

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

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

**Mary Immaculate V.R.C. School  
Merlins Terrace  
Haverfordwest  
Pembrokeshire  
SA61 1PH**

**School Number: 6683313**

**Date of Inspection: 29 September 2008**

**by**

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Mary Immaculate V.R.C. 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 Mary Immaculate V.R.C. School took place between 29/09/08 and 01/10/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Nicholas Jones undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **short** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Context</b>	1
<b>Summary</b>	2
<b>Recommendations</b>	6
<b>Standards</b>	7
Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?	7
<b>The quality of education and training</b>	11
Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	11
Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	13
Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	16
<b>Leadership and management</b>	20
Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	20
Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	21
Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	22
<b>School's response to the inspection</b>	
<b>Appendices</b>	
1 Basic information about the school	
2 School data and indicators	
3 National Curriculum assessments results	
4 Evidence base of the inspection	
5 Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	

## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Mary Immaculate is a large primary school situated in the town of Haverfordwest. The Unitary Authority is Pembrokeshire. There are 211 pupils on roll between the ages of 3 and 11. Twenty seven children attend the Nursery part time. They begin after their third birthday. Twenty three per cent of pupils come from outside the town of Haverfordwest.
2. Across the school, pupils come from a range of backgrounds. On entry, most children have good levels of basic skills. The school reports that about 14 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is below the average for Wales. No pupil is looked after by the Unitary Authority.
3. About 26 per cent of pupils have some degree of special educational needs (SEN), as recognised by the local education authority (LEA). This is above the average for Wales. One pupil on roll has a statement of SEN and is disapplied from the National Curriculum. No pupil was excluded in the previous school year.
4. The language of all pupils at school is English. Six pupils have support for English as an additional language. Almost all pupils come from white, British backgrounds. The school was last inspected in the autumn term of 2002. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the third time.

### The school's priorities and targets

5. The school lists the following as its main targets:
  - To consolidate the new key skills curriculum in key stage 2 planning and assessments.
  - To consolidate the foundation phase curriculum and its delivery in the nursery and reception classes.
  - To continue to develop the pupils' bilingual skills and the key skills initiated in the revised curriculum and the foundation phase.
  - To further develop the safe and healthy environment for the pupils through the continued development of the school's grounds.
  - To ensure that the co-ordinators' subject development plans inform the school improvement plan.
  - To further refine and improve the process of moderation both in-school and within the family of schools.
  - To complete the agreed spending plan for the carry forward surplus.

## Summary

6. Mary Immaculate is a good school, which has made good progress since the last inspection. It is well led and managed.

### Table of grades awarded

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	2
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	2
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	2
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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

7. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children are making good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. Many children begin school with good levels of basic skills for children of this age.
8. Regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background, the vast majority of pupils make good progress from the time they start school. Pupils with additional learning needs, including those pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or those learning English as an additional language (EAL) achieve extremely well taking account of their ability and start points. This is outstanding in key stage 2.
9. In the 2007 national assessments for seven and eleven year olds in English, mathematics and science, results are above the local and national averages for both age groups. When the subjects are combined, results are also above the local and national averages for both age groups.
10. For seven year olds, when results are compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the 2007 results in mathematics and science place the school in the top 25 per cent of similar schools. However, the school is placed in the lower 50 per cent in English.
11. For eleven year olds, when these results are compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the results place the school in the top 50 per cent in English, mathematics, science and when the three subjects are combined.
12. Generally, pupils' overall development of key skills has good features and no important shortcomings. In key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils' standards and

progress in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in English have good features and no important shortcomings. Mathematical, information and communications technology and problem solving and thinking skills are good. Bilingual skills have good features that outweigh shortcomings. However, significant improvements have been made since the previous inspection in this area. The pupils' knowledge of the heritage and culture of Wales, '*Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*', is good.

13. Pupils' personal, social and moral understanding is good. Their understanding and awareness of cultural diversity is good. Pupils are not entirely confident as independent learners, especially in key stage 2. However, most pupils in both key stages understand how to improve their work, although they are not fully involved in setting their own individual learning targets.
14. All pupils work well together, which is a good feature of the school. Good behaviour and attitudes are shown by pupils of all ages, during lessons and at play times.
15. The average level of attendance is around 94 per cent. This is above local and national averages for all schools.

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

#### **Grades for teaching**

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
14%	72%	14%	0%	0%

16. These figures are better than the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's Report for 2006/2007, when 80 per cent of lessons were reported to be good or better, with 14 per cent being outstanding.
17. In lessons where there are outstanding features, the teachers:
  - use highly effective questioning techniques which challenge pupils' thinking;
  - stimulate and challenge pupils consistently through lively presentations and purposeful tasks;
  - foster independent learning through ensuring that pupils take an active role in their learning.
18. Good features seen in teaching include:
  - a brisk pace to lessons;
  - clear learning objectives which are communicated effectively to pupils and revisited in plenary sessions;
  - intervening sensitively to support and encourage pupils;
  - the use of a wide range of teaching methods and learning styles;
  - the encouragement of all pupils to use Welsh vocabulary during registration sessions and at other times of the day.

