

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Sarn Nursery School
Heol Canola
Sarn
Bridgend
CF32 9NU**

School Number: 6721022

Date of Inspection: 04 March 2008

by

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Sarn Nursery 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 Sarn Nursery School took place between 04/03/08 and 06/03/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Linda Jane Williams undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **full** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Sarn Nursery School is a local authority maintained school situated in the village of Sarn on the outskirts of Bridgend. Housing within the village is a mixture of socially and privately owned housing, with two new developments within the village. Fifty per cent of housing is council rented accommodation and a small part of a nearby estate is to be designated a Community First area.
2. Children who attend the nursery come mainly from the local area but a small minority travel to the school from other areas of Bridgend. Assessments undertaken during the first term in the nursery indicate the ability of the majority of children is similar to the LA average. A small number of children have significantly delayed communication skills and/or generally delayed development.
3. The nursery caters for children aged three to four who are admitted in the term following their third birthday. Bridgend Local Authority (LA) controls admissions to the school. Children attend full-time at the start of the academic year during which they will be four and children eligible to be admitted prior to that time attend on a part-time basis.
4. At the time of the inspection there were 47 children on roll, including 6 who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Numbers remain relatively stable and are only slightly below the number on roll at the time of the last inspection.
5. English is the home language for 100 per cent of the children. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language. Six children are identified as having special educational needs (SEN) but no child has a formal statement of SEN.
6. The school has achieved the Eco Schools Green Flag Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark on two occasions and completed the first stage of the Healthy Schools Award.
7. The school was last inspected in March 2002. The head teacher has been seconded to the school since September 2001. The school has a high number of teaching staff, with a ratio of one teacher to twelve children. Five support staff are also employed by the school, four of whom work full-time.
8. The school has had many staffing changes in the past twelve months. One teacher is currently employed on a supply basis and the remaining two teachers were appointed in September 2007. A number of support staff are also working in the school on a temporary basis covering for absence.
9. Since the last inspection, the outdoor area of the school has undergone significant development to allow safe and regular access for children throughout the day.

The school's priorities and targets

10. The school's mission statement is: - Sowing the seeds of learning.
11. The school's major priorities and targets for 2007 – 2008 include:
 - Working towards quantifiable targets for language, literacy and communication; mathematical development; and information and communication technology (ICT).
 - Developing nursery as a 'Communication Friendly Space'.
 - Continuing to develop the community focus by setting up a cookery club for parents and their children.
 - Developing creativity throughout the school.
 - Developing strategies to improve attendance.
 - Developing progression in art.
 - Integrating *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* into planning.
 - Reviewing the aims of the school.
 - Further developing the role of the Governing Body in determining the strategic direction of the school.
 - Continuing to develop the role of curriculum leader.

Summary

12. Sarn Nursery School provides a happy, safe and secure learning environment for its children. The way in which the school cares for, guides and supports pupils is good.
13. The curriculum provided is full of varied, interesting, creative and investigative experiences. The outdoor provision is a good feature which impacts significantly on the standards achieved by the children.

Table of grades awarded

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

14. Children's standards of achievement in the lessons observed during the inspection are as follows:-

Grade1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
5%	68%	27%	0%	0%

15. Standards of achievement in the lessons observed are above Welsh Assembly Government's all-Wales 'Vision into Action' target requiring that by 2010, 98 per cent of standards should be grade 3 or better.

Subjects and/or areas of learning for under-fives

Language, literacy and communication	Grade 3
Personal and social development	Grade 3
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2

16. Standards have fallen in a number of areas of learning since the last inspection, particularly in personal and social development where very good standards were previously reported.

17. The educational provision for the under-fives has some weaknesses, but there is evidence that these weaknesses can soon be put right.
18. The majority of children make good progress in all areas of learning. However on some occasions children are insufficiently challenged to ensure they achieve their full potential. Children with SEN make good progress against the targets set for them in their individual education plans.
19. Overall, children reach good standards in the key skills of information and communication technology (ICT), numeracy, speaking, and reading. Children's creative development and their ability to solve problems is developing well.
20. In the key skills of listening, writing and bilingualism there are good features, which outweigh shortcomings. Children achieve good standards in listening when interacting with adults, but when listening to other children their listening skills are underdeveloped. All children confidently use emergent writing across many areas of learning, but many children, particularly the more able, do not sufficiently develop their skills from the earliest stages of emergent writing.
21. Children make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and skills when they work in small groups, which are directed by adults. In less formal situations, a majority become engrossed in their work and persevere with their chosen tasks. However a minority of children do not concentrate for any length of time and frequently wander from activity to activity without a clear sense of purpose.
22. Overall, the majority of children's behaviour is good. They are polite and courteous to adults and each other and often work well together. However, a few children behave well when engaged in self-chosen activities but do not co-operate well when required to conform to adult direction.
23. Children make good progress in their moral development. The majority of children have a good sense of what is right and what is wrong. Their social and personal development has good features, which outweigh shortcomings.
24. During times in the school day when routines and groupings remain constant children are developing a good level of independence. However, groupings are frequently changed, particularly to allow for weekly visits to the Forest School, and at these times a few children become confused and the change in routine adversely affects their confidence.
25. Occasionally children do not achieve good standards in developing their independence, particularly their self-help skills such as dressing and undressing and during "tidy up" times.
26. At 87 per cent the average rate of attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection is slightly below the average reported at the last inspection. In this aspect progress has not been made since the last inspection.

