

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Markham Primary School
Pantycfn Road
Blackwood
NP12 0QD**

School Number: 6762078

Date of Inspection: 17/03/08

by

**Peter Mathias
78829**

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Markham 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 Markham Primary School took place between 17/03/08 and 19/03/08. 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. Markham Primary School is situated in the once mining village of the same name near Caerphilly, which is the Unitary Authority (UA). There are 213.5 full-time equivalent pupils on roll between the ages of 3 and 11 including 14.5 full time equivalent children in the nursery who attend on a morning's only basis.
2. Most pupils come from the local area which is significantly economically and socially disadvantaged. For example, the Argoed Ward in which the school is situated is in the poorest 20% of wards in Wales in terms of its multiple deprivations. A large proportion of the population have no formal qualifications. The school is part of a Communities First area. A significant number of children are from families whose stay in Markham is transitory. On entry, children in general have very low levels of basic skills, particularly in speech and language and social development.
3. The school reports that 32% of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is well above the UA average of 20.6% and the national average of 17.5%. About 31% of pupils are considered to have some degree of special educational needs (SEN), including two boys and one girl who have a statement of SEN for a range of reasons. Overall this is higher than average. No pupil has the National Curriculum (NC) disapplied.
4. English is the predominant language of 99% of pupils. Some 95% of pupils are from Welsh backgrounds. No pupil has Welsh as a first language. No pupil has English as an additional language. Two pupils are looked after by the UA. No pupil was excluded in the previous school year.
5. The school was last inspected in the Spring Term 2002, when the current headteacher was in post. The school roll has increased since then. This is in large part due to the transfer of pupils from Argoed Primary School which closed at the end of the Autumn Term 2007.
6. During this inspection the deputy headteacher and one other teacher were absent due to long-term ill health. The place of the deputy headteacher was taken by a supply teacher and his management duties were assumed by another member of the teaching staff. Two newly qualified teachers were in post.
7. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Eco-Schools, Green Flag status and Investors in People.

The School's Aims

8. The school's aims are very wide and appropriate.

The school's priorities and targets

9. The school's priorities and targets for 2008/2009 are: -
- to gain Investors in People and Basic Skills Awards;
 - to ensure school accessibility for the disabled;
 - to strengthen the professional development of support staff;
 - to develop a skill based approach to teaching and learning in readiness of 'Curriculum 2008';
 - to extend the whole school strategy for assessment;
 - to review and update child protection procedures;
 - to continue to develop the school's self evaluation process;
 - to continue to develop transition arrangements in line with UA guidelines and a transition plan;
 - to continue to prepare for the introduction of the foundation phase;
 - to develop strategies for supporting pupils with SEN;
 - to continue to develop cultural diversity within the school;
 - to develop a cross phase anti-bullying pack;
 - to raise standards in both numeracy and literacy in both key stages; and
 - to secure the successful transfer of Argoed Primary School pupils to Markham Primary School.

Summary

10. Markham Primary School is a good school with some outstanding features. It is well led and is at the heart of the community it serves.

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?	1
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1
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 agrees with all of the judgements in the seven key questions made by the school about the standards pupils achieve and other areas of its work.

Standards

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

Pupils' standards of achievement	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	10%	90%	0%	0%	0%

13. These figures are above those found in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's (HMCI) Annual Report 2006/2007, where achievement in 80% of lessons in primary schools was Grade 2 or better. The figures are also well above those set as a target in the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) 'Vision into Action' document for primary schools that by 2010 at least 98% of lessons inspected should be Grade 3 or better.

Subjects and areas of learning for under fives

	Nursery	Reception
Language, literacy and communication skills	2	2
Personal and social development	1	1
Mathematical development	2	2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	2	2
Creative development	2	2
Physical development	2	2

14. 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.
15. Many children begin school with very low levels of basic skills, particularly in speech and language and in their social development. They make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	Nursery	Reception	KS1	KS2
	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade
Under fives	2	2	N/A	N/A
English	N/A	N/A	2	2
Welsh as a Second language	N/A	N/A	2	2
Information technology	N/A	N/A	2	2
History	N/A	N/A	2	1
Music	N/A	N/A	2	2

16. Pupils with SEN make good progress as a result of the very good provision and help they receive.
17. In the end of KS1 national teacher assessments for seven year olds, starting from a very low base, the proportion of pupils attaining at least the expected level (Level 2) was well below the UA and national averages in English, mathematics and science. The combined results were also well below these averages. However the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) in mathematics was above the UA and national averages and in the other subjects was close to those averages. In these results, the performance of boys was well below that of girls.
18. When these results are compared to schools in the UA with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the 2007 results were below most of these similar schools. The overall trend in performance in these assessments over recent years has fluctuated. However the performance of girls has improved significantly during this time.
19. In the 2007 national teaching assessments for eleven year olds, the proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding the expected level (Level 4) in English, mathematics and science and when these results are combined they were well below the local and national averages. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) was low overall but higher in science. In these assessments, girls reached higher standards than boys.
20. When these results are compared to schools with a similar proportion of free school meals, the school performed well below in English and science and below the majority of these schools in mathematics. The combined results were also below the majority.
21. In recent years, the end of KS2 results have varied considerably. For example in 2005 the standards were very high and in 2006 they were very low. In 2007 several factors adversely influenced results which were beyond the school's control and which reflected the high level of movement amongst families in and out of the area. Those pupils who remained at the school for the whole of KS2 improved their performance by at least the expected amount. The school met the targets agreed with the UA. Inspection evidence suggests that standards in classes are higher than those attained in the 2007 national assessments.
22. Standards and progress in key skills are Grade 2 (good features and no important shortcomings).
23. Across the school, pupils' standards and progress in communication in English are Grade 2. In nursery and reception children make good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They speak confidently and listen well. Across the school, many read at least at the expected level for their ages, for a wide range of reasons. Their writing skills are very well developed in, for example science, history and geography.

24. In communication in Welsh standards are Grade 2. In the nursery and reception, children begin to recognise simple phrases and to make brief and accurate responses. In KS1 and KS2, pupils answer confidently questions in Welsh. Older ones read clearly and write in sentences. Pupils' bilingual skills are also Grade 2. Pupils' understanding of the significant features of their Welsh heritage is Grade 2. They have a good knowledge of the history of their local area and of the culture of Wales.
25. Across the school, pupils' mathematical skills are Grade 2 and they make good progress. In KS1 and KS2, pupils measure carefully. They express data in a range of different ways. Pupils' skills in information and communications technology (ICT) are Grade 2. In nursery and the reception, children use the 'mouse' accurately to navigate through simple programs. In KS1 and KS2, they use their skills widely across the curriculum to reinforce their learning, to locate information, to compose and to illustrate their work.
26. Across the school pupils' personal and social skills are Grade 1 (good with outstanding features). In the nursery and reception children have very caring attitudes to each other. In KS1 and KS2 they show a very strong sense of community.
27. Pupils' creative skills and their problem solving skills are Grade 2. They work together very willingly and know what they need to do to improve their work in the shorter term.
28. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They show high levels of respect to adults and to each other. They are friendly, polite and considerate.
29. Attendance at 90% is below the WAG target of 95% and below most schools locally and nationally. Nearly all pupils arrive on time at the start of the school day.

The quality of education and training

Grades for teaching

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
15%	85%	0%	0%	0%

30. The above figures are well above the national picture reported by HMCI in the Annual Report 2006/2007 where the quality of teaching nationally was at least Grade 2 in 80% of lessons with 14% having outstanding features. These figures are also above the WAG 'Vision into Action' document where the target for 2010 for the quality of teaching observed by Estyn is for 80% of classes to be at least Grade 2 or better.
31. In the nursery and reception teachers plan and organise very well. Children enjoy a very wide range of suitable learning experiences.

