and increased responsibility for the monitoring of their learning.
84. Pupils' annual reports to parents are of good quality and comply with statutory requirements. They provide information on standards achieved and indicate how improvements can be made. Parents are given good and regular informal and formal opportunities to respond to the reports.

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

85. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

86. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced, and builds systematically on what pupils already know and can do and meets the statutory requirements of the NC and Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. It meets the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and the requirements for personal and social education, including sex education and drugs awareness. The curriculum provision for pupils with SEN is good as are arrangements to help those who enter school with English as a second language. Overall, the school's provision successfully reflects national priorities for lifelong learning and community regeneration.
87. The school's response to pupils' learning needs is good. It reflects the aspirations and needs of pupils well by providing equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum that is very well planned enabling pupils to build on what they know and can do.
88. Curriculum planning builds steadily on existing knowledge, understanding and skills. It is very effective with two and three year-cycles being planned and successfully put into practice. Policies for each subject are in place and there are curriculum overviews for all subjects. Long term planning is based on different schemes of work and teacher's own plans which are specific and detailed and provide a clear structure and progression for all pupils.
89. There is a detailed homework policy which is consistently followed by the pupils.
90. Pupils have equal opportunities to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities including music, gardening, netball and an eco club. This also includes a planned series of visits both in and out of school on a residential basis. Visits to local off-site provision, such as the Heritage Centre and Ironworks, provide a very rich source of educational opportunities. One noteworthy example is where pupils were invited by the BBC to participate in the harvest festival service in the local church, as part of their recent filming of 'The Coal House' series. The local leisure centre provides enhancement for regular swimming lessons and visitors to the school extend and enrich pupils' understanding of the world around them.
91. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with no important shortcomings. Personal and social education is taught across the curriculum and is guided by a policy which takes account of national guidelines. It is timetabled through the school's critical skills programme and personal target activities, where pupils discuss all aspects of school life, developing confidence and self-esteem.
92. Acts of collective worship meet local requirements and are appropriate. An air of reverence is maintained during the assemblies in the hall, where a strong sense of a caring family community is evident. Pupils' achievements are positively recognised and used effectively as a basis for developing positive attitudes. Strong links exist between the local churches and school and these contribute significantly to the promotion of the schools' ethos and values.
93. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and these values are positively reinforced through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Every day events are

thoughtfully used to illustrate and reinforce moral values in lessons. Pupils are sociable, polite and welcoming and are clearly familiar with the expectations set by the school. Older pupils play with and take care of the younger ones. They are courteous and helpful to visitors and are aware of their responsibilities to one another. They readily volunteer for and accept responsibility.

94. The rich local environment and wider community is used to promote cultural and social awareness. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is well planned in all subjects. This planning includes visits to places of Welsh historical interest and developing an understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales. Geography, religious education and weekly school Welsh assemblies provide good opportunities for all pupils to understand each others' cultures.
95. The school's partnerships with parents, the local community, other schools and higher education institutes are highly successful and have outstanding features that enrich the life and work of the school, enhancing pupils' learning experiences. Parents are very supportive of the school and express satisfaction with the aims and values that the school promotes. They particularly appreciate the Family Links clinic, based in the school that runs a variety of programmes, offering very young mothers an outreach service in a wide range of areas.
96. There are good initiatives in place, which successfully promote pupils' awareness of the need for sustainability. They are keen to recycle and to conserve electricity. Learning about global citizenship is well promoted with pupils studying the lives of others in India and studying other faiths through religious education.
97. The school is open to all and each pupil has an equal opportunity to take part fully in school life. There is no discrimination or stereotyping and the school tackles social disadvantage through, for example, enabling families to attend the Flying Start scheme and other supportive initiatives.
98. Several projects, such as the making of lanterns and the world of work week, help pupils of all ages understand the need to develop skills which will stand them in good stead in their adult lives. Learning experiences reflect the needs of the community well and there is a very close working relationship with the Communities First team.

