

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**St Mary's RC VA Primary School
Queens Hill
Newport
NP9 5HJ**

School Number: 6803302

Date of Inspection: 02 December 2008

by

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St Mary's RC 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 St Mary's RC Primary School took place between 02/12/08 and 04/12/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Stephen Dennett undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **short** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 St Mary's RC Primary School mainly serves the Catholic community of West Newport, a 'Communities First' area. The social and economic backgrounds of pupils are very varied, including a significant minority of economically disadvantaged families. Around 10% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the local education authority (LEA) and national averages. The school provides education for pupils aged four to eleven. Around 15% of the pupils have been identified as having additional learning needs (ALN). Seven pupils have statements of special educational need. Around 8% of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). No pupils speak Welsh as a first language. No pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority. Approximately 13% of pupils are from ethnic minorities. At the time of the inspection, there were 348 pupils on the school's roll, including 37 children in the reception class. The number on roll has risen since the school was last inspected in November 2002. This is largely due to the fact that St Mary's received a significant number of pupils from a neighbouring Catholic primary school that closed in July 2007. The present headteacher took up her post in January 2007.

The school's priorities and targets

- 2 The school's mission statement says, *'Through God and each other, to live, learn and love, so that everyone can flourish and grow'*. The school has set a number of targets in its current school improvement plan (SIP), which include:
 - implementing the Foundation Phase;
 - implementing the new Welsh National Curriculum;
 - further developing good practice in the teaching and learning of oracy and writing;
 - further developing good practice in the teaching and learning of religious education;
 - reviewing and revision the programme for pupils personal, social and relationships education;
 - increasing the opportunities for Welsh and Y Curriculum Cymreig across the curriculum;
 - developing further assessment for learning strategies, including pupils' peer and self-assessment;
 - further developing the outdoor environment to enhance teaching and learning;
 - ensuring a clear and consistent approach to the identification of and provision for more able and talented pupils; and
 - achieving excellence in environmental activity by achieving 'Green Flag' ecological status.

Summary

- 1 St Mary's is a good school with a number of outstanding features. Because of high quality teaching, pupils achieve standards which are often well above average, both in their academic and personal development. The school's Christian ethos is communicated clearly in all it does, and it provides a caring, secure environment for all its pupils. The very strong leadership provided by the headteacher is fully supported by the highly effective senior management team and governing body.

Table of grades awarded

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

- 2 The school is highly successful in enabling pupils to attain agreed learning goals. In the 2008 teacher assessments at key stage (KS) 1, pupils' achievement was in the top 25% nationally and compared with school with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. At KS2, pupils' achievement was in the top 50% nationally and close to average in comparison to similar schools. This cohort contained a significant minority of pupils who had recently transferred from a neighbouring school that had been closed, many of whom had additional learning needs (ALN). The trends in pupils' performance shows that standards have been maintained at a high level since the last inspection at both key stages. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
- 3 The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children are making good progress towards the desirable learning outcomes for children's learning. At key stage KS1, pupils are making very good progress and they achieve standards that are well above average by the end of Y2. At KS2, pupils continue to make excellent progress and their standards of achievement are generally well above average by the end of Y6. Pupils consistently achieve challenging targets in their work, especially at KS1.
- 4 Pupils achievement in the key skills of thinking, communication, number and information and communication technology (ICT) are good overall; in reading,

writing and number they are very good. However, pupils do not always use their ICT skills as effectively as they could to support their learning. Pupils' bilingual skills are developing well, but are better at KS1 than they are at KS2.

- 5 Pupils succeed in their learning regardless of their background. Pupils with ALN make good and sometimes very good progress, as do pupils who speak English as an additional language (ALN). Pupils have a good understanding of how they are progressing and know what they need to do to improve their work. All are making very good progress towards fulfilling their potential.
- 6 Pupils' personal, social and learning skills are very good. They are well motivated in all classes and work productively at all times. Nearly all pupils behave very responsibly. Pupils achieve good levels of attendance. Throughout the school, pupils are developing a good capacity to work independently.
- 7 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good; spiritual development is particularly outstanding. Pupils have a good understanding of their own Welsh culture and are developing an outstanding understanding of equality of opportunity and cultural diversity. Pupils are very well prepared to play an active part in the workplace and local community. They are also developing a very good understanding of issues such as sustainability and recycling, as well as a good understanding of global citizenship.