32. Across the school in the best lessons the outstanding features include: -
- very careful explanations of what is expected of pupils;
 - the use of a very wide range of high quality resources and artefacts which make the lessons come to life;
 - very positive encouragement which transmits the teachers' confidence to pupils to believe that they can succeed;
 - well thought out strategies to encourage pupils to think things out for themselves and to make connections between causes and effects;
 - very constructive relationships between adults and pupils;
 - brisk pace and sense of purpose to learning;
 - very good subject knowledge;
 - confident use of incidental Welsh;
 - good use of opportunities to extend pupils' speaking skills; and
 - close and effective co-operation between teachers and their assistants.
33. There are good arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' progress which meets statutory requirements in full. Pupils are fully involved in setting their own targets for improvement. The school uses a wide range of reliable tests and assessments to judge pupils' performance. However, the process of analysing this data is cumbersome. It is time-consuming and does not readily provide a clear picture of how much progress pupils make.
34. Pupils with SEN are assessed regularly and their needs are thoroughly addressed. The school is very mindful to ensure that teachers within the school agree what are the standards that pupils are achieving. They make consistent judgements with other schools particularly in English, mathematics and science.
35. Annual reports to parents meet statutory requirements. Parents have good access to teachers, in order to discuss the progress their children are making.
36. The curriculum provided by the school meets the legal requirements for the NC and for the local agreed syllabus in religious education. The overall curriculum is of a very high quality. It is accessible to all and meets the needs of all pupils including those with SEN. It is very broad, balanced and well planned.
37. The curriculum is substantially enriched by the use of the local environment. For example, there are extensive outdoor learning opportunities within the school grounds, including a forest school resource and also a newly constructed Anderson shelter for pupils to develop a sense of empathy with children in World War II. There is very good provision for out of school activities most notably a very innovative 'enrichment' arrangement with the local community. Planning for key skills is thorough.
38. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to reflect on

their own experiences and the ways of life of other people, for example through a link with a school in Nigeria. There are many good opportunities for pupils to learn how to take on responsibilities and to be constructive and helpful members of their community.

39. Links with parents are particularly strong. Their views are regularly sought and valued. They are kept very well informed and have easy access to teachers. The school has very effectively developed close ties with industry and with the wider community. As a result, pupils have a very good insight into the world of work and commerce. Arrangements for homework are good and provide opportunities for pupils to build on their learning in school.
40. The school promotes equal opportunities very well. All pupils are given the same chances to take part in all school activities. The school makes every effort to make up for the social disadvantage of many of its pupils. It actively discourages the stereotyping of individuals and cultures. Pupils are made very aware of the need to look after natural resources and to protect the environment. They are very successfully encouraged to see themselves as citizens of the world.
41. The school has rigorously produced extensive plans and arrangements which support pupils' well-being very successfully. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive healthy eating and living strategy.
42. The personal support and guidance of pupils is of a very high quality. Risk assessments are undertaken very carefully. Support for those who are unwell or in need of first aid are robust with several staff trained in giving help. Child protection arrangements are in line with local guidance. The school council is very well established and is very active in expressing the views of pupils. These opinions are respected and acted upon.
43. The support for pupils with SEN is of a very high quality and is very well managed. Individual education plans (IEP's) are detailed and put into practice very successfully. The requirements of the code of practice for SEN are met in full.
44. There are very detailed and extensive policies and arrangements to review pupils' attendance, punctuality, behaviour and performance. The school also has well organised policies and procedures for dealing with issues of race equality, disability, discrimination and equal opportunities. There is an accessibility plan in place based on a detailed survey of the site. The building and facilities are accessible to those with any physical disability.

Leadership and management

45. The headteacher is very effective in helping to create a very positive and constructive environment for teaching and learning. Staff morale is high and there is a very positive atmosphere across the school. All staff work very

purposefully together and they ensure that all pupils are well treated and positively encouraged.

46. The roles of subject leaders are well developed; they manage their subjects effectively. The headteacher is fully focused on raising standards further.
47. The school takes careful note of national priorities and local initiatives. Preparation for the introduction of the foundation phase and the new Curriculum 2008 are well advanced. Arrangements to provide teachers with time during the taught week to plan, prepare and assess are effectively organised.
48. The school works closely with the governing body. The chair of governors is very committed to the school and to its continued well-being. He regularly visits the school to discuss matters with the headteacher. The school's finances are well managed. Governors meet their statutory duties in full. However some governors are inexperienced and as a whole they do not hold the professional leadership sufficiently to account.
49. The process of self-evaluation is thorough and well established. It is closely linked to the school development planning process. All those including parents and pupils and those who have a direct involvement in the school have been consulted. The school's self-evaluation report is sufficiently detailed and accurate. It is an effective working tool for school improvement and is closely linked to arrangements within the school for the performance management of staff.
50. Since the last inspection in March 2002 the school has made good progress in addressing the key issues of that inspection. Day-to-day administration is efficient and the school is effectively run. There is an adequate provision of well-qualified teachers and a generous allocation of support staff who work together very well.
51. The accommodation is safe and attractive with considerable outdoor facilities which help to provide a stimulating environment for learning. Very good use is made of teachers' time, expertise and experience. There is an effective induction programme for newly qualified teachers. The school is well resourced. Good use is made of resources which are all readily available. They are of a good quality and quantity to support learning.
52. Bearing in mind the overall quality of education provided and the progress many pupils make from very 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 continue to take steps to raise attendance to a level at least comparable with most schools locally and nationally;
- R2 strengthen the role of the governing body so that it constructively holds the professional leadership of the school to account; and
- R3 utilise electronic means of interpreting information which the school collects from its assessment procedures in order to judge more efficiently the progress pupils make towards the targets set for them. *

* The school has already identified this as a priority 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

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

54. Standards of achievement in the lessons observed were as follows: -

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Pupils' standards of achievement	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	11%	89%	0%	0%	0%

55. These figures are well above those found in HMCI's Annual Report 2006/2007 where 80% of lessons in primary schools were Grade 2 or better. The figures are also well above the targets set for primary schools in the WAG Vision into Action document. In it the targets for primary schools by

2010 is for the quality of learning assessed by Estyn to be Grade 3 or better in 98% of lessons.

56. Baseline assessments indicate that children's basic skills are very low when they begin school. A significant proportion of children enter school with very low levels of basic skills particularly in speech and language and in their social development.
57. 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.

Subjects and areas of learning for under fives

	Nursery	Reception
Language, literacy and communication skills	2	2
Personal and social development	1	1
Mathematical development	2	2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	2	2
Creative development	2	2
Physical development	2	2

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	KS1	KS2
	Grade	Grade
English	2	2
Welsh as a Second language	2	2
Information technology	2	2
History	2	1
Music	2	2

58. Pupils with SEN make good progress as a result of the very good provision for them and the help they receive. In the 2007 national teacher assessments for seven year olds in English, mathematics and science the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2) was well below the local and national averages in English, mathematics and science and when these results were combined. In these assessments girls attained much higher results than boys. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) however was above the local and national averages in mathematics and close to the UA and national averages in science. The combined results were below the UA and national averages.
59. When these results are compared to schools which have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the results were below most of these similar schools in English and mathematics and well below in science. The combined results were also below.
60. Background data indicates that in this relatively small group of seven year olds who were assessed, many began school with low levels of basic skills.

Additionally three boys and one girl began nursery with significant levels of difficulties. Over half of those who were assessed were on the register of pupils with SEN. While results were low, all pupils reached the realistic targets set for them. A particular strength in these assessments is the overall high performance of girls which has steadily improved over the last four years, while the performance of boys has fluctuated. For example in 2006 the combined results of boys were double what they were in 2007.

61. In the KS2 national teacher assessment for eleven year olds in 2007 in English, mathematics and science, the proportion of pupils achieving at least the expected level (Level 4) was well below the local and national averages in all three subjects and when the results in these subjects were combined. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) was also low in English and mathematics but above in science. In these assessments boys reached lower levels than girls in English, mathematics and science and when the results in these three subjects were combined.
62. When these results are compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school performed well below in English and science and below the majority in mathematics. The combined results were also below the majority of these similar schools.
63. Since 2005 end of KS2 results have varied. They were very high in 2005 and very low in 2006. In the 2007 national teacher assessments three quarters of pupils achieved an improvement of at least two levels from the standards achieved when they were assessed at the age of seven. This represents at least the expected progress for them. In the 2007 group which was relatively small, one pupil entered the school two weeks before the assessments took place and three pupils who were predicted to reach at least the expected level left. In 2007 the school met the targets agreed with the UA. Currently standards in classes indicate that across the school pupils generally achieve well in their lessons.
64. Overall, pupils' achievements in key skills are Grade 2. In communication in English in nursery and reception starting from a low base, children make good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They are beginning to speak confidently. They recognise that words carry meaning. In KS1 and KS2, standards in these key skills are Grade 2. They listen attentively and often respond confidently and expressively. Pupils' reading skills are well developed across the key stages. They use these key skills well to find out information. A particularly strong feature is the overall quality of their writing in a range of subjects and for different reasons, for example in science, history and geography.
65. Pupils' communication skills in Welsh are Grade 2. In the nursery children are beginning to recognise simple phrases and responses. They are beginning to count in Welsh. In both KS1 and KS2, pupils respond to greetings and commands appropriately. Older pupils have growing confidence to express themselves naturally and accurately in their lessons. In KS1 they read clearly and write simple sentences in Welsh. In KS2 they

write more complex sentences accurately and some are beginning to read in Welsh as part of their general reading activities.