The quality of education and training

Grades for teaching

27. During the inspection, the grades allocated for teaching in the lessons observed are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
9%	57%	34%	0%	0%

28. The quality of teaching is significantly below the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her annual report for 2005-2006, where the quality of teaching in primary schools was grade 1 or 2 in 79 per cent of lessons.
29. Good features of teaching include good interaction with the children to support and extend their learning; the use of a variety of techniques and resources to stimulate interest; good use of questioning to extend learning; and strong links to previous learning.
30. Shortcomings in teaching include missed opportunities to extend learning and the development of children's key skills; insufficient pace to sessions; and insufficiently high expectations to ensure that all children participate in small group and whole school activities.
31. Children's learning is well supported by the very good relationships, which exist between all staff and children. The daily planning of lessons is detailed and provides a wide range of learning experiences. However, the planning to meet individual needs is less well developed.
32. Detailed records are maintained based on extensive observations of the progress made by each child. The assessment records are well used to track children's progress but less effectively used to plan for the next steps in their learning.
33. Detailed curriculum documents for each area of learning, religious education and Welsh have recently been completed as long-term plans for the school. These provide a very good basis for planning a curriculum, which meets the needs of all children. Although short-term planning provides a rich curriculum, insufficient use is made of the long-term plans to fully ensure breadth, balance and progression across all areas of learning.
34. On some occasion the curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities for the children to extend their learning. The school does not fully meet the learning needs and ability range of all pupils when insufficient challenge is provided in the tasks and activities set.
35. Children benefit from a good range of visits and visitors from the community and are developing a good understanding of sustainable development from

their involvement in recycling schemes and planting vegetables in the garden area.

36. Excellent opportunities are provided for children to further broaden and enrich their experiences particularly when they work in the Forest School, which is an outstanding feature of the school's provision.
37. Provision for the development of pupils' moral, social and cultural skills is good. However, provision for the development of spiritual skills is underdeveloped. Children are given opportunities to contribute to prayers, but times identified for quiet reflection are not identified.
38. The school has clear, well documented procedures that contribute to pupils' well-being when in the school's care. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy. However, a health and safety issue identified during the inspection was brought to the attention of the school.
39. Staff know the children very well and all children are confident to seek help whenever they need it. A range of opportunities is available to support parents and their children before the children are admitted to the nursery. Induction arrangements are an outstanding feature.
40. Overall the quality of provision for children with additional learning needs has good features, which outweigh shortcomings. Early identification of children with SEN is made through the school's extensive assessment procedures and good use is made of available specialist services. Purposeful support is planned from an early age, both on an individual basis and in small groups where specific needs, for example speech delay, are targeted.
41. A small number of children occasionally exhibit very challenging behaviour. All staff work hard to support these children in a very positive manner and are frequently effective. However, the school's behaviour policy is based primarily on conflict resolution and does not provide an adequate framework to support all children. Consequently, on some occasions, the behaviour of a few children affects the learning of others.

Leadership and management

42. There are clear values and objectives, which are promoted by all staff and ensure a caring ethos and a commitment to equal opportunities and racial equality, which is evident in the life of the school.
43. The head teacher has a strong vision for the school based on the full implementation of the High/Scope¹ curriculum. The teaching and non-teaching staff work exceptionally hard to support the head teacher's vision but their effectiveness is limited due to the frequent changes in staffing with a consequent lack of expertise in this particular approach.

¹ The High/Scope Curriculum model originated in the USA in 1963 and is now used extensively across the world.

44. The majority of curriculum co-ordinators are newly appointed to the school. Although their role has not yet fully been developed they have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and are conscientiously working to develop their leading role across the school.
45. The school takes good account of national priorities. It has achieved the Green Flag Eco School Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark on two occasions, successfully completed the first year of the Health Schools Award and a breakfast club is available to all children at the beginning of each day. The school's commitment to developing the use of a Forest School is outstanding, with a weekly session available for all children.
46. Procedures are in place for undertaking the performance management of teaching staff. Although support staff play a major role in delivering the curriculum, no formal system is in place to review their performance or set targets for improvement.
47. Since its inauguration two years ago, the governing body has been well supported by the head teacher as governors have developed their involvement in managing the school.
48. Governors have been actively involved in contributing to the self-evaluation report. They are made aware of targets in the School Development Plan but have not as yet been involved in its formulation or in setting targets for improvement. The governing body fulfils the majority of its responsibilities, however the latest Annual Report to Parents and the current school prospectus do not meet statutory requirements.
49. The current self-evaluation report is comprehensive and clearly identifies strengths and some areas where improvements are needed. It draws on a wide range of evidence, but is insufficiently based on information obtained through formal monitoring of teaching and learning. The inspection team agree with the grade awarded by the school in one of the seven key questions. In the remaining key questions a lower grade was awarded.
50. The School Development Plan is a three-year strategic document with detailed action to address areas identified for improvement. However, fifteen areas for development are identified for action within the current year and consequently progress in addressing a number of targets is limited.
51. Progress made by the school since the last inspection has good features with important shortcomings. Parents are now provided with good information on curriculum developments. However, standards have not been maintained in physical development, personal and social development, and language, literacy and communication; efforts to encourage parents to ensure that their children attend regularly are insufficient; and although curriculum policies have been revised they are not used as a basis for planning.
52. There are a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers who possess a good range of curricular knowledge to provide for the needs of the children. A

number of recently appointed staff have not yet been given sufficient training to update their skills and knowledge in the principles and practice of the High/Scope approach which underpins the delivery of the curriculum. With one teacher to twelve children and additional support staff, the school has a very high rate of staff for the number of children on role.

