

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

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

**Pontllanfraith Primary School  
Penmaen Road  
Pontllanfraith  
Blackwood  
NP12 2DN**

**School Number: 6762086**

**Date of Inspection: 25 February 2008**

**by**

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5542**

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Pontllanfraith 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 Pontllanfraith Primary School took place between 25/02/08 and 28/02/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Margaret Elizabeth Morgan 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 **standard** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Pontllanfraith Primary School is situated in the village of Pontllanfraith near to Blackwood in Caerphilly. The school is a pilot setting for the Welsh Assembly Government's Foundation Phase. The Foundation Phase is being implemented in the under-fives classes and in years 1 and 2. In the meantime, the National Curriculum has been disapplied in years 1 and 2. The school also hosts two Specialist Resource Base (SRB) classes for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Since the time of the previous inspection in 2001, the school has undergone some remodelling and it has also created enclosed outdoor areas as extensions of the classrooms for the Foundation Phase children and the Specialist Resource Base classes.
2. At the time of the inspection, there were 316 pupils on the school roll including 39 part-time nursery children. This number is a decrease of 53 pupils from the time of the previous inspection. The school is situated in an area that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. A significant number of pupils reside in the locality but approximately 20 per cent travel to the school from outside the catchment area. Nursery children are admitted to the school on a part-time basis at the beginning of the term following their third birthday. Pupils begin full-time education in the September before their fifth birthday.
3. Over 99 per cent of pupils come from English speaking homes. No pupils come from Welsh speaking family backgrounds. Approximately two per cent of pupils come from a mix of other ethnic groups. No pupils receive support for learning English as an additional language. In the current academic year, approximately 22 per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. This is above both Local Education Authority (LEA) and national averages.
4. Pupils' ability on entry is below the LEA average. Approximately 24 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN) including 14 who have statements of SEN. This is above the national average. The National Curriculum has been modified for 11 pupils. One child is 'looked after' by the local authority. Three pupils were excluded on a temporary basis from the school in the last 12 months.
5. There are the equivalent of 16 full-time teachers, including four who work on a part-time basis. Thirteen teaching assistants are also on the staff and also three administrative assistants. Both the head teacher and the deputy head teacher were appointed to the school in 2007. The school has received the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools and Bronze Eco Schools Awards.

## **The school's priorities and targets**

6. The school's mission statement is: 'Dysgu Gorau Dysgu Byw, Learning Together Learning for Life'.
7. Shorter-term priorities outlined in the School Development Plan include:
  - To raise standards of achievement of literacy across the school.
  - To raise standards of achievement in mathematics across the school.
  - To raise standards of achievement in science across the school.
  - To raise standards of achievement and access to ICT across the school.
  - To raise standards of achievement in PE through the PESS (PE and School Sport) Cluster Initiative.
  - To further develop Pontllanfraith Primary as a Healthy and an Eco School.
  - To review standards of teaching and learning.
  - To continue the Foundation Phase pilot.
  - To develop robust planning and assessment for learning systems across the school and curriculum statements.
  - To further develop the role of the curriculum leader.
  - To develop a whole school inclusive approach.
  - To further develop a robust training programme.
  - To continue to develop transition programmes.
  - To continue to upgrade premises – Internal and External.

## Summary

8. Pontllanfraith Primary School is a good school that has made significant improvements since the appointment of the new head and deputy head teacher in April 2007. The school is working hard and is successfully piloting and implementing the Foundation Phase for the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive especially in Foundation Phase. Progress since the last inspection has good features and no important shortcomings.
9. The grades awarded by the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report prior to the inspection in four out of the seven key questions. Where there are differences, the inspection team allocated one grade higher.

### Table of grades awarded

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

10. Standards of achievement are good in Pontllanfraith Primary School. Overall, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background, pupils, particularly those in the Foundation Phase Pilot classes and those in the Specialist Resource Base, make good and sometimes outstanding progress and they achieve the targets they are set.

### Standards in the areas of learning in Foundation Phase Pilot classes are as follows:

Area of Learning	Grade
Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity	Grade 1
Language, Literacy and Communication Skills	Grade 2
Mathematical Development	Grade 2
Bilingualism	Grade 2
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Grade 2
Physical Development	Grade 2
Creative Development	Grade 1

**In subjects inspected at key stage 2, standards are as follows:**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Welsh Second Language	Grade 3
Mathematics	Grade 3
Music	Grade 2
Religious Education	Grade 2

11. During the inspection, standards achieved by pupils in the lessons observed are as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
3%	79%	18%	0%	0%

12. Standards of achievement in the lessons observed are well above the Welsh Assembly Government's 2010 target that says the quality of learning should be 'grade 3 or better in 98 per cent of classes'.
13. The overall quality of provision for children in the Foundation Phase Pilot is good. It meets children's needs and they are making good progress. From below average ability on entry, they make good progress particularly in their personal and social and creative skills. Pupils with additional learning needs including the more able make very good progress relative to their abilities.
14. Children in the Foundation Phase Pilot classes use their key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing well. They also use their mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills very competently for a variety of purposes.
15. Throughout the school pupils are developing their bilingual skills confidently and they have a really good awareness of the culture and heritage of Wales through *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*. Although pupils in key stage 2 classes are developing their key and basic skills well overall, their communication, mathematical and problem solving skills have some shortcomings.
16. Pupils' ability when they start full-time education is below the local authority average. There is also a higher than average number of pupils on the SEN register. There is no comparative data available for key stage 1 pupils in 2007 because of the school's involvement in the Foundation Phase Pilot. Children involved in the Foundation Phase Pilot have been disapplied from the national curriculum and also its assessment. However, the school has undertaken formal assessments when children reach the end of the Foundation Phase and nearly all achieve in line with expectations.
17. All official results at key stage 2, include those for children from the Specialist Resource Base who on average make up approximately four per cent of the year group. Over the last two years, pupils' end of key stage 2 statutory assessment results in English, and science have been above local and similar to national averages. Mathematics results have improved but they remain below the averages.

18. There is a large proportion of boys in the school and despite the strategies recently put in place, girls continue to do better than boys in English and science. Over the past few years, mathematics has been the poorest performing subject. When compared with similar schools (those with similar numbers of pupils entitled to receive free school meals), results between 2005 and 2007 were in the lower 50 per cent.
19. Pupils' awareness of how well they are doing has good features that outweigh shortcomings. In some classes, pupils are given targets for improvement and they are aware of these but this is not consistent throughout the school. As pupils move through the school, they gradually acquire new knowledge and skills particularly in the Foundation Phase. In key stage 2 classes, pupils' progress is good overall. They make steady progress towards fulfilling their potential.
20. Attendance for the 12 months prior to the inspection was below the average All-Wales figure. Nearly all pupils arrive punctually for school and for lessons. There were three fixed short-term exclusions within the same period.
21. In the Foundation Phase, pupils show positive attitudes to school and the development of their personal, social and learning skills have outstanding features. Most pupils in key stage 2 work hard and are interested in their activities. However a very small group pupils do not show sufficient interest in learning and are reluctant to ask and answer questions or to fully engage with their work.
22. The development of pupils' independent learning skills in the Foundation Phase is a strong feature and is often outstanding. In key stage 2, pupils play an active part in the life of the school and respond well to their responsibilities. There are some shortcomings however in pupils' organisational and independent learning skills.

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

### **Grades for teaching**

23. In the 36 lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
11%	83%	6%	0%	0%

24. The quality of good teaching in the lessons observed is well above the Welsh Assembly Government's 2010 target outlined in 'Vision into Action' where 80 per cent should be grade 2 or better. The quality of good teaching observed is broadly in line with the findings of the previous inspection but there is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching.
25. Teaching in the Foundation Phase and for special needs pupils is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Where teaching is outstanding, there is a high level of challenge and interest in the tasks set and teachers intervene in a

skilful way to ensure that children work with maximum independence. In key stage 2, teachers are enthusiastic, lessons are often stimulating and most pupils are well motivated to succeed. In very few instances, lessons are over long and there is insufficient challenge in the tasks set.