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

Grade 2: Good feature and no important shortcomings

99. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
100. The school plans and manages care arrangements and support services very effectively. It is a very caring school and there are good links with the local services involved in the health and care of children and their families.

101. The school is safe and secure and good systems are in place to track pupils' academic progress and their physical and emotional development. Staff know the pupils very well and are sensitive to their needs. Pupils are confident that there is always a trusted adult in whom they can confide.
102. The views of parents and carers are sought and attention is paid to the findings of the questionnaires that the school undertakes. It is very much a community school. Although few parents attended the pre-inspection meeting, those that did spoke very highly of the relationships between staff and parents/carers and feel that the school 'values everyone.'
103. Great care is taken to ensure that new children entering reception settle in happily. There is very good liaison between the school and the local nursery which facilitates this. At the end of their primary education, pupils are given good opportunities to get to know the secondary school of their choice. Hillside staff and staff from the secondary school work very closely together to ensure a smooth transition, both pastorally and academically.
104. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' punctuality and attendance are very good and they are on-going. Records are carefully checked daily and there are immediate follow-ups on any problems. Good strategies, particularly the assertive discipline policy, help pupils who have behavioural problems and all pupils' behaviour is carefully monitored.
105. There are very clear, well documented procedures for assuring pupils' well-being and safety. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is carefully structured and covers many aspects of health. Pupils learn for example about their bodies and the need for a healthy diet. There are healthy snack options available in school at break times.
106. Audit and safety checks are regularly carried out and good policies are in place to cover health and safety, including risk assessments before school trips are undertaken. The school council is well-established and has a positive role in the school. Its views are carefully considered. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the democratic process. There is a well supported breakfast club.
107. Child protection is taken very seriously. Staff are trained to spot signs of any abuse and there is a clear procedure in place which is in line with local authority guidelines and recommended good practice, should there be a problem. Staff know that the headteacher is the named person responsible for this area.
108. The provision to meet the learning needs of pupils who have ALN is very good. The individual support and detailed monitoring procedures that exist to review their individual progress over time is very good. The annual reviews of their statements meet statutory requirements. The school makes good use of the education psychologist and other outside agencies. The preparation and support for the next phase of their education is very good.
109. The support for learning throughout the school is good. The SEN policy reflects the requirements of the Code of Practice and the additional support provided for these

pupils is very good, enabling them to feel special and included. Arrangements to help those who have additional literacy needs, especially the support for boys requiring multi-sensory teaching is outstanding. The support for pupils who are on the autistic spectrum or have communication problems is very good and pupils are positively managed, effectively raising their standards of achievement. The curriculum for these pupils is suitably modified. The curriculum is challenging and interesting to more able and talented pupils.

110. The support that helps meet the needs of different groups of pupils, who require literacy enhancement programmes and multi-sensory teaching, has outstanding aspects. The school has specifically designed the 'Raise Grant Three', to be used to meet the needs of a group of boys who have specific learning needs in mathematics. This group makes very good progress. Other groups of pupils receive regular help with literacy programmes that are regularly monitored and assessed. Able pupils are identified and given appropriate challenge in their learning.
111. Teachers and support staff work as a team providing continuity of support and assessment of need. This inclusiveness is a strength of the school. Targets, in individual educational programmes (IEPs) are stated in observable, measurable terms and can be clearly monitored and reviewed. Parents are fully consulted regarding their child's SEN status. Parents attend regular review meetings and can speak to the class teacher or SENCO regarding their child's progress, at any time.
112. The school's behaviour management programme is positive and effective. It is based on the positive recognition of pupils' achievements and success. Good provision is in place for pupils who are at risk of exclusion and the school liaises with the relevant outside agencies for further support. One pupil was temporarily excluded last year.
113. Pupils are made aware of cultural diversity, through assemblies, geography and religious education. Tolerance of others is encouraged and there are good guidelines as to how to deal with any bullying or other forms of harassment. Pupils are aware of the need to tell an adult and are confident that their concerns will be appropriately dealt with. In the first instance, they are encouraged to sort their own problems out with adult supervision.
114. There is a suitable accessibility plan and the management are very well aware of their statutory duties to ensure equal access to pupils and adults with disabilities. The school has undertaken a scrutiny of the site to identify access for the disabled.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

115. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

116. The headteacher gives a purposeful and effective lead. She has achieved much since the last inspection in raising standards in teaching and learning and in giving the school a strong sense of pride and confidence in what it is achieving. Teachers work together cohesively and have high expectations of themselves, each other and their pupils.
117. All professional staff work enthusiastically together to provide a positive lead to their responsibilities which are shared across the key stages. All contribute effectively to the management of the subjects of the NC and ensure that all pupils have equal access to what is taught and in all aspects of school life. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team are well informed about the needs of the school and plan carefully to review the impact of decisions and policies which have been agreed, for example to raise standards across the school.
118. There are extensive arrangements to project and evaluate pupils' progress. These are supported by well-established procedures to provide particular help on a regular basis to pupils who are not achieving as well as they reasonably could do. Resources and support staff are well used to maintain these activities.
119. The school takes careful note of local initiatives and national priorities. While the school has given increased attention to developing pupils' abilities to use Welsh regularly in lessons and informally in their day-to-day lives in school, standards and progress are inconsistent across the school.
120. The school has thoughtfully addressed the training needs of staff in preparation for the introduction of the Foundation Phase. However, it has decided to continue to teach for the time being the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
121. There are well established systems in place for the senior management team to observe teaching and learning and to evaluate the progress the school is making. There are close links between the school's performance management arrangements and this monitoring process in order to identify and address in-service training needs. There are appropriate arrangements in place to support newly qualified teachers and teachers who are new to the school.
122. The governing body is very supportive of the professional staff and meets all of its statutory duties. Positive links with individual staff ensure that governors are well informed about standards. They are fully aware of the school's longer-term needs. The governing body is in the process of strengthening its procedures in order to hold the professional leadership of the school constructively to account. Currently governors lack the means and experience to judge the impact of their spending decisions upon the quality of education provided. They do not give sufficient attention to judging whether or not the initiatives they have agreed provide best value for money and have met the objectives envisaged when the decisions were made.
123. The school's finances are carefully managed and well-focused on the educational needs of the school. The school's budget is closely linked to the school's performance management priorities and to the priorities set out in the SIP.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

124. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
125. The process of gathering information about the performance of the school is well-established. It is firmly based on first-hand evidence which has been carefully evaluated. The professional staff are well-informed about their areas of responsibility. The views of all staff, governors, pupils and parents have been gathered and carefully considered.
126. Teachers assess pupils' progress very rigorously on a regular basis. The comparative performance of the school is carefully considered by the senior management team. Teachers put the information the process highlights to good use in the overall strategy of raising standards further.
127. The self-evaluation document is carefully constructed and thoughtfully addresses the seven key questions of the Estyn framework for the inspection of schools. It is generally accurate in setting out the school's strengths and areas for development. It is closely linked to the SIP which in turn is carefully related to the school's extensive performance management programme. This reflects local and national priorities as well as the training needs of individual members of staff.
128. The inspection team agreed with six of the seven judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report. Where the inspection team disagreed this is because the school under-estimated by one grade how well learners achieve and the progress they make.
129. Since the last inspection in the spring term 2003 the school has made good progress in addressing nearly all of the key issues of that inspection. Overall, standards are higher now than they were and the school has made good long-term progress in its performance in the national teacher assessments, particularly at KS2. However, while all pupils write extensively for a range of reasons, many have limited skills in presenting their work neatly.
130. Teachers now plan their teaching more rigorously and effectively. There are also extensive arrangements which are well-used to record pupils' progress and to help to raise standards further. The senior management team and the professional teaching staff have well established and effective arrangements in place to look at the quality of teaching and learning going on in the school and to judge the success of initiatives they are pursuing.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

131. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

132. Staff are well trained, experienced and enthusiastic and the school benefits from the expertise of teachers and support staff. The teacher's planning, preparation and assessment arrangements are organised appropriately and covered by an additional support teacher. All work purposefully as a team to provide a secure, happy and industrious environment for all pupils.
133. Support assistants successfully assist teachers and are strategically deployed and briefed so as to provide very effective encouragement to pupils with SEN and ALN. They are highly valued members of the school community. The school has taken effective steps to extend the role of the SENCo as a result of workforce remodelling. The management, training and deployment of teaching and support staff is good and this impacts on the quality of learning. All support assistants are well managed and work closely with teachers and to support pupils exceptionally well.
134. The school secretary makes a valuable contribution to the smooth and efficient running of the administrative aspects of school life. Ancillary staff including the mid-day supervisors, canteen staff, caretaker and cleaners, make a valuable contribution. A very good team spirit is evident and they are highly valued for the contribution they make.
135. Overall, the provision, quality and accessibility of learning resources throughout the school are good and appropriate to pupils' ages and needs. Recent spending decisions made by the headteacher and the governing body, including that on the new ICT suite and interactive white boards, have proved to be beneficial to pupils. Great care is taken to ensure that all learners have good access to effective resources which match their needs.
136. Throughout the school, colourful displays in classrooms and shared areas celebrate pupils' achievements and provide a cheerful, learning environment that is kept clean, pleasant and inviting by the caretaker and cleaning staff.
137. In KS1, the classrooms and outside areas have been remodelled in line with the Foundation Phase requirements.
138. Secure play areas have been developed outside the Early Years classes to allow teachers to take on board aspects of the Foundation phase. A daily family clinic occupies a purpose built room and this is an integral part of the Early Years provision. The school hall is used in the evenings as a community facility as well as being timetabled for a range of activities during the day. The library is well resourced and also used for adult education working groups.
139. However, the school buildings are damp and old with areas of dry rot in the upper school that limits display opportunities. Movement in the walls of the buildings causes gaps and these are of great concern to the school. There is limited space to the sloping outdoor play areas and limited scope for developing environmental activities because of the very small grassed area.
140. All staff engage in an appropriate level of training to support their professional needs and areas for development. The continual professional development programme is

managed effectively. The range of courses and activities undertaken contributes very well to realising the priorities identified in the SIP. The school has developed good processes to ensure that information gained from staff training is disseminated to all members.

141. Financial management at the school is thorough. The headteacher and the governing body carefully monitor spending through thorough monthly budget meetings. Bearing in mind the progress pupils make, the overall quality of education provided and the good quality of leadership and management in the school, the school provides good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Under Fives

142. The school has chosen not to introduce the Foundation Phase into reception until September 2009 and currently the planning and teaching are according to the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
143. Standards of achievement in the six areas of learning for children under five are judged as follows:-

Language, literacy and communication skills

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

144. Children listen carefully and are beginning to listen for longer periods of time in tabletop activities. Children enjoy sharing books with an adult, such as 'The Little Red Hen', naming the main characters within the story very well. Children express their thoughts confidently in whole-class, in small group sessions and listen when someone else is talking. They eagerly join group discussions and offer their personal experiences, developing independent skills in answering and asking questions clearly.
145. Children experiment with mark making, drawing and writing in a wide variety of media, both inside and outside the classroom. Some write their names confidently whilst others can build up simple words using good letter sound knowledge. Children know and read their names well and use correct marks when attempting to write simple sentences, to a good level.
146. Children are developing a good knowledge that written symbols have sound and meaning. Some read books to a good standard and are making progress in using this skill in new experiences. They are making very good progress in the naming of letter sounds and using these sounds in a range of reading activities.
147. Welsh is successfully introduced with children understanding and responding to a range of everyday commands and phrases. They enjoy and know numerous songs

and rhymes, participate in literacy games and group activities, using newly learnt vocabulary.