66. Across the school, pupils' mathematical skills are Grade 2. In nursery and reception children make good progress. In KS1 and KS2 they use grids and graphs well to collate and interpret information, for example in science and geography. They measure accurately in design technology.
67. Across the school pupils' skills in ICT are Grade 2. In nursery and reception children use the mouse to navigate through simple programs. In KS1 and KS2 they edit, record and improve their work using their word processing skills effectively. They research and complete their finished work for example, in history in high quality presentations about their own area. They use interactive whiteboards and computers regularly.
68. Across the school, pupils' bilingual competence is Grade 2. Children under five make good progress in using Welsh naturally. Bearing in mind the geographical setting of the school pupils respond to questions appropriately in both languages. In KS1 and KS2, they use incidental Welsh in a wide range of settings.
69. Pupils' understanding of the richness of the Welsh culture is Grade 2. They have a very detailed understanding of the development of their village and surrounding area through an extensive range of visits and visitors. They take part in cultural events which help them to appreciate the particular features of Welsh music and dance. They study the work of some Welsh artists.
70. Pupils' personal skills are Grade 1. Starting in the nursery, children have very positive attitudes to each other. Across the school pupils know what is expected of them. They show very constructive attitudes to each other and to adults. They work willingly and show a strong sense of community. They wish to please their teachers and to succeed.
71. In the nursery and reception and in KS1 and KS2, pupils' problem solving skills are Grade 2. In the nursery and reception they think things out for themselves. In KS1 and KS2 they respond constructively to the carefully organised questions and challenges set for them.
72. Pupils' creative skills are Grade 2. Across the school they express themselves confidently in art, music and dance. They illustrate their work well using a range of materials and media.
73. A particular strength in the school is the outstanding way pupils work very willingly together. This is Grade 1. They share their ideas and resources generously and they co-operate very effectively.
74. Across the school, pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. They regularly evaluate their own performance realistically. They identify clearly what they have done well and where they need to make

improvements. They keep careful records of the small steps they need to take to improve and the progress they are making to reach them.

75. Pupils make outstanding progress in the development of their personal, social and learning skills. Their behaviour and their attitudes to learning are major strengths of the school.
76. The vast majority of pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They work hard in lessons and are eager to please. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic about their work and even the youngest children want to share experiences. They co-operate and support each other very well when working in pairs and small groups and at all other times. The vast majority sustain very good levels of concentration and persevere very well with their tasks.
77. Pupils' behaviour and the respect they show to adults and each other is outstanding. Relationships are exemplary and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect throughout the school.
78. The school sets high expectations. The foundations for good behaviour are laid very effectively in the early years. As a result, even the youngest children know what is expected of them. Pupils are friendly, polite and considerate. They relate extremely well to adults. Throughout the school they willingly help their teachers and support staff.
79. Pupils move sensibly in and around the school. Behaviour in the hall during assemblies and lunchtimes is very good. They enter and leave the hall quietly and take up their places quickly. Meal times are very pleasant social occasions.
80. Pupils work and play together very well and relationships with each other are very good. Older ones are sensitive to the needs of those who are younger than them. For example Y5 trained Playground Players lead activities in the playground at break times and lunchtimes.
81. In discussions pupils say they generally get on very well. Bullying is not a problem and they are very aware of what to do should it occur because of their involvement in devising the anti-bullying pack. They have a strong sense of right and wrong.
82. At 90% the average rate of attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection is below the UA and national averages and the WAG 2010 target of 93%. Absences are caused mainly by illness but holidays in term time and a significant minority of transient families adversely affect the overall rate.
83. There have been no exclusions for many years and those pupils on 'managed moves' from other schools settle and progress very well in this school compared to their previous experiences.

84. The vast majority of pupils arrive on time at the start of the school day but a small number in most classes arrive late. They often miss the important social time as well as the start of lessons and assemblies at the beginning of the day.
85. Pupils, including those with additional learning needs, develop very good independent, problem solving and decision-making skills. They are exceptionally well prepared for effective participation in the workplace through their roles on the school council and eco-committee.
86. Pupils have an extremely good understanding of the world of work and their place in the community because they participate in a really good range of projects and events as well as visits to appropriate places. This starts in the early years with topics such as 'People who help us'. Throughout the school pupils take a share in the life of the school, for example children in the early years willingly tidy up after activities.
87. The school council and eco-committee have a high profile in the school. As a result pupils develop corporate responsibilities and a strong sense of belonging to the school and the wider community through their roles. They conduct surveys and make decisions on behalf of the classes they represent. They work closely with representatives from the Communities First on projects such as the Cydcoed Community Woodland and they have successfully petitioned the local council to install floodlights on the Multipurpose Games Area (MUGA) for the benefit of the community. The school is involved in many community projects.
88. Pupils throughout the school take their responsibilities very seriously and show great commitment to their roles. They are very proud of their school and write reports of their activities for publication in the free 'Markham Messenger' booklet.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
15%	85%	0%	0%	0%

91. These figures are well above the national picture reported by HMCI in the Annual Report for 2006/2007 where the quality of teaching in primary schools is at least Grade 2 in 80% of lessons with 14% having outstanding figures. These figures are also above the 2010 targets for primary schools

set out in the WAG 'Vision into Action' document where the quality of teaching assessed by Estyn should be Grade 2 or better in 80% of classes.

92. In nursery and reception, teachers plan very effectively to organise a wide range of suitable learning experiences. There are close and effective working relationships between teachers and their assistants so that children settle into school happily. Staff help individuals to achieve success generally from very low starting points.
93. Across the school, teachers plan carefully so that their lessons are well structured and meet the different needs and abilities of all pupils. Teachers carefully explain what is expected of their pupils and how much time there is to complete tasks. They have very high expectations of what their pupils should achieve and positively encourage them to reach their goals. There are very constructive relationships between all adults and pupils in school.
94. The best lessons, which have outstanding features, are found across the school. In these, teachers prepare very stimulating activities for example, using many artefacts from the Second World War to make their lessons come to life. They question very effectively to encourage pupils to think things out for themselves. Teachers very cleverly present evidence in different ways in order for their pupils to recognise, for example in an English lesson what makes for an effective speech. They encourage pupils to look carefully at the relationship between cause and effect.
95. Lessons are very well paced so that pupils work hard and enjoy what they are doing. Teachers conscientiously try to make learning fun so that pupils naturally work with enthusiasm, for example when composing in music lesson. In the process teachers show a very secure understanding of their subject and how to link effectively together different subjects. They successfully encourage pupils to use incidental Welsh regularly and appropriately.
96. In many lessons, teachers show high levels of professional skill in encouraging pupils to work confidently and to have belief in themselves. They carefully foster pupils' self-esteem so that pupils thrive and are able to develop a sense of awe and wonder in the natural world. There is a strong sense of teamwork across the school between teachers and their assistants. This extends to those from the local community, who often come to help out and make lessons particularly interesting.
97. The school has good arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting which fully meet statutory requirements. The policy and practice is clear and understood by all staff. All teaching and support staff regularly assess pupils' learning and use this information to inform future planning. Pupils' are appropriately involved in setting their own targets as they move through the school and this has a positive impact on promoting higher standards and in monitoring learning.

