

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Ysgol Y Castell,
Hylas Lane, Rhuddlan,
Denbighshire. LL18 5AG**

School Number: 6632037

Date of Inspection: 22/04/08

by

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Ysgol Y Castell 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 Ysgol Y Castell took place between 22/04/08 and 24/04/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Merfyn Lloyd Jones undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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 standard inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Ysgol y Castell Primary school serves the small town of Rhuddlan and lies in the area administered by Denbighshire County Council.
- 2 The school caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven years of age who live almost exclusively in or near the town. At the time of the inspection there were 194 full-time equivalent pupils on roll. Since the last inspection there are 24 fewer pupils on roll. Pupils are admitted into the nursery class in the September following their third birthday and to the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.
- 3 Pupils represent the full ability range. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs, although there are thirty pupils either on school action or school action plus for extra support. The pupils are arranged into seven classes.
- 4 All levels of socio-economic groups are represented in the community. Nearly all the pupils have English as their first language and are of white ethnicity. Twenty one per cent of the pupils receive a free school meal.
- 5 The school was last inspected in 2002. The current head teacher has been in post since January 1988.

The school's priorities and targets

- 6 The school's main priorities and targets for 2007-08 include:
 - planning for and establishing Assessment for Learning across the school;
 - undertaking a review of ICT;
 - reviewing the anti-bullying policy;
 - raising standards in writing.

Summary

- 7 Ysgol y Castell is a caring school, one in which pupils feel safe, respected and valued. The school successfully promotes positive values and adults and pupils work together happily. All pupils are treated fairly and with respect. Members of staff work hard. Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum and the majority make good progress.

Table of grades awarded

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

- 8 The inspection team did not agree with the judgement of the school in five key questions. The school judged key questions 1, 2, 5 and 7 to be a grade 2 but it is the view of the team that there are shortcomings in all areas. However the team judged the care, support and guidance which pupils receive as a grade 2; the school awarded itself a grade 3 for this key question. There was an agreement with the school's judgement on key questions 3 and 6.
- 9 In the lessons observed, the standards achieved in the areas of learning and subjects inspected are:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	67%	21%	9%	0%

- 10 These percentages are slightly below the WAG's all Wales targets for 2010, that 98% of standards should be Grade 3 or better. They are also lower than the figures published in HMCI's latest Annual Report for 2005/06, where overall standards in primary schools in Wales are reported to be Grade 2 in 65% of lessons and Grade 1 in 12%.

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Ysgol Y Castell, 22/04/08

- 11 The overall quality of educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. They make very good progress in all aspects of learning and achieve good standards.
- 12 At key stage 1 and key stage 2, in the subjects inspected, the standards of achievement are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	Grade 3	Grade 3
Welsh Second Language	Grade 2	Grade 3
Science	Grade 2	Grade 3
Geography	Grade 3	Grade 2
Art	Grade 3	Grade 3
Music	Grade 2	Grade 2

- 13 In 2007, end of key stage 1 teacher assessment, the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or better in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science was above the Local Authority (LA) and the national averages. When compared with similar schools (i.e. schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals) across Wales, the school was placed in the top 25% of schools for English and the top 50% for mathematics and science.
- 14 Standards for the past three years have been consistently above the LA and national averages for each core subject.
- 15 There is very little difference between the performance of boys and girls in English and mathematics but the boys out perform the girls in science.
- 16 In 2007, end of key stage 2 teacher assessment, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English was above the LA and national average, in mathematics and science the results were close to the LA and national averages. When compared with similar schools across Wales, using the free school meals indicator, the school was placed in the top 50 per cent of schools for English and in the bottom 50 per cent of schools for mathematics and science.
- 17 Standards for the past three years have varied considerably from being in the top 25 per cent for each core subject to being in the bottom 50 per cent. School records indicate that there are significant differences between cohorts due to the mobility of pupils moving in and out of the area. Analysis of results indicates generally consistent performance.
- 18 The girls out perform the boys quite significantly in English and science but the margin in mathematics is minimal.
- 19 Overall, most pupils, including those with SEN, succeed regardless of their ability, gender or social background. The majority make good progress.