Shortcomings

148. There are no important shortcomings.

Personal and social development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

149. Children achieve good standards in personal and social development. All are happy and secure in their environment and develop good relationships with adults and other children, showing respect and care. They leave their parents without fuss and follow health and hygiene routines very well. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their work as individuals, in pairs and groups. Children become more confident as they choose from the range of activities available. Children concentrate for longer, working together, contented in small groups, around adult-directed activities or in individual play. All children show a good level of responsibility for selecting and clearing away resources.

150. Children's behaviour is very good and they work and play together effectively in all aspects. They make very good progress in turn taking and wait patiently for their turn. They are very supportive of each other and demonstrate a caring and sensitive attitude. They have a growing understanding of what is right and wrong, sharing equipment, helping each other and developing a respect for rules. They demonstrate a very conscientious approach to their work and new learning experiences.

Shortcomings

151. There are no important shortcomings.

Mathematical development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

152. Nearly all children develop a good understanding of mathematical concepts by singing number rhymes in English and Welsh, increasing their knowledge through exciting oral work. They engage in practical activities that involve sorting, matching, ordering and counting. For example on the computer, they place the correct amount of spots on the ladybirds.

153. Nearly all children order by colour, shape and size well, correctly counting objects and matching numbers to symbols. They recognise patterns in watermelons, shells and snakes. Using perfect printing techniques, they reproduce and order a variety of shape and number patterns, correctly.

154. One to one correspondence develops very well and most children are able to count to twenty and beyond, in Welsh as well as English. Children use mathematical terms such as addition and subtraction correctly, performing simple addition sums using numbers to ten.
155. Children understand terms such as bigger, smaller, heavier and lighter, explaining the difference between them well. They recognise and name two-dimensional shapes and a few three-dimensional shapes correctly sorting them into sets according to their properties. Through play, children's understanding of the idea of money develops well and activities in the 'Sali Mali Caffi' improve their understanding of the concept of 'giving change'. In all number activities children record their number work correctly and accurately.

Shortcomings

156. There are no important shortcomings.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

157. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is progressing appropriately. They are developing a good knowledge and understanding why some materials are magnetic and why some objects float and others sink. In the outside environment they use their problem solving skills very well as they explore the use of a metal detector.
158. Children study objects around them and know that water freezes and turns back to water if it is left on the radiator. In conversation, children know they were once small babies and understand that living things should be treated with care and respect. They develop a good awareness of the order of their day, retell past events and have a good idea of the difference between weekdays and weekends.
159. Many children name some healthy foods and explain why eating some food could damage their teeth. They develop a very good understanding of the use of computers and successfully gain good skills to operate the keyboard. They control the mouse effectively and click to obtain a sound or visual effect, showing accuracy and confidence.

Shortcomings

160. There are no important shortcomings.

Creative development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

161. Nearly all children confidently explore the use and mix of colour to express their ideas, copying exactly what they have seen. They paint using bold brush strokes. They develop good observation skills when creating repeating print patterns in their number work. They use good decision making skills when exploring the use of a wide range of media in their 'spider' making. Their moulding, cutting and sticking skills develop very well. They enjoy and sing a variety of songs and nursery rhymes in Welsh and English with great enthusiasm. Their singing is tuneful and several have the confidence to perform individually.
162. In the 'Sali Mali Caffi', children serve the customers, take orders and role-play events from their daily lives, showing independence and responsibility. Through creative dance, children respond exceptionally well to music and create a sequence of movements demonstrating very good recall of what they have learnt previously. They are able to improve their creative sequences and positively evaluate those of other children. They experiment and explore musical sound and march and clap to a steady beat, handling the instruments very well.

Shortcomings

163. There are no important shortcomings.

Physical development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

164. Children's physical and accurate control of using small tools is good and is improving appropriately. Their hand and eye skills through using pencils, paintbrushes and tools such as glue sticks and scissors, develops with increasing confidence. Children handle the tools with an awareness of safety. Their fine-control develops really well in water and sand play. All children make good progress in skills such as folding, moulding, pasting, and building for a variety of purposes.
165. Nearly all children use the space around them very well, experimenting with change of pace and physical effort in the playground. They develop a good understanding of health and safety rules to follow in the outdoors. Their larger physical skills develop very well as they climb, run and jump over large obstacles. They push, pull and pedal wheeled vehicles with increased confidence and ability. In the hall, they roll, skip and perform different actions in their dance sessions, showing good physical development and improvement.