98. Baseline assessment is undertaken shortly after entry to reception and is used effectively to plan for future provision. The school has a procedure for tracking pupil progress that aims to highlight performance across the key stages. However the process of analyzing data is time consuming and does not easily produce a clear picture of the progress of individuals and groups of pupils.
99. The tracking system does not make clear the progress that individual pupils make because the process is underdeveloped. The school is only just beginning to utilise this resource as a valuable tool in the assessment process.
100. The school has appropriate arrangements for informing those with a legitimate interest about pupils' achievements and progress. National Curriculum assessment data at the end of KS2 is exchanged with the local secondary school. There are extensive arrangements in place for teachers to agree standards within the school and across schools in the area in order to strengthen teachers' understanding about standards in particularly English, mathematics and science.
101. Marking is effective and gives pupils clear guidance on what to do next. Comments are related to the learning objective and provide encouragement and constructive suggestions for pupils on the way forward. During lessons teachers and support staff regularly check on pupils' learning and encourage them to play an active role in reviewing their own targets.
102. The processes for recording the achievements of pupils with SEN are good. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and cater effectively for their individual learning needs. Reading records are detailed and accurately reflect pupils' progress.
103. The school has annotated collections of pupils' work assessed against NC criteria in most subjects. They have been developed with other local schools and are well used to support teachers' judgments when assessing pupils' work. This is a good feature of assessment practice in the school and helps to ensure consistency.
104. Annual reports to parents are good and fully comply with statutory requirements.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

105. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
106. The curriculum fully meets the needs of all pupils in the school and is very broad, balanced and well-planned. The school fulfils its curricular aims.

Schemes of work in all subjects comply with NC and statutory requirements. Pupils with SEN are well catered for across the school. Teachers and support staff make sure that the curriculum is well matched to the needs of individuals.

107. The overall quality for the educational provision of the under fives is very good.
108. The very well planned curriculum offers a wide-range of active learning opportunities for pupils to build systematically on what they already know and can do from the nursery through to the end of KS2. Homework is set regularly and is well used to extend pupils' learning. The school makes very good use of the local environment to provide first-hand learning activities both inside and outside the classroom. Visits to places of interest and visitors to school are very well organised to make learning stimulating for the pupils.
109. An outstanding feature of the provision is the creative use made of the 'Forest School' area. All pupils make very good use of it. For example, pupils in KS1 use the Forest School to look at how animals use camouflage, which is then linked to poetry and music. In KS2 they help to design and build an outdoor Anderson Shelter in the school grounds as part of their study of World War II.
110. The school meets the statutory and legal requirements to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. The school promotes health education and has an effective substance misuse programme of activities for older pupils. Y6 pupils learn about the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse through a planned set of learning activities delivered by the local police. The planning for key skills is thorough.
111. Provision for the teaching of bilingual skills across the school is good. Teachers and support staff offer good models of bilingual competence. Pupils are confidently developing the skills of speaking, reading and writing in Welsh and English. Some pupils choose to read Welsh reading books alongside their English readers. They read with fluency and with good expression. Provision for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is good. Across the school pupils show pride in their Welshness and a growing understanding of the importance of their local community as being part of the industrial heritage of Wales.
112. The school provides a very wide range of extra-curricular and out-of-school learning. These activities make a very positive contribution to pupils' standards of behaviour and their personal and social development. The school is part of a physical education initiative with the local comprehensive which offers pupils the chance to access exciting recreational facilities such as rock-climbing.
113. An outstanding feature of the provision is the planning and organisation of an enrichment curriculum for pupils in KS2 who are given the opportunity to take part for half a day a week in a variety of activities within the local community.

They choose from a wealth of activities from outdoor pursuits to hair and beauty. All the providers are from the local community and include serving police officers to retired coalminers. Pupils experience a variety of personal, learning and social skills in these sessions.

114. The very strong links with the surrounding locality make the school an outstanding example of community learning. The school has very good links with the Cydcoed Woodland Project where pupils work alongside an artist-in-residence to design special gateways into the woodland area. Pupils design themed-logos to represent local history and flora and fauna which are incorporated on to stiles and gates in the woodland. The school works innovatively alongside the Groundwork Trust to design and make a sensory garden at Markham Resource Centre. Pupils meet and work with other users of the centre to develop the garden. In this way their personal and social development has greatly enhanced. They respect the community in which they live and the people who live and work in it.
115. Parents are encouraged to take part in after-school computer clubs and the school offers theatre nights for the local community to see professional performances.
116. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an outstanding feature of the school. Collective worship and school assemblies are broadly Christian in nature and fully meet legal requirements. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect and consider the human condition in a sensitive and planned way across the curriculum. They are encouraged to think about others through the British Council's 'Connecting Classrooms' project with Nigerian schools.
117. Pupils develop an informed view about what attitudes and values are important in life. They are given time to think about what is right and wrong as they experience learning across the school.
118. Cultural development is actively promoted through the wide range of links with the local community and the well-planned curriculum. Pupils take part in various festivals at local places of worship, visit local theatres and participate in 'Taro Brazil' community dance projects in Blackwood. These events help them understand the significance of other cultures and beliefs. The curriculum provides many opportunities for learning about other cultures in the topics studied in history, geography and religious education.
119. There are very effective links with parents, the local community, the local group of primary schools and some initial teacher training colleges. Appropriate links with the local secondary school are in place. The views of parents are canvassed by questionnaire on a regular basis and the opinions expressed are considered carefully by school management. There is a good dialogue between home and school and parents feel that they can approach the school to help resolve issues that arises from time to time. The hard-working parent teacher association helps raise funds and organise social events at school.

120. 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 KS2. Parents are well informed and are kept up to date about matters that directly affect their child's life in school through high quality brochures and news booklets. They are welcomed into school to support and enrich the curriculum. The school offers successful and well supported computer classes for parents of children in Y5 and Y6 who want to learn more about using the Internet.
121. Strong links with a wide range of local community organisations and projects are a very good feature of school life. The learning experiences that the school offers on account of these links is outstanding. Pupils regularly visit the local leisure centre, community garden and Ynys Hywel Centre to take part in a range of learning activities, which promote good quality learning and social cohesion.
122. The school works very closely with the local cluster of primary schools to share good practice. The high quality anti-bullying pack developed in the school and disseminated across local schools has provided consistency in managing this important area.
123. The school's partnership with industry is outstanding. The school has a well-written industry policy and strong links with Careers Wales. Nearly all the teachers including the headteacher have benefited from industrial placements, which have successfully enhanced their professional development and supported their teaching and management skills.
124. The school has exceptionally well established links with organisations such as Communities First, the Arts Forum and the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations. As a result, pupils gain a very good understanding of the world of work both in the past and in the present. The links further strengthen the school's work on sustainability and healthy lifestyles as well as its partnership with the community.
125. Pupils' work across many areas of the curriculum is enhanced through working with a wide range of professionals and crafts people. For example they work with Forest Rangers to develop a book of activities for Forest School lessons and with a wood carver to design the logo for the book and signposts to the Cydcoed woodland area.
126. Experiences of the world of work start in the early years classes when children work with 'people who help us' such as the police and emergency services. KS1 and KS2 pupils' work is enhanced through a range of visits to places of interest and employment and a wide range of visitors. These include the theatre groups, musicians and dancers as well as engineers. They have first hand experience of the construction industry through their observations of building work in the playground.
127. The school nurse and police support the school's personal and social education programme. The community police officer provides valuable

support in the weekly curriculum enrichment programme, particularly with outdoor pursuits activities.