26. Systems to ensure the fair, accurate and regular assessment of pupils' achievements in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are rigorous, but they are new, and their full impact has yet to be realised. Assessment in other subjects is still informal. Assessment in the Foundation Phase is unwieldy. Pupil and peer assessment has started in the core subjects but much is still to be done to fully involve pupils in understanding the purpose of assessment, and planning for improvement is still at a very early stage.
27. The school is making a very good effort to provide the best possible curricular experiences for all pupils, including those in the Specialist Resource Base. Teachers have worked very hard to update and adapt schemes of work, and the impact on the standards of children in the Foundation Phase is already being realised. The curriculum fully meets all statutory requirements and is equally accessible to all.
28. Overall, the school ensures that pupils develop a good understanding about the world of work. The breadth and quality of the curriculum, extra-curricular opportunities, business enterprise and work-related education ensures that the learning experiences reflect national priorities and lay the foundation for lifelong learning.
29. The school provides a happy, supportive, caring and safe environment for pupils to learn. In the questionnaires returned to the Inspection Team, many parents expressed satisfaction with the care and guidance provided for their children. However, a few parents were dissatisfied. The school is aware of the issues raised and is following correct procedures.
30. Pontllanfraith Primary is a very inclusive school. The quality of provision for equal opportunities is good. Good attention is given to ensuring pupils' well-being whilst in the school's care. All aspects of school life are open to pupils. The school makes very good provision for all pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes and in the Specialist Resource Base. All statutory requirements are fully met. Provision is well organised and the quality of additional support provided has some outstanding features.

### **Leadership and management**

31. Pontllanfraith Primary School has a bilingual motto, 'Dysgu Gorau Dysgu Byw, Learning Together Learning for Life' which is proudly displayed around the school and promotes equality for all. The newly appointed head and deputy head teacher, are committed to ensuring that the school will continue to thrive. They have instigated new procedures that have improved provision in less than 12 months.

32. Since their appointment, the head and deputy head teacher have worked hard to establish a shared vision and common purpose amongst staff and pupils. Leaders and managers have worked hard to establish the Foundation Phase Pilot successfully in the school.
33. Even though several members of the governing body have been appointed recently and the current chair and vice-chair were appointed last term, the governors know the school and its community well and have involved themselves in setting a whole school ethos. Overall, the governors monitor the curriculum in a proactive manner and provide the necessary resources for its delivery. The governing body meets all statutory requirements.
34. The process of self-evaluation is currently being developed and refined in the school and is an established target in the School Development Plan. The head teacher and senior managers are beginning to use information effectively to bring about improvements. The links between the processes of self-evaluation and planning for improvement are thorough and aim to support the raising of standards.
35. Subject leaders are involved in the monitoring process. They undertake some evaluations of subject areas and other aspects, for example provision in the Specialist Resource Base. A timetable has recently been established that clearly outlines subject monitoring for the next two years. Currently the role of the subject specialist is under developed but the school has identified this and is working to improve the situation.
36. The school makes efficient use of all its resources and reviews them regularly to ensure value for money. The head teacher and governors work well together to ensure that resources are well matched to identified priorities. The school makes very good use of all its resources to achieve the best possible outcomes for its pupils.

## Recommendations

37. In order, to further develop the good progress made in recent months, the school should:
- R1 improve standards in Welsh second language at key stage 2;
  - R2 improve standards in mathematics at key stage 2; \*\*\*\*
  - R3 improve assessment, recording and reporting procedures; \*\*\*\*
  - R4 establish more opportunities for pupils' independent learning at key stage 2;
  - R5 continue to develop the role of the subject leader as part of the self-evaluation process. \*\*\*\*

Those recommendations marked \*\*\*\* have already been identified by the school as requiring further development.

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

38. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
39. Standards of achievement are good in Pontllanfraith Primary School. Overall, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background, pupils, particularly those in the Foundation Phase Pilot classes and those in the Specialist Resource Base, make good and sometimes outstanding progress and they achieve the targets they are set.
40. Standards in the areas of learning in Foundation Phase Pilot classes and subjects in key stage 2 are as follows:

#### Foundation Phase Pilot classes

Area of Learning	Grade
Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity	Grade 1
Language, Literacy and Communication Skills	Grade 2
Mathematical Development	Grade 2
Bilingualism	Grade 2
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Grade 2
Physical Development	Grade 2
Creative Development	Grade 1

#### Subjects inspected at key stage 2

Subject	Grade
Welsh Second Language	Grade 3
Mathematics	Grade 3
Music	Grade 2
Religious Education	Grade 2

41. During the inspection, standards achieved by pupils in the lessons observed are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	79%	18%	0%	0%

42. Standards of achievement in the lessons observed are well above the Welsh Assembly Government's 2010 target outlined in 'Vision into Action' where the quality of learning should be 'grade 3 or better in 98 per cent of classes'.

43. The overall quality of provision for children in the Foundation Phase Pilot is good. It meets children's needs and they are making good progress. The good quality interaction between children and adults ensure that children enjoy their learning and they persevere and work hard at their tasks. From below average ability on entry, they make good progress particularly in their personal and social and creative skills.
44. Pupils with additional learning needs, including those with SEN and those with potential behavioural problems, make very good progress relative to their abilities. As a result of the very good quality support they are given, the majority of SEN pupils achieve the individual targets they are set. More able pupils make similar progress to their peers.
45. Children in the Foundation Phase Pilot classes use their key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing well. For example they use their reading skills to follow instructions and they speak and listen to each other sensibly when they are engaged in their stimulating outdoor activities. They also use their mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills very competently for a variety of purposes.
46. Throughout the Foundation Phase, children are developing their bilingual skills confidently and they have a really good awareness of the culture and heritage of Wales through *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*. Children develop some outstanding features in their problem solving and their creative skills. They also work extremely well with each other when engaged in their activities both indoors and outside.
47. Although pupils in key stage 2 classes are developing their key and basic skills well overall, their communication, mathematical and problem solving skills have some shortcomings. Pupils work together effectively in pairs and small groups and they respond appropriately on whole school occasions such as assemblies.
48. Pupils' ability when they start full-time education is below the local authority average. There is also a higher than average number of pupils on the SEN register. These factors impact on the standards pupils achieve especially at the end of key stage 2. Since the appointment of the new head teacher and the deputy head teacher, systems have been put in place to track pupils' progress more carefully and evidence indicates that the vast majority of pupils are now beginning to achieve and exceed the targets they are set.
49. There is no comparative data available for key stage 1 pupils in 2007 because of the school's involvement in the Foundation Phase pilot. Children involved in the Foundation Phase Pilot have been disapplied from the national curriculum and also its assessment. However, the school has undertaken formal assessments when children reach the end of the Foundation Phase using levels indicated in Foundation Phase outcomes. Nearly all children achieve in line with expectations.

50. All official results at key stage 2, include those for pupils from the Specialist Resource Base who on average make up approximately four per cent of the year group. Over the last two years, pupils' end of key stage 2 statutory assessment results in English, and science have been above local and similar to national averages.
51. In 2007, there was a data entry error and official results for mathematics were incorrect. These have since been ratified by the LEA and mathematics results have improved but they still remain below the local and national averages. However, these results had been predicted due to the ability of the year group. Targets set for future years indicate that standards will improve.
52. There is a large proportion of boys in the school and despite the strategies recently put in place, girls continue to do better than boys in English and science but, the gap is reducing. However, boys do better in mathematics. Over the past few years, mathematics has been the poorest performing subject but the school has recently introduced several new strategies to bring about improvement and these are beginning to have some success.
53. When compared with similar schools (those with similar numbers of pupils entitled to receive free school meals), results between 2005 and 2007 were in the lower 50 per cent. In 2007, the corrected results for mainstream pupils place the school in the lower 50 per cent in English and science and just in the lowest 25 per cent in mathematics.
54. As pupils move through the school, they gradually acquire new knowledge and skills particularly in the Foundation Phase where approaches to teaching and learning have been adapted to suit the changing needs of the curriculum and the pupils. In key stage 2 classes, pupils' progress is good overall. They make steady progress towards fulfilling their potential and are ready to move on to the next stage of their learning.
55. Pupils' awareness of how well they are doing has good features that outweigh shortcomings. In some classes, pupils are given targets for improvement and they are aware of these but this is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils are usually clear about the learning objectives of lessons but only occasionally do they evaluate whether they have achieved them.
56. In the Foundation Phase, pupils show positive attitudes to school and are interested and involved in their activities. These children take part in their learning tasks with great enthusiasm and join in readily with all that is provided for them. Their ability to concentrate and willingness to engage with their learning is consistently good and often outstanding.
57. Most pupils in key stage 2 work hard and show very good attitudes to learning. They are interested in their work and sustain concentration extremely well. Despite the efforts of the school, a very small group pupils however do not show sufficient interest in learning and are reluctant to ask and answer questions or to fully engage with their work.