- 20 Statutory targets are set at both key stages and records show that pupils of all abilities regularly achieve the targets set for them. However, they are not sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. The school's targets for 2008/2009 are in line with the national averages in each core subject.
- 21 In the early years, the standards and progress pupils make in the key skills across the curriculum are very good.
- 22 Overall, pupils' key skills of listening, speaking and reading at key stages 1 and 2 are developing well but pupils' writing skills across the curriculum have not been fully exploited. Handwriting and presentation skills are not yet fully developed by many pupils, particularly at key stage 2.
- 23 Generally, at both key stages, pupils do not make sufficient use of their numeracy skills to develop their work in a number of areas across the curriculum. Pupils have good ICT skills but not enough independent use is made of ICT to investigate topics.
- 24 When provided with appropriate opportunities, pupils enjoy collaborating on creative and problem solving activities.
- 25 Most pupils have a good understanding of everyday Welsh commands and greetings and respond appropriately to questions by the teacher. As yet, however, their confidence in their own oral ability is not sufficiently secure for them to use Welsh on a regular basis in informal situations around the school.
- 26 Pupils are progressing well in their personal, moral and social development. During lesson times the majority work well with their peers and confidently express their views.
- 27 Overall, pupils demonstrate good behaviour, act responsibly and show respect for others. The majority of pupils settle well at the start of the day, work well in lessons and move around the school in an orderly manner. Many show enthusiasm and join in purposefully with the range of activities provided.
- 28 Average attendance over the three terms prior to the inspection was, nursery 85.6%, reception 90.9% and the rest of the school 92.7%. These figures are below local and national averages and do not meet Welsh Assembly Government targets.
- 29 Throughout the school, pupils' understanding of equal opportunity issues is good. They recognise, understand and respect diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within a society. All pupils are developing a good understanding of their role in the community which gives them a firm grounding in the importance of the world of work and citizenship.

The quality of education and training

- 30 In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6%	52%	30%	12%	0%

- 31 These figures are below the WAG's 2010 target for 80% of teaching to be Grade 2 or better. They are also below the national picture reported by HMCI in her latest annual report 2005-2006 where the quality of teaching is good or better (grade 1 and 2 in 79 per cent of lessons, including 17 per cent with outstanding features).
- 32 The quality of teaching is variable. Teaching is consistently good in the Early Years. Children are challenged and motivated in a wide range of appropriate learning experiences.
- 33 Where teaching is good at key stages 1 and 2, lessons have clear learning objectives which are clearly understood by pupils and are appropriately differentiated to suit the needs of all pupils. Lessons are well paced, teachers use resources purposefully and pupils are actively involved in their learning. They employ good questioning techniques and effectively analyse incorrect answers to show pupils how to correct their work. The effective involvement of classroom support workers has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers and support staff have good working relationships with pupils.
- 34 Where there are shortcomings in teaching, the work is not sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. Sometimes, long introduction and over-direction by teachers impacts adversely on the pace of lessons, resulting in all the pupils doing the same thing. Insufficient opportunities are given for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- 35 Generally, teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding of the subject they teach and are aware of recent developments.
- 36 All staff are fully committed to equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender, ability or race. All pupils are treated fairly and with respect.
- 37 The school's arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' attainment and progress meet statutory requirements. Teachers' planning identifies assessment opportunities; however, this information is not always used effectively to differentiate work. Where assessment is good, pupils are encouraged to assess themselves and their peers. They are referred back to the learning intentions and effectively guided to understand their next steps for improvement.
- 38 Marking is undertaken regularly across the school. Where it is good, pupils are clearly informed on how to improve standards; however, there is a lack of consistency in marking.
- 39 Computerised annual reports to parents provide information about their children's progress in all subjects. Parents are provided with opportunities to discuss their children's progress at parent's evenings.
- 40 The curriculum for the under-fives is well planned and provides a good range of learning experiences both indoors and outdoors. The school is making very good progress towards the implementation of the Foundation Phase.