53. Day-to-day running of the school is smooth and effective. Funding allocated for workload remodelling is well used. However, the planning, preparation and assessment time allocated to teaching staff is not fully and consistently made available.
54. Children have ready access to a range of good quality resources appropriate to their age and needs. However, the school does not make the most efficient use of available resources as a wide range of very high quality resources are not frequently in use.
55. The building is a purpose-built nursery and good use is made of the available space. The school is a safe, secure and well ordered environment. The substantial outdoor area is very well utilised as an integral part of the learning environment, where pupils extend their learning well.
56. The school's spending decisions are closely linked to the priorities and objectives in the School Development Plan. The head teacher and governing body review and evaluate spending decisions regularly. The school gives adequate value for money.

Recommendations

57. In order to maintain and improve the current standards, staff and governors should:
- R1 Raise standards in language, literacy and communication **; personal and social education; bilingualism and ensure appropriate challenge for all children.
 - R2 Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching by addressing issues identified in the report.
 - R3 Fully ensure breadth, balance and progression in the curriculum by developing the use of medium and long term plans.
 - R4 Further develop strategies to ensure that the behaviour of some children does not impede the learning of others.
 - R5 Ensure that teaching staff receive their full entitlement to planning, preparation and assessment time.
 - R6 Raise the level of attendance through encouraging parents to ensure that their children attend regularly.
 - R7 Develop formal systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
 - R8 Develop the involvement of the governing body in setting the strategic direction of the school ** and ensure that the Annual Governor's Report to Parents and the school prospectus meet statutory requirements.
 - R9 Address the health and safety issue brought to the attention of the governing body.

** Issues already identified by the school.

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 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

58. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 2 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. There are a number of shortcomings particularly in the maintenance of standards since the last inspection.
59. Children's standards of achievement in the lessons observed during the inspection are as follows: -

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
5%	68%	27%	0%	0%

60. The standards achieved are above Welsh Assembly Government's 'Vision into Action' target requiring that by 2010, 98 per cent of standards should be grade 3 or better.

Subjects and/or areas of learning for under-fives

Language, literacy and communication	Grade 3
Personal and social development	Grade 3
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2

61. Standards have fallen in a number of areas of learning since the last inspection, particularly in personal and social development where very good standards were previously reported.
62. The educational provision for the under-fives has some weaknesses, but there is evidence that these weaknesses can soon be put right.
63. Baseline assessments, undertaken when children enter the nursery, indicate levels of achievement on entry are similar to the LA average. A few children enter nursery with very low levels of communication, social and number skills. The majority of children make good progress in all areas of learning. However on some occasions children are insufficiently challenged to ensure they achieve their full potential.
64. Pupils, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background, make steady progress equal to that of other pupils. Children with SEN make good progress against the targets set for them in their individual education plans.

65. The school uses its on-going assessments to identify targets based on the next steps in children's learning. Although all children make progress in achieving the targets, the lack of challenge within activities and some teaching sessions affects the pace at which they make progress.
66. Overall, children reach good standards in the key skills of information and communication technology (ICT), numeracy, speaking and reading with no important shortcomings. They use numbers confidently throughout the day and skilfully use a range of ICT equipment, including computers, digital cameras and listening centres, to support their learning well. They achieve good standards in their creative development and in their ability to solve problems.
67. In the key skills of listening, writing and bilingualism there are good features, which outweigh shortcomings. Children achieve good standards in listening when interacting with adults, but when listening to other children their listening skills are underdeveloped. All children confidently use emergent writing across many areas of learning, but many children, particularly the more able, do not sufficiently develop their skills from the earliest stages of emergent writing.
68. Although children achieve good standards and enjoy using the Welsh language in structured teaching situations, they rarely use the language during their free play activities and at other times during the school day.
69. Children make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and skills when they work in small groups, which are directed by adults. In less formal situations, a majority become engrossed in their work and persevere with their chosen tasks. However a minority of children do not concentrate for any length of time and frequently wander from activity to activity without a clear sense of purpose.
70. The daily sessions when children review the classroom areas they have visited and the activities they have been involved in provide some opportunities for them to reflect on their learning. However, opportunities for children to begin to evaluate and improve their own work are insufficiently developed and consequently children are not sufficiently beginning to develop an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.
71. Overall, the majority of children's behaviour is good. They are polite and courteous to adults and each other and often work well together. However, a few children behave well when engaged in self-chosen activities, but do not co-operate when required to conform to adult direction.
72. The majority of children are developing their independent learning skills well. This sets a firm foundation for their future lifelong learning. However, there are examples when they rely on and need constant supervision and help. Occasionally staff do not allow children to develop their independence, particularly in their self-help skills such as dressing and undressing and during

“tidy up” times. This affects the standards they achieve in developing their independence.