58. Throughout the school, pupils generally behave well and show courtesy to each other and to teaching and support staff. In the Foundation Phase, behaviour is a strength and often outstanding but on some occasions, a very small number of pupils in key stage 2 show a lack of self discipline and need to be reminded of the school rules and behaviour code.
59. Attendance for the 12 months prior to the inspection was below the target figure of 95 per cent set by Welsh Assembly Government and below the average for Caerphilly schools and the All Wales figure. Working together, the school and the Education Welfare Officer, have put in place strategies to improve the punctuality and attendance of pupils, with the result that attendance for the whole school for this present term has improved and currently stands at 92.6 per cent. There were three fixed short-term exclusions within the same period. Nearly all pupils arrive punctually for school and for lessons.
60. The development of pupils' independent learning skills in the Foundation Phase is a strong feature and is often outstanding. These children make decisions and solve problems taking pride in their independence, they co-operate with each other well and are acquiring skills which will enable them to improve their own learning.
61. In key stage 2, pupils play an active part in the life of the school and respond well to their responsibilities such as prefects or monitors. They assist younger children or less able pupils well at break times and many show mature attitudes. There are some shortcomings however in pupils' organisational and independent learning skills.
62. Most pupils make good progress in developing their personal, social and moral skills and show respect, care and concern for others. In the Foundation Phase this is a strength and often outstanding. Throughout the school, the positive relationships between all staff and pupils, good quality assemblies and wide range of extra-curricular provision enable pupils to become confident members of the school community.
63. Pupils take part in many community activities but their knowledge and understanding of the world of work is at an early stage and needs further development. Pupils show good understanding of equal opportunity issues and are aware of the need to treat everyone fairly without discrimination. Most pupils show a positive awareness of the diversity of beliefs and cultures within society.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

64. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report. Although there are still some shortcomings in assessment procedures, the quality of teaching and training meets the needs of learners well and has no important shortcomings.

65. In the 36 lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
11%	83%	6%	0%	0%

66. These figures exceed the proportions of good quality teaching outlined in the Chief Inspector's Annual Report 2005 – 06, where the quality of teaching was good or better (grade 1 or 2) in 70 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed is well above the Welsh Assembly Government's 2010 target outlined in 'Vision into Action' where 80 per cent should be grade 2 or better. The quality of good teaching observed is broadly in line with the findings of the previous inspection but there is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching.

67. Teaching in the Foundation Phase and of Special Needs pupils is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Where teaching is outstanding, there is a high level of challenge and interest in the tasks set and teachers intervene in a skilful way to ensure that children work with maximum independence.

68. In key stage 2, teachers are enthusiastic, lessons are often stimulating and most pupils are well motivated to succeed. In a very few instances, lessons are over long and there is insufficient challenge in the tasks set.

69. Throughout the school, relationships between staff and pupils are very good and all staff manage pupils well within a purposeful working atmosphere, intervening sensitively to provide support. Teachers ensure that all pupils, particularly those with SEN are treated equally and are fully involved in lesson activities. Staff promote equality of opportunity for all. They actively address issues of gender, race and disability.

70. Staff have good subject knowledge, improved through regular in-service training, and have a clear understanding of the use of a range of appropriate teaching strategies and techniques. In the Foundation Phase, staff have a very good and sometimes outstanding understanding of how children learn through practical experiences and they enable the children to learn through well structured play activities.

71. Teachers plan thoroughly and have clear objectives for each lesson which take account of the needs of individual pupils including those with SEN and those who are more able. On some occasions however, activities for the more able are additional to the lesson and pupils do not have sufficient time to carry them out. All teachers use interactive whiteboards confidently to introduce lessons, to enhance skills and to motivate pupils. Homework is well planned to complement work carried out in class and procedures are well organised.
72. Support staff are deployed well and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. They plan alongside teachers, attend regular training and are knowledgeable and effective in supporting pupils.
73. Teachers develop pupils' bilingual skills systematically and the use of incidental Welsh is well established and a strong feature of the school. Teaching and support staff take every opportunity to speak to pupils in Welsh and to encourage correct responses.
74. Systems to ensure the fair, accurate and regular assessment of pupils' achievements in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are rigorous, but they are new, and their full impact has yet to be realised. Teachers have a clear vision and know where they want to go but acknowledge that new procedures have yet to be fully evaluated. They also acknowledge that assessment in other subjects is still informal and does not allow teachers to properly identify pupils' standards.
75. Systems already introduced are beginning to impact on standards. Careful analysis of data is helping to track progress and set new targets. In key stage 2, pupils are 'set' in groups for mathematics according to their learning ability and this is reviewed at regular intervals. Differentiation based on first hand evidence is included in teachers' planning and in detailed individual education plans for pupils with additional learning needs. The school's new tracking systems are accurately identifying pupils in need of additional support and able and talented pupils.
76. There are lots of new and exciting assessment initiatives in the Foundation Phase, using guidance provided for the pilot, but so far, teachers have found these to be unwieldy and often unrealistic. Teachers are sure, however, that they now know their children's standards well. Changes are still being trialled to make the systems more manageable.
77. Phase moderation meetings are organised regularly to assist staff to judge standards consistently. LEA advisors have been involved and information available shows that teachers' judgements are accurate.
78. Marking of pupils' work is seen as having an important role in teacher assessment. However, the standards of marking are inconsistent from class to class. Marking is very positive and carried out regularly. Constructive comments are written in pupils' books. Marking does not always, however, show pupils where and how they need to improve their work.

79. Pupil and peer assessment has started in the core subjects but much is still to be done to fully involve pupils in understanding the purpose of assessment, and planning for improvement is still at a very early stage.
80. Reports to parents provide clear information on the levels attained by their children. They are very detailed on what pupils know and can do. Often, but not always, they explain how and where pupils can improve their work. Parents are invited to school regularly to discuss their children's progress.

**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**

81. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
82. The school is making a very good effort to provide the best possible curricular experiences for all pupils right through the school, including pupils in the Specialist Resource Base. Teachers have worked very hard to update and adapt schemes of work, and the impact on the standards of children in the Foundation Phase is already being realised.
83. The overall quality of provision for children in the Foundation Phase Pilot is good. It meets children's needs and covers each area of learning in a progressive manner, closely following the principles of the Foundation Phase as stated in the Welsh Assembly Government's draft guidelines. Teachers and support staff in this part of the school channel much time and energy into ensuring that the curriculum is not only skill based, broad, balanced and relevant, but exciting and interesting to motivate children well.
84. In key stage 2 the school strives hard to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs, abilities and aspirations of all groups. The timetable provides appropriate time allocation for each curriculum area and meets all statutory requirements. Learners at all levels of ability, social and ethnic backgrounds and gender have equal access to the curriculum – including pupils with severe disabilities.
85. In the Specialist Resource Base classes, teachers conscientiously and competently modify the curriculum by breaking it down into small achievable steps, suitable for the pupils in their care. This ensures equality of access to the whole curriculum, except for Welsh second language, from which these pupils are disapplied.
86. Foundation Phase teachers are in the process of developing an exciting new approach to their planning by linking schemes together in a purposeful way and much has already been done. In key stage 2, where certain subjects are taught as a two-year rolling programme, a thematic approach was used very

effectively as a transition project from the Foundation Phase in the first half of the autumn term with all pupils.