- 41 The curriculum for pupils at key stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced, complies with legal requirements and meets the needs of all pupils. There are effective schemes of work in place for all subjects which show good planning for progression. The school ensures that all pupils, including those with disabilities, have equal access and opportunity to participate in all the activities the school provides.
- 42 Overall planning for the development of pupils' basic and key skills has good features which outweigh shortcomings. Schemes of work identify the progressive development of these skills but opportunities for pupils to apply them independently are limited.
- 43 Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is co-ordinated across a range of curricular areas and bilingualism is promoted well.
- 44 The quality of out-of-school learning, including extra curricular activities, is good.
- 45 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- 46 The links with parents, the community and other providers are good and the school serves the community well.
- 47 Partnerships with the feeder high school and local colleges are well established.
- 48 Work-related education is good and well established throughout the school. Links with local companies have been particularly successful.
- 49 Global citizenship is developing well. There is much evidence of the school acting in a sustainable way. The school has recently been awarded the bronze Eco schools award. Pupils' experiences in school enable them to begin to develop a range of skills associated with lifelong learning.
- 50 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has a formalised programme for Personal and Social Education (PSE) that ensures all aspects are progressively taught and developed fully; it is well integrated into all aspects of the school's activities. The programme reflects the school's strong ethos of mutual respect, trust and understanding. It manages its care arrangements well. It has very effective links with relevant support services.
- 51 The school's provision for ensuring the healthy development and well being of all pupils is continuing to develop.
- 52 Monitoring procedures for attendance and punctuality lack rigour. The school provides good support for pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress and that of others.
- 53 The overall quality of provision for additional learning needs is good. The school has good structures in place to identify effectively the additional learning needs of pupils. The provision fully complies with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice.

- 54 Multi-cultural awareness and very positive attitudes towards ethnic minorities are successfully developed in the school by the way it promotes traditions and cultures of ethnic minorities.

Leadership and management

- 55 In the absence of the head teacher, the deputy head teacher has prepared the school well for the inspection. Staff and learning support assistants have responded positively to her leadership. Together with the staff, she has created a positive environment which reflects the school's caring and supporting ethos.
- 56 The general administration of the school is good, arrangements are well organised with efficient systems and procedures in place. As a result, the school functions smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
- 57 The school's mission statement and values are explicitly expressed in policy statements and openly displayed in the school's main foyer.
- 58 The school takes account of national priorities and these are integrated into the daily life of the school; health promotion and sustainability are good examples of this.
- 59 The school works very effectively in partnership with its 'family' of local primary schools. The school is used as a pioneering example of good practice for developing the foundation phase for learning. Induction and transitional arrangements with the local high school are good.
- 60 There are clear systems and procedures in place to set end of key stage targets which comply with statutory requirements. The process of setting targets is well established. However, these targets are not sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils.
- 61 The self-evaluation process has not developed sufficiently as part of the school's management strategy and the role of subject coordinators in the process has not developed fully. There are, therefore, shortcomings in the manner in which the school staff is managed and in the way in which the strategic direction of the school is set.
- 62 The current performance management arrangements do not have a positive impact on the school's work in relation to the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve.
- 63 The governing body is very supportive and is kept regularly involved via a number of pro-active sub-committees. However, they are not currently active enough in monitoring standards and setting a strategic direction for the school.
- 64 The governing body meets all regulatory and legal requirements, with the exception of some minor omissions in the prospectus and annual report to parents.