73. Overall children make good progress in their moral development. The majority of children have a good sense of what is right and what is wrong and are able to reflect sensitively on a range of appropriate issues, such as what makes them frightened or upset.
74. Their social and personal development has good features, which outweigh shortcomings. During times in the school day when routines and groupings remain constant, children are developing a good level of independence. However, groupings are frequently changed, particularly to allow for weekly visits to the Forest School, and at these times a few children become confused and the change in routine adversely affects their confidence.
75. Children are establishing good healthy living skills that include valuing their physical and emotional well-being. The majority of children are developing a responsible approach to life in school.
76. At 87 per cent the average rate of attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection is slightly below the average reported at the last inspection. The level is adversely affected by the susceptibility to illness of the very young children in the nursery, the persistent absences of a small number of children and by family holidays in term time. Epidemics of sickness sometimes affect both the staff and the children, for example the school closed for almost a week in the autumn term 2006.
77. Since the last inspection the time at which school starts has been changed to support parents who need to take siblings to other schools. This has improved punctuality and the vast majority of children are present by 9.25 am.
78. Children develop a good understanding of their place in the local community and the working world through visits to appropriate places, visitors from the community and the inclusive nature of the nursery.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

79. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 2 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. There are a number of shortcomings, particularly in strategies used to ensure that children reach their full potential.

Grades for teaching

80. During the inspection, the grades allocated for teaching in the lessons observed are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
9%	57%	34%	0%	0%

81. The quality of teaching is significantly below the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her annual report for 2005-2006, where the quality of teaching in primary schools was grade 1 or 2 in 79 per cent of lessons.

82. Where teaching is outstanding teachers :-

- make excellent use of questioning to check understanding;
- give very clear explanations to children; and
- make outstanding use of time.

83. Good features of teaching include :-

- effective use of questioning to extend learning;
- praise and encouragement used well;
- good interaction with children supporting and extending their learning;
- a variety of techniques and resources used to stimulate interest;
- strong links to previous learning; and
- a good awareness of health and safety issues.

84. Shortcomings in teaching include :-

- expectations insufficiently high to ensure that all children participate fully;
- opportunities missed to extend learning;
- insufficient pace to sessions; and
- missed opportunities to develop children's key skills.

85. Children's learning is well supported by the very good relationships, which exist between all staff and children. The daily planning of lessons is detailed and successfully identifies the key skills to be developed. A wide range of learning experiences is planned for the children. However, the planning to meet individual needs is less well developed.

86. Teachers and support staff demonstrate good knowledge of how young children learn and the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. However, their knowledge of the philosophy and implementation of the High/Scope curriculum has not yet been fully developed. In the main this is due to the recent changes in staffing.
87. Planning for structured play supports and fosters children's independence well, ensuring that they play an active role in their own learning. On occasion, during self chosen activities, there is insufficient monitoring of children's choices to ensure that they receive a range of experiences.
88. Well qualified support staff play a major role in the delivery of the curriculum. They are provided with detailed lesson plans but are insufficiently involved in the planning process.
89. Teachers promote equality of opportunity well and ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, irrespective of their abilities and backgrounds. They meet the language needs of pupils successfully by providing a good environment to support the children's learning. Incidental Welsh is used appropriately to reinforce skills in the language. However, children's bilingual skills are not promoted well across all areas of learning.
90. Arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting children's attainment meets statutory requirements. On entry to the nursery children are assessed against the baseline indicators used by the LA and against the High/Scope baseline assessment.
91. On-going assessment is based on extensive observations and details of the progress made by each child are recorded in an observation record. A Record of Achievement is kept for each child incorporating significant pieces of work and photographs of their experiences. Baseline assessments and on-going observations are used consistently to track children's progress, but are less effectively used to plan for the next steps in their learning.
92. Opportunities to develop children's involvement in the assessment of their own progress, for example during recall time, are underdeveloped.
93. Annual reports to parents are of a good quality and present a clear picture of children's achievements in the six areas of learning outlined in the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Parents are offered appropriate opportunities to discuss both the baseline assessments and the annual reports.

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

Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings

94. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
95. The educational provision for the under-fives has some weaknesses, but there is evidence that these weaknesses can soon be put right.
96. The school bases its provision on the principles of the High/Scope approach. The curriculum is full of varied, interesting, creative and investigative experiences that often motivate and excite children. The outdoor provision provided is a good feature and impacts significantly on the standards achieved by the children.
97. On some occasion the curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities for the children to extend their learning. The school does not fully meet the learning needs and ability range of all pupils when insufficient challenge is provided in the tasks and activities set.
98. Detailed curriculum documents for each area of learning, religious education and Welsh have recently been completed as long-term plans for the school. These provide a very good basis for planning a curriculum, which meets the needs of all children. Although short-term planning provides a rich curriculum, insufficient use is made of long-term or medium-term plans to fully ensure breadth, balance and progression across all areas of learning.
99. Good provision is made to establish healthy living routines by providing many opportunities to extend the children's understanding of what constitutes healthy eating and drinking. For example, healthy snacks are provided every day and small group times focus on healthy foods.
100. Provision for the development of children's basic and key skills is good. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the second time. Through their daily planning teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop these skills across the curriculum.
101. Excellent opportunities are provided for children to further broaden and enrich their experiences with school trips throughout the year covering places of interest. Their problem solving, decision making and independent learning skills, as well as their knowledge and understanding of the world, are enhanced as they work in the Forest School. This is an outstanding feature of the school's provision.
102. Provision for the development of children's moral, social and cultural skills is good. The good example set by adults is a core feature of the successful provision for personal development. Recall time, when children come together

at the end of a session, provides children with opportunities to think and reflect on what they have enjoyed during their work session.