The quality of education and training

Grades for teaching

- 8 During the time of the inspection, the quality of teaching in the 30 lessons observed was as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
23%	77%	0%	0%	0%

- 9 Throughout the school, teaching is good, with some outstanding features. Teachers have a very good knowledge of pupils' learning needs and of the areas of learning. Lessons are planned very well. The key skills are given good emphasis and promoted well across the curriculum. However, in some lessons there is a limited use of incidental Welsh and insufficient use of ICT to promote pupils' learning.
- 10 All adults have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and concentration. They set time limits for completing work and pupils work productively as a result. The pupils enjoy coming to school and benefit from its warm, friendly, Christian ethos. The staff are very good role models, and relationships are outstanding.
- 11 Assessment procedures are an outstanding feature of the school. The school has implemented an effective system for assessing pupils' progress. The information gained is used to help evaluate the effectiveness of school policies and identify strengths and weaknesses. The school has made a good start to involve pupils in planning their own progress and setting their own targets for improvement. Reports to parents are good.
- 12 The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. It meets statutory requirements. Learning experiences for children under five are planned in accordance with the desirable outcomes for children's learning.

- 13 The programme for personal and social development (PSE) permeates all aspects of school life, reflecting its inclusive ethos. An outstanding aspect of the learning experiences is its enrichment by an impressive range of cultural and extra-curricular activities. Another outstanding aspect throughout the school is the successful promotion of pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to think and have opinions and the school council is effective in decision making.
- 14 The partnership with parents is an outstanding feature of the school. Parents feel involved with the life of the school. Links with the local community are very good and the school is an established part of the community. The school promotes an ethos where all children, regardless of their background or circumstance, are encouraged to reach their potential. This is an outstanding feature of the school. Pastoral links between St Mary's and the receiving secondary school, St Joseph's, are very good. The care, guidance and support arrangements for the pupils is very well planned and managed. Parents and carers are kept well informed through a wide range of communications. The procedures for monitoring pupils' punctuality, attendance, behaviour and performance are very good.
- 15 The provision for ALN is of very good quality with a number of outstanding features. Procedures for identifying individual learning needs are very rigorous and effective for all kinds of additional needs, including more able and talented pupils and with EAL. All pupils with ALN have their own individual education plans (IEPs) containing details of clear targets, provision strategies and criteria, suitable resources, ideas for support staff and outcomes achieved. There is outstanding support for pupils whose behaviour could potentially impede their progress. Provision for equal opportunities is outstanding.

Leadership and management

- 16 The headteacher leads the school very effectively. An outstanding feature of the school is the way in which senior managers and curriculum leaders provide very effective leadership, monitoring standards and clearly identifying areas for improvement. The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and staff and highly effective in executing its duties. All statutory requirements are met.
- 17 Staff are very well informed about performance in their areas of responsibility. All those who provide education are actively involved in the self-evaluation process. The school self-evaluation report is a very well-researched document which effectively identifies its strengths and areas for development. The information gathered through self-evaluation is used very effectively to direct strategic planning. Areas identified as being in need of improvement are included as targets in the school improvement plan (SIP). The school has made good progress in addressing the issues raised by the last inspection.
- 18 The school has an appropriate number of teachers who are suitably qualified and have a range of expertise and experience, which is used effectively. The school has appropriate resources to meet needs in most curriculum areas. However, the school's ICT equipment is limited and this has a negative effect on the progress pupils make in the development of their skills in this area. The school make good use of its outdoor areas to enhance the curriculum. Overall, the use of accommodation is very good.

19 Financial management is rigorous. Sound financial protocols have enabled the head to manage the financial implications of seeking additional funding competently. The school gives very good value for money.

Recommendations

20 In order to further raise the already very good standards the school should:

- R1 Improve pupils' information and communications technology skills by providing more opportunities for them to use their skills in subjects across curriculum and increasing the provision of appropriate equipment; and
- R2 Improve pupils' bilingual skills by ensuring consistency in the use of Welsh in all classes as identified.*

** Aspects of this recommendation have already been identified in the school's improvement plan.*

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features.

- 21 The inspection team did not agree with the school's self-evaluation report, as it graded this key question a 2. However, evidence shows that pupils' achievement is well above expectations at both key stages, which warrants the grade 1 awarded by the team.
- 22 The school is highly successful in enabling pupils to attain agreed learning goals. In the 2008 teacher assessments at KS1, the percentage of pupils achieving at least level 2 in English, mathematics and science (the core subject indicator) was in the top 25% nationally and compared with school with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. In English 96% of pupils achieved at least level 2, which is in the top 25% compared with similar school and all primary schools in Wales. In mathematics, 98% achieved at least level 2, which places the school in the top 50% nationally and compared with similar school. In science, all pupils achieved at least level 2, which places the school in the top 25% compared with similar schools and all primary schools in Wales. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 is significantly above the national average in all three core subjects.
- 23 At KS2 in the 2008 teacher assessments, pupils' achievement in the core subject indicator was in the top 50% nationally and close to average in comparison to similar schools. This cohort contained a significant minority of pupils who had recently transferred from a neighbouring school that had been closed, many of whom had additional learning needs (ALN). If these pupils are excluded from the

figures, the school is in the top 25% nationally and in comparison with similar schools.