- 65 The self-evaluation report is a useful document in that it identifies some of the school's good features and areas for development but judgements on progress and the standards pupils achieve across all subjects are limited.
- 66 The current SIP sets out the school's main priorities for the current year but there are no details beyond that. The plan is sufficiently detailed and includes timescales, responsibilities and success indicators. The impact of these priorities in improving teaching and learning and tackling underachievement is not sufficiently evident.
- 67 There are areas for improvement identified in the last inspection where insufficient progress has been made, particularly linking effectively performance management to maintaining and improving standards. Good progress has been made in addressing some of the other key issues.
- 68 The school employs an appropriate number of qualified and experienced teachers who deliver a broad and generally well balanced curriculum. The use of specialist teaching where appropriate has a positive impact on standards. Teaching and learning assistants work well with the teachers in supporting pupils with their learning.
- 69 At key stages 1 and 2, there is an appropriate level of resources for most subjects but some need updating. Pupils have good access to a computer suite and the use of interactive whiteboards supports teaching and learning well.
- 70 The accommodation provides a good setting for teaching and learning.
- 71 Appropriate learning resources are identified and costed. However, curriculum audits across both key stages to identify specific needs are not in place.
- 72 Taking into account the limited progress made in addressing some of the key issues identified in the last inspection report and the findings of this inspection, the school provides adequate value for money.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school in the areas inspected, the staff and governing body need to:

R1 raise standards by addressing the shortcomings identified in the subject reports;

R2 ensure good standards in all key skills;

R3 improve the use of assessment information to differentiate work more appropriately, particularly to challenge the more able pupils and to support those who have learning difficulties;

R4 develop the awareness of pupils of what they need to do in order to improve their work and provide more opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning;

R5 improve the leadership and management of the school to give a clear strategic direction to improvement;

R6 develop the self-evaluation system to monitor standards of work and the quality of teaching consistently and rigorously;

R7 address the shortcomings in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents so that they fully comply with statutory requirements;

R8 improve pupils' attendance.

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. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

73 The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report; there are shortcomings in some areas. The school awarded itself a grade 2 for this question.

74 In the lessons observed, the standards achieved in the areas of learning and subjects inspected are:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
3%	67%	21%	9%	0%

75 These percentages are slightly below the WAG's all Wales targets for 2010, that 98% of standards should be Grade 3 or better. They are also lower than the figures published in HMCI's latest Annual Report for 2005/06, where overall standards in primary schools in Wales are reported to be Grade 2 in 65% of lessons and Grade 1 in 12%.

76 The overall quality of educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. They make very good progress in all aspects of learning and achieve good standards.

77 At key stage 1 and key stage 2, in the subjects inspected, the standards of achievement are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	Grade 3	Grade 3
Welsh Second Language	Grade 2	Grade 3
Science	Grade 2	Grade 3
Geography	Grade 3	Grade 2
Art	Grade 3	Grade 3
Music	Grade 2	Grade 2

78 In 2007, end of key stage 1 teacher assessment, the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or better in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science was above the Local Authority (LA) and the national averages. When compared with similar schools (i.e. schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals) across Wales, the school was placed in the top 25% of schools for English and the top 50% for mathematics and science.

79 Standards for the past three years have been consistently above the LA and national averages for each core subject.

- 80 There is very little difference between the performance of boys and girls in English and mathematics but the boys out perform the girls in science.
- 81 In 2007, end of key stage 2 teacher assessment, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English was above the LA and national average, in mathematics and science the results were close to the LA and national averages. When compared with similar schools across Wales, using the free school meals indicator, the school was placed in the top 50 per cent of schools for English and in the bottom 50 per cent of schools for mathematics and science.
- 82 Standards for the past three years have varied considerably from being in the top 25 per cent for each core subject to being in the bottom 50 per cent. School records indicate that there are significant differences between cohorts due to the mobility of pupils moving in and out of the area. Analysis of results indicates generally consistent performance.
- 83 The girls out perform the boys quite significantly in English and science but the margin in mathematics is minimal.
- 84 Overall, most pupils, including those with SEN, succeed regardless of their ability, gender or social background. The majority make good progress.
- 85 Statutory targets are set at both key stages and records show that pupils of all abilities regularly achieve the targets set for them. However, they are not sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. Pupils are aware of their targets for improvement in English but this practice is yet to be introduced in other subjects. Pupils have yet to develop the confidence to set their own targets for improvement. There are no differences in standards of achievement of pupils in terms of social background or race.
- 86 The school's targets for 2008/2009 are in line with the national averages in each core subject. N.B. There is a need to include targets for 2010.
- 87 In the early years, the standards and progress pupils make in the key skills across the curriculum are very good.
- 88 Overall, pupils' key skills of listening, speaking and reading at key stage 1 and 2 is developing well but pupils' writing skills across the curriculum have not been fully exploited. Handwriting and presentation skills are not yet fully developed by many pupils, particularly at key stage 2.
- 89 Generally at both key stages, pupils do not make sufficient use of their numeracy skills to develop their work in a number of areas across the curriculum. Pupils have good information and communications technology (ICT) skills but not enough independent use is made of ICT to investigate topics.
- 90 When provided with appropriate opportunities, pupils enjoy collaborating on creative and problem solving activities. However, opportunities are often missed for pupils to take responsibility for their own work and the recording of it.