Shortcomings

166. There are no important shortcomings.

Mathematics

Key stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

167. Within KS1 nearly all younger pupils count confidently and accurately within 20. They recognise these numbers in array and when expressed as numerals. They follow a sequence of numbers carefully and predict accurately which number will come next. Older pupils in KS1 know basic addition and subtraction facts. They count within 100 well using place value to calculate. They use simple strategies to find an answer in mental work. They form larger numbers accurately combining several smaller numbers to reach a solution. They find answers in simple money problems. They calculate volume and distance measuring in non-standard and in standard units.
168. Nearly all the older pupils in KS1 have a good understanding of two and three dimensional shapes. They understand how to make quarter and half turns clockwise and anti-clockwise when following directions. They tell the time accurately to a half and a quarter of an hour. Nearly all know and repeat in correct order the seasons of the year.
169. Within KS2 many younger pupils count confidently in tens. They know that weight is measured in kilograms. They estimate reasonably accurately how much small objects weigh. They recognise and draw regular and irregular quadrilaterals and calculate their areas. They draw simple charts and graphs accurately. They use co-ordinates well to plot a position.
170. Nearly all pupils in KS2 understand and apply the four rules of number and create their own division problems which they solve themselves. They utilise the Internet well to convert different currencies to sterling.
171. In KS2 older pupils measure angles accurately. They construct right-angled triangles using compasses carefully to strike intersecting arcs. They match equivalent fractions and order decimals. Many older pupils draw a range of graphs including pie charts and line graphs. They understand how to judge if an object is symmetrical or not.

Shortcomings

172. While there are no important shortcomings, a few older pupils lack confidence to solve simple mental problems quickly and accurately.

Science

Key stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

173. Within KS1 nearly all pupils recognise that some materials occur naturally and some are manmade. They compare the luminosity of different materials such as silk and cardboard. Nearly all younger pupils in KS1 assess the properties of objects by their texture. They know that some objects are 'soft' and others are 'hard'. They come to sensible generalisations as a result of careful examination of different objects, for example when testing their resistance to air and their weight.
174. Older pupils in KS1 know how important it is to be healthy and to eat and drink well. They create healthy drinks for themselves. They know that food provides energy and helps the body to be healthy.
175. Within KS1 nearly all pupils carry out a fair test systematically and record their findings appropriately. They know that electricity is dangerous and how some accidents occur when using electrical goods in the home. They know how to prevent these happening. They assemble simple circuits effectively.
176. Across KS2 many pupils appreciate the forces at work when, for example a boat is pulled up a beach. They know that friction occurs when two surfaces work against each other. They appreciate the need for constants and variables when carrying out investigations. They systematically rub different surfaces together to feel the differences in the force of friction. They roll model cars down a ramp on to different surfaces and measure how the surfaces affect the distances the car travels. Older pupils use force meters to measure friction using Newtons to measure resistance. They measure the amount of elasticity in different materials. They recognise the importance of investigating and regularly use predictions when carrying out investigations.
177. KS2 pupils know how their muscles work and the names of the main muscle groups. They accurately measure pulse rates before and after exercise and make predications based on the evidence they have collected. They investigate how substances dissolve and others do not. They know that the planets in the solar system have different orbits. They experiment to create different orbits using different lengths of string attached to a ball. They understand how different phases of the moon influence the movement of the oceans.