- 24 In English at KS2 in the 2008 teacher assessments, 89% of pupils achieved at least level 4, which places the school in the top 50% compared with similar school and with all primary schools in Wales. However, standards in mathematics were in the lower 50% nationally and in comparison with similar schools. Standards in science were also in the lower 50% compared with similar schools and all primary schools in Wales. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5 is above average in all three core subjects; significantly so in English.
- 25 The trends in pupils' performance shows that standards have been maintained at a high level since the last inspection at both key stages. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls at either key stage.
- 26 The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children are making good progress towards the desirable learning outcomes for children's learning. At key stage KS1, pupils are making very good progress and they achieve standards that are well above average by the end of Y2. At KS2, pupils continue to make excellent progress and their standards of achievement are generally well above average by the end of Y6. Pupils consistently achieve challenging targets in their work, especially at KS1. Pupils with ALN make good and sometimes very good progress, as do pupils with EAL.
- 27 Pupils achievement in the key skills of thinking, communication, number and information and communication technology (ICT) are good overall; in reading, writing and number they are very good. However, pupils do not use their ICT skills sufficiently to support their learning in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils succeed in their learning regardless of their background. Pupils' bilingual skills are developing well, especially in KS1, where they regularly use Welsh words and phrases in their work in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils' bilingual skills are less well developed in KS2, where some pupils are reluctant to use their Welsh except in formal, structured situations.
- 28 Pupils have a good understanding of how they are progressing and know what they need to do to improve their work. All are making very good progress towards fulfilling their potential and are ready for the next phase of their education.
- 29 Pupils' personal, social and learning skills are very good. They are well motivated in all classes and work productively. Nearly all pupils behave very responsibly. This is an outstanding feature and contributes to their very good progress and development. There is great respect shown by pupils for their peers and all other age groups. The work of the 'Peer Mediators' in supporting other pupils is an outstanding feature of the school.
- 30 Pupils achieve good levels of attendance. The average attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection was 95%, which is well above the national average and above the targets set by the LEA. Registration at the start of the school day is prompt and efficient with all arrangements meeting WAG guidelines. There are minor instances of pupils arriving late but the vast majority are punctual and the school day starts promptly.

- 31 Throughout the school, pupils are developing their capacity to work independently well and are able to improve their own learning. Pupils respond well to the 'Building Learning Power' (BLP) style of learning and assessment for learning strategies, which actively promote pupils' learning development. Effective 'learning diaries' in KS2 support individual pupils' learning through identification and monitoring of personal targets, as well as encouraging dialogue with the class teacher. This is an outstanding feature. Classes in Reception and KS1 have class books for their targets. Self- and peer assessment is developing well.
- 32 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good; their spiritual development is particularly outstanding. Pupils have a good understanding of their own Welsh culture and are developing an outstanding understanding of equality of opportunity and cultural diversity, for example through 'World Week' and the 'Islands of Imagination' study in Y6.
- 33 Pupils are very well prepared to play an active part in the workplace and local community, for example the monitoring and evaluation of the profit margin of the healthy fruit tuck shop by members of the school council and the developments from the Year 6 'Enterprise Week'. They are also developing a very good understanding of issues such as sustainability and recycling that affect their community, as well as a good understanding of global citizenship.
- 34 Pupils very much enjoy coming to school and take a full part in learning activities. One pupil in Y6 said, '*Learning is fun and interesting.*'

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features.

- 35 The findings of the inspection team exceed the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation. Outstanding features were identified throughout the school.
- 36 The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
23%	77%	0%	0%	0%

- 37 All lessons were graded 1 or 2. This is well above the national average for the quality of teaching, quoted in HMCI's Report for 2006-7, of 80% grade 1 and 2. The percentage of lessons graded 1 is also well above HMCI's reported average of 14%.
- 38 Teaching for children under five is good with outstanding features. Activities are very well planned to stimulate and challenge all abilities and to successfully promote independence of learning. The teamwork between the teachers and the teaching assistants makes a very good contribution to the effectiveness of teaching for children under five and throughout the school.
- 39 In KS1 and KS 2 teaching is also good with some outstanding features. Where teaching is outstanding:

- learning objectives (what pupils are to learn) are clearly shared at the beginning of lessons and reviewed either during lessons or in the plenary session;
 - teachers have a very good knowledge of pupils' learning needs and of the areas of learning;
 - there are excellent planned opportunities for pupils to learn through doing and discovery;
 - teachers make very good use of open ended questions to find out how pupils can extend their understanding;
 - teachers have high expectations of pupils, praise their efforts, and develop their self esteem and confidence; and
 - staff manage behaviour of pupils very effectively.
- 40 Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects of the NC. Lessons are planned well. The key skills are given good emphasis and promoted across the curriculum. However, in some lessons there is limited use of incidental Welsh, and insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning.
- 41 A strength of the teaching is the regular attention paid to developing pupils' thinking and learning skills. Pupils are encouraged to make good use of a wide range of reference material. They are taught to be systematic and logical and given good strategies for solving problems in mathematics and science.
- 42 All adults have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and concentration. They set time limits for completing work and pupils work productively as a result. The pupils enjoy coming to school and benefit from its warm, friendly, Christian ethos. The staff are very good role models, and relationships are outstanding. Pupils have a strong feeling of belonging to a happy orderly community where learning can thrive.
- 43 Pupils are beginning to learn to be constructively critical about their own work. They are given opportunities to express their opinions and to reflect on their work. This is an area that is developing well in the school. Good marking generally supports this very well and there are opportunities to involve pupils in setting their own targets.
- 44 Assessment procedures are an outstanding feature of the school. They are thorough and well managed by the school, fully meeting all statutory requirements. The school has implemented an effective system for assessing pupils' progress from the time they enter school.
- 45 The information gained is used to help staff, governors and the headteacher to:
- evaluate the effectiveness of the policy;
 - carefully track progress and set targets to raise the achievement of individual pupils;
 - assess pupils accurately against LEA and national data benchmarks;
 - adjust curriculum planning effectively and set new objectives;
 - identify strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance; and
 - communicate performance to feeder schools, governors and parents.

46 Reports to parents are good. Parents are fully informed about their children's progress and achievement and the reports are detailed and reflect individuals well. There are regular opportunities for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their children's work.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 47 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 48 The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and ensures coherence, continuity and progression for the full range of pupils. It meets statutory requirements and the recommended times for each key stage. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils very well and is equally accessible to all pupils. The extent to which learning experiences meet pupils' needs and interests is an outstanding feature.
- 49 Learning experiences for the under-fives are planned in accordance with the desirable outcomes for children's learning and there is a good balance of regular activities across the six areas of learning. Pupils in KS1 follow a similar form of organisation, as part of the preparation for the introduction of the Foundation Phase, with English, mathematics, religious education and Welsh taught as subjects and with topic links between subjects developed to an appropriate level. In KS2 learning is through subjects with cross curricular links made where appropriate.
- 50 The curriculum policies and schemes of work have been reviewed, with the Foundation Phase, Curriculum 2008 and Skills Framework in mind. The schemes of work for both key stages indicate what pupils will learn and are of very good quality. There are explicit learning and teaching opportunities for each year group with curriculum maps showing coverage across the school. The schemes build on systematically to existing knowledge, understanding and skills. Learning experiences reflect national, local and school identified priorities, as indicated in the SIP. The programme for personal and social development (PSE) permeates all aspects of school life, reflecting the inclusive school ethos. PSE is promoted through a variety of ways, including religious education, circle time, PSE lessons, pupils taking on different positions of responsibility, theme weeks and the example set by staff. The programme is very well co-ordinated and the school is used by the LEA to share good practice. A recent PSE audit of current provision and practice alongside the Skills Framework is also used by the LEA as outstanding practice.
- 51 An outstanding aspect of the learning experiences is its enrichment by an impressive range of cultural and extra-curricular activities. These complement and extend the curriculum and contribute towards the standards pupils achieve and their personal and social development. Pupils benefit instrument lessons by peripatetic teachers. The school makes very good use of the school environment and nearby places to provide rich and exciting learning experiences, including visits to places of interest in the locality and beyond. 'Forest Schools' provision is very good. Visitors are invited to the school to make learning interesting and

enjoyable. A broad and numerous range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils at lunchtimes and after school include educational, cultural and sporting activities. These are very popular and taken up by a large number of pupils from both key stages.

