

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Mount Pleasant Primary School
Mount Pleasant, Merthyr Vale
Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 4TD**

School Number: 6752014

Date of Inspection: 10/03/09

by

**Stephen Dennett
78888**

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Mount Pleasant 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 Mount Pleasant Primary School took place between 10/03/09 and 12/03/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by Stephen Dennett 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 **full** 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 Mount Pleasant Primary School is situated in the village of Mount Pleasant about six miles south of Merthyr Tydfil. The social and economic backgrounds of pupils are very varied, including a large number of economically disadvantaged families. Around 29% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the local education authority (LEA) and national averages. The school provides education for pupils aged four to eleven. Around 45% of the pupils have been identified as having additional learning needs (ALN). None have statements of special educational need. No pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL) or speak Welsh as a first language. No pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority. Very few pupils are from ethnic minorities. At the time of the inspection, there were 31 pupils on the school's roll. There is no nursery and children under five are taught in the Key Stage 1 class. The number on roll has fallen significantly since the school was last inspected in April 2003. The present acting headteacher took up her post in September 2007.

The school's priorities and targets

- 2 The school has set a number of targets in its current school development plan (SDP), which include:
 - to improve school ethos by developing a values based curriculum
 - to develop pupils' key skills and bilingualism
 - to ensure effective transition procedures are in place to support pupils moving to new schools
 - to raise standards in literacy
 - to develop staff professional competence so that the curriculum is delivered effectively
 - to develop a curriculum to meet the needs of both our pupils and the wider community.

Summary

- 3 Mount Pleasant is a good school which is successfully facing its challenging circumstances. The overall quality of education is good. The school recognizes the need to improve pupils' language skills further and to refine its self-evaluation procedures. A significant strength of the school is its caring and inclusive ethos.

Tables of grades awarded

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

- 4 In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	3	3
Welsh second language	3	3
Mathematics	2	2
Science	2	2
Art and design	2	2
Design technology	2	2
Information and communication technology	2	2
Geography	3	3
History	3	3
Music	3	2
Physical education	2	2
Religious education	2	2

- 5 Because of the very small number of children under five, the report comments on provision only. The educational provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and children are making good progress towards the desirable learning outcomes for children aged five.
- 6 During the time of the inspection, standards of achievement in 25 lessons were as follows:

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

- 7 The school has very small year groups and therefore statistical analysis of assessment information is difficult. However, figures for the last three years show that while standards in mathematics and science have been generally above the national average, standards in English have been lower.
- 8 In the 2008 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, there were less than 10 pupils in the year group, so detailed information about individual subjects is not published. However, 80% of pupils achieved at least level 2 in all three core subjects (the core subject indicator). This places the school in the upper 50% compared with schools with a similar number of pupils' eligible for free school meals. In the 2008 teacher assessments at the end of Y6, 67% of pupils achieved level 4 in the core subject indicator, which places the school in the lower 50% compared with similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was above average in English and mathematics, but well below average in science. In 2008, the school met its targets for literacy and numeracy.
- 9 Pupils' key skills have good features which outweigh shortcomings. Their listening and reading skills are good throughout the school. Pupils' numeracy and ICT skills are also good. However, pupils' speaking and writing skills have some shortcomings. Pupils' competence in using bilingual skills is underdeveloped. Pupils' understanding of what they are learning and how they are progressing is good.
- 10 Pupils' personal skills, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work, and behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils leave the school with the necessary skills to maintain life-long learning in numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' understanding of their community and the workplace is developing appropriately.

The quality of education and training

Grades for teaching

- 11 The overall quality of teaching in 25 lessons was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	52%	44%	0%	0%

- 12 Teaching of children under five is good. Teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 meets pupils' needs and curricular requirements well. A strong feature

of the teaching in all lessons in both key stages is the quality of the relationships between all staff and pupils that establishes a good learning environment that effectively fosters learning.

- 13 There is an appropriate system of assessment which tracks pupils' progress, but there are a few shortcomings. Statutory requirements are met. However, the school does not make sufficient use of standardised tests to measure pupils' progress against their prior attainment or national curriculum (NC) attainment targets. Annual reports to parents meet statutory requirements and provide detailed information on pupils' progress in all subjects.
- 14 The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully meets statutory requirements. Overall the provision for key skills has good features that outweigh shortcomings. Provision for bilingualism has some shortcomings. The use of incidental Welsh is variable and is not consistent feature of all classes. The provision for Welsh culture within the *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is good and there are examples in classes of pupils' work on Welsh themes.
- 15 Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good. Collective worship has a distinctive Christian ethos and contributes very well to pupils' awareness of spiritual and moral issues. Provision for the teaching of Welsh culture is good. Provision for promoting knowledge of other cultures is also good.
- 16 The school's extra-curricular provision is good and includes activities such as sports. The provision of breakfast club and after-school care clubs of very good quality. These features enrich further pupils' social development.
- 17 Learning experiences are effectively enriched by partnership with parents and the community. Parents and carers are happy with the care and guidance which the staff extend to their children. The school welcomes parents and provides both formal and informal opportunities for parents to find out about the work of the school. One of the school's highest priorities is to provide for the needs and well-being of each pupil and provision is good. The school gives constant attention to safety matters and to the healthy development of pupils.
- 18 The provision for pupils with ALN is good. The additional support given to different groups of pupils who require extra help with language helps them make rapid progress. Support for the tiny minority of pupils whose behaviour may impede their own or other's progress is good. The school is effective in promoting equality of opportunity and pupils have a good awareness of equal opportunity issues.

Leadership and management

- 19 The acting headteacher provides positive leadership which gives a clear sense of direction. All staff members share the school's sound aims and values and are fully committed to promoting them in all ways including through personal example.
- 20 The school's development plan (SDP) is a well structured document which identifies the school's targets for improvement, actions to be taken and success criteria. While the targets are valid in themselves, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that they have been selected in the light of

information gained from the self-evaluation process and a sufficiently well informed overview of standards.