128. The school makes excellent use of local facilities and amenities to develop the enriched curriculum activities and community projects. For example pupils in the cookery club use the kitchen in the neighbouring leisure centre. They learn about health and safety regulations and the rules of an industrial kitchen. In the gardening club they learn about the work that volunteers do and develop their understanding of sustainable development and healthy lifestyles through working in the gardens of the nearby community house. They evaluate the effectiveness and value of their experiences.
129. Y5 and Y6 pupils take part in a well-established residential visit to an outdoor pursuit centre, where they experience a wide range of activities, which further develop their independent and team building skills.
130. The school promotes equal opportunities extremely well. Pupils, irrespective of their social background, gender, disability or ethnicity, are positively included in all appropriate school activities including out of hours sports, dance and cookery clubs. The school makes every effort to tackle the social disadvantage of many of its pupils. It actively discourages the stereotyping of individuals and cultures.
131. The school has a clear written policy for sustainable development and global citizenship. One teacher is responsible for eco-activities and a support assistant has a special interest. Pupils develop an extremely good understanding of conservation issues through recycling and compost projects in the school and in the community. The school acts in a sustainable way. There are clear policies for sustainable development and anti-litter. Pupils have roles in monitoring energy and water bills and they are aware of the savings that have been made.
132. Pupils work with their parents and members of the community in the gardening club to care for their environment. They are involved in a wide range of activities which develop their skills and their understanding of healthy living. For example they build a variety of features: they plant and harvest crops and take them home to cook and eat with their parents.
133. Pupils' awareness of global citizenship is outstanding. The school is one of only two schools in Wales to establish a link with a school in Africa through the 'Connecting Classrooms' initiative. One teacher has very recently visited the school in Nigeria. Pupils have corresponded with their partners and exchanged sample of their work. They are eagerly awaiting the visit from their partner teachers.
134. Opportunities for pupils to develop skills required to support economic development are outstanding.

135. The school council manages its own budget and uses the money to purchase equipment and resources. They hold fundraising events such as coffee mornings to support the school's Connecting Classrooms initiative.
136. Children in the Early Years develop their entrepreneurial skills through role-play activities and their involvement in the Tiddly Prom project.
137. Pupils throughout the school are involved in enterprise projects each year. They work with crafts people to design and make goods for sale in their various clubs. They organise activities and set up and run stalls to raise funds in school fairs. Y4 pupils work with the headteacher to design and cost playground games and equipment. Y6 pupils run the daily fruit tuck shop.
138. The school attends extremely well to national priorities for lifelong learning and community regeneration. As a result of adult learning courses organised at the school many parents attend other courses and a small number gain qualifications and jobs. Parents' self esteem and confidence is also raised through family learning initiatives. For example parents make story sacks: they learn to tell stories and sing rhymes with their children. Pupils in turn see adults as lifelong learners.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

139. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
140. Pupils are particularly well cared for, guided and supported in a very secure, supportive and happy environment. The school has a very positive ethos and every pupil is valued and included. This is an outstanding feature.
141. An outstanding feature of school life is the quality of relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils. There is a mutual respect between all parties which creates a warm, caring environment in which pupils are encouraged to do their best at all times. The school promotes social development in a coherent and progressive way. Older pupils are given more responsibilities such as school council and eco-school membership and all pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and a pride in their school environment. 'Healthy Schools' promotes a strong agenda for social and personal development. The school successfully operates a Safe Routes Travel Plan and walking bus scheme for pupils.
142. The school works very effectively with health professionals and external agencies. It has a very positive partnership with parents. It knows pupils and their families very well. The headteacher's commitment in this respect is outstanding. Parents' views are sought on a variety of subjects through regular meetings and questionnaires. They are involved in whole school

initiatives such as the development of the anti-bullying pack, Forest School training and the enriched curriculum. There is very good daily informal contact between teachers and parents at the start and end of the day and the regular Fun Days for families in the nursery are very well attended and provide parents with another valuable opportunity to express any issues or concerns.

143. Induction arrangements for the early years are very carefully planned and implemented. As a result of the phased intake and entry even the youngest children settle very well into school life. There are appropriate procedures in place when pupils move between classes and key stages and very effective arrangements to support pupils who join the school at a later stage. All pupils quickly learn the routines and settle well into school life.
144. There are adequate pastoral arrangements with the receiving secondary school. The school provides very high quality personal support and guidance for pupils. The policy is integrated into all aspects of the school's activities and the outcome is reflected in the pupils' caring and thoughtful attitudes.
145. There is a very well established school council which is very active. It successfully gives a very clear message to pupils about the importance of the democratic process.
146. There are very effective policies and procedures in place to monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality, behaviour and performance. Pupils have a role in devising class and school rules that are clearly displayed throughout the school. Their involvement in developing the anti bullying pack is an outstanding feature. Pupils' behaviour is very closely monitored and when required appropriate action is taken to support pupils who may experience difficulties. Arrangements to encourage pupils to behave well are extremely effective. This is evident in high standards of pupils' behaviour.
147. Pupils' attendance and punctuality is extremely carefully monitored. There are a significant number of pupils from transient families. The school works extremely closely with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) in terms of attendance and family welfare for families who give concern. The school sets targets and the EWO makes presentations to pupils in Y4 to Y6 on the leaflet 'Why Attendance Matters'. The school works hard to encourage parents to send their children to school regularly and on time. Pupils monitor their attendance and are very keen to be in the best group. Pupils with 100% attendance are rewarded termly and at the year end. Copies of the leaflet are given to parents when their children start school and at regular intervals.
148. The school is in its fourth year of the Healthy Schools initiative. It is extremely effective at promoting health and fitness for pupils through a wide range of extra curricular activities including physical education with the local secondary school, weekly outdoor pursuits activities through the enriched curriculum programme and the walking bus initiative. This is an outstanding feature. All pupils have access to water throughout the day. Healthy choices

as well as vegetarian and nut free options are available at lunchtime. Pupils understand the need for exercise and a balanced diet.

149. Adults in the school including the canteen staff are very well aware of pupils with particular needs and are very knowledgeable about procedures in the event of accidents and emergencies such as how to help pupils with identified medical conditions and allergies.
150. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy: risk assessments are systematic. All staff are trained in first aid procedures and are alert to issues relating to the well-being of pupils.
151. There is an effective policy and sound procedures for child protection. The headteacher is the nominated officer. The acting deputy headteacher is a teacher governor. She is the named second in command in the headteacher's absence and the named governor with responsibility for child protection. All staff are fully aware of their responsibilities.
152. The school uses a good range of assessments including baseline and diagnostic in conjunction with teacher assessments, to identify pupils' additional needs effectively, at an early stage and to influence the teaching appropriately.
153. The headteacher, during the absence of the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) manages the arrangements to provide additional support for pupils very well.
154. There is excellent support for pupils with additional learning needs, by teachers, a highly effective support staff and additional learning resources. High quality IEPs, individual behaviour plans (IBPs) and 'Play Plans', for the youngest children inform learning and teaching in detail. Good communication ensures that pupils and parents are fully involved in the process. Pupils with additional needs are fully included in all aspects of school life and extra-curricular activities and they take a full part. They are equally valued. The ethos of inclusion is an outstanding feature of the school.
155. The school has well planned and documented procedures for dealing with race equality, disability discrimination and equal opportunities. All pupils are encouraged and enabled to take part in the activities provided by the school.
156. There are effective policies for areas such as bullying, harassment, disability and fire prevention.
157. There is a suitable accessibility plan and action plan that takes account of the school site and buildings. The school has a disability equality scheme in place.
158. The school promotes diversity and equal opportunities extremely well. A very good range of activities is provided for pupils through personal and social and religious education. Initiatives such as working with a multi-

agency forum to design and make a culture diversity calendar enable them to develop a sound understanding of diversity and equal opportunities.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

159. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
160. The headteacher provides a very positive and constructive lead and has achieved much in ensuring that pupils are well taught and have a strong sense of belief in themselves.
161. Staff morale is high and all work together as a mutually supportive and well-motivated team. All share the same optimistic vision for the future. They have a strong sense of commitment to the school and its place in the local community. For example, the headteacher has instigated many initiatives such as the Forest School project and the Eco Schools Award in order to raise pupils' and parents' awareness of what they can achieve. There is a very positive ethos of mutual respect, high expectations and aspirations for all pupils as well as a determination to ensure that pupils have equal access to what is taught.
162. Staff work closely together to provide positive leads to their subjects and to look at ways of improving them, for example in the successful introduction of new strategies to help develop pupils' skills in English and mathematics. There are detailed arrangements in place to assess pupils' long-term progress, to identify under achievement and to determine appropriate short-term targets for pupils to aim to reach. However, much of the data which the school collects is analysed in a time consuming way. The school is only beginning to use electronic means to complete these tasks efficiently.
163. The school takes careful account of national priorities and local initiatives. The school promotes successfully an awareness of healthy lifestyles and healthy diets. There are very strong links with the local community, for example through the Communities First initiative, which has helped to considerably enrich activities such as the 'Markham Memories' Project. Pupils are very successfully encouraged to be aware of ecological issues and of the need to protect and improve the environment. Initiatives to strengthen pupils' basic skills in learning have been put into practice well.
164. The school council and eco-council are both active and take their responsibilities very seriously. In the process they have developed a good awareness of democracy. Preparation for the foundation phase and for the introduction of Curriculum 2008 is well advanced. Arrangements to provide teachers with time during the taught week to plan, prepare and assess are

carefully and effectively managed. Pupils are successfully developing their bilingual skills which are used extensively across the school.