- 52 Another outstanding aspect throughout the school is the successful promotion of pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted very effectively through assemblies, collective worship, reflective times in class and religious education. This is an outstanding feature. Collective worship takes a variety of forms and plays an important part in developing pupils' understanding of being part of the school community and celebrating success. The pupils' moral development is an outstanding feature. Assertive and positive discipline policies are followed consistently. There are four 'houses' with house points, rewards, stickers, certificates and positive reinforcements embedded in the school day. Teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) work closely together and know the pupils very well. They set very good examples for the pupils and their very positive relationships with pupils help pupils to form very positive attitudes about self-discipline and to behave socially.
- 53 Pupils' social development is integrated effectively across all aspects of the school. Pupils are encouraged to think and have opinions and the school council is effective in decision making, for example, with regards their recommendation for girls to be allowed to wear trousers. There are pupils who are on the eco committee. These work closely with the school council. Pupils also take up positions of responsibility such as house captains, prefects and '*helpwr heddiw*'. There is very good provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to consider important issues linked to their own experiences, not only through the formal curriculum, such as science and geography, but also through reflection about and appreciation of the Welsh culture and other cultures, the natural world and music. The culture of Wales is celebrated in various ways, for example through an Eisteddfod on St David's Day. There are also theme weeks, one of which is a 'World Week' when cultures representing school families are studied.
- 54 The partnership with parents is an outstanding feature of the school. As indicated at the pre-inspection parents' meeting and questionnaires parents feel very positive about all aspects of school life. Parents feel involved with the life of the school. There are effective 'home links books' which parents spoke very positively about at the pre-inspection meeting. There is a parent/ teacher association which is very supportive, raising considerable sums of money for school resources. Parents are also actively involved in helping in school activities, such as reading groups and visiting school to talk with groups of pupils about their jobs. Parents feel very welcome, valued and appreciated. Parents are also surveyed on specific matters. There is thorough and effective communication with parents through newsletters, consultation evenings, annual reports and the school web site.
- 55 Links with the local community are very good and the school is an established part of the community. Links with the local secondary school are very good and the local cluster of schools is very active. Staff work very well together, for example, with very effective transition projects. Other well established links are

with regards to special educational needs and behaviour management. The school provides placements for students from local further and higher education institutions, having particularly close links with the University of Wales, Newport. At a meeting with the school's 'partners', all spoke very positively about how the learning experiences provided by St Mary's contribute significantly to the pupils' high standards.

- 56 The curriculum and collective worship comply with all legal requirements. Sex education is taught in accordance with the published policy. There is an appropriate home-school agreement, which both parents and pupils sign.
- 57 The promotion of work related education is very good and often an outstanding feature of the school. There are strong links with business partnerships, which support the many learning experiences pupils gain during the school day. There are good examples in Y5 of how pupils write a letter of application for the many varied posts of responsibility that the school creates for its pupils, such as peer mediators, monitors and librarians. They also benefit from a wide range of work-related activities and visits. Entrepreneurship receives very good attention in the school and is promoted effectively to pupils. They gain good understanding of roles and responsibilities, planning, budgeting, stock control, marketing, promotion and profit and loss through the school council, the fruit stall and when participating in enterprise week.
- 58 The school makes a good contribution to education for sustainable development and raising pupils' awareness of issues of global citizenship through its PSE programme and its participation in the Eco Awards. The school has achieved the silver award and is currently working toward the Green Flag Award. Pupils are developing a good understanding of conservation issues through the 'Forest Schools' programme and the nature club. Pupils recycle a range of products and participate in energy saving monitoring within the school.
- 59 Pupils gain good experiences relating to lifelong learning and community regeneration. The BLP programme develops children's life long learning skills and the school places a high priority on promoting healthy living. They have achieved three healthy living awards and implemented many initiatives and activities to promote health and well-being. Pupils take part in joint community events such as carol services, and other religious services.
- 60 The school promotes an ethos where all children, regardless of their background or circumstance, are encouraged to reach their potential. This is an outstanding feature of the school. There are good links with the parish to support families and there are a number of systems in place to support funding of school trips, music tuition and uniforms. A good range of charitable fund raising events and the well planned PSE programme support pupils' awareness of equality, diversity and tackling social disadvantage issues.
- 61 Pastoral links between St Mary's and the receiving secondary school, St Joseph's, are very good. There are curricular links between staff in a number of subject areas as well as regular meetings between primary heads. Induction is well planned and effectively supports parents whilst helping pupils to settle into school life quickly.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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- 62 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 63 The care, guidance and support arrangements for the pupils is very well planned and managed. This provision is an outstanding feature. The school is a very caring and happy community where pupils are valued and supported well. Effective use is made of the wide range of expertise of support agencies. All staff are highly effective in ensuring that the schools arrangements for care and support are implemented consistently and sensitively.
- 64 Relationships with parents are very good. The school successfully operates an open door policy enabling parents and carers to make suggestions or respond promptly to complaints should they arise. The school actively promotes the involvement of parents, pupils, local employers and external agencies in its consultation and decision-making processes. Annual pupil questionnaires, suggestion boxes, the role of the school and eco councils ensure that learners take the view that they are listened to and that, where possible, appropriate action will be taken.
- 65 The well established induction and support programmes to support pupils and help them settle in to school life quickly are very good. Parents and carers are very well informed about the school's ethos and expectations. As pupils progress through the year groups transition arrangements are very well planned ensuring pupils' move to the secondary school is an exciting and looked forward to experience.
- 66 Registration is undertaken correctly. The procedures for monitoring pupils' punctuality, attendance, behaviour and performance are very good. The headteacher and administrative staff monitor attendance and punctuality vigilantly and know the pupils well. Parents and guardians are aware of their responsibilities in relation to attendance and punctuality and are discouraged from taking term time holidays. For the very small minority of pupils who are persistently late and give cause for concern, the school acts swiftly in engaging strategies for improvement by way of support from the educational welfare officer and certificates for punctuality and good attendance.
- 67 The introduction of peer mediators has had a positive effect on any aggressive behaviour or bullying. Pupils recognise and respect the codes of conduct, consequences and rewards arrangements and enjoy the recognition of celebration assemblies and certificates, all of which help to promote positive behaviour.
- 68 The headteacher is the nominated child protection officer. All staff have received regular briefings on protocols and procedures as outlined in the school's child protection policy. Risk assessments, incidents and accidents are all recorded appropriately. All staff and helpers have current Criminal Records Bureau certificates. The effective procedures ensure that pupils feel secure in the school. In discussions with pupils during the inspection they commented positively about how staff listen and respect their viewpoints.