- 21 Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to the school and contribute well to school improvement. The governing body is knowledgeable about trends, targets and areas for improvement and is involved in making strategic decisions.
- 22 The acting headteacher has put in place procedures to support its school self-evaluation. These include the monitoring of subjects and data analysis. The process, however, lacks consistency, rigour and a sharp focus on standards. The school supports its priorities well through its allocation of resources.
- 23 Staffing levels are very advantageous and good use is made of learning support assistants (LSAs) to help with pupils' learning. Learning resources are generally of a good quality and are sufficient for the teaching of the curriculum in both key stages and in the early years. Teachers make good use of the school buildings to extend pupils' learning.
- 24 The governing body controls finance well, and is supported effectively by the acting headteacher, school administrative officer and the LEA support officer. The school provides good value for money, as it produces confident pupils with good personal skills, which enable them to move on to the next stage in their education successfully.
- 25 The school has dealt with the majority of issues raised by the last inspection, although standards in geography still need to be improved further.

Recommendations

- 26 In order to raise standards further and improve the quality of education provided, the school should:
 - R1 Improve pupils' language skills in English and Welsh and standards in handwriting and presentation.*
 - R2 Improve pupils' problem-solving skills and their ability to apply prior learning to new situations, especially in science.*
 - R3 Raise standards in those subjects which have shortcomings identified in the report.
 - R4 Improve the monitoring of standards and provision by leaders and the gathering of first-hand evidence from all interested parties and sources, so as to inform the self-evaluation process better.

* The school has already identified aspects of this recommendation in its improvement plan.

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

- 27 The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 28 During the time of the inspection, standards of achievement in 25 lessons were as follows:

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

- 29 Pupils' achievement in lessons is lower than reported in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's (HMCI) report for 2007-08, when achievement was found to be good or better (grade 1 or 2) in 84% of lessons in primary schools.
- 30 Because of the very small number of children under five, the report comments on provision only. The educational provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and children are making good progress towards the desirable learning outcomes for children aged five.
- 31 In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	3	3
Welsh second language	3	3
Mathematics	2	2
Science	2	2
Art and design	2	2
Design technology	2	2
Information and communication technology	2	2
Geography	3	3
History	3	3
Music	3	2
Physical education	2	2
Religious education	2	2

- 32 The school has very small year groups and therefore statistical analysis of assessment information is difficult. However, figures for the last three years show that while standards in mathematics and science have been generally above the national average, standards in English have been lower.
- 33 In the 2008 teacher assessments at the end of Y2, there were less than 10 pupils in the year group, so detailed information about individual subjects is not published. However, 80% of pupils achieved at least level 2 in all three core

- subjects (the core subject indicator). This places the school in the upper 50% compared with schools with a similar number of pupils' eligible for free school meals.
- 34 In the 2008 teacher assessments at the end of Y6, 67% achieved at least level 4 in English, 92% in mathematics and 92% in science. In the core subject indicator, 67% of pupils achieved level 4, which places the school in the lower 50% compared with similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was above average in English and mathematics, but well below average in science.
- 35 The overall trend in teacher assessment results at key stage 1 is similar to the national and LEA averages. Standards at key stage 2 have varied considerably, but are similar to the national and LEA trend. Overall, there are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls at either key stage.
- 36 In 2008, the school met its targets for literacy and numeracy. Children's progress in learning in the early years is good. The education the school provides meets the needs and range of pupils appropriately. Pupils succeed regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic backgrounds and in early years, their success in learning is good. Overall, pupils' progress in learning is good throughout the school.
- 37 Pupils' key skills have good features which outweigh shortcomings. Their listening and reading skills are good throughout the school. Pupils' numeracy and ICT skills are also good. However, pupils' speaking and writing skills have some shortcomings. Pupils' competence in using bilingual skills is underdeveloped. Children's key skills in early years are developing well.
- 38 Pupils' understanding of what they are learning and how they are progressing is good. Target setting is understood by all pupils and they participate in setting their own goals. Pupils with individual education plans (IEPs.) have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve because the IEPs are in an appropriate 'child friendly' format.
- 39 Pupils' personal skills are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and benefit from its warm, friendly ethos. Relationships with staff are good and this has a positive effect on pupils' social development. Pupils have a strong feeling of belonging to a happy orderly community where learning can thrive. This is acknowledged by many of the parents.
- 40 Pupils have positive attitudes to their work, and behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Older pupils show a great deal of responsibility as they carry out their tasks.
- 41 Over the last three terms, attendance figures have been good, at an average of 94.6%. The school is a 'Green Light' school within the authority for their good attendance.
- 42 Pupils' capacity to work independently and acquire the skills necessary to maintain lifelong learning is good. In early years, children have good independent learning skills, but these are not sufficiently developed in key stage 1, where some pupils have poor self-control. Pupils' development is

better at key stage 2 and they work well in pairs and small groups to complete tasks.

- 43 Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective. Pupils have good awareness of Welsh culture as well as other world cultures. There is great respect for diversity.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 44 The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in its self-evaluation report.

- 45 The overall quality of teaching in 25 lessons was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	52%	44%	0%	0%

- 46 The quality of teaching in the lessons observed is **lower than the** average reported in HMCI's report for 2007-08 which is that teaching is good or better (grade 1 or 2) in 83% of lessons and outstanding (grade 1) in 16%.
- 47 Teaching of children under five is good. The teacher and the learning support assistant (LSA) show a clear understanding of how to plan an appropriate curriculum in order to promote successfully the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- 48 Teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 meets pupils' needs and curricular requirements well. A strong feature of the teaching in all lessons in both key stages is the quality of the relationships between all staff and pupils that establishes a good learning environment that effectively fosters learning. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. Teachers are effective in promoting equality of opportunity and the way issues of gender, race and disability are addressed is a strength of the school's provision.
- 49 The key features of good and outstanding teaching include:
- thorough planning and preparation
 - well-paced lessons
 - highly effective use of questioning to extend pupils' thinking and to encourage them to discover their own solutions to problems
 - stimulating tasks that motivate pupils
 - secure subject knowledge
 - high expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour
 - effective organisation
 - good collaboration with LSAs to provide good quality help for pupils
 - clear learning objectives and skills which are shared with pupils.

