

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Machen Primary School
Commercial Road,
Machen, CF83 8NA**

School Number: 6762326

Date of Inspection: 10/11/08

by

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78706**

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Machen 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 Machen Primary School took place between 10/11/08 and 12/11/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Dr David Gareth Evans, 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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Machen Primary School is located in the centre of the village of Machen, which lies in the lower Rhymney Valley between Caerphilly and Newport. There are currently 167 pupils on roll aged 3-11, including 20 part-time nursery children. Pupils are taught in six mixed-age classes.
2. Pupils live mainly in the surrounding area, but a significant number come from outside the school's catchment. The vast majority come from homes which are neither socially disadvantaged nor prosperous, with around 6 per cent currently being eligible for free school meals, which is significantly below the national average.
3. Around 17 per cent of pupils have been identified as having additional learning needs, and this is slightly below the national average. Two have statements of special educational need (SEN). None has English as an additional language and there are no natural Welsh users. Currently, there are no looked after children in school.
4. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the fourth time and renewed its Investors in People award for the third time in 2007. It has been a member of the Healthy Schools scheme since 2003 and will be assessed for the Eco schools' Green Flag next term.
5. The school was last inspected in November 2002.

The school's priorities and targets

6. The school's priorities in the School Development Plan (SDP) for 2008-2009 are to:
 - further develop literacy skills, with a focus on drama role-play areas, and to improve spelling strategies;
 - ensure that thinking skills are deployed effectively in mathematics;
 - further extend the Foundation Phase provision;
 - further develop skills provision to meet the requirements of the new curriculum;
 - further enhance self-assessment strategies;
 - further develop provision for multiculturalism and bilingualism in the school; and
 - update policies, schemes of work and school structures in the light of the new curriculum.

Summary

7. Machen Primary is a caring school with outstanding features in the quality of teaching. The head teacher has led the school with dedication and commitment for several years and, with the support of staff, has successfully maintained and improved the school's positive and supportive ethos.

Table of grades awarded

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

8. The inspection team agrees with the school's judgements in its self-evaluation report in six of the seven key questions. The only mismatch is in key question 2, where the team awarded a higher grade than the school.
9. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the Foundation Phase.
10. In key stage 1 in 2008, the results of teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science were well above national and local averages. The core subject indicator, which is the percentage of pupils attaining at least Level 2 in English, mathematics and science in combination, was also well above local and national averages. When the 2008 key stage 1 results are compared with similar schools, using the free school meals indicator, performance in English, mathematics, science and in the core subject indicator was above average. These figures represent a positive trend in attainment at key stage 1 over the last few years. Girls performed better than boys in English, mathematics and science.
11. In key stage 2 in 2008, results in English, mathematics and science were above both national and local averages. The core subject indicator, which is

the percentage of pupils attaining at least Level 4 in English, mathematics and science in combination, was also above national and local averages. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science was also slightly above the national average. When the 2008 results are compared with similar schools, using the free school meals indicator, performance in English and the core subject indicator was below average, while in mathematics and science it was above average.

12. Over the last few years there has been a very positive upward trend in attainment at key stage 2. In 2007, for example, compared with similar schools, performance in the three core subjects was well above average. The 2008 results were adversely affected by the number of pupils with SEN in the Year 6 group and the movement of pupils in and out of the school. In 2008, boys outperformed girls in English, mathematics and science.
13. All children under five make good progress with no important shortcomings in the key skills of speaking, listening, early reading and writing through the medium of English and Welsh, as well as in overall bilingual competence, mathematical skills, personal and social education, problem-solving and creative skills. The progress they make in information and communication technology is outstanding.
14. In key stages 1 and 2, all pupils make good progress with no important shortcomings in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing through the medium of English and Welsh, as well as in overall bilingual competence, in mathematical, problem-solving, personal and social education and creative skills. Their progress in information and communication technology is outstanding. The vast majority of pupils use computers very well and display a remarkable level of maturity and independence. For example, older pupils create a wide range of films and presentations, which they explain enthusiastically and competently to visitors.
15. All pupils make good progress and progress well towards the next stage of learning.
16. The progress that learners make in their personal, spiritual and wider development is good overall. Their moral and social development is outstanding.
17. Standards of behaviour are good with no important shortcomings. Pupils participate in a good range of projects and community events. However, their participation in, and understanding of, the workplace is less well developed.
18. Attendance and punctuality are good. Whole-school attendance for the last three terms prior to the inspection averages 94.5 per cent and exceeds the national and local averages for primary schools in Wales.