- 69 The school has appropriate arrangements that encourage and enable learners to develop a healthy lifestyle. School dinners offer a variety of healthy options and the school council are invited to participate in food tasting in order to choose the menu for the term. Parents and carers are given the menu for their information. Meals are provided by Newport Catering and the cook and her staff work very closely with the nutritionist and dietician and is very nutritionally innovative in her recipes. In discussions with pupils during the inspection they show awareness of the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise. The PSE programme is effectively used to promote a range of personal, health and welfare issues and the school receives good support from the nurse and the community police in delivering various aspects of this programme.
- 70 The provision for ALN is of very good quality with a number of outstanding features. Procedures for identifying individual learning needs are very rigorous and effective for all kinds of additional needs, including more able and talented pupils and those with EAL. There is a comprehensive ALN policy which has been reviewed recently and which complies with the requirements of the code of practice. The principle of early identification and intervention is very effective, identification being through a combination of baseline assessment, ongoing teacher assessment, parental observations and tracking data. This is an outstanding feature. The inclusion policy, also reviewed recently, is reflected in the ethos and life of the school. An excellent example of this was when pupils with ALN transferred from a neighbouring school which closed. The diagnosis and provision for these pupils' needs was of outstanding quality, having significant effect on their academic and personal and social development. Very effective use is made of external professional support.
- 71 All pupils with ALN have their own individual education plans (IEPs) containing details of clear targets, provision strategies and criteria, suitable resources, ideas for support staff and outcomes achieved. These IEPs are written by class teachers and monitored by the additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) to ensure targets are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. Progress is monitored carefully with parents three times a year. Annual review procedures meet legal requirements and parents are involved fully in the process. The overall provision is co-ordinated very well by the ALNCo. Professional and material resources are deployed efficiently and effectively, in consultation with the headteacher and governing body.
- 72 Pupils with ALN are very well supported in class by class teachers and other staff. This is consistent throughout the school and an outstanding feature. There are also small withdrawal groups by an experienced support assistant, who provides outstanding teaching support. Pupils with ALN make very good progress in their learning. Pupils with EAL also make very good progress; a recent trend being that all EAL achieve the expected levels of achievement by the end of KS2.
- 73 The ALNCo also co-ordinates the provision for more able and talented (MAT) pupils. Whilst this provision is already at a good stage of development, it is nevertheless identified by the school for further development. There is a MAT register with approximately 21% of pupils identified for a range of reasons. Provision is made through careful planning for differentiation, pupil ability groupings and cluster arrangements.

- 74 There is good consultation and dialogue with parents. At the pre-inspection meeting with parents those present expressed satisfaction that those pupils with ALN are very looked after well. All parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaires indicated parents are satisfied with the help and guidance their children receive from school.
- 75 There is outstanding support for pupils whose behaviour could potentially impede their progress. Clear rules and consequences are understood by all pupils and applied consistently throughout the school by all staff. All pupils have the opportunity to learn effectively without interference or interruption.
- 76 Clear policies exist on race equality, equal opportunities and diversity. There are good procedures in place to record any racial incidents. Good attention is paid to nurturing tolerance, happy inter-relationships and respect for others in collective worship assemblies, PSE sessions and the general life of the school. Gender equality is promoted well in the curriculum through challenging stereotyped views and both boys and girls are given opportunities to attend all extra-curricular activities.
- 77 Although the school building is not always accessible to the physically challenged, it does have a disability equality scheme and accessibility plan which provides appropriate information for disabled pupils, parents and carers and seeks support when required. The school plans and manages well in advance for any visitors or pupils who would need support accessing the building.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features.