- 50 In the lessons that had shortcomings in teaching, work was not sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs. Generally, not enough use is made of incidental Welsh to develop pupils' bilingual skills. Occasionally, behaviour management was not sufficiently firm enough to engage younger pupils who have not yet developed their own self-control sufficiently.
- 51 There is an appropriate system of assessment which tracks pupils' progress, but there are a few shortcomings. Statutory requirements are met. However, the school does not make sufficient use of standardised tests to measure pupils' progress against their prior attainment or national curriculum (NC) attainment targets. This means that, although teachers know their pupils progress informally, they are not able to track progress against NC age-related expectations. Systems for moderation are appropriate.
- 52 Pupils of all ages are encouraged to judge their success in meeting the lesson objectives and a system of 'two stars and a wish' enables them to evaluate how secure their new knowledge is. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide useful oral feedback to pupils about their work.
- 53 Annual reports to parents meet statutory requirements and provide detailed information on pupils' progress in all subjects. There are appropriate opportunities for parents to respond.

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

- 54 The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in their self-evaluation report.
- 55 The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully meets statutory requirements. It provides a wide range of learning experiences which meet the needs and interests of pupils with different abilities well. Clear policies and comprehensive schemes of work in all subjects identify learning objectives, activities, resources and assessment opportunities for the pupils.
- 56 Overall the provision for key skills has good features that outweigh shortcomings. A clear overview of planning for the teaching of key skills guides planning at a medium term and short term level. The provision of planned opportunities for pupils to work together, to experience problem-solving activities and to improve their own learning and performance is good. Provision for bilingualism has some shortcomings. The use of incidental Welsh is variable and is not consistent feature of all classes.
- 57 Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good. Acts of collective worship have a distinctive Christian ethos and contribute very well to pupils' awareness of spiritual and moral issues. They meet statutory requirements. The provision of personal and social education (PSE) is an integral part of school life. Lessons make good provision for education about drugs and substance misuse, health education and road safety.
- 58 Provision for the teaching of Welsh culture is good. Celebrating St David's Day raises pupils' awareness of their Welsh tradition and heritage, for example. The

provision for Welsh culture within the *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is good and there are examples in classes of pupils' work on Welsh themes. Pupils also sing Welsh songs in music lessons.

- 59 Provision for promoting knowledge of other cultures is good. Teachers ensure that pupils respect diversity in their work in geography about other countries such as India, China and the West Indies.
- 60 The school's extra-curricular provision is good and includes activities such as sports. The provision of breakfast club and after-school clubs are of a good quality. These features enrich further pupils' social development.
- 61 Learning experiences are effectively enriched by partnership with parents, members of the community, the local education authority, health services, other schools and colleges and especially the strong links with the education business partnership. Pupils visit local work places and have links through the education business partnership to find out about the world of work and community involvement.
- 62 The school council's 'eco monitor', staff and pupils work hard to recycle and uphold the school's 'eco code'. The school council has worked impressively on projects to improve the environment with the groundwork trust and with students from Greenfields Special School.
- 63 The school uses visits and visitors to enrich the pupils' curricular experiences. Activities held off site such as working with the forestry commission at Gethin and Nantgarw woods and working with the Rivers Agency, as well as the work of volunteers and visitors from the community, contribute positively towards pupils' understanding of community regeneration and sustainability.
- 64 The school promotes pupils' awareness of global citizenship effectively by providing valuable opportunities to foster links with citizens of other countries especially Canada, where Canadian visitors on the Otesha project worked with the pupils.
- 65 The school works closely with parents and the local community and is actively involved in community enhancement and regeneration. Various courses are run for pupils and their parents and carers that effectively promote healthy living.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 66 The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 67 Parents are happy with the care and guidance which the staff extend to their children. The school welcomes parents and provides both formal and informal opportunities for parents to find out about the work of the school. Parent's evenings are well attended and together with annual reports help parents find out how their children are progressing. Most parents praise the close links and appreciate how approachable the acting headteacher and staff are. Careful consideration is given to parents' opinions and any complaints are effectively investigated and dealt with.