The quality of education and training

19. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
48%	52%	0%	0%	0%

20. The quality of teaching compares very well with the national picture described in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools' most recent report for 2006-2007, where 80 per cent of lessons inspected achieved a Grade 2 or better, with 14 per cent having outstanding features.
21. Examples of outstanding features observed in teaching include: high expectations of what pupils can achieve; excellent use of time and pace; very good relationships between adults and pupils; a sensitive appreciation of pupils' efforts, particularly those with additional needs; and a precise match between individual pupils' abilities and the level of challenge in the tasks presented to them.
22. Teachers successfully promote pupils' thinking and critical skills and teaching assistants play a very important role in supporting and extending pupils' learning.
23. Whole-school assessment procedures are well established and meet statutory requirements. Good arrangements have been established to standardise and moderate teachers' assessments at the end of each key stage.
24. A computerised whole-school tracking system is developing appropriately to monitor the progress of individual pupils in the core subjects. The school is also developing its assessment of other areas of learning; but currently this is less formal and at an earlier stage of development, for example in Welsh second language.
25. The school meets the needs of the range of pupils well and provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which is fully accessible to all pupils and complies with statutory requirements.
26. The school provides well for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
27. The provision for work-related education has good features that outweigh shortcomings. In discussions with pupils, they confirm that they would appreciate more involvement in, and experiences of, the world of work.
28. The school ensures that pupils develop a good appreciation of Welsh culture and heritage through Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. The promotion of pupils' bilingual skills in both key stages is good with no important shortcomings.
29. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well in a secure, supportive and happy environment. The school has a positive ethos and every pupil is valued and included.

30. Policies and arrangements relating to the well-being, health, safety and welfare of pupils are good and pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and a balanced diet. Some health and safety issues were discussed with the school and the governing body (GB).
31. Overall, the provision for pupils with additional learning needs, including those with SEN, is good. The school promotes social inclusion well.

Leadership and management

32. The head teacher has a clear vision for the school and leads it with dedication and diligence. He has gained the trust and confidence of staff and successfully initiated a number of important improvements.
33. A positive team spirit is clearly apparent and the school is a happy environment for staff and pupils alike. The deputy head teacher is extremely effective and the role of subject leaders is well established.
34. The GB is a knowledgeable, positive force for improvement. It fulfils all its statutory and legal requirements.
35. The school's self-evaluation process is comprehensive and accurately identifies its strengths and weaknesses. The self-evaluation report that the school produced prior to the inspection is a thorough, informative document.
36. The key issues for improvement identified in the last inspection have been effectively addressed and the school has made good progress.
37. The school has an appropriate number of teachers who are suitably qualified.
38. Resources meet the needs of all curriculum areas. The accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on roll, although there are some shortcomings: for example, the outdoor playground has a significant slope and there are insufficient staff toilets available in the school.
39. Financial management is rigorous and the school remains on course to meet its fiscal commitments. All available resources are effectively managed so that the school achieves good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 continue to develop assessment procedures in the non-core areas of learning, including Welsh second language;
- R2 provide more effective work-related education for pupils*; and
- R3 attend to the shortcomings in the accommodation.

* The school has already recognised this in its SDP

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 40. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 41. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the Foundation Phase.
- 42. In key stage 1 in 2008, the results of teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science were well above national and local averages. The core subject indicator, which is the percentage of pupils attaining at least Level 2 in English, mathematics and science in combination, was also well above local and national averages. When the 2008 key stage 1 results are compared with similar schools, using the free school meals indicator, performance in English, mathematics, science and in the core subject indicator was above average. These figures represent a positive trend in attainment at key stage 1 over the last few years. Girls performed better than boys in English, mathematics and science.
- 43. In key stage 2 in 2008, results in English, mathematics and science were above both national and local averages. The core subject indicator, which is the percentage of pupils attaining at least Level 4 in English, mathematics and science in combination, was also above national and local averages. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science was also slightly above the national average. When the 2008 results are

compared with similar schools, using the free school meals indicator, performance in English and the core subject indicator was below average, while in mathematics and science it was above average.