87. Pupils' key and basic skills are developed effectively. Teachers in key stage 2 carefully plan the key skills that they wish to promote in each subject. Key skills are an integral part of Foundation Phase planning.
88. Teachers seek to develop an enriched curriculum through a wide range of activities, both within and outside the school day. They work with support staff to run a wide variety of creative and sporting clubs, including a notable gardening club. French language club is offered to older pupils and a considerable number of pupils from year 2 onwards benefit from instrumental tuition. Many pupils attend the free Breakfast Club and enjoy a healthy breakfast.
89. Pupils participate in a number of out of school cultural and other visits, including residential visits, which enhance their learning. The school also hosts a great variety of visitors to enrich the curriculum, such as storytellers, fire and police services, cycling proficiency and instrumentalists.
90. The promotion of pupils' personal and social skills is good throughout the school, although systems are new and have yet to fully impact on the standards that pupils in key stage 2 are achieving in their personal and social development. In particular, the prefect system with a head boy and girl is seen as a major strength. Older pupils are actively involved in decision-making through the School and Eco councils and pupils know that their views are taken seriously and acted on.
91. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own and others' actions on occasions such as assembly and circle time, where they gather for discussion. They are taught the nature of consequences of bullying, racism, teasing and other aggressive behaviour, and how to resolve differences, and look for alternative reactions and actions. This helps them to become responsible and mature and to behave well overall.
92. The school has good arrangements to ensure that pupils appreciate their Welsh identity through visits, celebrations, folk dancing club and the study of Welsh artists. They are given good opportunities to study a range of other cultures and traditions, helping them to become good global citizens. Very effective arrangements are in place to promote learners' bilingual skills.
93. The school is developing productive partnerships with parents and a range of other providers. The school has an active PIP [Parents in Partnership] group, which organises functions for the pupils and the community. Funds raised recently have been used to help the development of the gardening club.
94. Parents are encouraged to join in and support many parts of school life. Their views have been sought through questionnaires. They are kept well informed by letters, planners, consultation visits and annual reports. Most parents

respond well and support their children in home school tasks. A small group of volunteers including parents and governors helps with reading.

95. Links with other schools in the area are very strong with a well thought out curricular link between year 6 pupils and the local comprehensive school. Groups of year 6 pupils also undertake Critical Thinking events with cluster schools. The school works in partnership with local and other colleges of higher education and provides supportive work placements for students.
96. Overall, the school ensures that learning experiences respond well to the needs of employers and the wider community.
97. The provision for work related education is developing and has good features that outweigh shortcomings. The school is developing links with the Education Business Partnership and Careers Wales. A range of other businesses, including engineering companies, has supported the school. Pupils have benefited from visits by parents and grandparents who talk about their work. Members of staff have benefited from placements at the National Museum of Wales at Caerleon.
98. Pupils from the school visit local shops and cafes and have recently visited Atlantic College to see the lifeboat and learn about the work undertaken by its crew. Pupils have since raised money in support of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Year 6 pupils are also involved in an industry day transition project at Oakdale Comprehensive School.
99. Irrespective of their abilities and backgrounds, pupils all enjoy equality of access to the curriculum and this extends through to sports such as football, hockey and rugby and extra curricular activities including gardening and folk dancing. All pupils are encouraged to achieve success and to participate fully in the life of the school.
100. Issues around stereotyping are regularly challenged by pupils 'dressing up' and the use of role-play. Staff also 'dress up' to accentuate pupils' learning and challenge stereotyping, for example, female teachers dressing up as pirates or as coal miners.
101. The school promotes sustainable development and global citizenship across the curriculum well. Pupils recycle paper, yellow pages, mobile phones, printer cartridges plastic bottles and cans. There are composting bins for fruit skins with the resulting compost being used on the school garden. There is an active Eco-Committee and the school has achieved the Bronze Award and is now working towards the Silver Award.
102. Following the establishment of the school garden pupils, together with members of staff and the caretaker have formed a gardening club. This year fruit trees have been planted with the intention that the fruit can be sold either in the fruit tuck shop or at events at the school.

103. Global Citizenship is addressed appropriately through science and geography lessons but it is an area recognised by the school for further development.
104. Pupils' entrepreneurial skills are beginning to develop. For example, the gardening club is formally established with pupils having to apply for positions. Pupils operate the fruit and milk tuck shop at the school and the School Council selects play equipment to be purchased for use on the yard at break times.
105. The School Council, Eco-Committee and the 'prefect' system are effective means of providing pupils with real problems to solve. Pupils take their roles seriously and are very proud of their positions. The school recognises that there is a need to further develop pupils' entrepreneurial and decision-making skills.
106. The breadth and quality of the curriculum, extra-curricular opportunities, business enterprise and work-related education ensure that the learning experiences reflect national priorities and lay the foundation for lifelong learning especially in Foundation Phase classes.

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

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

107. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
108. The school provides a happy, supportive, caring and safe environment for pupils to learn.
109. Within the school there is a well-structured pastoral system and pupils trust teachers to deal with any concerns quickly and effectively and are happy with their school. Good links exist with the Education Welfare Officer, Educational Psychologist, Social Services and other support services.
110. In the questionnaires returned to the Inspection Team, many parents expressed satisfaction with the care and guidance provided for their children. However, a few parents were dissatisfied. The school is aware of the issues raised and is following correct procedures. The school conducts its own questionnaires with the results being fed into the School Development Plan. As an example, the enrichment programme has been extended and parents have been informed.
111. An open door policy operates at the school and parents are encouraged to meet with the head teacher and teachers to discuss any issues and to act jointly upon them in order to minimise any areas of concern. School planners have been introduced into key stage 2 to ensure good communication links between the school, pupils and parents. Parents are invited into school for

many events such as termly parents' evenings, leavers' assemblies and also to open days.

112. Induction arrangements for new pupils are well established and effective. Year 6 pupils support younger ones and those from the Specialist Resource Base at play and dinner times. Transition to the local high school is comprehensive and well structured with visits starting in year 5.
113. Effective support is provided at the school through its personal and social education programmes, which are taught across the curriculum. The school is well supported by a range of visits from professionals who provide positive support for the pupils. The School Council represents the views and concerns of pupils. It works effectively as a group and suggestions have already impacted on the life of the school. There are 'Problem Boxes' in classes that are used as additional support for pupils.
114. Staff carefully monitor pupils' attendance, punctuality, behaviour and performance. There is good liaison with the Education Welfare Officer and other agencies should the non-attendance, punctuality or behaviour of a pupil give rise to concern.
115. School rules are displayed around the school and there is an effective Rewards and Sanctions Policy known to pupils, staff, parents and carers. All school staff are trained on anti bullying procedures.
116. There are good policies and appropriate procedures in place to ensure the healthy development, safety and well being of pupils. There is an appropriate Health and Safety Policy. Regular risk assessments are undertaken on activities both in school and on outside visits. The caretaker makes daily physical inspections of the premises and grounds.
117. The school has a Food and Fitness policy and has been awarded the Healthy Schools Award. There is a breakfast club, a fruit and milk tuck shop and the school grounds are being developed to encourage pupils to be more active during break times.
118. The head teacher is the designated Child Protection Officer with a named governor having responsibility for child protection. The school has a detailed Child Protection Policy, which is understood by staff. All necessary checks are undertaken for those who come into contact with pupils.
119. Pontllanfraith Primary is a very inclusive school. The quality of provision for equal opportunities is good. All aspects of school life are open to all pupils. Policies for curriculum access, equal opportunities, SEN and Inclusion are fully implemented.
120. The small number of pupils from an ethnic minority, and 'looked after' pupils are treated with respect and courtesy by all. They are extremely well supported within the school system and this is an outstanding feature.