103. Provision for the development of spiritual skills is underdeveloped. Children are given opportunities to contribute to prayers but times planned for quiet reflection are not identified.
104. Children's awareness of the culture and heritage of Wales is promoted well through *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*, particularly in the creative areas of learning. Staff use the Welsh language on some occasions throughout the day, but there is insufficient encouragement for children to develop their confidence in using the language.
105. The school has a positive partnership with parents and the community. They are very appreciative of the dedication of the staff and the work done to involve parents in their child's learning, for example, Language and Play sessions, "Messy Mondays" and "Fab Fridays".
106. The school meets all legal and course requirements.
107. Visits and visitors from the community help to raise the children's awareness of the world of work, both past and present, and help strengthen the nursery's links with the community. The school has established a very useful link with a local factory. Children use the Forest School facilities on the premises and are aware of the goods manufactured in the factory.
108. Children benefit from working with craftsmen such as a wood carver to design, make and install a story chair and a willow tunnel in the garden. Visitors from the community such as the police, postman and dental hygienist, help raise their awareness of people who help them. As yet no staff have benefited from industrial placements in industry to enhance their teaching and management skills.
109. The school promotes equality of all its pupils very well and successfully recognises and celebrates diversity.
110. The school has gained the Eco School Green Flag award. As a result of the work undertaken in connection with the award children develop a very good understanding of how to care for the environment, energy conservation and the effects of litter. Children and the community are involved in recycling schemes and planting vegetables in the garden area.
111. Opportunities to develop children's entrepreneurial skills are used effectively through practical activities such as preparing hampers of vegetables harvested from the garden as raffle prizes and through role play activities following visits, for example to the post office and other shops in the locality.
112. The school attends well to national priorities for lifelong learning and community regeneration. Learning experiences, such as Language and Play sessions, enable children to work with their parents and acquire valuable

skills. The school provides placements for child care students on long-term work placements and as a result children see adults as lifelong learners.

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

Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings

113. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 1 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. Although outstanding features were identified in the school's induction programme, this was insufficient to award a grade 1 to the overall question.
114. Overall, the way in which the school cares for, guides and supports pupils is good. The school provides a happy, safe, secure and caring learning environment. Care arrangements are well planned and managed. A wide range of external support services and agencies are used appropriately and effectively. The school has clear, well documented procedures that contribute to pupils' well-being when in the school's care.
115. Parents and carers are welcomed into school at the beginning and end of each day and this provides good opportunities to ensure that parents are fully informed regarding any issues, which have arisen during the school day. Questionnaires sent out to parents annually indicate their overall satisfaction with the work of the school. The school takes good account of the views of parents.
116. Induction arrangements to support children new to the nursery are an outstanding feature. Before the children are admitted to nursery, Language and Play sessions and "Messy Mondays" provide opportunities for parents and children to work together in school, while "Fab Fridays" are available for children to stay on their own for a short time. Caring start sessions are held with parents to explain the benefits of the High Scope approach.
117. A high priority is given to developing children's personal and social education throughout each school day. High quality support and guidance is underpinned by the strong relationships, which exist between the children and all the adults who work in the school. Staff know the children very well and all children are confident to seek help whenever they need it.
118. All children participate in the activities undertaken as a result of the school's involvement in the Healthy Schools Initiative aimed at developing children's awareness of the importance of exercise and a healthy diet.
119. Adequate policies and procedures are in place to monitor pupils' attendance, inappropriate behaviour and performance. The nursery sometimes involves the health visitor to encourage a small number of parents who give concern in terms of their children's attendance and welfare. However, follow up procedures for frequent and unexplained absences are insufficiently rigorous to help parents establish good habits for the future and insufficient

encouragement is given to parents to ensure they fully understand and appreciate the importance of regular attendance. For example, a system of contacting parents on the first day of absence is not in place. In this aspect progress has not been made since the last inspection.

120. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy. Risk assessments are systematic and all staff are alert to issues relating to the children's well-being. All staff are trained in emergency first aid and two have up-to-date emergency at work certificates. However, notices of named first aid officers are out of date and still bear the names of people who are no longer employed at the nursery. A health and safety issue identified during the inspection was brought to the attention of the school.
121. The nursery is in its second year of the Healthy School initiative. The school does not have cooking facilities but lunches cooked at the local primary school arrive in good condition. The daily Breakfast Club serves sugar free cereals, toast and yoghurt that support the school's healthy eating programme and all children have fruit and salad daily. Parents are encouraged to join in the weekly Big Steps, Little Steps walking programme.
122. There is an effective policy and sound procedures for child protection. The school follows the Local Authority guidelines. The head teacher and the assistant head teacher are the nominated persons and the chairman of the governing body is the named link governor. Teachers and support staff are aware of their responsibilities. However, some aspects of training are insufficiently developed for a few members of staff. The child protection policy provided as individual guidance for staff is inappropriate because it is the Bridgend County generic policy.
123. Overall the quality of provision for children with additional learning needs has good features, which outweigh shortcomings. The school's policy is comprehensive and complies with the code of practice and the framework for inclusive education.
124. Early identification of children with SEN is made through the school's extensive assessment procedures. Good use is made of available specialist services including the psychological service, health and specialist services.
125. Individual education plans provide clear targets for children, which are reviewed at appropriate times. Parents of children with SEN are consulted regularly and kept fully informed of their child's progress.
126. A number of staff are trained to use methods, for example signing, which help to ensure that children with SEN achieve their full potential and access all areas of the curriculum. Purposeful support is planned from an early age both on an individual basis and in small groups where specific needs, for example speech delay, are targeted.
127. A small number of children occasionally exhibit very challenging behaviour. All staff work hard to support these children in a very positive manner and are

frequently effective. However the school's behaviour policy is based primarily on conflict resolution and does not provide an adequate framework for all children. Individual behaviour plans are not in place and a number of staff are not adequately trained in behaviour management. Consequently, on some occasions, the behaviour of a few children affects the learning of others.