44. Over the last few years there has been a very positive upward trend in attainment at key stage 2. In 2007, for example, compared with similar schools, performance in the three core subjects was well above average. The 2008 results were adversely affected by the number of pupils with SEN in the Year 6 group and the movement of pupils in and out of the school. In 2008, boys outperformed girls in English, mathematics and science.
45. Baseline assessment indicates that children enter school with attainment and skills that are about average. They make good progress in line with their age and ability.
46. All pupils throughout the school, regardless of their age, ability or ethnicity, make good progress in the acquisition of new skills, knowledge and understanding and progress well towards the next stage of learning. Those with additional learning needs, including those with SEN, make good progress and achieve well over time
47. Pupils' attitudes to learning, the interest they show in their work and their ability to concentrate are good. The vast majority work diligently in lessons; they are keen to join in the activities prepared for them and are enthusiastic in their work. Pupils' understanding of how they are learning and of what they need to do to improve is also good. For example, the vast majority are well aware of their targets for improvement and the success criteria.
48. All children under five make good progress with no important shortcomings in the key skills of speaking, listening, early reading and writing through the medium of English and Welsh, as well as in overall bilingual competence, mathematical skills, personal and social education, problem-solving and creative skills. The progress they make in information and communication technology is outstanding.
49. In key stages 1 and 2, all pupils make good progress with no important shortcomings in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing through the medium of English and Welsh, as well as in overall bilingual competence, in mathematical, problem-solving, personal and social education and creative skills. Their progress in information and communication technology is outstanding. The vast majority use computers very well and display a remarkable level of maturity and independence. For example, older pupils create a wide range of films and presentations, which they explain enthusiastically and competently to visitors.
50. The progress that learners make in their personal, spiritual and wider development is good overall. Their moral and social development is outstanding. The vast majority relate very well to each other and successfully develop a very clear understanding of what is right and wrong. Their personal

values develop well, together with a respect for, and an understanding of, the values of others.

51. Standards of behaviour are good with no important shortcomings. Pupils' good behaviour contributes well to the standards they achieve. They interact courteously and confidently with peers, adults and visitors to the school. They cite peer mediators as being very effective in helping to settle any issues that occur in the playground. The school is a very friendly and happy community where all pupils are valued and respected.
52. Pupils develop the skills to work independently and to take responsibility for their own learning. They work extremely well together in pairs and groups, taking on different roles in order to organise activities fairly and effectively.
53. Pupils' awareness of equal opportunities is good with no important shortcomings. They take an active part in the life and work of the school through the school council and their involvement in Eco and extra-curricular activities. They develop effective skills to work as part of a team and as members of the school community. They show respect for the beliefs of different faiths and an appreciation of other cultures, for example Japanese traditions and lifestyles.
54. Pupils have a strong sense of citizenship within the school and the local community and they participate in a good range of projects and community events, such as their work with the local history society to produce a mosaic and DVD on the historical buildings of Machen. However, their participation in, and understanding of, the workplace is less well developed.
55. Attendance and punctuality are good. Whole-school attendance for the last three terms prior to the inspection averages 94.5 per cent and exceeds the national and local averages for primary schools in Wales. Absences, particularly among the very young children, are caused mainly by illness. But the overall rate is adversely affected by an increasing number of family holidays during term time.
56. Although a significant number of pupils travel from outside the catchment area, almost all arrive on time at the start of the school day.
57. There have been no exclusions during the last five years.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

58. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. This is because the inspection team judged that the overall quality of teaching in the school is outstanding.

59. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
48%	52%	0%	0%	0%

60. The quality of teaching compares very well with the national picture described in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools' most recent report. In 2006-2007, 80 per cent of lessons inspected achieved a Grade 2 or better, with 14 per cent having outstanding features.
61. Throughout the school teachers use a good range of teaching methods and approaches and make lessons very interesting and stimulating. There are very good working relationships in every classroom and teachers and support staff treat pupils equally and fairly.
62. Teachers very successfully use a wide variety of resources that stimulate pupils' interest and curiosity and help them learn. In most classrooms the interactive whiteboard is used particularly well to illustrate key points and to help pupils understand the lesson themes.
63. In all classes teachers enable pupils to develop independence in their learning and to record their activities in a wide variety of forms.
64. Examples of outstanding features observed in the best lessons include:
- high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including the use of sophisticated words and expressions;
 - excellent use of time and pace and changes of activity throughout the lesson, so that pupils' interest is maintained and remains focused;
 - a lively sense of humour and a sensitive appreciation of pupils' efforts, particularly those with additional needs, which makes them feel valued and encourages them to do their best; and
 - a precise match between individual pupils' abilities and the level of challenge in the tasks presented to them.
65. In all classes, teachers very effectively implement the school's focus on developing pupils' thinking and critical skills. They give pupils many purposeful opportunities to work in groups, to collaborate and to gain confidence in expressing their ideas. They develop pupils' personal and social skills in many ways throughout the day. This is another outstanding feature.
66. Teachers' planning is detailed, builds well on pupils' previous learning and caters very effectively for the range of abilities in the class.
67. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively and play a very important role in supporting and extending pupils' learning. They work very closely with class teachers and are involved in assessing and planning activities for the pupils with whom they work.