121. The school actively celebrates similarities and differences in all aspects of its' daily life. This helps to promote good race relations throughout the school and enables pupils to recognise and respect diversity and to understand what living as part of a multi-cultural society means. It does this well.
122. A comprehensive plan to help secure equal treatment for disabled learners is in place and many reasonable adjustments have already been made within the school to ensure that these pupils are not at a disadvantage.
123. The school rightly considers bullying and all forms of oppressive behaviour to be unacceptable and has comprehensive measures in place to eradicate them. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are taught to deal with their emotions through individual counselling. The school is having some success in this aspect.
124. There is very good provision for all pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes. All statutory requirements are fully met. Provision is well managed by the special needs co-ordinator [SENCo]. She has developed her role well in the time allocated to her and is very organised and knowledgeable about the needs of all pupils in her care.
125. SEN staff work as an effective team, successfully diagnosing difficulties at an early stage and being proactive in intervening where necessary. Pupils' needs are meticulously assessed and monitored and the views of outside professionals are sought and used. Evidence shows that even when pupils are able to move down or off the register, their needs are still closely monitored to ensure that they do not regress. All pupils are well supported to try to achieve their full potential.
126. The school is very effective in diagnosing the needs of less able pupils who may not be identified on the SEN register, and intervening to ensure that their learning is given a boost. These pupils are eager to describe their achievements in 'Catch-Up' sessions and have a very good idea of where their strengths and weaknesses lie, showing great pride in the progress they have made. This is an outstanding feature.
127. Good support is provided for learners whose behaviour impedes their own progress and that of others. New systems are in place and developing well. However, these systems have yet to fully impact on the behaviour of some of the older pupils in the school. It is to the credit of the school however, that through its close links with the LEA behaviour support services, it has been successful in integrating pupils with challenging behaviour.

### **Specialist Resource Base**

128. Arrangements for supporting pupils in the two classes for autistic spectrum disorders are equally good. The co-ordinator for this resource manages provision exceptionally well. Both teachers are very experienced and well qualified. Their planning is very detailed and thorough for each pupil and very well matched to need. Tasks are interesting and fun because staff have spent

much time preparing and making suitable resources, so that learning targets are approached in a fun way.

129. All adults in the resource base give enormous commitment, energy and care to their roles. They know and manage the pupils well and interact very effectively with them in lessons. They show great pride when pupils make progress and achieve their targets. Well-planned systems help to keep staff informed and in touch, particularly when challenging behaviour situations occur. Outstanding features are evident in the very good teamwork, high quality training, and commitment of all staff in the resource base classes.

## Leadership and management

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

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

130. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. In the judgement of the inspection team, the new senior management team has already made a significant positive impact on provision in the school.
131. Pontllanfraith Primary School has a bilingual motto, 'Dysgu Gorau Dysgu Byw, Learning Together Learning for Life' which is proudly displayed around the school and in all documentation. There is a clear set of aims that promotes equality for all and is reflected in practice especially in the Foundation Phase.
132. The newly appointed head and deputy head teacher, and also the governors are committed to ensuring that the school will continue to thrive. They have instigated several new procedures and structures that have the potential to bring about continued improvement. Many initiatives have already improved provision in less than 12 months such as improvements in accommodation and curricular planning and also pupils' bilingual skills.
133. Since their appointment, the head and deputy head teacher have worked hard to establish a shared vision and common purpose amongst staff and pupils. They have created an atmosphere of openness and collaboration in which governors and staff feel an optimism and sense of purpose. All members of staff and governors are now fully aware of the school's principles and priorities. As a result, a sense of team spirit exists among the staff.
134. Leaders and managers have worked hard to establish the Foundation Phase Pilot successfully in the school. The head teacher and the Foundation Phase team leader have established a suitable framework that gives clear direction to all members of staff involved. They all work closely together and have ensured the successful implementation of the pilot.
135. Policy documents are appropriate. Subject specialists have clear but developing responsibilities that they undertake conscientiously. The school takes good account of local and national priorities. For example, it has recently worked hard to establish the concept of bilingualism and works closely with the local secondary school on a transition project. It is currently involved in piloting a LEA assessment tracking system.
136. All pupils are now given challenging but realistic targets for their attainment at the end of key stage 2 based on their individual capabilities. Other goals for development are clearly identified in the 'School Development Plan' and are appropriate to the needs of the school such as, raising standards in literacy and numeracy. The school development planning process is clear to all involved including governors.

137. Staff development has had a positive impact on individual teachers, members of the support staff and mid-day supervisors, for example, in subjects such as early years and behaviour management. Training opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants are provided in a variety of ways including school-based training, staff meetings and attendance at externally organised courses. Non-teaching staff have benefited from the opportunity of staff development interviews with Careers Wales.
138. There are proper procedures in place to review and monitor the performance of teachers and to identify training needs. Members of the senior management team undertake staff appraisals. Newly qualified teachers are supported well by their assigned mentor.
139. Even though several members of the governing body have been appointed recently and the current chair and vice-chair were appointed last term, the governors know the school and its community well and have involved themselves in setting a whole school ethos. The chair of governors is clear about his vision for the governing body and works hard to achieve this. The governing body is supportive of the school but challenges suggestions and ideas appropriately. Along with the senior management team, the governors are ensuring that the school is now beginning to run smoothly.
140. Members of the governing body take a keen interest in the progress and welfare of the pupils. They have a secure understanding of their responsibilities and are kept well informed by the head teacher. Overall, the governors monitor the curriculum in a proactive manner and provide the necessary resources for its delivery. With the help of the head teacher they monitor progress regularly and help to determine targets for improvement. They meet frequently and their decisions are carefully recorded. The governing body meets all statutory requirements.

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

**Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

141. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
142. The process of self-evaluation is currently being developed and refined in the school and is an established target in the School Development Plan. The head teacher and senior managers are using information effectively to bring about improvements. The links between the processes of self-evaluation and planning for improvement in the School Development Plan are thorough and aim to support the raising of standards.
143. Subject leaders are beginning to become involved in the monitoring process. They undertake some evaluations of subject areas and other aspects, for example, provision in the Specialist Resource Base. A timetable has recently

been established that clearly outlines subject monitoring for the next two years. Currently the role of the subject specialist is under developed but the school has identified this and is working to improve the situation.

144. Senior managers have monitored teaching but most subject leaders do not evaluate teaching standards. However, they do identify areas for improvement in the long term in individual subjects through monitoring books and planning for example. Evidence of their role in identifying good practice in teaching is not established.
145. The school is beginning to use performance data effectively to inform judgements and to evaluate trends over time. However, the system is new and not yet fully operational. 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.
146. The school seeks the views of pupils, parents, staff, the governing body, the LEA and the wider community to inform its self-evaluation. This is good practice. The consultation process provides clear evidence from a range of stakeholders and agencies that have an interest in the school.
147. The school council and eco-committee provide an opportunity for pupils' views to be heard constructively. Questionnaires are sent to parents as part of the school's self-evaluation process. The school has made good efforts to address any concerns. The governing body is involved in the self-evaluation process and under the guidance of the head teacher is pro-active in further developing and refining self-evaluation procedures.
148. All staff work as an effective team. Dialogue is particularly good within the Foundation Phase. The Foundation Phase and key stage 2 co-operate effectively. Teaching assistants are aware that they have a part in the school's self-evaluation process and are beginning to be asked for their views.
149. The quality of the self-evaluation report produced by the school prior to the inspection is detailed and targets areas for development. It provides a clear overview of the school's position. It also identifies in detail those areas and aspects that are strengths or those that require further attention.
150. The school has adequate resources and ensures that their purchase is prioritised according to need. It is effective in its use of additional funding and uses staff and resources effectively to fulfil the requirements of grant and funding regulations.
151. The school's priorities for improvement, inform the School Development Plan and have appropriate time scales and costs noted. For example, the actions of the school in establishing outdoor classroom areas have resulted in measurable improvements in curricular provision for younger children.
152. The school makes efforts to obtain measures to evaluate its performance. It is now using national and local data to target areas that have shortcomings and

works with the LEA to allocate resources and expertise to raise standards. Although good progress has been made overall since the last inspection, one key issue has not been fully addressed, namely the role of the subject leader. Progress is obvious in other aspects such as accommodation for the Specialist Resource Base and provision for the under-fives.