- 68 The playgroup is located in the school and a very close relationship exists between them and the school. Suitable arrangements are in place for the children to spend time in the school prior to transferring, to enable them to settle quickly. There are effective transition arrangements, both curricular and pastoral, with the secondary school to which pupils transfer.
- 69 One of the school's highest priorities is to provide for the needs of each pupil and provision is good. The school works closely with specialist services and good quality personal support and guidance is given and each member of staff has a good awareness and understanding of the importance of PSE and developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Detailed arrangements have been established for the monitoring of pupil attendance, the school works closely with the education welfare service where there are significant concerns.
- 70 The school gives constant attention to safety matters and to the healthy development of pupils. Careful attention is given to safety in lessons and activities. Effective procedures are in place for child protection and the designated person ensures most staff are aware of their responsibilities in protecting pupils. There is also a designated member of the governing body.
- 71 The provision for pupils with ALN is good. Early identification ensures highly effective and purposeful support. The school policy is comprehensive and complies with statutory requirements and the framework for inclusive education. The acting headteacher, who acts as the ALN co-ordinator is effective and works well with the whole staff, outside support agencies and the governing body.
- 72 The additional support given to different groups of pupils who require extra support with language development helps them make rapid progress. Pupils with ALN receive timely support which is monitored regularly and assessed. Teachers and support staff work as a team providing continuity of support and assessment needs. Targets set in individual education plans (IEPs) are stated in observable, measurable terms and can be clearly monitored and reviewed. 'Child-friendly' versions are used well to involve pupils in assessing their own progress and performance. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is detailed and effectively identifies what they need to do to improve.
- 73 Support for the tiny minority of pupils whose behaviour may impede their own or other's progress is good. Effective use is made of behaviour management strategies for those who need it and there are a clear set of school values, which effectively guide pupils' behaviour. The school has been successful in eliminating all kinds of oppressive behaviour, including racism.
- 74 The school is effective in promoting equality of opportunity and pupils have a good awareness of equal opportunity issues and through their respect and understanding of the visiting pupils from Greenfields Special School, they develop worthwhile social values and responsibilities. Boys and girls are equally encouraged to participate in all activities. The school has worked closely with visiting specialists from other cultures who have been respected and valued by the pupils.
- 75 The school has an appropriate disability equality scheme and an action plan to ensure that all pupils have access to the premises and the curriculum.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 76 The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in its self-evaluation report. The school recognises that leadership and management is an area for further development and the inspection team agrees with their evaluation.
- 77 The acting headteacher provides positive leadership which gives the school a clear sense of direction. She leads a committed team of teachers who are united by a sense of common purpose, namely to provide a caring, close and supportive school community which facilitates effective learning for all and which ensures that all pupils, regardless of ability, race or gender feel valued, respected and have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- 78 All staff members share the school's sound aims and values and are fully committed to promoting them in all ways, including through personal example. The school's core values are clearly reflected in all that goes on in the daily life and work of the school. The school takes good account of national priorities. The raising of standards in literacy and numeracy are current targets. The school has invested in establishing an outdoor learning environment in preparation for the Foundation Phase. The school has begun to implement Curriculum 2008 and staff members are revising planning together with their teaching strategies to facilitate this.
- 79 The SDP is a well structured document which is informed by data analysis, curriculum co-ordinators' subject reports and LEA advisors. It identifies the school's targets for improvement, actions to be taken and success criteria. While the targets are valid in themselves, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that they have been selected in the light of information gained from the self evaluation process and a sufficiently well informed overview of standards.
- 80 All curriculum co-ordinators have management responsibilities which are clearly defined in their job descriptions. Although one is a very recently qualified teacher and another a newly qualified teacher (NQT), they are beginning to provide some effective leadership. They have commenced the process of monitoring standards in their subjects in line with the school's monitoring programme, which is at an early stage of development. The acting headteacher and a senior member of staff provide good support for NQTs. Performance management is conducted efficiently and teachers' targets reflect both the school's priorities and the professional development needs and interests of the individual. The acting headteacher also holds appraisal meetings with staff to review their professional development and assess their training needs.
- 81 Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to the school and contribute well to school improvement. The governing body is knowledgeable about trends, targets and areas for improvement and is involved in making strategic

decisions. After the acting headteacher has presented the SDP to them in draft form, the governors critically evaluate it and make amendments where appropriate. The governing body is very supportive of the acting headteacher and the staff and satisfies legal requirements. Governors receive a thorough termly report from the acting headteacher which informs them of all aspects of the school's life and work together with an update about the school's progress against the targets in the SDP. They monitor standards by discussing with the acting headteacher the pupil tracking record and many visit the school regularly, some to help in classrooms, by listening to readers for example.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 82 The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 83 The acting headteacher has put in place procedures to support its school self-evaluation. These include the monitoring of subjects and data analysis. The process, however, lacks consistency, rigour and a sharp focus on standards. Self-evaluation procedures include an evaluation of the previous SDP, scrutiny of pupils' work and some evidence is gathered by the acting headteacher through classroom observations. There is, however, a lack of rigour and insufficient focus on standards in classroom observations and insufficient first-hand evidence is gathered to inform curriculum co-ordinators accurately about performance in their areas. The information gained is discussed and used to identify strengths and areas for development in order to identify aspects for development. This analysis is used to set targets for improvement. There are no formal procedures for gathering the views of interested parties but the acting headteacher considers seriously the opinions expressed by staff, governors and pupils through informal discussion and the school council.
- 84 The acting headteacher leads the school's self-evaluation process well. All teachers discuss each of the seven questions in staff meetings, come to a judgement about them and set targets for improvement. The school's self-evaluation report (SER) is a structured document which is based on the inspection framework and is comprehensive. The inspection team's judgements agreed with those of the school in all seven key questions. Although thorough, the SER is narrative rather than evaluative and there is some lack of clarity about how the school's areas for development are identified. Governors carefully scrutinise a draft copy of the self-evaluation report and consider if it reflects the school as they see it. They make amendments where appropriate after critical evaluation and thorough discussion and support the school's self-evaluation process effectively in this way.
- 85 The school supports its priorities well through its allocation of resources. There has been considerable investment in resources to establish an outdoor learning environment not only to support the implementation of the Foundation Phase, but also to enhance all pupils' understanding of the importance of healthy eating and their active learning by planting and tending vegetables.

The school has purchased numerous appropriate resources to support its target of raising standards in English, for example. There has, however, been insufficient time as yet for these to demonstrate a positive effect on standards. Although the school has procedures in place to monitor pupils' achievement, these are not sufficiently structured to demonstrate that it is improving.