68. The school successfully recognises the language needs of the learners in a community where few, if any, people speak Welsh. One of the school's strengths is the promotion of incidental Welsh; members of staff use the language frequently during the day. Many teachers use Welsh as a medium of instruction with positive results.
69. Whole-school assessment procedures are well established and meet statutory requirements for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' achievements.
70. Good arrangements have been established to standardise and moderate teachers' assessments at the end of each key stage. The school is involved in clusters of local schools where staff meet to consider assessment issues. Portfolios of samples of pupils' work have been developed and these show different levels in order to aid the clarity and accuracy of teacher assessment.
71. A computerised whole-school tracking system is developing appropriately to monitor the progress of individual pupils in the core subjects and to help identify those who are not progressing as expected. The school uses this information effectively to provide well-focused additional support where necessary.
72. Overall, the school has made good progress in developing the use of assessment in the core subjects to identify what pupils know, understand and can do and what the next steps in their learning should be. In both key stages, a strong feature of the assessment process is the emphasis that members of staff place on success criteria. These are regularly checked in lessons and revisited in plenary sessions.
73. Pupils are increasingly involved in evaluating their own progress and also undertake peer assessment. The school is also developing its assessment of other areas of learning; but currently this is less formal and at an earlier stage of development, for example in Welsh second language.
74. A clear, agreed marking policy has been established, but the quality of teachers' written feedback to pupils is not always consistent. There are some good examples where the teacher describes the good features in a piece of writing and clearly indicates how the pupil should try to improve. There are other instances, however, where work is regularly marked with a brief comment, but little diagnostic feedback is given.
75. Reports to parents are informative and meet requirements. They clearly identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in all subjects and areas of learning. Parents much appreciate the opportunities the school gives them to discuss their child's progress at any time.

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.

76. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
77. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the Foundation Phase.
78. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and ensures coherence, continuity and progression for the range of pupils. It meets statutory requirements in full and has embraced the statutory and non-statutory curriculum changes for September 2008. An outstanding feature is the key skills document produced by the school. This allows teachers to focus on developing key skills by dovetailing learning activities from the schemes of work. Short-term planning reflects recent curriculum developments well.
79. There are detailed policies for all subjects and all schemes of work allow for progression and continuity by developing systematically existing knowledge, understanding and skills. There are explicit learning objectives with curriculum maps showing coverage across the school in some subjects, as well as details of assessment activities and resources.
80. The quality of teachers' termly and weekly planning is good. Key skills are well integrated into the weekly plans, showing which key skills are being developed and which subject and areas of learning are linked. There are outstanding learning experiences for the development of information and communication technology and the school has a thriving film club to support this particular key skill. As a result, in 2007 the school won the BBC Best Edited Video competition.
81. An impressive aspect is the enrichment of the curriculum through a wide range of cultural and sporting activities. These make a good contribution to the standards pupils achieve and to their personal and social development. Greater independence, teamwork and problem-solving skills are promoted successfully for Year 6 pupils during a residential week at Hilston Park Outdoor Pursuits Centre and for Year 5 pupils during their residential weekend at Llangranog Urdd centre.
82. There are many visits to places of interest in the locality and beyond, for example, to historical buildings in Machen, the University of Glamorgan, the Museum of Welsh Life, Blaenavon Big Pit, Llanmaes for an archaeological dig and Llancaiach Fawr. Visitors make learning interesting and enjoyable for the pupils; for example, artists in residence, African drummers, representatives from the world of business and commerce and members of the community, such as a local historian, come to the school.