153. The judgements of the inspection agree with the school's self-evaluation in four of the seven key questions. The areas for development recommended by the inspection team are similar to those identified by the school, indicating a good awareness of strengths and shortcomings.

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

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

154. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation as the school graded this key question as grade 3. However, the inspection team found that there are good features with no important shortcomings in the way in which staffing and resources are managed.
155. There are sufficient, well qualified teachers and support staff to meet the needs of all pupils and to enable the curriculum to be taught effectively across the school. All members of staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and update their skills regularly by attending a wide range of in-service training. Some members of staff also regularly provide training for the LEA.
156. Arrangements for providing teachers with statutory planning, preparation and assessment time are well organised and cover is provided by qualified teachers. Governors have instigated a suitable framework for workforce remodelling.
157. Support staff throughout the school work effectively with teachers to plan pupils' work and on some occasions to record progress. They know the pupils well and provide good quality support which has clear benefits for pupils. The Foundation Phase benefits from an increased number of teaching assistants and this additional provision is effective in promoting a range of opportunities for learning through first hand experiences and well structured activities.
158. The school administrative staff make a positive contribution to the smooth running of the school and ancillary staff including the caretaker, midday supervisors, cleaners and canteen staff are all valued for their conscientious approach to their various roles within the school community.
159. Pupils have access to a wide range of good quality resources which are used effectively to promote learning. The ICT suite has been recently upgraded and its use is already beginning to have an impact on standards while the use of interactive whiteboards in each classroom is effective in supporting learning across the curriculum. The school has a good range of fiction and non fiction books in both English and Welsh and also uses the Caerphilly library service

to supplement project books. Resources for the Foundation Phase, musical instruments and resources for special needs are of particularly good quality with access to a soft play area and sensory room.

160. During the past year, major building work has been undertaken in the school, new larger classrooms for the Foundation Phase and the Specialist Resource Base have been created and all now have access to outside areas. An administrative block and head teacher's office have also been installed and new toilet facilities, including a toilet and shower suitable for disabled use are now in place. Classrooms and corridor areas are clean and attractive with pupils' work prominently displayed however the building used by key stage 2 pupils is in need of refurbishment in order to bring it up to the standard of the rest of the school.
161. The outside environment provides very good opportunities for learning with a large grassed area behind that includes a log circle, sensory garden, allotments and an enclosed pond. The garden and pond have both won awards in Caerphilly in Bloom and Wildlife Garden competitions. The playground at the front of the school is in a poor condition and due to the relatively steep slope, is unsuitable for games.
162. The school makes efficient use of all its resources and reviews them regularly to ensure value for money. The head teacher and governors work well together to ensure that resources are well matched to priorities set out in the School Development Plan and that decisions are always linked to the needs of the school. The school holds reasonable contingencies to allow for unforeseen circumstances and makes very good use of its resources to achieve the best possible outcomes for all its pupils.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Foundation Phase

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

163. The overall quality of provision for children in the Foundation Phase Pilot is good. It meets children's needs and they are making good progress.

#### Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity

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

##### Outstanding features

164. Throughout the Foundation Phase, children show great confidence in working and playing independently both indoors and outside. They co-operate very well together and remain on task showing real enjoyment and becoming absorbed in their activities even when there is no direct adult supervision. Children communicate very well with adults and other children and listen exceptionally well to stories and instructions.
165. By the end of the Foundation Phase, children have a well developed understanding of differences and similarities between themselves and others and know that 'everyone is special and everyone is different'. They take part in celebrations of the Chinese New Year and talk knowledgeably about food, clothing and customs from other cultures.

##### Good features

166. Younger Foundation Phase children dress as 'Mrs Wishy Washy characters' and take part in role play with great enjoyment and concentration. Their behaviour is very good and they support each other well. Children at this age dress and undress themselves with great independence and understand the need for hygiene and hand washing routines.
167. Children at the lower end of the Foundation Phase recount how they make a fruit salad, they know the names of many fruits and understand that eating fruit helps them to be healthy.
168. Nearly all children at the upper end of the Foundation Phase know that they live in Wales and that the Welsh flag shows a dragon. Many give reasons why they like living in Wales, describe what makes them feel happy and express their feelings confidently. Many know Bible stories such as the story of Noah or Moses and retell them simply.
169. Foundation Phase children are aware of other people's feelings, understand the need for simple rules and are developing a good sense of right and wrong.

##### Shortcomings

170. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Language, literacy and communication skills**

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

#### **Good features**

171. Children at the beginning of the Foundation Phase enthusiastically interact with adults, and willingly talk about their activities. Most speak clearly and confidently, eager to try out new speaking skills such as repeating positional words. They readily engage a visitor in discussion about their favourite things in the class, and a recent visit to a farm, naming the animals they observed.
172. Towards the end of the Foundation Phase children confidently speak formally as individuals in front of the class. They are eager to talk in lessons because they are provided with so many interesting and exciting experiences that they wish to share with others. They are keen to express their own views and ideas. Most are good listeners, listening attentively to both instructions and to stories.
173. The youngest children make a good start to reading. They know all single sounds and correctly identify them in words. They handle books appropriately, and have a good try at reading labels around the room. They love stories and poetry, and are keen to join in familiar ones, having good recall of stories that they know. Many accurately predict what might happen next.
174. By the end of the Foundation Phase children are good readers, with a strong liking for both fiction and information books. They read fluently and expressively and read with genuine understanding when they read signs, notices and instructions. Their reading development is well supported by parents at home, which has a considerable impact on motivation and standards. More able children self correct when stuck on new words, and show a good understanding of characterisation and plot.
175. Children towards the end of the Foundation Phase are prolific and very enthusiastic writers and standards are generally high. The vast majority form clear, legible letters when they write independently and for a range of purposes, such as instructions, lists, menus and letters. This is because younger children engage in so many purposeful mark-making experiences, helping them to practise their early writing skills, and to control pencils and other small tools well. They show they fully understand that print carries meaning, for example, when they experiment with Chinese writing to create a menu for Chinese food.

#### **Shortcomings**

176. Although there are no important shortcomings, a small number of older children are so eager to write at length that they take insufficient care, and the presentation of their written work sometimes lacks correct punctuation and accurate letter formation.

## **Mathematical development**

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

#### **Good features**

177. Throughout the Foundation Phase, children make good progress in using mathematics in their day to day activities and use correct mathematical terminology. They develop their number skills very well and are confident in solving problems. Nearly all children count in Welsh as well as English.
178. The youngest children sequence numbers correctly and match up to six objects. More able children order shoes by size and count up to 10 objects accurately. These children are developing their understanding of the use of money and cash machines in the class cafe very well.
179. Younger children in the Foundation Phase choose a picture of their favourite animal and add it to the correct column to form a 'block graph'. They show good understanding and accurately work out the favourite and least favourite animal using comparative vocabulary such as more/less/ fewer etc.
180. Older children correctly identify numbers to 20 and the more able beyond. They match and sequence accurately and many count to 100 and read larger numbers correctly. They have a developing knowledge of two dimensional shapes and some three dimensional shapes such as cube and cone.
181. Children at this stage develop an appropriate understanding of fractions and quickly identify half and then one quarter of a Welsh cake. They carefully measure across the cake with a strip of paper and fold it in half and quarter to guide their cutting line. Outside they go on a treasure hunt to find halves and quarters of three dimensional cardboard boxes and reassemble them accurately stating whether they need 'one more quarter' or 'one half is the same as two quarters'.
182. The oldest children in the Foundation Phase discuss ways of measuring and use a click-wheel accurately to measure a grid for co-ordinates outside. They understand simple letter/number co-ordinates and use them correctly. When asked to measure distances on a pirate map, they use rulers carefully to measure in centimetres. Their problem solving skills are good. For example, when faced with measuring curves they select pipe cleaners to help them and straighten these out to measure along a ruler.