- 91 Most pupils have a good understanding of everyday Welsh commands and greetings and respond appropriately to questions by the teacher. As yet, however, their confidence in their own oral ability is not sufficiently secure for them to use Welsh on a regular basis in informal situations around the school.
- 92 Pupils are progressing well in their personal, moral and social development. During lesson times the majority work well with their peers and confidently express their views. They are establishing healthy living skills that include fostering good eating habits.
- 93 Overall, pupils demonstrate good behaviour, act responsibly and show respect for others. They understand the behaviour expected of them and are courteous to each other and to adults. Where there is inappropriate behaviour, the school's behaviour policy is followed and incidents are dealt with effectively. There have been three fixed term exclusions in the last twelve months.
- 94 The majority of pupils settle well at the start of the day, work well in lessons and move around the school in an orderly manner. Many show enthusiasm and join in purposefully with the range of activities provided. However, a minority of pupils at both key stages find it difficult to focus on their work for sustained periods.
- 95 Average attendance over the three terms prior to the inspection was, nursery 85.6%, reception 90.9% and the rest of the school 92.7%. These figures are below local and national averages and do not meet Welsh Assembly Government targets. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time. Registration is conducted efficiently and in line with statutory procedures.
- 96 Throughout the school, pupils' understanding of equal opportunity issues is good. They recognise, understand and respect diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within a society.
- 97 Pupils are developing their knowledge and understanding of the world of work through their visits to places of educational interest, their links with industry and through their involvement in a range of environmental and charitable initiatives. All pupils are developing a good understanding of their role in the community which gives them a firm grounding in the importance of the world of work and citizenship.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

98 The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report; there are shortcomings in the quality of teaching and in the way assessment is managed and used. The school awarded itself a grade 2 for this question.

99 In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6%	52%	30%	12%	0%

100 These figures are below the WAG's 2010 target for 80% of teaching to be Grade 2 or better. They are also below the national picture reported by HMCI in her latest annual report 2005-2006, where the quality of teaching is good or better (grade 1 and 2 in 79 per cent of lessons, including 17 per cent with outstanding features).

101 The quality of teaching is variable. Teaching is consistently good in the Early Years. Children are challenged and motivated in a wide range of appropriate learning experiences.

102 Where teaching is good at key stages 1 and 2, lessons have clear learning objectives which are clearly understood by pupils and are appropriately differentiated to suit the needs of all pupils. Lessons are well paced, teachers use resources purposefully and pupils are actively involved in their learning. They employ good questioning techniques and effectively analyse incorrect answers to show pupils how to correct their work. The effective involvement of classroom support workers has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers and support staff have good working relationships with pupils.

103 Where there are shortcomings in teaching, the work is not sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. Sometimes, long introduction and over-direction by teachers impacts adversely on the pace of lessons, resulting in all the pupils doing the same thing. Insufficient opportunities are given for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

104 Generally, teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding of the subject they teach and are aware of recent developments. The school recognises the need to update teachers' skills in Welsh.

105 There are good working relationships in all classrooms. All staff are fully committed to equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender, ability or race. All pupils are treated fairly and with respect. Good team work is evident with all adults across the school.