83. There is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils and these include Eco, French, chess and drama clubs, a thriving school choir and many inter-school sporting activities, such as netball, rugby and football. These are taken up by a range of pupils of all ages. Pupils are also encouraged to participate in many community events, such as services at the local church, choral concerts for the annual remembrance service, involvement in the Lower Machen festival and in the Caerphilly showcase at St David's Hall.
84. The provision for personal and social education is a well-established part of the curriculum. The school follows national guidelines well; it successfully promotes healthy lifestyles and gives good attention to sex and relationships education, substance misuse and personal safety.
85. The school provides well for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Collective worship is an effective aspect of the overall provision and plays an important part in developing pupils' understanding of the school community and celebrating success. Acts of collective worship are of a broadly Christian nature and the school keeps a detailed record of themes discussed.
86. The provision for pupils' moral and social development has many outstanding features. There are numerous very successful strategies to promote pupils' sense of what is right and wrong and to encourage them to reflect on positive relationships and attitudes. The promotion of pupils' social development is integrated effectively across all aspects of the school and there are many opportunities for pupils of all ages to assume positions of responsibility. As well as the school council and Eco committee, there are playground buddies and class monitors.
87. The school promotes cultural development well. Pupils are encouraged to consider important issues, to compare their life experiences with those of others in less well-developed countries and to reflect upon and to appreciate other cultures.
88. There are effective links with parents and other interested parties. An outstanding feature of the relationship between home and school is the quality of information that parents receive about school life from nursery to the end of key stage 2. Parents are well informed and kept up to date about matters that directly affect their children's life in school through high quality brochures and newsletters as well as the school website and regular open days and evenings.
89. Parents and other family members gain a valuable insight into their children's learning through weekly invitations to observe activities in the early years. In discussion during the inspection parents said they greatly appreciate these opportunities and they see their children learning through practical fun activities. Parents and members of the community are regularly welcomed into school to support and enrich the curriculum.
90. There are close links with surrounding primary schools and the receiving secondary schools. The school is in partnership with an initial teacher training

university and there are close links with surrounding colleges of further education. It provides good quality training and work experience for child-care and student teachers.

91. The provision for work-related education has good features that outweigh shortcomings. In discussions with pupils, they confirm that they would appreciate more involvement and experiences of the world of work.
92. The school ensures that pupils develop a good appreciation of Welsh culture and heritage through Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. Experiences in subjects such as history and geography, in particular, ensure that pupils develop a good awareness of Wales in current times and in the past. The promotion of pupils' bilingual skills in both key stages is good with no important shortcomings.
93. Machen Primary is an inclusive school where all pupils are treated equally and have full access to the curriculum and all the activities that the school provides. This is because the school rigorously promotes equality of opportunity for all and celebrates the achievements of pupils in every aspect of school life. Incidents of stereotyping are immediately challenged and this has helped the school to successfully address, for example, issues relating to boys' achievement.
94. The provision for sustainable development and global citizenship is very effective and an outstanding feature of the provision. The Eco committee actively promotes the school travel plan, encourages pupils to walk to school, grows vegetables in the school allotment to sell and develops waste minimization and energy efficiency projects and a host of playground improvements.
95. The development of pupils' entrepreneurial skills is promoted well through various practical and curricular activities. From the early years onwards, pupils are encouraged to participate in role-play and to understand coinage and the idea of value. Older pupils, in particular, have many opportunities to develop problem-solving and investigative skills in subjects such as science and geography.
96. The breadth and quality of the curriculum and many extra-curricular opportunities ensure that learning experiences reflect national priorities and lay the foundations for lifelong learning and community regeneration.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

97. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
98. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well in a secure, supportive and happy environment. The school has a very positive ethos and every pupil is

valued and included. The school works effectively with health professionals and external agencies.