19. Where shortcomings were seen in a few lessons, the pace was too slow, introductions were too long and there was too much use of work sheets that did not challenge pupils sufficiently.
20. Equality of opportunity is promoted very well in the school. It is outstanding practice. All pupils are treated equally whatever their gender, race or disability. Teachers challenge stereotypical images very effectively.
21. The system to assess pupils' progress and to record and report upon pupils' achievements has good features and no important shortcomings. Assessment is regularly undertaken in order to track the progress pupils make. It is used to inform the next steps in teaching and learning. Further involvement of pupils in planning their own individual learning targets is planned by the school in all areas of their academic and personal development. Reports to parents are of a good quality. They are informative and provide a clear picture of pupils' achievements and efforts.
22. The school curriculum fully complies with the requirements of the National Curriculum and the diocesan religious education syllabus. The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced. It meets the needs of all pupils, including those with Additional Learning Needs. However, in some subjects, short term plans do not contain sufficiently detailed and challenging tasks for the different abilities of pupils or indicate opportunities for independent learning.
23. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visitors to the school and by visits to places of interest. There is a good range of extra curricular activities, provided both within and outside the school day. These activities and all areas of the curriculum are equally accessible to all pupils.
24. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for pupils to understand the importance of sustainable development and bilingual skills has good features that outweigh shortcomings.
25. The quality of care, support and guidance is good with outstanding features. The quality of provision for additional learning needs is outstanding. The school provides a happy and caring environment. Induction arrangements for the early years and for the transfer to secondary education are detailed and effective.
26. The school has clear and well-documented arrangements to contribute to pupils' well being. Child protection policies meet current recommended practice. The school has well-planned and documented procedures for dealing with race equality, disability, discrimination and equal opportunities.

### **Leadership and management**

27. The head teacher leads well. Leadership and management have good features and no important shortcomings. He is well supported by his deputy head teacher. High expectations and aspirations for all pupils are at the

- forefront of their vision. The leaders and managers implement good management structures at all levels in the school.
28. The school takes careful account of national priorities and local partnerships. The introduction of the Foundation Phase has been managed thoroughly and sensibly.
  29. The governing body works closely with the professional leadership of the school. The chair of governors and individual governors support the school very well. They are well informed about the long-term needs of the school and their monitoring of the quality of provision at the school is outstanding.
  30. The process of self-evaluation is thorough. It is generally based around first hand evidence. The views of all those involved in the school are considered. The head teacher and deputy head teacher monitor teaching on a regular basis as part of the performance management process. Although the staff follow a corporate monitoring process in relation to the standards pupils achieve, the monitoring of teaching and learning is less established.
  31. The school's self-evaluation document fully informs the School Improvement Plan. The School Improvement Plan is well used and closely aligned to the school's performance management programme.
  32. Although the school's self-evaluation is not accurate in terms of grades, the inspection team agrees with the school's identification of its main strengths and weaknesses. Since the last inspection in 2002, the school has made good progress in addressing the shortcomings of that inspection.
  33. The school is well staffed by well-qualified and experienced teachers. The use of support staff is a good feature of the school. The day-to-day life of the school is organised effectively.
  34. The school is clean, new and in very good condition. It provides suitable accommodation for all pupils. The use of the accommodation in the foundation phase is outstanding. The outdoor environment is used well and there are plans for further developments. The school uses and deploys its teaching resources well.
  35. The school gives good value for money.

## Recommendations

36. In order to improve the school in the areas inspected, the staff and governing body need to:
- R1 provide sufficiently challenging tasks for pupils in all classes;
  - R2 further develop pupils' involvement in the planning of their own learning and the setting of their own individual learning targets;
  - R3 implement an effectively planned system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

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

37. The findings of the inspection team are one grade lower than the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team did not identify sufficient outstanding features to match the school's judgement.
38. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children are making good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. Many children begin school with good levels of basic skills for children of this age. The key skills of Foundation Phase children in early reading, early writing and early mathematical development are good.
39. Regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background, the vast majority of pupils make good progress from the time they start school. Pupils with additional learning needs, including those SEN or those learning English as an additional language achieve extremely well taking account of their ability and start points. This is outstanding in key stage 2.
40. In English, mathematics and science, the 2007 national assessments for seven year olds show that results are above the local and national averages. When the results in these three subjects are combined, they are also above the local and national averages. In these assessments, there is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys in all three subjects and also when all three subjects are combined.
41. When the results are compared to the assessments that were made when these individual pupils began school, they show that they make good progress. When results are compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the 2007 results in mathematics and science place the school in the top 25 per cent of similar schools. However, the school is placed in the lower 50 per cent in English.
42. The 2007 results are better than the 2006 results when English and science were placed in the lower 50 per cent of similar schools. Mathematics was in the top 50 per cent. In 2005, the school was in the top 25 per cent of similar schools when considering the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals in all three subjects and when the subjects were combined.
43. At the end of key stage 2 national assessments in 2007, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 4) was above the local and national averages in English, mathematics and science. When the results in these subjects are combined they are also above the local and national averages. In these assessments, there is no significant difference between the

performance of girls and boys in all three subjects and also when all three subjects are combined.