#### **Shortcomings**

183. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Bilingualism**

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

#### **Good features**

184. Children of all ages in the Foundation Phase enthusiastically join in with Welsh songs and rhymes. They are confident responding to adults using simple words and phrases. They show good levels of understanding to instructions issued in Welsh and react appropriately. Their pronunciation is generally accurate. In all classes, children are confident issuing instructions to their peers as part of their '*Helpwr Heddiw*' responsibilities.
185. The youngest children have a growing Welsh vocabulary and name colours, numbers and key words connected with their class topic. They use simple greetings often and most remember to use the 'Phrase of the Week'. Older children use short sentences and phrases and the most able answer questions correctly, confidently using the correct sentence pattern. They make very effective use of their Welsh oral language patterns when they work in the class 'Welsh Shop'.
186. As they move through the Foundation Phase, children's reading skills begin to develop steadily when they read words on labels or simple worksheets based on their oral experiences. They listen to stories in Welsh understanding the general meaning. The more able show an appropriate understanding of the text in bilingual signs in their classrooms and around the school.
187. By the end of the Foundation Phase, children begin to develop appropriate writing skills. They label items correctly and with adult support, they write short sentences and phrases when completing work sheets to reinforce their oral work.

#### **Shortcomings**

188. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

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

#### **Good features**

189. As they move through the Foundation Phase, children progressively develop their skills of enquiry. They are confident exploring, experimenting and investigating both indoors and outside. They quickly develop the ability to make comparisons through handling resources in their practical activities. By the end of the Foundation Phase, children describe in great detail what they have found out.
190. By the end of the Foundation Phase, children have a good knowledge of their locality. Through visitors to the school and visits to the local community and further afield, they begin to develop an awareness of their place in the locality.

Even the youngest children begin to develop an awareness of places that are more distant. Older children recognise key geographical features and correctly identify Wales on a map of the British Isles. Children's role-play experiences enable them to develop a good understanding of different types of workers and occupations.

191. The youngest children begin to develop a sense of time. They are aware of the days of the week and the seasons of the year. By the end of the Foundation Phase, children have a good understanding that things were different in the past, particularly in relation to their lives at home. They understand the importance of historical artefacts and the information they provide about life before their time.
192. Throughout the Foundation Phase, children gain a very good understanding of the environment through their work in the outdoor area. For example, they develop a good understanding about the life cycle of creatures such as butterflies and frogs. They have a good knowledge of the essential elements for plant growth. From an early age, children describe weather conditions in detail and older children understand some of the effects on the environment. All children in the Foundation Phase understand the need to act in a sustainable manner and that healthy eating encourages growth and development.
193. All children confidently experiment with different materials, appreciating that some can change shape by squashing, bending or twisting. They have a developing appreciation of the difference between natural and man-made materials through their work in the outdoors.

### **Shortcomings**

194. There are no important shortcomings.

### **Physical development**

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

#### **Good features**

195. Children generally develop appropriate manipulative skills. They use a wide range of equipment confidently. For example, they use scissors correctly managing to cut on a defined line. They use knives and forks properly at snack and dinnertime. The majority of children have sufficient control to use pencils and crayons successfully to include detail in their work. All children are very competent using a computer mouse. By the end of the Foundation Phase, they handle apparatus such as balls, hoops and skipping ropes with reasonable control.
196. All children in the Foundation Phase classes enjoy exploring their indoor and outdoor learning environments. They develop a good awareness of health, fitness and safety, of adventurous and physical play and control body movements well. Children are very aware of the space around them and

control their movements successfully to avoid each other, such as when they are working outside or dancing in the hall.

197. At different levels, children work safely with each other and with equipment. They have a good awareness of the effect of exercise on their bodies and understand the need to 'warm up' and 'cool down'. Children willingly help with moving apparatus and handle it properly as helping to take it out and put it away. They are confident in the outdoor environment running, jumping and landing off equipment. They show good body control and balance when moving to music.

### **Shortcomings**

198. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Creative development**

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

#### **Outstanding features**

199. Older children refine the skills using clay to create a 'furry' texture on their clay teddies. They develop their skills of rolling, twisting, pinching and joining. Finished models are of an outstanding quality.
200. The quality of older children's recorder playing is outstanding. Their singing also shows very good breathing control and pitch.
201. The quality of children's independent role-play across the Foundation Phase is outstanding because it is so purposeful, regular, and an integral part of their learning. When younger children enact the story of 'Mrs Wishy Washy' throughout the day, they link all their activities in a purposeful way, showing exceptional imaginative involvement. When older pupils engage in 'pirate' activities, they express their own ideas well and collaborate confidently with others to develop them.

#### **Good features**

202. Children work enthusiastically and competently with a very wide range of interesting tools and creative materials, such as clay, paint, beads, pasta, charcoal and chalk. They model, print, blow paint bubbles, paint and draw effectively. Displayed work shows good evidence of colour mixing, careful observation, and attention to detail.
203. Younger children, when they use rolling pins and modelling tools to create clay food, experiment with shape and form, using a descriptive language to express their ideas about texture, colour and feel.
204. When they create interesting patterns with fabric paint, on their T-shirts, in the style of Laura Ashley pupils begin to develop a good awareness of the work of significant artists of Wales, making choices and using their imagination well. When older children make dragons out of junk materials, they show

confidence in selecting the materials they want. They work independently, discussing a variety of shapes to find out which would be the most suitable for a head or body shape. When they evaluate the quality of their finished dragons they are quite clear as to which they feel looks “real”, and why.

205. Children across the Foundation Phase are confident enthusiastic music makers. They experiment readily with percussion, keeping a steady beat and rhythm as they tap, clap, shake and strike. They respond to music thoughtfully and attentively. Older children create melodic patterns in response to a stimulus, suggesting how different sounds can be organised. They sing tunefully and enthusiastically in both English and Welsh.

### **Shortcomings**

206. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Welsh second language**

### **Key stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

207. Across the key stage, most pupils display a positive and often enthusiastic attitude to learning Welsh as a second language because of the strong Welsh ethos provided by the school. By the end of the key stage pupils’ levels of understanding and pronunciation are developing reasonably well. Pupils develop more confidence using Welsh through regular use of the ‘Phrase of the Week’ and the ‘*Helpwr Heddiw*’ systems.
208. Key stage 2 pupils’ listening and speaking skills have some good features. Younger pupils have a developing range of vocabulary. Throughout the key stage, pupils respond positively to instructions and speak with developing expression. They use an appropriate range of sentence patterns and vocabulary relating, for example, to their families or their hobbies. The majority respond to teachers’ questions using complete sentences. By the end of the key stage, pupils confidently ask each other simple questions based on familiar language patterns.
209. Pupils develop their reading skills in Welsh by reading short words and phrases displayed on the interactive whiteboard with reasonable accuracy mainly understanding what they read. By the end of the key stage pupils read more extended pieces of writing. Most read their own writing mainly understanding what they have written. Older pupils make good use of dictionaries to support their understanding of Welsh and this is a really positive feature.
210. In all key stage 2 classes, pupils write at appropriate levels for a range of purposes and their work shows progression. They rely heavily on ‘writing frames’ or established patterns. By year 6, pupils begin to write to reinforce their oral skills by completing more complex written tasks using both the past and present tense.

### **Shortcomings**

211. Many pupils lack the confidence to speak Welsh independently and rely too heavily on adults to support them.
212. The majority are hesitant when reading and writing and are often uncertain about the meaning of their work.