- 78 The grade awarded for this key question matches that given by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 79 The headteacher leads the school very effectively. She gives a crystal clear direction through the values she communicates to all involved in the educational process. The school successfully promotes a caring Christian ethos and its commitment to equal opportunities is outstanding. These values are shared by staff, parents and pupils and are evident in all the school's work.
- 80 An outstanding feature of the school is the way in which senior managers and curriculum leaders provide very effective leadership, monitoring standards and clearly identifying areas for improvement. The school takes appropriate account of national priorities and is successfully implementing the skills-based curriculum. It has also made a good start on introducing the principles for the Foundation Phase in Reception and KS1.
- 81 The school has set realistic and challenging targets for pupils' performance and regularly meets or exceeds these at KS1. In 2008 KS2 teacher assessments, the school did not meet its challenging targets because of the late influx of pupils into Y6 from a local school that had just closed. Many of these pupils had a variety of additional educational and behavioural needs.
- 82 The effectiveness of performance management and staff appraisal is outstanding. Teachers' objectives reflect both the school's priorities and the

professional development needs and interests of individual teachers. The training taken by teachers has had a very positive effect on the quality of education provided by the school.

- 83 The governing body makes an outstanding contribution to the leadership and management of the school. It is very supportive of the headteacher and staff and highly effective in executing its duties. Governors contribute significantly to setting the educational direction of the school and have many professional talents to bring to the school's aid. High quality regular monitoring of the quality of provision through visits to the school, presentations by subject leaders and the headteacher's report means that governors are able to support and challenge the professional management of the school very effectively. All statutory requirements are met, including those for collective worship and complaints.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features.

- 84 The grade awarded for this key question matches that given by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 85 The headteacher, senior managers and all staff are very well informed about performance in their areas of responsibility. This information is used very effectively to construct action plans to address weaknesses in the school's performance. These are exemplary and an outstanding feature of the school's self-evaluation process. The school has very good self-evaluation arrangements, which are systematic and based on first-hand evidence. Senior managers and subject leaders make highly effective use of planning, preparation and assessment time to monitor teaching, learning and standards and the information gathered is used effectively to inform the school's self-evaluation report.
- 86 The school's consultation procedures are outstanding. All those who provide education are actively involved in the self-evaluation process. Staff, pupils, parents and governors are consulted and their views sought and discussed fully. The school self-evaluation report is a very well-researched document which effectively identifies its strengths and areas for development.
- 87 The inspection team agreed with the school's evaluation in five of the seven key questions. Where the inspection team did not agree, as it did not in key questions 1 and 2, this was because the school has been unduly influenced by the dip in standards at KS2 caused by the late influx of pupils into Y6 from another school. The value added to pupils' learning as they move through the school is outstanding and this warrants the grade 1 awarded to these key questions by the inspection team.
- 88 The information gathered through self-evaluation is used very effectively to direct strategic planning. Senior managers and governors set clear priorities for improvement and these have maintained standards at a high level for several years. This is an outstanding feature. The SIP is a detailed and effective document, which clearly sets out the school's priorities for the next three years. These priorities are supported well by the effective allocation of resources. The school has maintained a significant surplus for the last three years, as it was

expecting to have to move from its current building. However, these plans have been suspended for the present and the school has plans to decrease the surplus by increasing expenditure on educational resources in the current academic year.

- 89 The school can show that its actions have resulted in consistently high standards, especially in reading and writing at both key stages. The value added to pupils' learning between Reception and Y2 is outstanding and pupils make an average of 2.5 NC levels progress between Y2 and Y6. This is outstanding progress. The school has also made good progress in addressing the issues raised by the last inspection.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features.