44. When these results are compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the results place the school in the top 50 per cent in English, mathematics, science and when the three subjects are combined.
45. Overall at key stage 2 there is a decreasing trend in results. The 2007 results are lower than those in 2005 and 2006 when the school was in the top 25 per cent in all subjects and when the subjects were combined. However, until 2007, pupils' progress in key stage 2 has been stronger than key stage 1 in terms of end of key stage results.
46. Generally, pupils' overall development of key skills has good features and no important shortcomings. In key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils' standards and progress in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in English have good features and no important shortcomings. Pupils across the school speak confidently and clearly. They all ask and answer questions well and listen carefully to each other and to their teachers.
47. In both key stages nearly all pupils read well for a range of reasons. They use reference books and the Internet confidently and effectively to find out information. They read with good expression and with good understanding of a variety of texts. Older pupils have good higher order reading skills and their deductions and inferences for set purposes are good.
48. In a wide range of activities in other subjects, most pupils write well in both key stages for a wide range of reasons and use different styles and genres.
49. In both key stages pupils' bilingual skills have good features that outweigh shortcomings. They are not consistent across the school and little incidental Welsh is heard in the classroom or on the school yard. However, pupils can conduct basic discussions in Welsh when prompted and guided in the classroom. Significant improvements have been made since the previous inspection in this area.
50. In both key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects are good with no important shortcomings. All pupils use their mathematical skills well to collect and interpret information in other subjects like science. They use their knowledge of mathematics to investigate carefully and to identify appropriate results and findings.
51. All pupils' skills in information and communications technology are good with no important shortcomings. Foundation Phase and Key stage 1 pupils use simple programs confidently to reinforce their work in other subjects. They use art and language packages to express the information they collect and print their illustrations and use the mouse and keyboard with confidence.

52. Within key stage 2, older pupils are good at creating, storing and retrieving their work. They use the Internet well to research and to find relevant information, make multimedia presentations and use equipment confidently to record their work. They compose, draft, edit and print their work accurately.
53. Pupils' understanding of the particular features of Welsh music, dance, art, history, literature and traditions are good. Almost all pupils are aware of the work of local and other Welsh artists and other craftspeople. They are familiar with a good range of Welsh folk tales and legends and benefit from visits locally and to other areas of Wales.
54. All pupils' personal social and learning skills are good with no important shortcomings. They have positive attitudes to each other and to adults and co-operate willingly. Pupils behave sensibly and thoughtfully in their lessons and on the playground almost all of the time. They are good at accepting responsibilities willingly and enthusiastically.
55. All pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. Acts of worship in the school and assemblies assist pupils to develop their spirituality well. They have a good, realistic understanding of equal opportunities, adopt mature attitudes and recognise the need to treat consistently every person fairly and without any form of discrimination. Their moral values are good.
56. All pupils are successful at developing sensitivity to the needs of others, caring for those that are less fortunate than themselves. They have a good awareness of cultural and racial issues and have a basic knowledge of world religions. All pupils show empathy towards others by collecting regularly for good causes and charities.
57. Most pupils have very good attitudes to learning and show a good interest in their work. Nearly all pupils maintain concentration in lessons. There is occasionally some low level classroom disruption. Most pupils are well motivated and show enthusiasm for their schoolwork and related activities. Overall, this has a very positive effect on the standards they achieve and the quality of life in school.
58. All pupils clearly understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and fulfil these expectations most of the time. Nearly all parents consider that the school achieves good standards of behaviour. There have been no exclusions during the last year. Pupils are courteous to adults and pupils of all ages play happily together at break times.
59. All pupils are considerate of others and of school property and demonstrate a growing level of self-confidence, taking an increasing degree of responsibility for their own attitudes and behaviour. Pupils understand the school rules and expectations, having been a part in their creation.
60. Pupils' problem solving and thinking skills are good with no important shortcomings. Most pupils, in both key stages, can with guidance successfully

make decisions for themselves. They respond well to the challenges, which are set for them, for example in mathematics and in science.

61. Pupils' creative skills are good with no important shortcomings. In both key stage 1 and key stage 2, all pupils apply their creative skills in a wide range of activities, for example in art, dance and music. They illustrate their work thoughtfully.
62. Most pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work and what progress they are making. Pupils are not entirely confident as independent learners, especially in key stage 2.
63. Attendance is good, averaging 93.8 per cent for the three terms prior to the inspection. This is above the level required by the Welsh Assembly Government when compared to similar schools and is above the Pembrokeshire and all Wales average.
64. Unauthorised absence is very low and authorised absence is below county and national levels. Occasional absences occur when pupils are taken on holiday during term time. This is actively discouraged by the school.
65. Punctuality is good at the start of, and throughout, the school day allowing sessions to start promptly without interruption.
66. The pupils know that the school is an important part of the parish and local community and they participate well in community events such as concerts, religious festivals and activities relating to the church.
67. All pupils' knowledge and understanding of the workplace and the local community is good and appropriate to their age. Pupils are well prepared for the world of work through a number of visits by people who speak about their work.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

68. The findings of the inspection team are one grade lower than the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team did not identify sufficient outstanding features to match the school's judgement.

69. The quality of teaching in the 35 lessons or sessions seen was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
14%	72%	14%	0%	0%

70. These figures are better than the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's Report for 2006/2007, when 80 per cent of lessons were reported to be good or better, with 14 per cent being outstanding.

71. The quality of teaching for the under fives has good features and no important shortcomings. Teachers, support staff and volunteers work effectively to provide a wide range of learning tasks for nursery and reception children. This ensures that learning is purposeful.