128. The school is an inclusive community and the quality of provision for equal opportunities is good. The school recognises the diversity of children's backgrounds. Staff act appropriately on this knowledge and use it effectively to meet the needs of all children.
129. The nursery has relevant policies and procedures in place to guide children taking into account their social, educational, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Policies and practices positively promote gender and race equality. As a result of the recent changes in staffing, however, the High/Scope strategies for conflict resolution are not always used effectively to prevent inappropriate behaviour.
130. There are currently no children with mobility disabilities attending the nursery, but the school has successfully accommodated disabled children in the past. Facilities such as toilets have been suitably adapted to accommodate children with disabilities. The school is currently working with the LA to develop a clear Disability Equality Scheme and action plan.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

131. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 2 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. There are shortcomings in the management of staff and the role of the governing body.
132. There are clear values and objectives, which are promoted by all staff, including non teaching staff, and by the governors. These ensure a caring ethos and a commitment to equal opportunities and racial equality, which is evident in the life of the school.
133. The school has experienced many staffing changes over recent years and the governing body was only formed two years ago. In view of these changes the aims of the school are currently being reviewed to allow all staff and governors to be involved in their formulation.
134. The head teacher has a strong vision for the school based on the full implementation of the High/Scope curriculum. The teaching and non-teaching staff work exceptionally hard to support the head teacher's vision but their effectiveness is limited due to the frequent changes in staffing with a consequent lack of expertise in this particular approach.
135. All staff undertake training to meet the needs of the school and their own professional development. Plans are in place to ensure that staff new to the school, receive appropriate training to support them in their current role.
136. Detailed job descriptions are in place for the vast majority of staff. However, the job description for the recently appointed assistant head teacher has yet to be formally agreed.
137. With the exception of the head teacher, all curriculum co-ordinators are newly appointed to the school. Although their role has not yet fully been developed they have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and are conscientiously working to develop their involvement by taking a leading role across the school.
138. The school takes good account of national priorities. It has achieved the Green Flag Eco School Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark on two occasions, successfully completed the first year of the Health Schools Award and a breakfast club is available to all children at the beginning of each day.
139. The school's commitment to developing the use of a Forest School is outstanding. The head teacher represents the LA on committees linked to Forest Schools and home visiting. The school is beginning to work towards

introducing the Foundation Phase and staff have recently attended training provided by the LA.

140. The school works closely with other providers of education including the local primary school, cluster of local schools and colleges of further education. Work undertaken with the local primary school successfully supports the transition of children who transfer there at the end of their time in nursery.
141. Procedures are in place for undertaking the performance management of teaching staff and agreed targets are in place. Although support staff play a major role in delivering the curriculum, and informal monitoring of their work takes place very frequently, no formal system is in place to review their performance or set targets for improvement.
142. A governing body for the school was set in place two years ago in line with statutory changes. Several governors had already supported the school as members of the management committee prior to their appointment on the current governing body. The governing body has been well supported by the head teacher as governors have developed their involvement in managing the school.
143. Many governors who are relatively new to their role have undertaken training provided by the LA and been involved in additional training to develop their involvement in the process of self-evaluation. A number of governors have also attended workshops within the school.
144. Governors are kept well informed about issues that effect the performance of the school. The chairman of the governing body visits the school regularly and most governors have spent time in school prior to contributing to the current self-evaluation report. There are currently no specific links between members of the governing body and curriculum leaders.
145. Governors have been actively involved in contributing to the self-evaluation report. They are made aware of targets in the School Development Plan but have not as yet been involved in its formulation or in setting targets for improvement. The governing body meets the majority of its responsibilities, however the latest Annual Report to Parents and the current school prospectus do not meet statutory requirements.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

146. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 2 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. There are a number of shortcomings particularly in the progress made by the school since the last inspection.

147. Staff within the nursery work closely together on a day-to-day basis and consequently staff with leadership responsibility have opportunities to monitor performance informally. However, the formal monitoring of performance is underdeveloped and frequent changes in staffing limit how well the school's management is able to use information on performance to plan for improvement.
148. The school's self-evaluation process now involves all members of staff and the governing body have worked closely with the head teacher in preparing the current self-evaluation report. The views of parents are sought through detailed questionnaires sent out at the end of each school year. These highlight areas of concern or satisfaction and are taken into account as part of the self-evaluation process. The views of the community are voiced through the governing body.
149. The current self-evaluation report is comprehensive and clearly identifies strengths and some areas where improvements are needed. It draws on a wide range of evidence, including judgements based on the recorded assessment of children's progress. However, the report is insufficiently based on information obtained through formal monitoring of teaching and learning. The inspection team agree with the grade awarded by the school in one of the seven key questions. In the remaining key questions a lower grade was awarded.
150. Clear links are evident between the outcomes of self-evaluation and the School Development Plan. The School Development Plan is a three-year strategic document with detailed action to address areas identified for improvement in the current year and a brief outline of development areas for the following two years.
151. For the current year, the plan identifies actions, responsibilities, time schedules, costs and success criteria for each target. Appropriate resources are allocated to ensure that targets are achievable. However, fifteen areas for development are identified for action within the current year and consequently progress in addressing a number of targets is limited and in some instances has been affected by staffing changes.
152. A number of targets are the responsibility of the newly appointed curriculum leaders. Based on information available to them within the school, they have written detailed plans and made good progress in addressing many of the actions identified.
153. Actions taken as a result of work planned within the School Development Plan have had a positive effect. For example, the use of the Forest School has been systematically developed and is now a strength of the school.
154. Progress made by the school since the last inspection has good features with important shortcomings. Parents are now provided with good information on curriculum developments. However, standards have not been maintained in physical development, personal and social development, and language,