- 90 The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in the self-evaluation report.
- 91 The school has an appropriate number of teachers who are suitably qualified and have a range of expertise and experience which is used effectively. The pupil/teacher ratio is good. A range of training opportunities and visits ensure that individual teacher needs and school priorities are met. The good quality of pupil support through dedicated teaching assistants is a strength of the school. They are used well and their quality has enabled the school to plan its strategies effectively. This is an outstanding feature, particularly in the reception classes. All staff benefit from appropriate training that improves the expertise in curriculum areas.
- 92 The school has appropriate resources to meet needs in most curriculum areas. However, the school's ICT equipment is limited and this has a negative effect on the progress pupils make in the development of their skills in this area. The school makes good use of its outdoor areas to enhance the curriculum. The school has recently purchased equipment for the reception outdoor classroom. This has significantly influenced the provision for the Foundation Phase requirements for outdoor activities.
- 93 Overall, the use of accommodation is very good. Inside it is more than adequate in terms of space with each classroom having an interactive whiteboard. Classrooms, hall and work areas show imaginative use of space. Stimulating displays help to create an environment which is conducive to learning. However, due to the nature of the building the school finds it difficult to comply with suitable access for those with disabilities. Also there are no toilet facilities in the outdoor classroom block and pupils have to cross an open area to use facilities.
- 94 Financial management is rigorous. Priorities are set by the headteacher and the governing body's finance committee. Sound financial protocols have enabled the head to manage the financial implications of seeking additional funding competently. The headteacher and governors have prioritised the quality of teaching as a means of raising standards and have ensured that the school is very well staffed. The governing body audits expenditure rigorously and ensure that resources are matched to priorities. This is an outstanding feature. The school gives very good value for money.

School's response to the inspection

As a whole school community we are delighted with the outcomes of the inspection report that acknowledges that St Mary's is a good school with a number of outstanding features.

We are extremely proud it was recognised that because of the high quality teaching, pupils achieve standards which are often well above average, both in their academic and personal development.

We are very pleased that the relationships throughout the school community were found to be outstanding. We are equally pleased that the care, guidance and support given to pupils was recognised as outstanding, and that the report highlights that the provision for pupils with ALN is of a very good quality with outstanding features.

The very many outstanding features of our school identified in the report will enable us to build on the firm foundations and continue the high standards and high expectations.

The staff and governors would like to thank the inspection team for their courtesy and integrity and for the professional way in which they conducted the inspection.

The inspection team made two recommendations in order to further raise the very good standards of the school. These will be added to the school's improvement plans and a copy sent to all parents.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	St Mary's RC VA Primary School
School type	Primary
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Address of school	Queens Hill Newport
Postcode	NP9 5HJ
Telephone number	01633 840490

Headteacher	Mrs Natalie Gould
Date of appointment	January 2007
Chair of governors	Mr Peter Durkin
Registered inspector	Mr Stephen Dennett
Dates of inspection	02 December 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		37	54	53	48	48	52	56	348

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	14	4	16.5

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	21:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.2:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Autumn 2007		94	95
Spring 2008		93	95
Summer 2008		93	94

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	10
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	1

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2008			Number of pupils in Y2:					48
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	4	65	31	
		National	0	4	14	63	19	
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	4	65	31	
		National	0	4	15	55	26	
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	4	69	27	
		National	0	5	16	68	11	
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	4	67	29	
		National	0	2	11	63	24	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	2	63	35	
		National	0	2	11	65	22	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	42	58	
		National	0	2	9	66	23	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	96	In Wales	81

D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements
 W Pupils who are working towards level 1

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2008			Number of pupils in Y6					52			
Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	2	10	48	40
		National	0	0	0	1	1	3	16	51	29
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	4	14	60	23
		National	0	0	0	1	1	3	15	51	30
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	4	12	39	46
		National	0	0	0	1	1	2	11	54	32

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	81	In Wales	76

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

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

- A team of four inspectors spent a total of nine inspector days at the school.
- Pre-inspection meetings were held with staff, parents and governors.
- Eighty-one questionnaires were returned by parents and analysed.
- The school's self-evaluation report and a comprehensive range of other documents were examined.
- Thirty lesson observations were undertaken.
- Samples of pupils' work from across the age and ability ranges were examined.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and listened to them read.
- Inspectors talked to the school council and eco committee, and observed lunch times and break times.
- Inspectors attended daily acts of collective worship.
- Post-inspection meetings were held with the staff and the governing body.
- The headteacher acted as nominee and assisted the team with gathering evidence and answering questions about the school.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Stephen Dennett Registered Inspector	Led on: Context, Summary, Recommendations and Appendices Key Questions 1, 5 and 6
Miss Helen Adams Lay Inspector	Led on: Key Question 4 Contributed to: Key Questions 1 and 3
Mr Enir Morgan Team Inspector	Led on: Key Question 2 and 7 Contributed to: Key Questions 1 and 3
Mr Michael Thomas Team Inspector	Led on: Key Questions 1 Contributed to: Key Questions 1 and 4
Mrs Natalie Gould Nominee	Contributed to all key questions

Acknowledgement

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

Contractor

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