72. All teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum programmes of study and the framework for personal and social education. In the best examples of planning, teachers pay good attention to the development of key skills, plan and use a good range of strategies to engage pupils and ensure that individual pupils make good progress.

73. Teachers' relationships with pupils are very good and this is a very good feature. All staff have age appropriate expectations of their pupils and provide a supportive atmosphere to enable pupils to make good progress.

74. Teachers and support staff work together closely to ensure that there is maximum impact on pupils' learning.

75. Purposeful and innovative use is made of a wide range of high quality resources, in order to stimulate pupils and provide them with a wide range of rich experiences.

76. On the whole, teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and are aware of recent developments. This has a positive impact on practice and standards, particularly in the early years. Homework is set on a regular basis and is appropriately linked to classroom work.

77. In lessons where there are outstanding features, the teachers:
- use highly effective questioning techniques which challenge pupils' thinking;
  - stimulate and challenge pupils consistently through lively presentations and purposeful tasks;
  - foster independent learning through ensuring that pupils take an active role in their learning.
78. Good features seen in teaching include:
- a brisk pace to lessons;
  - clear learning objectives which are communicated effectively to pupils and revisited in plenary sessions;
  - intervening sensitively to support and encourage pupils;
  - the use of a wide range of teaching methods and learning styles;
  - the encouragement of all pupils to use Welsh vocabulary during registration sessions and at other times of the day.
79. Where shortcomings were seen in a few lessons, the pace was too slow, introductions were too long and there was too much use of work sheets that did not challenge pupils sufficiently.
80. Equality of opportunity is promoted very well in the school. It is outstanding practice. All pupils are treated equally whatever their gender, race or disability. Teachers challenge stereotypical images very effectively.
81. Teachers meet the English language needs of all pupils well, and pupils, including those with additional learning needs and more able pupils, make very good progress. Work set for pupils with additional learning needs relates very well to targets identified in their individual education plans. The teaching of pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding.
82. Incidental Welsh is used regularly by most teachers within day-to-day routines. However, in general, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop and apply bilingual skills in subjects across the curriculum. This is an area identified by the school and there are clear plans in hand to address it.
83. Assessment, recording and reporting procedures have good features and no important shortcomings and meet statutory requirements for assessing and reporting pupils' achievements in full.
84. Assessment is regularly undertaken throughout the academic year in order to track the progress pupils make and in the best examples effectively inform the next steps in teaching and learning. The present robust system is paper based in nature and plans are in hand to replace this system with an electronic one with the intention of increasing overall efficiency.
85. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly through the use of teachers' assessments, a range of appropriate standardised tests and day to day assessments. Detailed analysis of data recorded is used appropriately to set targets for improvement in a structured manner to build effectively on previous

learning. This detailed tracking system gives a very clear picture over time of respective pupils' achievements and attainment as they transfer from class to class or move on to their next stage of learning. Arrangements for the moderation and standardisation of key stage 2 assessments are good.

86. Pupils' understanding of the purpose and nature of assessment is good. They confidently point to their individual learning targets which are prominently displayed in classrooms, celebrating success when achieved in a corporate manner with fellow peers. In the nursery and reception class positive verbal feedback is used effectively to help most children understand the progress they have made.
87. In key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils' work is regularly marked, often with encouraging remarks. In the best examples of marking, pupils are given written or verbal guidance on how to improve and pupils respond as directed. This helps them concentrate on what they need to do to improve but does not always offer specific guidance on how they can make their own decisions on the next steps to take in their learning. Pupils are not fully involved in setting their own individual learning targets.
88. The quality of the annual report to parents is good and meets statutory requirements. Annual reports give a positive detailed picture of children's progress in all subjects as well as comments and social and personal development. Pupils' targets are also shared with parents and this is good practice. Parents are formally invited to discuss their child's progress with teachers at regular intervals. Parents state they are welcome to discuss their child's progress at any time and most feel they are kept well informed about their child's achievements. Further involvement of pupils in planning their own individual learning targets is planned by the school in all areas of their academic and personal development.
89. Parents and carers of pupils with additional learning needs are very well informed and have full and regular access to consultations and reviews.
90. Relevant information is transferred to the receiving secondary school, to various outside agencies and to the LEA, in order to secure continuity and progression in pupils' learning.

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

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

91. The findings of the inspection team are one grade lower than the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team did not identify sufficient outstanding features to match the school's judgement.
92. The school successfully meets the needs of all its pupils including those with additional learning needs and children under five. Within its highly inclusive

ethos for learning, all pupils have equal access to every area of the curriculum and every activity offered by the school. This is reflected extremely well in the good levels of interest all pupils show in their work.