99. The school has a good partnership with parents. Their views are sought through newsletters and questionnaires and the school responds positively to parents' suggestions and requests.
100. The school council and Eco committee provide pupils with a real voice in the school and the community. Representatives from Year 2 to Year 6 develop team-building and negotiating skills that support their work in other areas and further strengthen the school's links with the community. The school council is effective and well-established.
101. Induction programmes are effective. Arrangements for children starting school are very carefully planned and implemented. As a result, nursery children become familiar with the school and staff from a very early age. They quickly learn the routines and settle very happily into school life. There are good procedures to support pupils when they move between classes and key stages or join the school at a later stage. Transition arrangements from the primary to the receiving secondary school are comprehensive. The school participates fully in the transition plan.
102. The school provides good quality personal support and guidance for pupils. The policy for this is integrated into all aspects of the school's activities and the outcome is reflected in pupils' caring and thoughtful attitudes.
103. There are appropriate policies and procedures to monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality, behaviour and performance. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Officer and operates a first-day response to absence for those pupils who give concern. It sets clear targets and pupils are keen to be in the best class for attendance. Holidays in term time are discouraged and parents are reminded of the importance of regular, punctual attendance through newsletters and other means.
104. Teachers and support staff apply policies for behaviour management consistently. Arrangements to encourage pupils to behave well are extremely effective; this is evident in the behaviour observed. Midday supervisors understand their role in the reward system and peer mediators have an important role in maintaining good behaviour. Pupils say that they are effective in helping everyone to play happily together.
105. The school has an effective food and fitness policy. It effectively promotes health and fitness for pupils through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including residential visits.
106. Pupils operate a daily fruit trolley and all have access to water throughout the day. They understand the need for exercise and a balanced diet. They appreciate the outdoor play equipment as well as the sports and gardening clubs.

107. All adults in the school, including the canteen staff, are aware of pupils with particular needs and understand procedures in the event of accidents and emergencies, such as how to help pupils with identified medical conditions and allergies.
108. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and risk assessments are systematic. Members of staff are trained in first-aid procedures and are alert to issues relating to the well-being of pupils. Some health and safety issues were discussed with the school and the GB.
109. There is an effective policy and sound procedures for child protection and the school follows local guidelines. The head teacher and his deputy are nominated officers and there is a named link governor. Members of staff, including midday supervisors, are fully aware of their responsibilities.
110. Provision for pupils with SEN is good with no important shortcomings. The school provides a well co-ordinated and clearly documented provision in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice. Careful consideration is given to the needs of pupils and the school effectively implements procedures for early identification and subsequent monitoring of those experiencing difficulties in their learning.
111. The school is sensitive to issues of inclusion and takes good account of the statutory framework for inclusive education. This enables teaching assistants to assist staff in providing good quality support for pupils with SEN and, in so doing, allow them full access to the curriculum.
112. Good emphasis is placed on home/school links in reviewing specific needs and in enabling pupils to make good progress within a positive and encouraging learning environment. The review of individual education plans is regular, with updates in accordance with pupils' progress and consultation with parents. The use of external agencies is good and provides further appropriate support for the school and pupils.
113. Good emphasis is placed on nurturing good quality language across the curriculum and there are effective arrangements for providing additional support and resources for pupils whose attainment levels are below average.
114. More able and talented pupils are generally given appropriate challenges in their learning. The school's system for monitoring their academic progress ensures that they achieve the standards expected of them.
115. The school has well planned and documented procedures for ensuring equal opportunities. There are effective policies for areas such as race equality, diversity, bullying, harassment, disability, pastoral care, inclusion and internet use. All pupils are encouraged and enabled to take part in the activities provided by the school.

116. There are no pupils with mobility problems currently attending the school, but there are suitable disability and equality schemes that take account of the school site and buildings, should the need arise.
117. The school effectively promotes pupils' appreciation of diversity. A good range of experiences is provided through personal and social education, religious education, assemblies and various themes.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

118. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
119. The head teacher has a clear vision for the school and leads it with commitment and diligence. He has gained the trust and confidence of the staff, empowered them and successfully initiated a number of important improvements in the quality of the provision.
120. A positive team spirit is clearly apparent and the school is a happy environment for staff and pupils alike. Members of staff share a common sense of purpose and are increasingly contributing to the achievement of shared goals. The school's motto, 'Where we all work together to make the best of our talents', is amply reflected in its day-to-day work in classrooms and around the school. Pupils understand this motto and work hard to achieve their targets with the help of their peers, teachers and other adults.
121. The deputy head teacher is effective and an excellent role model in many ways. She complements the head teacher's role well. The senior management team provides clear and purposeful direction to maintain and improve overall standards. The role of subject leaders is well established and they play an increasing part in managing the subjects and areas for which they are responsible.
122. Central to the school's ethos is that pupils always come first. This is reflected in the outstanding quality of teaching and the positive relationships within the school. All required policies and guidelines are in place to direct its development. The views of those with an interest in the school, including pupils and parents, are seriously considered and equality of opportunity is evident in the school's work.
123. Full consideration is given to national priorities, local partnerships and developments within the cluster of schools, such as transition arrangements, sporting activities and promoting healthy schools. The school has made a good start in establishing the Foundation Phase and developing the skills-based curriculum at key stage 2.