- 106 Teachers' use of incidental Welsh is improving and promotes the development of pupils' bilingual skills. However, this is not always consistent.
- 107 The school's arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' attainment and progress meet statutory requirements. Baseline assessment is undertaken in the reception class and information from playgroup observations is also used in the nursery class to plan future work.
- 108 The 'Travelling Together' booklet is used to record individual pupil progress from nursery to the end of key stage 1. In the early years, notes of observations further inform planning.
- 109 Assessment information gained from standardised tests and teacher assessment is used to track pupils' individual progress in the core subjects and to identify ability groupings within classes, as appropriate. Record checklists also identify skills acquired in IT, mathematics and science.
- 110 Teachers' planning includes assessment opportunities, however, these are not assessed consistently and this information is not used to differentiate work to challenge the more able pupils or support the less able. Opportunities for self-assessment are underdeveloped. The school has identified introducing self-assessment as a target in their school improvement plan (SIP).
- 111 Individual targets are set for the end of key stage 2; however, more specific targets to assist teachers and pupils to assess regularly progress in the core subjects are only set in English.
- 112 A manageable system of tracking pupils' progress in the non-core subjects identifies pupils performing above or below the expected levels of achievement.
- 113 Marking is undertaken regularly across the school. Where it is good, pupils are clearly informed on how to improve standards, however, there is a lack of consistency in marking and more opportunities are required to enable pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- 114 Where assessment is good, children are encouraged to assess themselves and their peers. They are referred back to the learning intentions and effectively guided to understand their next steps for improvement.
- 115 Portfolios of work are being developed to support teachers' judgements about pupils' levels and standards. Discussions are being held to moderate pupils' work.
- 116 Computerised annual reports to parents provide information about their children's progress in all subjects and general comments about their personal and social development; in addition, the school provides a half-yearly progress report. Parents are able to comment on their child's report but pupils are not yet provided with an opportunity to comment on their progress. The inclusion of targets for improvement in the reports is inconsistent. Parents are provided with opportunities to discuss their children's progress at parent's evenings.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 117 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 118 The overall range of learning experiences provided for pupils is appropriate and equally accessible to all.
- 119 The overall quality of educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. The curriculum is well planned and provides a good range of learning experiences both indoors and outdoors. The school is making good progress towards the implementation of the Foundation Phase.
- 120 The curriculum for pupils at key stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced, complies with legal requirements and meets the needs of all pupils. Policies are in place, with a clear cycle of review arrangements. There are effective schemes of work in place for all subjects which show good planning for progression.
- 121 Overall planning for the development of pupils' basic and key skills has good features which outweigh shortcomings. Schemes of work identify the progressive development of these skills but opportunities for pupils to apply them independently across the curriculum are limited, as are opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and problem solving skills.
- 122 The quality of out-of-school learning, including extra curricular activities is good. Pupils have equal opportunities to participate in a range of extra curricular activities including sport, art, craft and ICT and, more recently, a gardening club. Pupils' experiences and personal development benefit from the many visitors to the school and from visits to the community and further afield to residential centres such as Pentrellyncymer.
- 123 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has a formalised programme for Personal and Social Education (PSE) that ensures all aspects are progressively taught and developed fully, it is well integrated into all aspects of the school's activities. Daily acts of collective worship raise important social, moral and cultural messages such as caring for the environment and provide opportunities for personal reflection and contemplation. Studies of the culture of other countries, through geography and music lessons, promotes positive attitudes. The involvement of pupils in the Urdd competitions, the school eisteddfod and residential visits to Glan Llyn help them to develop their awareness of the Welsh culture.
- 124 The links with parents, the community and other providers are good and the school serves the community well. Parents are provided with regular newsletters, there is a school website and termly parents' evenings. There is a very strong Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) which raises substantial amounts of money each year.

The well-attended village carnival is organised by the PTA and is very successful in bringing the local community together.