93. The curriculum is well organised, balanced and relevant and meets statutory requirements. The provision is good for developing pupils' personal, social and health education. Schemes of work for all subjects and areas of learning are of good quality and reflect recent curriculum changes. There have been several successful reviews of schemes of work since the last inspection. This has had a positive effect on standards. Generally, teachers provide interesting and stimulating experiences. However, in some subjects, short term plans do not contain sufficiently detailed and challenging tasks for the different abilities of pupils or indicate opportunities for independent learning.
94. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children are making good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. There are a range of well planned learning experiences structured to provide enjoyment and meaningful learning experiences. The well planned early years provision which follows Foundation Phase principles, positively encourages learning through play, both indoors and outdoors. As a result, the majority of children develop their knowledge, understanding and skills well in all areas of the curriculum. All children are given a good start in school.
95. The school makes good provision for the development of pupils' basic key skills. There is sound provision for the development of pupils' bilingual skills. Firm plans are in hand to develop this aspect further. The development, continuity and progression of key skills are underpinned successfully by a well defined key skills framework which includes monitoring and assessment at regular intervals. Opportunities for the development of key skills are successfully linked into planning and the curriculum, ensuring consistency across the school.
96. The school offers an extensive range of well attended, good quality, out of hours clubs which effectively promote pupils' learning during and after the school day. Pupils state that they are pleased with and derive enjoyment from the variety of clubs on offer by the school. Provision at breakfast club is good with many pupils in attendance. The school community acknowledges the positive part played by all teaching staff and several support staff who volunteer to organise clubs.
97. Pupils also benefit from the good provision of visits and visitors to the school. These have an impact on pupils' understanding of different cultures, standards and enthusiasm for learning. Well planned opportunities are taken to visit places within the locality of the school and further afield. Visits and local studies enrich the curriculum. Visitors from the community bring a wealth of expertise and experience that stimulate pupils' learning, for example visitors include a veterinary surgeon, a librarian, local community police, and representatives from the Fair Trade Organisation, fire brigade, authors,

storytellers, artists, musicians and visitors of other faiths. There are also opportunities for pupils to attend residential courses in Cardiff.

98. The overall provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good with no important shortcomings. It is well planned for and a strong feature of school life. The school provides a very calm, caring and supportive environment where all pupils feel secure and respected.
99. The planning for the development of personal skills and social education is thorough. It is well integrated into the school's daily life. Good use is made of the community police who work with pupils to enhance their understanding of aspects of social awareness including that of substance abuse. Appropriate attention is given to sex education.
100. Good opportunities are provided for pupils' spiritual development. Prayers are said at different times of the day. Collective worship meets statutory requirements in full. The school's very strong links with the local church further strengthens the school's spiritual dimension. Most pupils are actively encouraged to consider other faiths alongside their own through multi-cultural themes. Within lessons, planned opportunities are given for pupils to discuss matters of concern.
101. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. All staff actively enhance values such as fairness and model good behaviour for pupils. This is a strong feature of day to day life in the school.
102. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development that enables them to play a full and active part in the school community. Pupils are provided with opportunities to work collaboratively and take positions of responsibility within the school. Pupils are involved in raising funds for a number of good charitable organisations and this positively enhances their sense of social responsibility and understanding of their own and other communities. Sporting events with other schools provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils' social interaction with other children.
103. Cultural development is good. Pupils are given a growing understanding, awareness and appreciation of other cultures. '*Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*' is fostered well through the study of famous Welsh people and pupils are given opportunities to learn about the traditions, culture and history of Wales through visits and visitors. It is well integrated into the curriculum. Pupils from ethnic minorities celebrate their cultures and faiths in a variety of ways, for example in assembly, art and craft work and food tasting.
104. The school is truly at the heart of its church community. Close and very effective links are maintained with a wide variety of community groups such as artists, theatre groups, the fire and police services, school nurse and library. The school also enjoys effective working partnerships with other local schools, including local comprehensive schools, where good transition arrangements have been developed. Links for Additional Learning Needs provision with the secondary schools are very strong. Successful partnerships have been

developed with higher education facilities, which are equally beneficial, enriching the life and work of the school and enhancing all pupils' learning experiences.

105. The school's partnership with parents is good. Parents are well informed about school events through weekly newsletters. They have regular opportunities to meet teachers to discuss their children's work and progress and these meetings are reported to be well attended.
106. There was a good response to the parents' pre-inspection questionnaire. The response indicated that almost all parents and carers were supportive of the school and expressed satisfaction with the standards their children achieve within a very caring, supportive environment.
107. Good features outweigh shortcomings when related to pupils' knowledge of the world of work beyond the school gates. Visits and visitors provide opportunities to broaden and enrich pupils' work related education. Local employers are supportive of the school but no teachers have recently undertaken relevant industrial placements with a view to enhancing professional development and enriching curricular provision for pupils.
108. The school has very high expectations of all its pupils and actively promotes all aspects of equality. This is a very strong and outstanding feature of the school. Stereotyping is continually challenged when identified. Policies for equal opportunities and racial equality are consistently and sensitively implemented and fully meet statutory requirements. Extremely good links with external agencies help support any socially disadvantaged pupils. All pupils are treated as individuals, and are encouraged to participate fully in all activities.
109. The standards and provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship have many good features that outweigh shortcomings. This area features highly in the school development plan. Plans are in hand for this area of learning to be fully embedded into the life and work of the school in the future.
110. Nearly all pupils' entrepreneurial skills are developing well. The school is clearly laying down the foundations for life long learning and community regeneration and national priorities are reflected well in the life of the school. The priority given to pupils developing independence and taking responsibility for their own learning and well being is developing but not yet fully embedded.