- 86 The school has dealt well with most of the issues raised by the last inspection, but standards in geography need further improvement.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 87 The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 88 Staffing levels are very advantageous and good use is made of LSAs. The acting headteacher covers for full-time teachers during planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time, by taking groups for speech and language. This time is used effectively by teachers to ensure that planning and assessment meets the needs of pupils effectively. Workforce remodelling has been completed successfully. Support staff in classrooms work effectively with teachers to plan, teach and record the progress of pupils in their care. The administrative officer also makes a very considerable positive contribution to the effective day-to-day running of the school.
- 89 Learning resources are generally of a good quality and are sufficient for the teaching of the curriculum in both key stages and in the early years. The purchase of resources corresponds to priorities identified in the SDP, and effective use is made of them in lessons. Teachers make good use of the school buildings. Classrooms are organised well, and the good quality of displays of pupils' work provides both an extra learning resource and a stimulating and lively environment. The hall is used effectively for physical education, collective worship and school lunches. Standards of cleanliness are very good throughout the school.
- 90 The governing body controls finance well, and is supported effectively by the acting headteacher, school administrative officer and the LEA support officer. The school makes every effort to acquire additional money to its budget allocation through bids to various organisations. The governing body takes its responsibility for monitoring spending on a regular basis seriously, and the SDP is used well as a tool for planning future expenditure.
- 91 The school provides good value for money, as it produces confident pupils with good personal skills, which enable them to move on to the next stage in their education successfully.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Children under five

- 92 Because of the very small number of children under five, the report comments on provision only. The educational provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and children are making good progress towards the desirable learning outcomes for children aged five.

Personal and Social Development

- 93 Children receive good opportunities to become independent, make choices, take responsibility for their personal hygiene needs and to become confident, investigative explorers of their environment. They are given opportunities to learn about right and wrong, to understand that they must take responsibility for their actions and to develop an awareness of different cultures and beliefs of others.

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills

- 94 Children receive good opportunities to listen to a variety of stories, to make themselves understood and to listen to and carry out instructions. They have access to a wide variety of attractive books, are made aware of the connection between letters and sounds and receive opportunities to respond to stories they hear. There are ample opportunities for them to communicate by using symbols, pictures and words and to recognise the connection between writing, speech and communication.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 95 Practitioners provide good first-hand experiences which enable children to explore and experiment their indoor and outdoor environment, identify what they want to do and to listen to the ideas of others. Children also receive good opportunities to learn about their bodies and what they need to grow and to be healthy, to observe the differences between plants and creatures and to experiment with everyday objects and sort them according to simple features.

Physical Development

- 96 There are good opportunities for children to develop their motor skills, control of their bodies and to develop confidence when practising these skills. Children also receive experiences which enable them to become adept at different ways of moving and to move safely with increasing control, confidence and coordination.

Creative Development

- 97 Practitioners provide children with good and varied opportunities to explore with a variety of techniques and materials and to create their own images choosing from a range of materials. They also have opportunities to sing a range of songs, explore and respond with their bodies to music and to develop their responses to different stimuli including music and stories.

English

Key stage 1: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 2: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

- 98 Standards in listening are good at both key stages. In Key Stage 1, most pupils take turns and listen carefully to their teachers' instructions and the ideas of others. In Key Stage 2, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and show an appreciation of the contributions of their peers.
- 99 Standards in reading are good throughout the school. Most pupils in both key stages make good progress with reading in relation to their abilities. More able pupils in Key Stage 1 recognise the humour in texts and read with expression when using picture books they have chosen themselves.
- 100 Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to read from a structured reading scheme supplemented by books from the school and local libraries. Older and more able readers read from a broader range of texts with increasing fluency and accuracy. Pupils demonstrate good information retrieval skills and know well how to find specific information in reference books. Pupils are developing a preference for particular genres, naming their favourite books and authors.
- 101 In Key Stage 1, pupils' writing has good features that outweigh shortcomings. Younger pupils move from 'underwriting' (copying words by writing underneath them) to writing sentences independently. The more able, older pupils write sentences which are demarcated by spaces, capital letters and full stops demonstrating a basic understanding of grammar.
- 102 At Key Stage 2, writing has good features that outweigh shortcomings. Pupils write with increasing accuracy according to their abilities. They write a wider range of different forms including reports and poetry. Pupils write good accounts of the eruption of Vesuvius, after listening to an 'eye-witness' account. Pupils write sentences that extend logically and words are chosen for effect.
- 103 Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 produce a wider range of writing in different forms which are suitable for the task. This includes accounts, letters from evacuees and re-writing stories for a different audience. Pupils at the end of the key stage punctuate accurately and use inverted commas correctly. Pupils identify which parts of an advertisement are opinion and which are fact. They write interesting advertisement of their own, using a good range of appropriate adjectives.

Shortcomings

- 104 Pupils' standards in speaking are underdeveloped at both key stages. They find it difficult to express themselves and often will use a general word like 'stuff', rather than think of a suitable descriptive adjective. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a limited vocabulary and do not know how to use standard English in formal situations.

- 105 Pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are underdeveloped at both key stages. Younger pupils' letters are poorly formed and frequently not constructed in the right way. For example, several pupils were observed writing the letter 'p' from the descender upwards.
- 106 In Key Stage 2, many pupils do not spell common words correctly.

Welsh second language

Key stage 1: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 2: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

- 107 In Key Stage 1, pupils respond accurately to phrases such as 'Bore da', 'Eisteddwch i lawr' and answer accurately questions such as 'Pwy sy'n cael brechdannau?' and 'Pwy sydd yn cael cinio?' They have a developing vocabulary to express their feelings. For example in response to 'Sut wyt ti?' they answer 'da iawn diolch' or 'anhapus'.
- 108 Pupils know a number of Welsh songs and rhymes which they sing clearly during lessons and at other times of the day. They know colours and the days of the week. They enjoy hearing and listen well to an illustrated story and discuss the illustrations using some Welsh words, for example, when asked 'beth wyt ti'n hoffi?' they answer 'dwi'n hoffi cath'. Some older pupils read a few words from the story. Older pupils answer questions with a sentence such as 'dwi'n byw yn Merthyr Vale' when asked 'Ble rwyt ti'n byw?'
- 109 Older pupils in Key Stage 1 write simple sentences following a given pattern, namely: 'Huw dw i'; 'Dwi'n byw gyda Mam a Dad'; and 'Gwenno yw fy chwaer.' Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 are beginning to maintain a simple dialogue in pairs. They ask one another 'Pwy wyt ti?' 'Ble wyt ti'n byw?' and 'Oes brawd neu chwaer da ti?' and respond accurately.
- 110 Older pupils in Key Stage 2 engage in extended dialogue and ask and answer simple questions on a given topic using full sentences. When reading, pupils use their phonic knowledge to sound out words and most read simple texts. Pupils write accurately extended descriptions about their homes, families, interests and friends. They write well extended dialogue and a descriptive passage of six to seven sentences about their families, where they live, their hobbies and their heroes.