165. There are strong links with other schools in the area including the secondary school to which most pupils transfer and also with other providers of education. The school is often used as a resource to demonstrate its success, for example in developing ways of building up pupils' self esteem and in promoting good behaviour and mutual respect.
166. The school has robust arrangements in place, which are used on a carefully planned basis for the headteacher and subject leaders to observe teaching and learning. This information is well used to determine teachers' training needs. Links between this process and the school's performance management arrangements are effective. There are detailed and well-used arrangements to support newly qualified teachers and teachers who are new to the school.
167. The governing body is very well led and is actively engaged in the daily life of the school. Some governors have been relatively newly appointed. There is a close and effective working relationship between the chair of governors who is a regular visitor to the school and the senior management team. The chair of governors ensures that issues are thoroughly discussed between him and the school before decisions are made.
168. The financial management of the school is well organised and is effective. Governors are well informed about the school's performance in the national teacher assessments. However, they are only beginning to have an influential role in determining the long term strategic direction for the school and in constructively challenging and holding the professional leadership to account. The governing body meets all of its statutory duties in full.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

169. The findings of the inspection team matched the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
170. There are thorough procedures in place to gather information about the performance of the school, based upon a wide range of data. The headteacher, senior management team and subject leaders are well informed about the performance of their areas of responsibility. Subject leaders regularly carry out detailed reviews to judge the success of initiatives they are pursuing. Teachers systematically measure and predict pupils' progress. However, they lack the electronic means to complete these tasks quickly and efficiently in order to highlight successes and where individuals or groups of pupils have areas of weakness.

171. In the process of self-evaluation the staff, pupils, parents, governors and the UA are appropriately consulted. Governors are given good opportunities to express their views, which effectively contribute to the overall judgements made.
172. The school self evaluation document is sufficiently detailed, well organised and logically set out. It provides an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. It is closely linked to the SDP, which sets out priorities for improvement in detail. These are carefully costed and tracked in order to judge whether or not the intentions have been met and that the spending has produced value for money.
173. The school's improvement process is also closely linked to its performance management programme, which takes full account of local and national priorities. Included in this process, for example, is the successful introduction of appropriate arrangements to provide sufficient time for teachers to plan, prepare and assess during the taught week.
174. The inspection team agrees with the school's identification of its strengths and areas for improvement. It also agrees with the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation in each of the seven key questions.
175. Since the last inspection in the Spring Term 2002, the school has made good progress in addressing the many key issues of that inspection. Schemes of work in all subjects and key skills are of a good quality. Teaching and learning are systematically reviewed. The standard of teaching is of at least Grade 2 or Grade 1 throughout the school. Standards have been raised in subjects where they were satisfactory.
176. Pupils now have a good appreciation of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig and in many lessons pupils are encouraged to recognise the existence of forces greater than themselves. Information to parents complies with statutory requirements. Attendance and punctuality has improved. However there is still work to do for the school to reach levels of attendance in line with most schools.
177. Pupils' performance at Level 4 in the national teacher assessments in science at the end of KS2 has fluctuated considerably. Despite this, in the last five years the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) has been above the UA and national averages overall.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

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

179. There are an appropriate number of teachers in the school. Teachers have an effective blend of experience. This is enhanced by some specialist teaching for music, religious education and mathematics. Teachers and their assistants are appropriately qualified and take part in regular ongoing professional development activities. Training or recent developments such as the Forest School initiative have resulted in all staff gaining the necessary training and qualifications.
180. All staff benefit from an extensive programme of professional development. Individual, whole school, cluster and UA training moves the school forward. The school has invested time and money well in its training. Newly qualified staff have an effective induction programme and are mentored well. The school's use of time for teachers to plan, prepare and assess is innovative and highly successful.
181. All classroom support staff work very effectively alongside teachers. Relationships are very good and result in pupils receiving high quality support in their learning. Support staff have a good range of qualifications and use their knowledge and understanding of child development to good effect. They regularly assess the progress of pupils they are supporting and work closely with teachers in ensuring that the next steps in learning are planned.
182. The school clerks play an efficient role in the daily management of the school. The caretaker and cleaning staff ensure that the school is kept clean and tidy.
183. The accommodation provides a safe and accessible environment which meet the needs of all pupils. Attractive wall displays in the corridors and classrooms are generally of a good size for the number on roll. The school buildings and grounds are in a good state of repair and are well maintained providing a stimulating environment for learning. The school makes very good use of local community resources such as the adjacent leisure centre and the resource centre across the road, which helps to extend pupils learning opportunities very successfully.
184. The school is well resourced. In the nursery and reception children have access to a wide range of materials, which match their needs well. All classrooms have a range of books to support pupils' learning and the libraries have a good range of attractive fiction and non-fiction. The school has shown continued commitment to ICT by improving its provision in classrooms and in a dedicated classroom of computers.
185. The school links resources to its needs and priorities well. The SDP is efficiently costed and through good strategic planning is matched to areas of development. Resources are well used. Good account is taken of national initiatives in the school's spending.
186. Bearing in mind the overall quality of education provided and the progress made by many pupils from very low starting points, the school gives good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Under 5s

Language, literacy and communication

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Nursery

187. Nursery children listen to stories with enjoyment and interest. They respond well to questions and instructions. They have good recall of the story and join in dialogue well. In their Forest School activity they use descriptive language explaining that the bark is both rough and smooth and that the bear masks they play with are 'like binoculars.'
188. Children discuss a special letter they have received and talk about the ingredients of Goldilock's porridge breakfast.
189. Children enjoy mask making with pencils, felt pens, paints and chalks and writing an invitation to Goldilock's breakfast.

Reception

190. Reception children listen attentively to their stories about gardens and growing and discuss them with increasing confidence, and are eager to share their experiences. They appreciate humour in stories.
191. Children describe their scarecrows clearly in sentences use descriptive language and appreciate that words such as 'cross ' have more than one meaning. They listen to instructions well and respond to them.
192. Children begin to recognise key words in their reading books and know capital and lower case letters and question marks. They begin to form letters correctly; they firstly overwrite, copy a model and select words independently to make sentences. They write their names legibly.
193. Children enjoy using a clipboard to take notes and use a dictionary to find words.

Shortcomings

194. There are no important shortcomings.

Personal and social development

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Good and outstanding features

195. The behaviour of pupils in the nursery and reception classes is an outstanding feature.

Nursery

196. Nursery children quickly settle into daily routines. They sit quietly during whole class sessions, listening very attentively to what adults and peers have to say. They take turns confidently to say 'hello' to Jo Jingles, the visitor, and to Goldilocks. They show sensitivity to others as they hug the doll Jo or 'give him five'. They are courteous to visitors as they sit quietly without fuss waiting for an activity to begin.
197. Children choose a friend to sit next to for breakfast, are well behaved and show good table manners, using the cutlery sensibly. They have a good understanding of fair play recalling rules for their hide and seek game.

Reception

198. Reception class children know class routines well. After the prayer at the end of the day they move sensibly to the cloakroom, put on their coats and collect their bags independently. They listen avidly to their peers and teachers and show increasing powers of concentration during their activities. They display outstanding co-operative skills as they help each other do up their aprons. They show increasing independent skills as they clear up after milk and fruit.

Shortcomings

199. There are no important shortcomings.

Mathematical development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Nursery

200. Nursery children's mathematical skills develop well. They recall a number of counting songs and rhymes, count their teddy masks in English and Welsh and the number of children in class, realising that there is an equal number of boys and girls present. They begin to recognise numbers and match them to objects. They understand size and match a big bowl to a big spoon.
201. Children order father, mother and baby bear according to size.