literacy and communication; efforts to encourage parents to ensure that their children attend regularly are insufficient; and although curriculum policies have been revised they are not used as a basis for planning.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

155. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 2 judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report. There are shortcomings particularly in the use made of available resources and the allocation of teacher's planning, preparation and assessment time.
156. There are a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers who possess a good range of curricular knowledge to provide for the needs of the children. All staff undertake training to meet the needs of the school and their own professional development. However, there are a number of recently appointed staff who have not yet been given the training to update their skills and knowledge in the principles and practice of the High Scope approach which underpins the delivery of the curriculum.
157. With one teacher to twelve children and additional support staff, the school has a very high rate of staff for the number of children on role. Teachers and support staff are deployed effectively and good use is made of their expertise.
158. Day-to-day running of the school is smooth and effective. The administrative officer, midday supervisors and caretaker/cleaner make an important contribution to implementing the values and caring ethos of the school. The school is kept in a clean and well-maintained condition.
159. Funding allocated for workload remodelling is used effectively. However, the planning, preparation and assessment time allocated to teaching staff is not fully and consistently made available.
160. A wide range of reading material is available in the school library. Books are suitable for both boys and girls. A considerable number are not accessible to the children but good use is made of the available reading resources through a system reintroduced recently which allows parents to access the books for reading at home with their children.
161. Children have ready access to a range of good quality resources appropriate to their age and needs. However, the school does not make the most efficient use of available resources as a wide range of very high quality resources is kept in store rooms and is not frequently in use.
162. The building is a purpose-built nursery and good use is made of the available space. The school is a safe, secure and well-ordered environment. The quality of accommodation inside and outside is good overall. The substantial outdoor area is very well utilised as an integral part of the learning

environment, where children investigate and explore using a wide range of equipment.

163. The school's spending decisions are closely linked to the priorities and objectives in the School Development Plan. The head teacher and governing body review and evaluate spending decisions regularly. The governing body receives a financial report at each full meeting and there is a finance sub committee. Audit guidelines are adhered to in relation to purchasing services and resources to ensure cost effectiveness.
164. Co-ordinators are reviewing resources effectively in each curriculum area and a rolling programme of replacements is planned to ensure the delivery of a wide range of stimulating experiences. The recent expenditure on ICT is having a positive impact on standards. The school gives adequate value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Under 5s

Language, literacy and communication skills

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

165. The vast majority of children listen well to whole class presentations, stories and listening centres. Most listen carefully to questions and respond confidently, illustrating a sound understanding of the spoken word. Most follow instructions accurately.
166. Many children develop good oral skills within a short space of time. They speak confidently in a variety of situations, using a growing vocabulary with increasing accuracy. One or two children articulate very well and use extended sentences.
167. Children's reading skills are developing adequately. Many recognise and read their name cards correctly. They handle books well, often using pictures to gain an understanding of the story; all enjoy sharing a book and many understand that words carry meaning. Many children predict sensibly and sequence events correctly when retelling stories. They readily recall their favourite stories, such as "The Train Ride".
168. Children's early writing skills are developing well. They show a good understanding of the functions of writing when sending messages and making lists in role play situations. Many children make good attempts at writing their names, and all children make effective use of a large variety of writing materials to practise their writing skills.

Shortcomings

169. Although pupils listen well to adults, a significant minority do not listen well to their peers.
170. Children's writing skills, in particular those of the more able pupils, are not adequately developed from the early stages of emergent writing.

Personal and social development

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

171. Most children relate very well to each other and to adults. They show care, respect and affection for their peers. They play well together, readily sharing their equipment and taking turns appropriately.

172. At times when children have a good understanding of class routines, they show a high level of independence and confidence. Many are successfully developing their independence in dressing themselves. They put on their own painting aprons and outdoor clothes when necessary, asking for help when they need it. They show a good awareness of issues related to personal hygiene.
173. Children confidently experiment with new learning opportunities, particularly when working in the Forest School when all children are very co-operative and work exceptionally well together.
174. Many children are developing the ability to concentrate for long periods of time. They become very involved in the tasks which are prepared for them. This supports their learning and enables them to benefit in full from the activities they engage in.

Shortcomings

175. A minority of children, fail to engage sufficiently in tasks during self-directed time.
176. The social skills of a few children are less well developed and on some occasions they do not relate well to others.
177. A minority of children are over-reliant on adult help when, for example, they need to put on outdoor clothing or when equipment needs to be put away.
178. A few children lack confidence in dealing with the complex routines and groupings in the nursery.