Shortcomings

- 111 The knowledge of vocabulary and sentence patterns of a minority of pupils in both key stages is insecure.
- 112 Pupils lack confidence when speaking Welsh.
- 113 Insufficient progress is made by the end of both key stages.

Mathematics

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

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

Good features

- 114 In Key Stage 1, pupils count forwards and backwards up to 50 in the context of a game and 100 when counting by rote. They count to 100 in tens and fives and count forwards from five and 10 in twos and threes. They count in fifties. Pupils know the term 'order', understand the concept and place objects and themselves in order accurately up to 20.
- 115 Pupils use a hundred square accurately and confidently to make a variety of calculations including addition of single, multiple numbers and tens and twenties. They also use whiteboards confidently to work out answers which they check and self-correct when appropriate. Pupils have good facility for mental calculation and a secure knowledge of addition and subtraction bonds up to 20 which they use accurately and confidently in mental calculations.
- 116 Younger pupils add on numbers and all make accurate calculations using money. All know the value of coins. Older pupils confidently use a variety of strategies for addition and subtraction, for example, partitioning numbers. They compare larger numbers and know which is the greater from their developing understanding of place value.
- 117 Pupils have a good knowledge of fractions and calculate mentally halves of numbers to 100. They apply their knowledge of multiples of 10, for example, to subtract 20 from 50. They know and understand the terms 'quarter' and 'half' and use them accurately when giving out fruit at snack time. They understand number sequences and confidently complete some. Pupils know and identify odd and even numbers and count accurately and confidently in both. Pupils identify two-dimensional shapes, name them and describe their features accurately. Pupils tell the time accurately using quarter and half hours.
- 118 A good feature is their interest in investigative mathematics and the way in which they use it to solve problems. For example, they work out how many months they have lived and from that information they find out in which season they were born.
- 119 In Key Stage 2, pupils have an understanding of number patterns. Across the key stage, they develop well an understanding of place value and handle numbers up to 10000 and beyond. They round off whole numbers to the nearest 10, 100 1000 or 1,000,000.
- 120 Younger pupils work out tables well by using different strategies. They have growing understanding of place value and make accurate calculations of three-figure numbers. Pupils show an understanding of fractions and they calculate these in a practical manner by dividing shapes into equal parts. By the end of the key stage they understand more complex fractions and they express them accurately in a number of ways. Pupils further develop their knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes, and across the key stage they identify and

relate the features of a wide range of two and three-dimensional shapes successfully. They use Carroll diagrams accurately to demonstrate the different properties of several shapes.

- 121 Older pupils have a secure knowledge of addition and doubling using partitioning, improper fractions and mixed numbers. They apply this to decimals and use this knowledge well to solve problems. They have a secure understanding of decimal notation and express vulgar fractions as decimals. They round off decimal numbers to the nearest hundredth or tenth. Older pupils name a variety of triangles and list their features. They know the properties of quadrilaterals and parallelograms and know well different lines including horizontal, vertical and perpendicular. They calculate confidently lengths and distances using kilometres, metres, centimetres and millimetres.

Shortcomings

- 122 Pupils' ability to solve problems which are applied to real life situations is underdeveloped in Key Stage 2.

Science

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

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

Good features

- 123 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good understanding of the habitats of 'mini-beasts'. They correctly identify insects by counting the number of legs. They have good suggestions about where different small creatures may be found. They observe ants and spiders carefully and make suitable suggestions about their movements. 'They are looking for food' observes one pupil in year 1. Pupils look on with wonder at 'garden slaters' and note that it has a number of 'babies' it is protecting.
- 124 When carrying out an investigation, pupils plan their activities well and are systematic in their approach. They make intelligent predictions as to which plants will grow well in which conditions. They test their theories carefully and record their findings precisely using appropriate tables and charts.
- 125 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 suggest ways in which shadows may change when they hold up a shape in front of a light source. They describe how their shadows change as the shape moves nearer or further away from the light source. Pupils know that light usually travels in straight lines.
- 126 Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve good standards overall. They recall facts about different light sources and can name several, including the sun. Pupils know that night time is when the country is in the Earth's shadow. More able pupils know that the moon shines because the sun's rays are reflected from its surface.
- 127 Pupils' written work shows a good understanding of electricity. They know that electricity can be generated from a number of sources, including sustainable

sources. Pupils make good use of ICT to support their learning in the subject. More able pupils show that they know how to construct a circuit and the difference between a parallel and series circuit. Pupils construct accurate circuit diagrams, using conventional symbols.

- 128 Older pupils in Key Stage 2 have a good grasp of sustainability. They know how some materials are recycled and that some energy sources are more 'environmentally friendly' than others. They recognise basic safety rules when carrying out investigations.

Shortcomings

- 129 Some pupils' work is not well presented, which results in recording errors being made during observations.

Information and communication 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

- 130 In Key Stage 1, pupils use an appropriate range of equipment and software with increasing skill in a variety of contexts. They create pieces of written work independently on the screen, adapting the text as required and printing it.
- 131 Pupils use appropriate programmes correctly to produce drawings and for word processing purposes. They are able to follow the menu and the instructions in multi-media packages with a fair degree of independence and these activities promote the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.
- 132 Older pupils in Key Stage 1 give suitable instructions to a floor robot. They work out how to program it and make it move across the floor. Pupils understand that they need to calculate how many moves forward it needs to make to reach a card. Pupils write lists of instructions, using simple symbols.
- 133 In Key Stage 2, pupils are confident users of equipment and software and have good keyboard skills. They communicate and exchange information effectively in different forms including text, graphs and pictures.
- 134 Pupils make effective use of spreadsheets to calculate information in a table. Standards in data handling are good and pupils use their numeracy skills well to create formulae to add up rows of data. Pupils recognise that poor data results in poor results, so they have methods to see that their outcomes are reasonable.