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

##### **Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

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

112. All pupils receive very good care and very good support. All pupils are confident in approaching adults at the school to seek help. Peer support given by older pupils on the playground is very effective.
113. Parents raise significant sums, which are used to buy additional resources and subsidise visits. This is a very good feature of the school.
114. Children settle quickly in caring surroundings when they begin school. There are suitable procedures in place for welcoming new pupils, whether through coming of age or on transfer from another school. Parents are given the opportunity to visit the school and are provided with good and relevant documentation.
115. Good social and curricular arrangements help pupils transfer smoothly to their secondary school at the end of key stage 2. The transition arrangements give pupils a good insight into the work of the secondary school.
116. Very good support is given to all pupils to meet their individual needs. Effective, regular use is made of specialist health and education professionals. Visitors regularly come to talk to the pupils about aspects of health, hygiene and safety.
117. Parents have been made aware of the school's expectations regarding attendance and taking holidays during term time. The school works closely with the Educational Welfare Officer. The school also works closely with the Hospital Education Service to support long term absentees. The school takes appropriate account of the requirements of National Assembly of Wales Circular 3/99 that sets out the requirements for recording absence.
118. Pupils' behaviour is promoted well and is effectively underpinned by the use of clearly defined, whole school procedures to praise and raise pupils' self esteem based on reward systems like 'Merit Scrolls'. This is often very good practice.
119. The school has effective procedures to safeguard every pupil's health and safety. These include appropriate policies, guidelines and risk assessments. All pupils are well supervised at playtime and at the end of the school day. Promoting health and well being is an area that is well developed at the school and the school has achieved three leaves of the Healthy Schools project.
120. Healthy eating is actively encouraged and the school actively promotes well-being and health issues. The canteen follows the procedures and menus laid down by the local authority and this follows the principles of healthy eating. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy food in lunch boxes.
121. Physical education sessions are held as part of the curriculum. This includes swimming and other activities. After school clubs are well attended and the school is successful at county and national levels.

122. The school council is well established and effective. The school responds to representations and requests from the school council that improve daily life at the school.
123. School equipment, installations and fire drill procedures are regularly checked. There are nominated first aiders and a number of teaching and non teaching staff have received basic training. Arrangements to ensure the medical needs of pupils are good. Parents are confident that the school will inform them immediately if their child suffers any type of injury or becomes unwell.
124. The school gives due attention to child protection issues. The policy and designated personnel meet current guidelines. All staff are aware of the strict protocols that must be followed.
125. The overall provision for learners with additional needs is outstanding. This includes the provision of English as an additional language. Identification of pupils with additional learning needs in the school ensures very purposeful support. The policy of early intervention is extremely successful and the school's policy complies with the Code of Practice and the framework for inclusive education.
126. The Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) works very effectively with the designated support teacher, respective class teachers and support staff and the governor with responsibility for additional learning needs. The support teacher, in consultation with the class teacher, writes the individual education plans. All interested parties keep the individual education plans records close to hand during the school day for easy reference. Well focused and achievable targets are set and progress that the pupils make towards these targets is closely monitored. Although reviews of targets take place termly, in practice where targets are achieved before that time, new ones are drawn up. This maintains high levels of momentum and a high rate at which the majority of pupils make good progress. These are outstanding features of the school's provision.
127. The assessment of these pupils' attainment and progress in relation to basic and key skills is very good. The SENCo and class teachers are very proactive in encouraging parents to work with the school in support of their children. Parents are fully informed and involved in an effective partnership with the school to ensure that they can support their children's learning at home.
128. During withdrawal sessions that involve individual groups of pupils for additional support, work undertaken is successfully linked into ongoing class work. This in turn is linked effectively into pupils' individual education plans. This is an outstanding feature of provision. The high quality teaching of additional learning needs pupils very successfully underpins levels of good progress and high levels of self esteem. Through the school's outstanding inclusive nature most pupils with additional learning needs are fully integrated into the life of the school.

129. A very important feature of the outstanding provision is the valuable work undertaken by very well trained support staff and a host of external agencies in supporting the pupils. The school values the impact of the local authority in terms of provision by the Educational Psychologist and other supporting agencies.
130. The school's behaviour management programme is very good. It is effective for all pupils and is based on the positive recognition of pupils' achievements and successes and is aimed at reducing oppressive behaviour. Support for those pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress is highly effective. They quickly become accustomed to the school's high expectations.
131. The school has well-planned and documented procedures for dealing with race equality, disability, discrimination and equal opportunities. All pupils have equal access to all parts of the school curriculum. All boys and girls are given the opportunity to play all sports. Their content is reflected in the day to day work of the school.
132. Arrangements to raise pupils' awareness of diversity within society are good. In geography and religious education, all pupils learn about life in relation to other countries and faiths.
133. Pupils and almost all parents state that this is a friendly and happy school. No instances of bullying, racism or sexism have been recorded for many years. Policies are appropriate and well established. There is a good system in place to record these should the need arise. In the case of minor disputes between pupils, these are usually settled amicably and quickly by the staff.
134. Support for permanently or temporarily disabled pupils is good. The relatively new building has a lift, ramps and good flat surfaces throughout. Appropriate adjustments have recently been made to cater for pupils with hearing and walking difficulties. A Disability Plan and clear action plan is in place and operates effectively.