Shortcomings

178. There are no important shortcomings.

Design technology

Key stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

179. In KS1 nearly all younger pupils plan systematically before they begin to make a product. They study materials carefully to test their suitability, for example when thinking about how to make a kite. They establish clear criteria to help them evaluate what they have made, for example when designing and making fridge magnets.
180. In KS1 older pupils make detailed and accurate evaluations of their 'fruit smoothies'. They identify before they start the tools which they will need and the ingredients they will use. Across the key stage pupils refine their designs as they experiment and find ways of improving the product. They compare their initial ideas with the final design and the final outcome.
181. In KS2 many pupils have a good understanding of how to design, plan and make a wide-range of objects. They use ICT well to help them picture what they should aim to achieve, for example when making an Anderson Shelter linked to their study of World War II in history. They create working drawings and logical instructions.
182. All younger pupils in KS2 systematically organise the production of cotton clothes bags. They test a range of carrier bags carefully in order to appreciate how one method of construction is more durable than another. They test the strength of different types of handles in order to clarify their designs. They carefully list the purpose of the product, the materials needed, how the products will be constructed and how it will work. They study and then apply the principles of levers when making a moving puppet.
183. Older pupils in KS2 use their scientific knowledge to construct an electronic board game. They study how commercial products work and evaluate them carefully in order to create their own.
184. Pupils in KS2 carry out detailed surveys of packaging in order to identify the components they will need to create a 'springbox' container. They identify specific requirements such as the importance of ensuring that the materials are biodegradable. They analyse the design and how the product can be marketed. They take the necessary steps to ensure the copyright of their invention.
185. Across the key stage pupils evaluate their outcomes very comprehensively against their design specifications. They test their healthy hot potatoes and biscuits and discuss their products maturely and sensibly suggesting ways of improving them.

Shortcomings

186. There are no important shortcomings.

Information communications technology

Key stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

187. Pupils' progress in basic ICT skills is good. They are developing good keyboard skills and work on computers quickly and accurately. They have a good idea of their own progress and success at this. They quickly learn to use program menus efficiently and edit their work and store it in a variety of ways.
188. Pupils in KS1, develop appropriate mouse and keyboard skills, responding to instructions on screen. They are familiar with various computer keys and functions, such as the cursor, return button and the space bar. They are able to store and retrieve their own work. Pupils in KS2, use computers purposefully and selectively in their work across the curriculum.
189. Word processing skills develop well. KS1 pupils produce good work in a range of different formats, changing layout and font accurately. KS2 pupils confidently delete mistakes and capital letters. They readily combine text and graphics in their work on how they would travel from Rajasthan in India, to Blaenavon.
190. Pupils' communicating and handling information skills develop very well. Working in pairs, many KS2 pupils use advanced skills to import and position graphics behind a stored text. In their work on World War II, KS2 pupils use and understand that text and graphics can be combined to communicate information, following lines of enquiry on 'evacuation'.
191. Pupils make intelligent use of the Internet and have a good understanding of search engines and ways to refine their questions to find the information they require. They consistently cut and paste pictures and text from the Internet for use in cross-curricular aspects, handling the information in a variety of ways.
192. Modelling skills progress appropriately and pupils understand that control devices follow instructions that need to be programmed. KS1 pupils navigate a car around a track, independently print their own racetracks and use a text box to add their name, correctly. KS2 pupils, working in pairs, follow instructions well and program a turtle around a set track on screen.
193. Pupils are confident in their use of the Internet and by the end of the key stage have a good knowledge of the strengths and limitations of the use of computers. They understand possible dangers in the use of the Internet and how to use technology safely.

Shortcomings

194. There are no important shortcomings.

Physical education

Key stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

195. In both key stages pupils warm up vigorously and sensibly, using space well and avoiding each other. They realise that their heart and circulation system needs to be prepared for exercise and at the end of the lesson they correctly cool down. They change clothes appropriately, adhere well to safety matters and take responsibility when using large or small apparatus.
196. Pupils make good progress in gaining practical skills and techniques in gymnastics. In KS1 they approach their lessons confidently and with a sense of enjoyment. Using space well, they sequence a routine to include a balance involving different body parts. Working together diligently and conscientiously, they know they need to hold a perfect balance still and perform good sequences using change of pace and direction.
197. KS2 pupils, very ably plan, repeat and refine their performance in creative dance. They move expressively and sensitively in rhythm to music. They combine a variety of movements into sequences and are clear about the aspects that constitute a good performance. Using good subject vocabulary they confidently express and describe the structures included. They use their evaluative skills very well and make appropriate suggestions how the performance of others could be improved.
198. KS2 pupils demonstrate refined skills in throwing, catching and controlling a ball with increased confidence and accuracy. Working collaboratively with a partner they improve their running techniques, demonstrating improved accuracy and enhanced physical control. They exhibit good sporting behaviour and there is a good attitude of participation and competition in their athletic performance.
199. As a result of regular visits to the local swimming pool, nearly all pupils make very good progress in swimming with the majority gaining a personal achievement award. Their acquisition and application of physical skills and techniques are good.