Shortcomings

- 135 There are no important shortcomings.

Design technology

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

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

Good features

- 136 In Key Stage 1, pupils have good designing skills. They talk about how they are going to make a shelter, using different materials. They also say what they like and dislike about their choices of material. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 ask questions and suggest ideas when making their constructions. They make good use of their prior knowledge of materials as they try out various combinations. They discuss with staff ways in which they can improve their shelter.
- 137 In Key Stage 2, pupils draw effectively on their experience of making 'buggies'. They combine their drawing and designing skills well to produce a series of images in a logical sequence. They compare their finished products with their original intentions. Pupils use tools safely and correctly.
- 138 Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to identify the driver of a spur gear, as they investigate mechanisms. They use components effectively to build different groups of gears. Pupils make good use of investigative skills as they solve the problem of how the gears go together.

Shortcomings

- 139 There are no important shortcomings.

History

Key stage 1: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 2: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

- 140 Pupils are developing a good understanding of past, present and future as a result of charting their progress from birth through babyhood and into childhood. They know that William Morgan translated the Bible into the Welsh language a long time ago so that Welsh people would be able to read it as they could not read English.
- 141 In Key Stage 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the past is developing well through topics such as the Second World War. They have studied the effects of the war on ordinary families and children such as themselves. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Blitz, rationing, the blackout, air raid shelters and wardens and evacuees. They produce sensitive empathetic writing as evacuees who are separated from their families which describes how they feel, what they are afraid of and what they miss. They

interact with attractive displays which include the typical contents of an evacuee's suitcase and speak knowledgably about such things as gas masks and ration books.

- 142 Pupils know the term 'census' and describe well what a census is, the type of information that is gathered and how it is used. They gather information for a census they are conducting by interviewing one another and know that information was gathered differently in the past. Pupils know that sources of information from the past include school log books, parish registers and inscriptions on old gravestones. Pupils analyse the information they have gathered and enter it onto a data base using good ICT skills.

Shortcomings

- 143 Pupils' knowledge of Welsh history in both key stages is underdeveloped.
- 144 Pupils' ability to select, recall and organise historical information is underdeveloped in Key Stage 2.
- 145 Pupils' skills of historical enquiry are underdeveloped in both key stages.

Geography

Key stage 1: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 2: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

- 146 Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a secure knowledge of where they live and ask and answer well geographical questions about their locality. They know their address and speak confidently about their locality describing its main features such as the mountains, church and shops. They make sensible geographical observations about the school and the village identifying which features they consider to be attractive and those which they dislike and wish to improve offering sensible suggestions.
- 147 Pupils describe well the differences between Merthyr Vale and Cardiff, state which they prefer and give sensible reasons for their choice. They suggest ways in which to improve their school which include adding a sand pit, garden area and pirate ship.
- 148 Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 indicate Merthyr Vale and Cardiff on a map of Wales and identify Wales accurately on a world map. They make a map of the locality identifying its main features and write what they think makes it special. Pupils have conducted traffic surveys in the locality and in Porthcawl, have compared them, analysed the data and drawn sensible conclusions from them.
- 149 Pupils compare and contrast their locality with Porthcawl and name many of the latter's geographical features such as the beach, caravan site, pavilion, ambulance station, art gallery, sea and pier.
- 150 Pupils assemble their own map of Porthcawl using the photographs and a map of the area which displays its major characteristics well. They understand that

tourism is the main source of income for Porthcawl and that visitors there fluctuate on a seasonal basis. Pupils apply their knowledge of what makes it a popular tourist area to how Merthyr Vale might be made a tourist attraction.

- 151 Pupils use simple two figure co-ordinates accurately when engaged in mapping work. They know that areas such as Merthyr Vale are linked to other areas by roads, rivers and railways. Pupils know also that different areas and countries are linked by computer, telephone and satellite.

Shortcomings

- 152 In neither key stage do pupils observe and collect information from first hand sources sufficiently.
- 153 Pupils' knowledge of a contrasting geographical area in a less economically developed country is underdeveloped in Key Stage 2.
- 154 In Key Stage 2, pupils' knowledge of environmental change is underdeveloped.

Art and design

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

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

Good features

- 155 In Key Stage 1 pupils explore colour, form, line and texture to create imaginative pictures using a wide range of media. They make careful drawing of Gethin Wood of good standard, and demonstrate confidence and skill when using a range of media to refine their work. They explore a range of techniques which they use effectively.
- 156 Pupils' three-dimensional work is good. They observe Welsh 'loving spoons' and make their own, using clay. They also combine scrap materials to create collages in the style of Henri Matisse, which show a good understanding of texture and colour.
- 157 In Key Stage 2, pupils investigate and combine visual and tactile qualities of paint well. They match these qualities to their design ideas about bridges and viaducts, for example. Pupils draw effectively on their understanding of Welsh artists, such as Sian Griffith in their work.
- 158 Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have well developed designing skills and generally achieve standards which are above age-related expectations. Pupils have a good background knowledge and understanding of the Chinese New Year, for example, and draw on this knowledge effectively when designing dragon masks. They also design and make evocative drawings of the Blitz, using the work of several war artists as a starting point.

Shortcomings

- 159 There are no important shortcomings.

Music

Key stage 1: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

Good features

- 160 Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing tunefully with clear diction performing loudly or quietly as directed. They keep a steady beat when clapping to accompany a piece of music. Pupils have a good awareness of rhythm and pattern and repeat rhythmic patterns clapped by the teacher accurately. Older pupils repeat longer and more complex patterns well. They sing a range of songs broadly in tune and demonstrate an enjoyment of music to which they respond sensitively when engaged in 'Write Dance' activities.
- 161 In Key Stage 2, pupils sing tunefully in Welsh and English. They keep time carefully and observe the rhythm of a song. Pupils explain well the need to take deep breaths before singing and why it is important to keep the chest upright when singing.
- 162 Older pupils recognise the need to vary volume when singing to convey the emotions in a song. They also name some well-known western composers.