<b>Mathematics</b>
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### **Key stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

213. Across key stage 2, pupils develop their number skills well and use correct mathematical terminology with increasing confidence.
214. Year 3 pupils know the purpose of block graphs and create and interpret them accurately. They consolidate their knowledge of addition and subtraction facts to 20 and beyond and understand the use of tally charts. Many pupils know multiplication facts for two, five and 10 and a few know corresponding division facts. Pupils are familiar with regular two and three dimensional shapes and describe some of their properties accurately.
215. During mental warm up, more able pupils in year 4 show good knowledge of place value and nearly all pupils write four and five digit numbers correctly from the spoken word. More able pupils extend their knowledge of multiplication tables and recall facts quickly many seeing the relationship between tables such as three and six. The majority of more able pupils use multiplication facts to derive corresponding division facts and work out remainders accurately. Pupils work logically to carry out an investigation into increasing remainders and explain their reasoning clearly.
216. More able pupils in year 5 have quick recall of multiplication tables and understand and use terms such as product and square root. They work accurately with fractions and successfully find one seventh of 42 or five sixths of 48. Less able pupils quickly find one quarter or one third.
217. Pupils in year 6 plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants and translate two dimensional shapes accurately. More able pupils continue to extend their recall of multiplication facts and accurately multiply three and four digit numbers by two digit numbers using a variety of methods. They successfully convert imperial to metric measures and use a conversion graph to convert inches to centimetres.
218. By the end of the key stage, more able pupils have a good understanding of the relationship between percentages, decimals and fractions. All pupils make good use of interactive white boards to consolidate their learning.

### **Shortcomings**

219. Less able pupils have very weak recollection of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts and recall is slow. For these pupils, presentation skills are poor making it difficult for them to interpret their work.
220. There is a wide gap in knowledge, skills and achievement of pupils in the upper and lower sets throughout the key stage in all aspects of mathematics.

## **Music**

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

#### **Good features**

221. Throughout key stage 2 pupils sing well in two parts and in unison, in English and in Welsh. They display good control of musical elements such as breathing, diction and dynamics. Their singing skills develop well when they sing in assembly, special events, and out in the community. They sing tunefully and with obvious enjoyment and pleasure. The choir makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning and standards.
222. Younger pupils reproduce high and low notes successfully in their own singing. They understand a wide musical vocabulary, such as ostinato, scale, and rhythm. They use tuned instruments confidently. In their own compositions they effectively combine elements such as drone and ostinato. They listen attentively to each others' music. Other pupils, create interesting patterns in their early graphic score work. They thoughtfully evaluate each others' compositions by grading them appropriately.
223. Older pupils, after listening to 'Sea Sketches, High Winds', a composition by a prominent Welsh composer, use evocative vocabulary to describe the feelings that they have about the piece. They use phrases such as 'stormy feelings' and 'crashing waves'. After listening to the music again, they create their own suitable graphic patterns and in groups, take turns to play and record their graphic scores.
224. At the end of the key stage, pupils listen to, and move rhythmically to the lyrics and melody of 'protest songs', showing some depth of understanding of why these songs are written. They easily pick out the repeated phrases and understand that these are included for emphasis and to get people's attention. When creating their own 'raps' in the same style, most join in confidently, keen to compose, using a wide range of tuned instruments.

#### **Shortcomings**

225. Although there are no important shortcomings, a small minority of pupils in each class finds it difficult to work as part of a group and this sometimes affects the quality of their music making.

## Religious education

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

#### Good features

226. Throughout the key stage, pupils develop a good knowledge of Christian beliefs, traditions and stories and are extending this knowledge to other religions. They use the many opportunities to meet with visitors, to visit places of worship and to watch or take part in role play of religious ceremonies effectively to consolidate their learning.
227. Pupils in year 3 and 4 have good understanding of the feast of the Passover. They recall facts about the flight of the Israelites from Egypt and are beginning to develop their understanding of symbolism. They sample foods from the Seder plate and know that each part of the meal has a special meaning for Jews. They show a good level of interest in finding out about other faiths.
228. Year 3 and year 4 pupils study the ten commandments and show that they understand the need for rules. They devise their own modern commandments to help them to lead happy and good lives and sensitively reflect on questions such as 'Is it always wrong to tell a lie?' They retell Bible stories such as the story of Zacchaeus and are eager to share their thoughts and feelings with the class.
229. At the upper end of key stage 2, pupils listen to the story of Rosa Parks and contribute well to a class discussion on prejudice. Through effective role play pupils develop their understanding of the issues involved and put forward sensitive views on the difficulties of standing up for what they believe is right. They show that they value the opinions and beliefs of others and are aware of ways in which people's lifestyles are affected by their beliefs.
230. Pupils in year 6 consider the story of Ann Frank and are aware that religious beliefs affect the way in which people live. They show empathy with families who helped or chose not to help Ann Frank's family and put forward thoughtful reasons why people acted in a particular way. Many pupils in year 6 show that they know what is right and wrong but also that some issues are neither but depend on personal views.

#### Shortcomings

231. There are no important shortcomings.

## School's response to the inspection


The Governing Body, Head teacher, and staff, welcome the inspection report and are very pleased with its findings.

Governors were pleased to note that the inspection team identified the following:

- Pontllanfraith Primary is a good school.
- Standards of achievement are good.
- The school provides a happy supportive caring and safe environment for the pupils to learn.
- Pontllanfraith Primary is a very inclusive school.
- Throughout the school relationships between staff and pupil are very good.

A copy of the school's action plan in response to the inspectors' recommendation will be sent to all parents. The Governor's Annual Report to Parents will note progress we are making on the inspectors' recommendations.

The school would like to thank the inspection team for the professional and courteous way in which they undertook the inspection.



## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Pontllanfraith Primary School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3 – 11 years
Address of school	Penmaen Road, Pontllanfraith Blackwood
Postcode	NP12 2DN
Telephone number	01495 222128

Head teacher	Mrs M S Shankland
Date of appointment	April 1 2007
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr G Symons
Registered inspector	Margaret E Morgan
Dates of inspection	February 25 – 28 2008

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	19.5	41	28	47	32	40	41	48	296.5

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	15	4	16

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	20:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	6.5:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	2:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	26.5
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.2:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Spring 2007	85.9	87.2	91.3
Summer 2007	85.0	89.3	90.8
Autumn 2007	85.5	88.2	93.4

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	22%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	3 (temporary)

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum Assessment Results

#### End of key stage 1:

The school is a pilot for implementing the Foundation Phase for the Welsh Assembly Government and therefore this key stage is disappplied from the National Curriculum. No comparative data is available.

### National Curriculum Assessment Results

#### End of key stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2007							Number of pupils in Y6		46		
Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	2	2	4	13	61	17
		National	0	0	1	0	1	4	16	48	30
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	2	2	4	20	50	22
		National	0	0	1	0	1	3	14	48	33
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	2	2	0	11	50	35
		National	0	0	1	0	0	2	11	52	34

(N.B. Mathematics figures have been ratified by the LEA. The original figures submitted were incorrect.)

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	67.4	In the school	N/A
In Wales	74.0	In Wales	N/A

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

## Appendix 4

### **Evidence base of the inspection**

Four inspectors spent a total of 12 inspector days in the school. A team meeting was held prior to the inspection.

There was a Nominee from the school who was the head teacher.

Inspectors visited:

- 36 lessons or part lessons.
- All classes.
- Acts of collective worship.
- A range of extra-curricular activities.
- Met with head boy and head girl.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- Staff, governors and parents before the inspection began.
- Senior managers, teachers, other members of staff and groups of pupils during the inspection.
- Chair and Vice Chair of Governors, Education Welfare Officer, representatives of LEA and the local advisory service during the inspection.

The team also considered:

- The school's self evaluation report.
- 41 responses to the parents'/carers' questionnaire.
- A comprehensive range of documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection.
- A range of pupils' work.

The inspection team also held post inspection meetings with the head teacher, staff and governors.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Margaret Morgan Reporting Inspector	Context, Summary, Recommendations, Appendices Contributions to Key Questions 1, 5 and 6 Foundation Phase (Language, literacy and communication, Bilingualism, Knowledge and understanding of the world, Physical development) and Welsh second language
Reg Cawthorne Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, and 4
Kay Andrews Team Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 2, 3 and 4 Foundation Phase (Creative Development) and Music
Sue Parsons Team Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2 and 7 Foundation Phase (Personal and social development, well being and cultural diversity, Mathematical Development), Mathematics and Religious education
Sian Shankland Nominee	Contributions to all Team Meetings and Collation of School Documentation

#### The contractor was:

Evenlode Education Ltd  
Little Garth  
St John's Close  
Hawarden  
Flintshire  
CH5 3QJ

#### Acknowledgement

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