202. Children begin to use positional language such as behind and beside.

Reception

203. Reception children show an increasing understanding of number as they order and match numbers and group objects together, add two bananas to four bananas to make six and build a tower from three blocks. They sequence the days of the week. They understand the concept of long and short. They begin to understand measures as they measure water in jugs.
204. Children match two-dimensional shapes and use them to make their scarecrow pictures.
205. Children show an understanding of the purpose and use of money as they shop at their greengrocer shop.

Shortcomings

206. There are no important shortcomings.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Nursery

207. Nursery children observe the life cycle of the butterfly with fascination.
208. Children have an appreciation of the passing of time as they become familiar with the school day and how toys have changed over a period of time, as they look at their teddies' time line.
209. Children show an understanding of their own identity recognising the Welsh flag as the flag of Wales.

Reception

210. Reception children have a good understanding of the natural world. They understand life processes, stating that birds build nests, lay eggs and hatch and that animals live in different habitats. They know about weather conditions and describe them in English and Welsh. They know about different climates tasting exotic fruits like dragon fruit and pineapple which don't grow in their country.
211. Children show an awareness of the physical world, deducing that a spatula makes a wand shape shadow.

212. Children know that they can get information from books, the television and the computer. They begin to develop an understanding of the different properties of materials as they examine bark cloth from Uganda used for artwork.

Shortcomings

213. There are no important shortcomings.

Creative development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Nursery

214. Nursery children enjoy singing and making music. They sing and clap 'Farmer's in his den ' and 'Good morning ' with gusto. They use a range of percussion instruments keeping the beat well to 'Bear Necessities.'
215. Children collect brown, natural materials from the garden to decorate their bear masks and create attractive brightly painted self- portraits to welcome everyone to the Nursery.

Reception

216. Reception children listen to music, recognise what it is and begin to make their own evaluation. They experiment with the sounds of the musical instruments on the display table. They make observational drawings of fruit and vegetables and create realistic fruit and vegetables for their Markham Greengrocer Shop, from salt dough. They enjoy experimenting with a range of media making snowflakes from white chocolate and rice crispies. In their role-play they sort the shopping, prepare lunch and dinner and take the baby for a walk.

Shortcomings

217. There are no important shortcomings.

Physical development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Nursery

218. Nursery children's fine motor skills develop well. They thread beads, paint and play with dough and use crayons and brushes with increasing accuracy.

In the outdoor classroom, on their Bear hunt they walk and run stepping carefully from one stepping-stone to another. As they play hide and seek they show an increasing spatial awareness.

Reception

219. Reception children's fine motor skills are good. They use scissors correctly cutting and sticking shapes onto their pictures. Their pencil control develops well as they colour their pictures with increasing accuracy. They use the mouse on the computer to drag objects and colours with dexterity and make a good attempt to write their name using the keyboard. When they make sandwiches they demonstrate correct use of a knife.
220. Children's hand eye co-ordination skills develop well as they throw balls and beanbags. They travel around the Leisure Centre Hall balancing rubber rings on their heads, showing good spatial awareness.

Shortcomings

221. There are no important shortcomings.

English

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

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

Good features

222. Pupils in KS1 starting from a very low base, speak confidently and clearly to adults and to each other. They ask purposeful questions and know how to improve their speech by using more expressive words. They listen eagerly and are attentive.
223. Within KS2, younger pupils make very good progress when speaking both formally and informally. They have growing vocabularies and speak clearly. They enjoy findings words which sound the same but are spelt differently.
224. Older pupils in KS2 build successfully on what they already know and can do so that by the end of the key stage they recognise the significance of prefixes and use them quickly and accurately to make new words. They listen very attentively to a wartime speech by Winston Churchill and identify how the speech conveys stirring messages through its tone and expression. They know that in a speech the delivery is a very important element. They identify imperative verbs and how alliterations and repetitions make a speech more compelling to its listeners.
225. Across KS1 pupils read reasonably accurately and nearly all know how to use their knowledge of the sounds letters make to read unfamiliar words they meet in their reading books. Many read accurately and are at least at the expected level for their ages. They enjoy and discuss the characters

they meet, they know the main parts of a book and how to use the contents and index appropriately.

226. Within KS2 nearly all pupils read confidently. They correct mistakes themselves and many read with expression and a sense of audience. They identify with the characters in the books they read. They have clear views about why they prefer some authors to others. They show empathy about the plight of those they read about, for example in 'Carrie's War'. They know how to use the Internet to find information and they do so regularly.
227. In KS1 pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. Many form their letters neatly and know how to use capital letters and full stops correctly. They make their writing more colourful by using adjectives and adverbs. They begin to write for different reasons and in different styles. For example, they write instructions in a logical order. They re-tell the lifecycle of a penguin accurately. They write descriptively about the 'Tatty Bogle'.
228. Across KS2 many pupils' handwriting is neat and fluent. They write for a wide range of reasons and in many different styles. Younger pupils in KS2 use direct speech well when recording conversations. They write using bullet points as well as in complete sentences. They use a planner well to write a sequential story.
229. Older pupils in KS2 compose a range of poems including acrostics and haiku. They use paragraphs accurately and write detailed newspaper reports, keep fictional diaries and write interesting biographies. They write letters home from the point of view of an evacuee and to the people connected to a visit they made to a McDonald's café in Swansea as part of their work in geography. They compose lively scripts for short plays and write amusing alternative endings to well know stories.

Shortcomings

230. There are no important shortcomings.

Welsh second language

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

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

Good features

231. Throughout the school pupils use their skills in Welsh with pride and increasing fluency.
232. In KS1 pupils respond naturally to the attendance and dinner registers and positively to the teacher's commands. They ask and answer questions about their feelings and the weather patterns. They follow and read the Big Book

'Picnic Tedi Twt ' and read food labels when they fill the picnic basket. They describe what they are wearing and use positive and negative responses to questions. Their counting skills in Welsh develop well and they tell the time. They use an increasing, varied vocabulary.

233. In KS2 pupils describe what they are wearing and state their preferences for school activities, using positive and negative sentences. Their reading skills develop further as they read questions and vocabulary from flash cards, the days of the week and the date. Their writing skills develop well. By the end of the key stage they recall language patterns previously learnt well. They use both the present and past tense confidently, join sentences with connectives and end and begin appropriately.
234. Pupils readily transfer what they have learnt in Welsh to other situations. In their history lessons they write post cards in Welsh home, as either 'Carrie' or 'Nick' from the novel 'Carrie's War'. In mathematics they complete co-ordinates in a grid following instructions given in Welsh.
235. In both key stages pupils respond positively to daily incidental Welsh. They enjoy singing a range of Welsh rhymes, counting songs and hymns.

Shortcomings

236. There are no important shortcomings.

Information 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

237. Pupils in KS1 use hardware and software purposefully and with confidence. They skilfully use the mouse and are developing good keyboard skills. They can use a paint program package to create their own pictures to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. They 'click and drag' and change the painting tool, size of the picture and the colour in their compositions.
238. Pupils in KS1 save, edit and print their pictures and access their own file of IT work to show what they have achieved. They use simple CD Rom systems to find information about topics successfully. They use hand-held video recording devices to capture aspects of their work. They successfully use computer modelling and simulation packages such as moving a floor turtle across the room.
239. Younger pupils in KS2 organise, combine and select sounds from a software package to illustrate their pictures of musical instruments. They upload computer-generated icons, pictures and symbols and add the appropriate sound clips to highlight a musical sequence. They make good links with

previous learning and demonstrate good skills in retrieving and handling information. They can move between programs they need to use with confidence and a growing understanding.

240. Pupils in KS2 sort, communicate and store information in the form of a database about real situations. They use a simple data-handling package to make a block graph to display the data they have collected about their eye colour. They add records to the database and undertake a search to interrogate the information. They successfully save their work and have a developing understanding of the importance of checking the quality and reliability of data stored.
241. Older pupils in KS2 have good keyboard skills and make good use of desktop publishing packages to present, communicate and contrast information about the local area and Swansea Bay. They prepare, design and make their own spreadsheet about shop prices, enter values and produce a report using available modelling software. They check their work for accuracy and file, save and produce a series of bar graphs and pie charts. They use the Internet responsibly to research topic work The Second World War and make effective power point presentations, which incorporate animations and audio clips.