Shortcomings

200. There are no important shortcomings

School's response to the inspection

201. Hillside Primary School found the inspection team courteous, diligent and fair in their findings.
202. The inspection process was conducted efficiently, thoroughly and in line with Estyn guidelines.
203. The inspection outcomes and report accurately acknowledges the good aspects and standards at Hillside Primary School.
204. The recommendations are appropriate and useful, identifying development areas for the school.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Hillside Primary School
School type	Primary including Foundation Phase
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Address of school	Upper Hill Street Blaenavon Torfaen
Postcode	NP4 9NN
Telephone number	01495 790295
Headteacher	Mrs J M Cook
Date of appointment	1 st January 1998
Chair of governors	Mr Brian Whitcombe
Registered inspector	Mr Peter Mathias
Dates of inspection	2 nd -4 th 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	n/a	30	21	21	13	20	18	12	135

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	6	1	6.5

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	21:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	n/a
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	n/a
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	27
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.3:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Spring 2008	n/a	89.1%	91%
Summer 2008	n/a	87.8%	91.6%
Autumn 2008	n/a	89.9%	94.7%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	32%
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:			13	
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	31	46	23
		National	0.2	3.5	13.8	63.0	19.4
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	15	54	31
		National	0.2	4.1	14.9	55.2	25.5
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	31	46	23
		National	0.2	4.8	15.9	67.8	11.3
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	31	46	23
		National	0.2	2.4	10.7	62.8	23.8
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	31	69	0
		National	0.2	2.0	10.9	65.2	21.6
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	8	31	62
		National	0.2	1.6	8.5	66.3	23.4

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics and science and English according to teacher assessment			
In the school	69%	In Wales	80.7%

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

National Curriculum Assessment Results
End of key stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2008			Number of pupils in Y6					18	
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	6	6	61	28
		National	0.2	0.5	0.6	3.1	15.6	51.3	28.5
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	6	17	56	22
		National	0.2	0.5	0.6	2.7	14.7	51.4	29.9
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	6	6	56	33
		National	0.2	0.5	0.5	1.8	11.4	53.9	31.7

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and English by teacher assessment	
In the school	77.78%
In Wales	75.5%

D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Three inspectors plus the school's nominee spent the equivalent of seven inspector days in the school and met as a team before the inspection. The headteacher was the school's nominee and attended all team meetings.

The inspectors visited:

- twenty-seven lessons or part lessons;
- registrations, assemblies and acts of collective worship; and
- a range of extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- staff, governors and parents before the inspection;
- senior managers, teachers, support and administrative staff;
- groups of pupils representing each year group;
- the school council; and
- representatives of organisations associated with the school.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- forty-two responses to a parents' questionnaire;
- documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- a wide range of pupils' past and current work; and
- samples of pupils' reports.

After the inspection, the team held meetings with the staff, senior managers and governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Peter Mathias (Registered Inspector)	Context Summary and Recommendations Contributions to Key Question 1 & 2 Key Question 5 Key Question 6 Mathematics Science Design technology Appendices
Mrs Rhiannon Boardman (Lay Inspector)	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3 & 4
Mrs Julie Jones (Team member)	Contributions to Key Questions 2, 3 & 4 Key Question 7 Early Years Information communications technology Physical education
Mrs J Cook (Headteacher/Nominee)	Contributions to all Key Questions

Acknowledgement

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

Contractor:

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