## Leadership and management

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

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

135. The findings of the inspection team are one grade lower than the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team did not identify sufficient outstanding features to match the school's judgement.
136. The school is well led and managed. The head teacher has been in post since 2003 and is a visible presence around the school. He is well supported by his deputy. High expectations and aspirations for all pupils are at the forefront of their vision.
137. The quality of all leaders and managers at different levels in the school is good. This makes the school a purposeful and effective community.
138. The head teacher has a clear vision for the school. His management of staff and pupils is good. He is a pro-active member of the governing body and has a good and very positive relationship with parents.
139. The school's policies and practices promote equality of opportunity well. These are reflected in the life and work of the school. It is an ordered community where each pupil is valued and all enjoy equal access to all the school offers. Staff contribute significantly to the school's caring ethos. This has a positive effect on all pupils' behaviour and attitudes.
140. There are appropriate arrangements to support newly qualified teachers and teachers who are new to the school.
141. The school takes very careful account of national priorities and local partnerships. The school council is very active and helps successfully to encourage pupils to have a strong sense of responsibility and citizenship. Preparations for the introduction of the Foundation Phase and Curriculum 2008 were thorough and are now being systematically managed by the teaching staff and governing body.
142. The outdoor area is being developed and is used by the school to provide additional learning opportunities for all pupils. The pupils are made very aware of the importance of environmental issues and of the need to have healthy lifestyles through a range of national and local initiatives. The school has a successful breakfast club and several after school clubs. This is good practice.
143. There are effective arrangements in place for the head teacher to review the progress of initiatives that the school is pursuing. This is good and conducted diligently and accurately. The school collects National Curriculum assessment data and analyses the data effectively.

144. Performance Management is well established and job descriptions note the specific roles and tasks of staff. The head teacher has agreed objectives that are reviewed annually. All staff have been made aware of their responsibilities in relation to their job descriptions.
145. Support and training is good for all staff members and the governing body. The school allows staff and governors to further develop their skills and knowledge through appropriate and focused training opportunities, organised mainly by the LEA.
146. The links between the governing body and the school are very strong. The governing body, working effectively with the head teacher helps to set the long term direction for the school in a structured way. The governors are well informed regarding the school's self-evaluation process and have effectively followed guidelines set out by the LEA. Their contribution to the school's strategic planning is good. The monitoring of the quality of provision in the school by the governors is outstanding.
147. Procedures for the financial management are thorough and finances are well managed. The outcomes of spending decisions are regularly reviewed. Governors successfully hold the professional leadership to account. The school has current policies covering the various aspects of school life. These are regularly considered and updated by the governors. All statutory requirements are met.

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

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

148. The findings of the inspection team are one grade lower than the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team did not identify sufficient outstanding features to match the school's judgement.
149. The process of self-evaluation is developing well in the school. In most aspects of school life, the head teacher, senior managers and governors use information effectively to make improvements. The link between the processes of self-evaluation and planning for improvement in the School Improvement Plan is thorough. The school's procedures for monitoring standards, based on clear evidence, are good.
150. All staff are involved in the monitoring process. The role of the subject co-ordinator in the monitoring and moderation process is developing, although the school acknowledges that there is still more work to be done.
151. The school uses performance data to inform judgements and evaluate specific trends over time. The school's self-evaluation is based on first-hand evidence and the school co-operates effectively with the LEA to target areas for improvement. The school is good at seeking the views of a range of agencies that have an interest in the school. This includes parents.

152. The school council is a good forum that allows all pupils' views to be heard constructively.
153. All staff work diligently. An appropriate dialogue exists between year groups. All staff are aware that they have a part in the school's self-evaluation process and their input is valued.
154. The head teacher and deputy head teacher monitor teaching on a regular basis as part of the performance management process. Although the staff follow a corporate monitoring process in relation to the standards pupils achieve, the monitoring of teaching is less established. Therefore, evidence of identifying good practice and using this to inform planning and professional development is under developed.
155. The quality of the self-evaluation report produced by the school prior to the inspection is good. It is detailed and targets areas for development. It provides a good overview of the school's position. It identifies the areas and aspects that are strengths within the school and those, which require further attention.
156. However, the judgements of the inspection team do not agree with the school's self-evaluation in six of the seven key questions. The inspection team did not identify sufficient outstanding features to match the school's judgements other than in key question 4.
157. The school's priorities for improvement, inform the School Improvement Plan and have appropriate time scales and costs noted. This is good practice.
158. The school makes good efforts to obtain measures to evaluate its performance. It uses national and local data to target areas that have strengths or shortcomings. It works with the LEA to allocate resources and expertise to raise and improve standards.
159. The actions of the school in establishing outdoor areas have resulted in good improvements in curricular provision for all pupils.
160. The school has successfully addressed the key issues noted in the last inspection report and improvements are evident in areas that needed developing. Progress since the previous inspection is good.

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

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

161. The findings of the inspection team are one grade lower than the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team did not identify sufficient outstanding features to match the school's judgement.
162. The school is a new building, occupied since May 2008. The adequacy, suitability and use made of staffing, learning resources and accommodation is

good. The school has good resources and ensures that purchases are prioritised according to need. It is effective in its use of additional funding and uses staff and resources effectively to fulfil the requirements of funding regulations.