124. The SDP is an effective document, which takes good account of local and national initiatives. The links between development planning and the professional development of staff are clear.
125. All who work at the school are aware of school procedures and lines of communication are clear. Members of staff meet regularly to share information and discuss strategies and the school day proceeds in an efficient manner.
126. Systems to support, develop and improve the performance of staff are well developed. Performance management procedures are embedded in the life of the school and targets set have had a positive influence on school improvement. All members of staff have the opportunity to discuss their performance and training requirements with the head teacher. This has impacted greatly on the quality and responsibilities given to support staff and the positive contribution they make to the quality of teaching and learning.
127. The GB is a knowledgeable, positive force for improvement. Many governors are experienced in their understanding of the traditions of the community served by the school. Governors are well informed on all aspects of school life and help the head teacher effectively in setting the school's strategic direction.
128. The GB helps to shape the aims, vision and strategic direction of the school with appropriate targets for development in the school's SDP. Financial resources are carefully managed and monitored in order to implement these priorities. The GB fulfils all its statutory and legal requirements.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

129. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
130. A positive culture of self-evaluation has been established so that members of staff actively seek advice and value one another's expertise and strengths. The head teacher has been instrumental in developing the confidence of staff in taking responsibility, at all levels, for evaluating how well the school is doing and planning for improvement.
131. There is a regular, well-focused timetable for monitoring and evaluating the quality of planning, teaching and pupils' work. Subject leaders in the core subjects carefully analyse performance trends and the progress pupils make from their entry to school, in order to ensure the maintenance and improvement of good standards.
132. The overall results of subject leaders' monitoring activities are inserted as targets in the SDP in order effectively to aid whole-school improvement. Significant strategies have been implemented to improve pupils' performance in key areas, such as literacy, numeracy and critical skills. This is clearly

resulting in pupils communicating with much greater confidence as they move from the early years to the end of key stage 2.

133. Good account is taken of the views of everyone who has an interest in the school's work. Members of staff listen to pupils' suggestions informally, as well as through formal channels of communication such as the school council, and respond appropriately with improvements in many areas, including the Eco activities.
134. The school's self-evaluation process is comprehensive and accurately identifies its strengths and weaknesses. The self-evaluation report that the school produced prior to the inspection is a thorough, informative document, to which staff and governors contributed. The overall judgements of the report match those of the inspection team in six out of the seven key questions. The only mismatch is in key question 2, where the inspection team judged that the overall standard of teaching is outstanding.
135. The school has a very good sense of where improvements are needed. Appropriate priorities are highlighted in the SDP and supported through adequate allocation of resources by the GB. The quality of planning for improvement is good and well focused and has already resulted in measurable improvements in key aspects of the school's provision.
136. The quality of teaching has improved markedly since the last inspection in 2002. Then, teaching in the school was satisfactory or better in all lessons, of which about 51 per cent was good and around 12 per cent very good. Now, 100 per cent of teaching is judged to be good or better and 48 per cent is outstanding. This represents significant progress in improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
137. All the key issues for improvement identified in the last inspection report that were a focus in the current inspection have been effectively addressed. The school has, therefore, made good progress since the last inspection.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

138. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
139. The school has an appropriate number of teachers who are suitably qualified. They have a good range of expertise and experience, which is used well both in lessons and in the provision of extra-curricular experiences.
140. The quality of pupil support given by dedicated teaching assistants is a strength of the school. They are deployed well and their quality has enabled the school to plan, effective support strategies.