Mathematical development

Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings

Good features

179. Children are making good progress in developing their early mathematical concepts. They recognise and recreate basic patterns independently, using a range of apparatus. They correctly name a number of two-dimensional shapes.
180. Children show a good awareness of number when working independently. Most count accurately up to 5 and many enjoy working with higher numbers. Many correctly recognise numerals from one to six when working in the role play area and when playing dominoes.
181. They are beginning to understand the mathematics of money when they buy currant buns from the shop and use money in role play situations. Children's understanding of 'full' and 'empty', 'more' and 'less' is well developed.

182. Children participate enthusiastically in a range of number rhymes, songs and counting games. They make good use of their ICT skills to practice and reinforce their number skills.

Shortcomings

183. There are no important shortcomings.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings

Good features

184. The observational skills of the children are developing well, for example through their work in investigating materials and making nests in the Forest School. They discuss and use appropriate vocabulary to describe the different natural materials.
185. The majority of children demonstrate a good awareness of their families and homes. They describe the different kinds of houses in which they live and can accurately note the different characteristics of the buildings.
186. They have a very good awareness of the work which different people do in the school and in the community. They can refer to different places and have a clear understanding of the specific features of different jobs such as the nurse and postman.
187. More able children are beginning to develop a good awareness of chronology. The majority sequence the events of the day and discuss the changes they observe in themselves as they grow.
188. Children achieve good standards in their ICT skills as they competently use the digital cameras, computers, bee bots and listening centres. They handle the mouse competently to fulfil a number of different tasks independently.
189. Through good practical experiences, the children create objects and models using different types of blocks and materials. They play imaginatively with the blocks and other small equipment, often applying their knowledge of number, size and shape to good effect.

Shortcomings

190. There are no important shortcomings.

Physical development

Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings

Good features

191. Children show a good awareness of their own bodies when they run, walk, and jump. They move confidently, with good control and an awareness of others.
192. All children handle small tools such as pencils, scissors and crayons with good control and are developing their skills well. A minority are developing skills, which enable them to throw and catch small balls accurately.
193. During outdoor activities children skilfully manoeuvre a range of wheeled vehicles, carefully following a chosen path and avoiding other children. They control the vehicles well to stop at the appropriate sign and manoeuvre round the roundabout. They confidently use skateboards and display good balancing skills.
194. Children understand the importance of diet, rest and sleep and are developing a good knowledge of healthy and unhealthy foods. They are beginning to develop an awareness of safety issues, particularly when working in the outdoor area.

Shortcomings

195. There are no important shortcomings.

Creative development

Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings

Good features

196. Children enjoy musical activities. They know and can recall a good range of songs and rhymes in English and Welsh. They respond well to stimuli with their voices and overall sing sweetly and in tune.
197. They use their skills well to listen carefully to a range of music played in the dance lesson. On these occasions they follow instructions for action well and perform with enjoyment. They move confidently using their ribbons to enhance their performance.
198. Children independently choose and use a wide range of materials to create representational images such as pictures, drawings or constructions. They handle a variety of equipment such as scissors and glue sticks with confidence.
199. Painting skills are developing well as children experiment with a variety of different types of paint and size of brush. They carefully choose and name a

range of colours as they mix their paint, and are beginning to develop their colour mixing skills.

200. Many children respond imaginatively to role play activities in the home corner or with puppets.


Shortcomings

201. There are no significant shortcomings but on some occasions the children's skills in the home corner lack spontaneity. A few children do not have the confidence to apply their own creativity to their projects.

School's response to the inspection

There are no factual errors contained in the report.

An Action Plan will be put in place to address the recommendations.



Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Sarn Nursery School
School type	Nursery
Age-range of pupils	3 – 4 years
Address of school	Heol Canola, Sarn Bridgend
Postcode	CF32 9NU
Telephone number	01656 720978

Head teacher	Mrs L. Evatt
Date of appointment	Seconded 01.09.01
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Cllr. G. Walters
Registered inspector	Mrs L. J. Williams
Dates of inspection	4 - 6 th March 2008

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	44								

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	4	0	4

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	N/A
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	12:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	N/A
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Spring 2007	84	N/A	N/A
Summer 2007	89	N/A	N/A
Autumn 2007	87	N/A	N/A

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	N/A
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

Appendix 3

Three inspectors spent a total of 7 inspector days in the school and met as a team before the inspection. A Peer Assessor was assigned to the inspection and a nominee worked as a member of the team.

These inspectors visited:

- 23 lessons or part lessons; and
- All classes.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- Staff, governors and parents; and
- Senior managers, teachers and support staff.

The team also considered:

- The school's self-evaluation report;
- Eight responses to parents' questionnaires;
- Comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection; and
- A range of children's work.

The inspection team also:

- Talked to children throughout the inspection; and
- Observed children's behaviour throughout the day.

Appendix 4

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mrs Linda Jane Williams Registered Inspector	Context Summary and recommendations Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2, 4, 5. and 6. Personal and social development. Mathematical development. Physical development.
Mrs Carolyn Thomas Team Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2, 3, and 7. Language, literacy and communication. Knowledge and understanding of the world. Creative development.
Mrs Caterina Lewis Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3 and 4.
Mrs Julie Saville	Peer Assessor
Mrs Lesley Evatt Nominee	Contribution to team meetings and provision of documentation

Contractor:

Evenlode Education Ltd
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Acknowledgement

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