163. There are sufficient numbers of well-qualified teachers who possess a good range of specialist knowledge to provide for the needs of pupils, including those with additional learning needs and for the under-fives. Music specialists contribute very well to pupils' learning.
164. All staff are committed to providing a secure, supportive environment for all pupils. Teaching assistants successfully support teachers and all pupils throughout the school day and are valued members of the school community. The school holds the 'Investor in People' award.
165. Efficient use is made of available resources. All pupils have ready access to a range of good resources appropriate to their age and needs. Very good investment has been made in ICT resources. The computers and interactive whiteboards are very well used to support pupils' learning.
166. The library area has been developed very well in relation to the age and needs of the pupils and the ICT suite is very well used.
167. The use made of the outside learning environment including the school grounds enriches every pupil's experiences and is a developing feature of the school's provision. The school makes effective use of resources outside the school, including sports facilities, art galleries, museums and theatres to enrich the curriculum.
168. The accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on roll and is kept clean and well maintained. The head teacher and staff make imaginative use of the building to provide a welcoming and warm environment for all pupils. The quality of display throughout the school is good. It is used well to celebrate pupils' achievements and is an effective aid to learning.
169. Outdoors, the school benefits from having hard play areas and a large field. Specific outdoor areas for the Foundation Phase are of very good quality and include large play equipment. The use of the accommodation for the foundation phase is outstanding.
170. The school is aware of its duty according to the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and has an appropriate accessibility plan that looks at ways to improve access for all.
171. Staff experience and expertise are used well for the benefit of pupils. An appropriate staff development programme enables teachers to keep up to date with current educational initiatives and with new ideas in their subjects and other areas of responsibility.

172. Teachers also make good use of their planning, preparation and assessment time to develop work for their own classes and for their subject responsibilities. Resources are used well for the purposes of work force re-modelling.
173. The school's administrative procedures ensure the efficient day to day running of the school. All support staff, such as the caretaker, mid-day supervisors, canteen staff and cleaners are valued for their contribution to the life of the school.
174. Spending decisions relate directly to the school priorities as set out in the School Improvement Plan. Expenditure is monitored closely by the Governing Body.
175. The school meets the needs and range of all pupils and gives good value for money.

## **School's response to the inspection**

The school community of Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary wishes to thank the inspection team for the very thorough and professional manner in which the inspection process was conducted.

We are pleased that the report recognises the good and outstanding features of our school. We are pleased with the recognition given to the strong and effective leadership and the pupils' positive attitude and behaviour.

As a Catholic school, we are particularly pleased that the very high standard of care, support and guidance given to the pupils and the equal opportunities provided for them were recognised also.

All associated with our school will continue to work hard to maintain and further improve the very high standard of education we offer our pupils.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Mary Immaculate V R C School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Merlin's Terrace Haverfordwest Pembrokeshire
Postcode	SA61 1PH
Telephone number	01437 762324

Head teacher	Mr P Mansfield
Date of appointment	September 2003
Chair of governors	Mr P Murphy
Registered inspector	Mr N Jones
Dates of inspection	29/09/08 – 01/10/08

## 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	13.5	23	23	25	32	23	28	30	197.5

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	9	2	9.4

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	19.7:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	6.8:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	26.3:1
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.3:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Autumn 2007	91%	95%	93.6%
Spring 2008	92%	95%	94.3%
Summer 2008	96.2%	91.3%	93.4%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	14%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

## Appendix 3

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2008			Number of pupils in Y2:		30		
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	0.0	9.7	64.5	25.8
		National	0.3	3.3	14.1	62.7	19.5
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	0.0	6.5	58.1	35.5
		National	0.3	3.8	15.2	54.8	25.8
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	0.0	9.7	80.6	9.7
		National	0.3	5.0	15.9	67.5	11.3
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	0.0	6.5	58.1	35.5
		National	0.3	2.1	10.8	63.6	23.2
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	0.0	3.2	64.5	32.3
		National	0.3	1.9	10.9	64.6	22.3
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	0.0	3.2	71.0	25.8
		National	0.3	1.4	8.9	65.8	23.5

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	90.3	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 2008			Number of pupils in Y6		28				
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	39.3	42.9
		National	0.4	0.4	0.6	3.6	16.3	49.7	28.8
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.4	28.6	46.4
		National	0.4	0.4	0.5	3.0	15.3	50.4	29.9
Science	Teacher assessment	School	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	28.6	53.6
		National	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.8	12.2	52.5	32.4

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by teacher assessment		by test	
In the school	75.0%	In the school	N/A
In Wales	74.1%	In Wales	N/A

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

## Appendix 4

### Evidence base of the inspection

- A team of three inspectors were present in the school for seven inspector days. They 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. A pre-inspection meeting for the team was also held.
- Seventy two questionnaires were completed by parents and carefully analysed.
- Discussions were held with the head teacher and staff with responsibilities and support staff.
- School documentation and samples of pupils' work were examined.
- Thirty five 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 and answering mental mathematics' problems.
- 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 other related activities.
- Post inspection meetings were held with the staff and the governing body.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Mr Nicholas Jones (Registered Inspector)	Context Summary and Recommendations Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2 & 5 Key Question 6 Key Question 7 Appendices
Mr Peter Clarke (Team Inspector)	Contributions to Key Questions 2 & 4 Key Question 3
Mr Dylan Jones (Lay Inspector)	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 4 & 5
Mr Patrick Mansfield (Nominee)	Contributions to all Key Questions

### **Contractor**

Evenlode Education Ltd  
Little Garth  
St Johns Close  
Hawarden  
Flintshire  
CH5 3QJ

### **Acknowledgement**

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