141. A range of training opportunities and visits ensures that teachers and teaching assistants' needs and school priorities are met. All staff benefit from appropriate training that improves their expertise in different curricular areas and has a positive impact on standards. In addition, whole-school training addresses priorities indicated in the SDP.
142. All members of staff have clear job descriptions. Induction of new staff is effectively provided by an experienced member of staff. There is good supervision at meal times, and ancillary staff are well aware of strategies relating to unacceptable behaviour and emergencies. Kitchen staff and midday supervisors also make important contributions to the school.
143. Periods for teachers to have time for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) are covered effectively. Close liaison between the teacher who covers most lessons and class teachers ensures that pupils benefit from her interests and expertise and that there is continuity in the provision and maintenance of good standards. The school uses its resources for workforce remodelling well.
144. The school secretary carries out her duties efficiently and effectively. The school caretaker takes great pride in her work and the school is well maintained and clean.
145. The school has appropriate resources to meet its needs in all curriculum areas. The school library has good potential for supporting pupils' learning. The computer suite is spacious and there is sufficient equipment for pupils' use.
146. The internal accommodation is generally adequate for the number of pupils on roll and the work areas are well used. Attractive wall displays in shared areas and the classrooms celebrate pupils' work. They are stimulating, informative and provide good learning experiences for pupils. Good use is made of the infant hall as an extension to the classrooms and the outdoor classroom.
147. However, there are shortcomings in relation to the accommodation: the outdoor playground has a significant slope; the multi-purpose hall, which is used well for physical education lessons, assemblies and at lunchtimes, is cluttered and houses the library, role-play areas and the pod for teachers on their PPA time; in addition, there are insufficient staff toilets available in the school.
148. Financial management is rigorous and the school remains on course to meet its financial commitments. Priorities are set by the head teacher and the GB's finance committee. Sound financial protocols have enabled the head to manage the financial implications of maintaining a good level of staffing and updating equipment to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. All available resources are effectively managed so that the school achieves good value for money.

School's response to the inspection

149. The Governing Body of the school would like to acknowledge the thorough, professional and courteous approach of the inspection team and the sensitivity shown whilst with us.
150. We believe that the inspection has been a positive and helpful experience that has enabled us as a school to celebrate its many strengths and to identify areas for further development.
151. We are pleased to note that the school has maintained and further enhanced standards since our last inspection. We are particularly pleased that the inspection identified the extremely high level of teaching, which has been deemed to be an outstanding feature of the school.
152. The staff and governors of the school will carefully consider the recommendations outlined in this report and compile an action plan as an extended part of this year's School Development Plan to address these actions. We will report on its progress in the governors' annual report to parents.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Machen Primary School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Commercial Road, Machen, Caerphilly.
Postcode	CF83 8NA
Telephone number	01633 440403
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Lloyd
Date of appointment	September, 2002
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Robin Jones
Registered inspector	Dr David G Evans
Dates of inspection	10—12 November, 2008.

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	10	15	27	27	23	21	17	27	167

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	0.67	7.67

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	20.4:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	1:10
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	26.1
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.3 :1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Summer 2008	92.6	91.9	94.1
Spring 2008	94.6	90.7	94.6
Autumn 2007	94.8	92.9	93.9

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	5.9%
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 KS1 Results 2008			Number of pupils in Y2:					23
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	8	57	35	
		National	0.2	3.5	13.8	63	19.4	
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	4	57	39	
		National	0.2	4.1	14.9	55.2	25.5	
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	9	78	13	
		National	0.2	4.8	15.9	67.8	11.3	
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	8	57	35	
		National	0.2	2.4	10.7	62.8	23.8	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	4	66	30	
		National	0.2	2	10.9	65.2	21.6	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	4	61	35	
		National	0.2	1.6	8.5	66.3	23.4	

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	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					21				
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	57	24	
		National	0.2	0	0	0.5	0.6	3.1	15.6	51.3	28.5	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	53	33	
		National	0.2	0	0	0.5	0.6	2.7	14.7	51.4	29.9	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	57	33	
		National	0.2	0	0	0.5	0.5	1.8	11.4	53.9	31.7	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by teacher assessment		by test	
In the school	76%	In the school	N/A
In Wales	75.5%	In Wales	N/A

- 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

Four inspectors spent a total of seven inspector days in the school. A team meeting was held prior to the inspection. The school accepted the invitation to appoint a nominee and there was a peer assessor present for the duration of the inspection.

The team inspected:

- 25 lessons or part lessons;
- all classes;
- acts of collective worship; and
- a range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection team held meetings with:

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

The inspection team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- 12 parents'/carers' questionnaires, of which 97.72 per cent of responses were positive;
- a comprehensive range of documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection; and
- a variety of current and past pupils' work.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Dr David G Evans, Registered Inspector	Context, Summary and Recommendations. Key Questions 1, 2, 5 and 6
Mrs Caterina Lewis, Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4, and 7
Mrs Mary Dyas, Team Inspector	Key Question 4
Mr Michael Thomas, Team Inspector	Key Questions 3 and 7
Ms Ona Worrall, Peer Assessor	Contributions to all the key questions
Mr Andrew Lloyd, Nominee and Head Teacher	Attending meetings and supplying information

Acknowledgement:

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

The contractor:

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