Shortcomings

- 163 Pupils' ability to choose and organise sounds in response to a given stimulus and create simple melodic patterns is underdeveloped.
- 164 Pupils' ability to compose simple, short pieces using percussion instruments is underdeveloped.

Physical education

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

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

Good features

- 165 Pupils in both key stages dress appropriately for activities and pay due regard to safety issues. Pupils work well in pairs or groups and they evaluate their performances with clarity and accuracy. All pupils undertake a range of movements during warm up exercises and they understand the importance of health issues.
- 166 In Key Stage 1, pupils make good use of space and perform basic skills of jumping and balancing to a good standard. Many can hold shape for an appropriate time and transfer weight from one part of the body to the other. They put together simple sequences, which they then repeat.
- 167 In Key Stage 2, pupils achieve good standards in gymnastics. Pupils explore different movements with increasing confidence and improve their skills. They

make constructive comments about how they can improve their performance and assess their work effectively as they refine movements.

- 168 Pupils have a good grasp of the rules and tactics of various sports through their participation in the Dragon Sports programme. Pupils have made up their own dances based on Indian dance patterns and performed these as part of their studies in geography. Pupils also participate in adventurous activities, such as wall climbing and ravine walking.
- 169 Pupils swim regularly and most achieve good standards by the time they leave the school.

Shortcomings

- 170 There are no important shortcomings.

Religious education

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

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

Good Features

- 171 Pupils of all ages make steady progress in their understanding of religious facts, concepts and symbolism and use key words appropriately to describe beliefs and practices.
- 172 At both key stages, pupils have a good awareness of the Bible as a book which Christians regard as special and recall a number of its stories in detail. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are familiar with Creation stories and recall the sequence of Creation Days as recorded in Genesis. In Key Stage 2, pupils understand that in some Christian denominations, adults are baptised by total immersion as a sign that they belong to Christ.
- 173 Pupils at both key stages know about the Chinese New Year and some of the ceremonies associated with this. They have also studied Islam and know that the Qu'ran is a special book for Muslims. They show respect for Qu'ran by ensuring it is displayed properly.
- 174 Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a good understanding of Hinduism and have studied Divali. They have produced lamps and rangoli patterns and explain how these relate to the Divali celebrations. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion has been effectively extended by a visit to a Sikh gurdwara and they know that Sikh men do not cut their hair, but tie it up in turbans.
- 175 Pupils awareness of values such as friendship and kindness towards others is good. They know that St Paul defined Christian love in a number of ways in 1 Corinthians 13 and seek to put these virtues into practice in their lives. The current theme is 'love is patient'. These studies make an important contribution to pupils' personal development.

Shortcomings

- 176 There are no important shortcomings.

School's response to the inspection

The governors and staff have considered the outcomes of the inspection and are happy that the report states that the quality of education is good and also that our strength is our caring and inclusive ethos.

The report has identified areas for improvement and we are committed to implementing the recommendations to ensure that 'we are doing the best for our children so that they can do the best for themselves'.

We would like to thank the inspection team for the very positive way in which they carried out the inspection and as such have contributed to our school improvement.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Mount Pleasant Primary School
School type	Community Primary
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Address of school	Mount Pleasant Merthyr Vale Merthyr Tydfil
Postcode	CF48 4TD
Telephone number	01443 690240

Headteacher (Acting)	Mrs Anne-Marie Lewis
Date of appointment	1 September 2007
Chair of governors	Mr Jeff Edwards
Registered inspector	Mr Stephen Dennett
Dates of inspection	10-12 March 2009

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	0	3	2	6	5	2	7	6	31

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	2	2	3

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	10:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	15
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.5:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Spring 2008		92.9	92.0
Summer 2008		94.1	90.4
Autumn 2008		90.5	93.5

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	29
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	5
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 was greater than four but fewer than 10, overall performance indicators only are included.		

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	80.0	In Wales	80.1

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2008							Number of pupils in Y6	12				
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	33	33	
		National	0	0	0	0	1	4	16	50	29	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	50	42	
		National	0	0	0	0	1	3	15	50	30	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	75	17	
		National	0	0	0	0	0	2	12	53	32	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	66.7	In Wales	74.1

- D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

A team of three inspectors, including the school's nominee, spent a total of seven inspector days at the school.

These inspectors visited:

- 25 lessons or parts of lessons;
- registrations, assemblies and acts of collective worship; and
- a range of extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- staff, governors and parents before the inspection;
- teachers and support staff;
- groups of pupils in all classes;
- the school council; and
- a representative of the local authority and other people associated with the school.

The team also considered:

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

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

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Stephen Dennett Registered Inspector	Led on : Context, Summary, Recommendations and Appendices Key Questions 1, 2 and 3 English Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Art and design Physical education Religious education Contributed to: Key Question 4
Mrs Elizabeth Halls Lay Inspector	Led on: Key Question 4 Contributed to: Key Questions 1 and 3
Mrs Branwen Llewlyn Jones Team Inspector	Led on: Key Questions 5, 6 and 7 Early Years Welsh second language Mathematics History Geography Music Contributed to: Recommendations Key Questions 1, 2 and 3
Mrs Anne-Marie Lewis Nominee	Contributed to all key questions

Acknowledgement

The inspection team wish to express their thanks to the governing body, acting headteacher, staff, parents and pupils of Mount Pleasant Primary School for the co-operation and assistance both before and during the inspection.

Contractors

Baker-Phillips Educational Communications Ltd., Oaks Lea, Higher Knolton, Overton, Wrexham. LL13 0LF.