Shortcomings

242. There are no important shortcomings.

History

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

Key Stage 2: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Good and outstanding features

243. In KS1 pupils know that their families and themselves have changed since they were young. They compare their lives and living conditions to those of a long time ago. They discuss with older visitors what life was like in Markham when they were young. They look at and learn from a wide range of household artefacts. They attempt to help in a 'Victorian washday' using the dolly, mangle and scrubbing board. They appreciate how much easier life in their homes is today than it was then.
244. In KS1 they compare their own household equipment with that of the Victorians. They know that schools were not always friendly places as they are today and that sanitation was not so well developed and often involved a visit to the Ty Bach at the end of the garden.
245. Across KS1 pupils know something of the lives of some famous people of the past. For example in Y2 pupils know the main events in the life of St Patrick and place them in a correct chronological order. They have a good

understanding of the main events of The Second World War and draw them accurately on a time line.

246. Pupils in KS2 have a good understanding of how Rome developed as a major empire. They know from a visit to the legionary fort of Isca what life was like in the Roman Army. They empathise well with a Roman legionary writing a letter home about his life in Wales. They know that many soldiers serving on the frontiers of the empire set up home with local women, although Roman law forbade this.
247. Older pupils in KS2 have a secure understanding of social life in Tudor times and from their Internet study of 'The Mary Rose' they know the names and the purposes of a wide range of naval tools and equipment of the period. They describe accurately the journey of The Armada and its defeat.
248. A particular strength is the understanding older pupils have of their local area. Through the study of a range of information and source material including interviews, they built up a very detailed picture of how their area developed. They know that some sources of information are more reliable than others. They know from a wide range of activities that life for the Welsh miner in the Victorian period was dangerous and arduous. They know that the local chapel played an important part in the life of the community then. They use their skills in ICT to present a very detailed record of 'Markham Memories'.
249. Pupils across KS2 develop a very detailed understanding of the chronology of the main events and leaders in The Second World War. For example they know why Winston Churchill replaced Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister. They know that the causes of the war lay in the after effects of The First World War and the impact of reparations on Germany. They know why and how the Holocaust took place and what life was like in a ghetto.
250. Through the detailed study of original artefacts KS2 pupils draw accurate conclusions about life at home during The Second World War. They experience what food rationing was like and how food, such as 'spam', was cooked and tasted. They identify strongly with the process of evacuation. Through a study of the local war memorial they are familiar with the personal cost to families in the area that the war caused. They study the newspaper reports of the time about the destruction caused by the explosion of the first atomic bombs.

Shortcomings

251. There are no important shortcomings.

Music

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

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

Good features

252. In both key stages pupils confidently sing a wide range of rhymes, traditional hymns and modern songs in English and Welsh. They sing in tune using clear diction and pay attention to the duration of notes and the quality of sound. They perform enthusiastically and with enjoyment showing good progression in control of breathing, posture, pitch and phrasing. The school choir comprises of boys and girls from across the school. They enthusiastically perform two-part harmonies and sing expressively with good dynamics.
253. Pupils in KS1 compose simple action songs using body percussion. They play the rhythm of a song on a hand drum and know the difference between a short, quick sound and a long, low sound. They demonstrate good pitch in their singing in both English and Welsh and play and keep a tuneful rhythm on simple tuned and untuned percussion instruments. They copy simple musical melodies to perform to each other and enjoy listening carefully and making suggestions on how to improve their work.
254. Younger pupils in KS2 describe the pitch and melody of different songs using the pentatonic scale. They confidently appraise elements such as timbre, pace and structure when listening attentively to a musical composition. They distinguish between high, middle and low notes when played on a xylophone and know the value of spacing and silences within their own compositions. They compose and arrange their own music using the five-note scale and maintain an individual instrumental performance within a group performance. They listen attentively to the musical compositions of their friends and offer good suggestions on how to improve them.
255. Older pupils in KS2 perform confidently when singing simple part songs such as rounds and songs with a descant. They show good control of breathing, phrasing and posture when they sing as a group. They appraise and evaluate their own musical compositions based on the study of a poem about The Second World War.
256. Pupils confidently play tuned and untuned percussion and use ICT software packages to improve their musical composition. They review their work by recording their performance and discuss as a group which musical elements need changing. They use the terms timbre, pitch and tempo accurately in their discussions. In this way they undertake simple yet effective refinements to their music producing a pleasing, melodic group composition.

Shortcomings

257. There are no important shortcomings.

School's response to the inspection

258. The governors and staff of Markham Primary School have considered the outcomes of the inspection report and are extremely pleased that the findings acknowledge that Markham is a good school with many outstanding features and no shortcomings.

259. We are also pleased that the team agreed with the school's judgement on the seven key questions, and they felt that the school self evaluation process was thorough and well established. The report also recognises that the school has made good progress since the last report.

260. We are proud that the team found the quality of teaching and standards of achievement are above the Welsh Assembly All-Wales targets, and that this standard is consistently high in all areas of the school.

261. Most importantly, the report recognises the caring nature of the school and the very high quality of support and guidance given to pupils. It also acknowledges the role the school plays within the community and the extensive range of community linked activities, which are used to enhance pupil learning.

262. The head teacher, staff and governors greatly appreciated the very professional and courteous manner in which the inspection team carried out a detailed and thorough inspection of the school.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Markham Primary School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Address of school	Pantycfn Road Markham Blackwood
Postcode	NP12 0QD
Telephone number	01495 224811
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Crandon
Date of appointment	1 st September 2002
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Alan Howells
Registered inspector	Mr Peter Mathias
Dates of inspection	17 th – 19 th March 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	14.5	36	27	25	29	25	26	31	213.5

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	3	8.5

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	20:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	9:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Autumn 2006	96	88.5	90.9
Spring 2007	97.1	89.1	90.5
Summer 2007	96.9	89.5	89.7

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	32
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 2007			Number of pupils in Y2:		25		
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	20	20	32	28
		National	0	3	14	63	20
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	24	16	32	28
		National	0	4	15	55	26
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	24	16	32	28
		National	0	5	16	68	11
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	24	12	36	28
		National	0	2	11	64	23
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	4	28	48	20
		National	0	2	11	65	22
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	4	28	52	16
		National	0	1	9	66	24

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English			
In the school	60	In Wales	80.1

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 2007			Number of pupils in Y6		20				
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			N	D	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	5	0	40	50	5
		National	0	0	1	4	16	50	29
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	5	35	45	15
		National	0	0	1	3	15	50	30
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	5	30	30	35
		National	0	0	0	2	12	53	32

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and English by teacher assessment	
In the school	55
In Wales	74.1

D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
N Pupils who have failed to register for reasons other than absence

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

- A team of four inspectors who were present in the school for ten inspector days carried out the inspection with a nominee from the school.
- Pre-inspection meetings were held with parents and the governing body to discuss the life and work of the school.
- Forty-four questionnaires were completed by parents and carefully analysed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff with responsibilities and support staff.
- School documentation and samples of pupils' work were examined.
- Thirty-three lessons or sessions were observed.
- A sample of pupils' work from across the ability range in each year group was examined.
- Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils from each year group reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils about their work and about the life of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during break periods, at lunchtime and at the beginning and end of the school sessions.
- Inspectors attended assemblies and observed extra-curricular activities.
- Post inspection meetings were held with the staff and the governing body.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Peter Mathias (Registered Inspector)	Context Summary and Recommendations Contributions to Key Questions 1 & 2 Key Question 5 Key Question 6 Appendices English History
Mrs Caterina Lewis (Lay Inspector)	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3 & 4
Mr Robert Lewis (Team Inspector)	Contributions to Key Question 2, 3 & 7 Information technology Music
Mrs Anne Williams (Team Inspector)	Contributions to Key Questions 4 & 7 Special educational needs Early Years Welsh as a Second Language
Mrs Gillian Crandon (Headteacher/Nominee)	Contributions to all Key Questions

Acknowledgement

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

Contractor:

E.L.L.I.S. (Cymru) Ltd
Willastones
13 Heol Pentre'r Felin
Llantwit Major
Vale of Glamorgan
CF61 2XS