- 125 Partnerships with the feeder high school are well established and work is in progress to develop a common transition programme with other feeder primary schools. The school regularly takes students from North East Wales Institute (NEWI), Llandrillo College and pupils from Ysgol Emrys ap Iwan on work experience.
- 126 Work-related education is good and well established throughout the school. Links with local companies have been particularly successful, impacting well on pupils' knowledge and understanding. The school nurse, police liaison officer and fire service are among the many visitors to school who contribute to pupils' awareness of the world of work.
- 127 Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is co-ordinated across a range of curricular areas as well as promoted through 'Wythnos Gymreig'. Bilingualism is promoted well and during the day pupils are actively encouraged through a variety of activities to use Welsh. However, their bilingual skills are not yet developed progressively across the school.
- 128 All pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum, including sport. Pupils are particularly aware of social disadvantage by their involvement in raising funds for Maria's Care, a school orphanage in Uganda. Any incidents of stereotyping are actively challenged by staff. Global citizenship is developing well.
- 129 The school has recently been awarded the bronze Eco schools award. There is a flourishing eco committee with a well-developed action plan working towards their silver award. There is much evidence of the school acting in a sustainable way.
- 130 Pupils' involvement with the School Council, running the tuck shop and raising funds for children in need helps develop entrepreneurial skills. Their experiences in school enable them to begin to develop a range of skills associated with lifelong learning.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 131 The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement made by the school in its self evaluation because a greater number of good features were identified. The school awarded itself a grade 3 for this question.
- 132 The school manages care arrangements well. It has very effective links with relevant support services and places considerable emphasis on creating an environment where pupils feel safe and confident.
- 133 The partnerships with parents/carers are good. Most of the responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting were positive in their support of the school. An 'Index for Inclusion' questionnaire was recently sent out to parents and resulted in positive action in several areas identified as in need of

attention. Pupils on the School Council feel that their views are valued and considered seriously.

- 134 Induction into the nursery class is very well managed. Parents are kept fully informed and involved and pupils settle very quickly into school routines. Effective arrangements are in place for the year 6 pupils when they transfer to secondary education.
- 135 The school provides good personal support and guidance for pupils which reflects the school's strong ethos of mutual respect, trust and understanding. This is clearly evident in the positive relationships between pupils and adults. Pupils feel confident in approaching members of staff should they have any concerns. Parents value the support they receive.
- 136 Monitoring procedures for attendance and punctuality lack rigour. Statistics relating to attendance are not analysed and continuing absences are not always followed up. Targets to increase attendance levels have not been set and shared with all stakeholders.
- 137 Behaviour is consistently monitored by all staff, many are trained in assertive discipline strategies. Bullying is not considered a problem and any minor misdemeanours are sorted out sensibly. The LA has funded a range of training sessions that have proved beneficial to the school and individual pupils. Behaviour related policies are working documents and reinforce all the school puts into practice. Pupils work hard to earn merits and good behaviour is celebrated.
- 138 The school provides good support for pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress and that of others. If appropriate, individual targets are set and behaviour is monitored and rewarded. The school has suitable behaviour, anti-bullying and race equality policies and procedures that are fully incorporated into the daily life of the school.
- 139 The school's provision for ensuring the healthy development and well being of all pupils is continuing to develop. They are part of the Healthy Schools initiative and have gained their first year's award. Four members of staff are trained first aiders and the school makes arrangements to support pupils with particular medical needs. Appropriate security arrangements are in place. Suitable attention is given to sex education and substance misuse.
- 140 The head teacher is the person with responsibility for child protection and all staff have received training and can recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse. There is a child protection policy in line with local and all Wales procedures. Criminal Records Bureau checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers helping in school.
- 141 The overall quality of provision for additional learning needs is good. The school has good structures in place to identify effectively the additional learning needs of pupils. The provision fully complies with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice. Suitable Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are implemented and monitored. These are generally well structured and set appropriate targets and

there is good evidence of their use and impact in lessons. The school makes all reasonable efforts to involve parents in the regular reviewing of IEPs.

- 142 The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) effectively oversees and monitors all aspects of the provision, thus ensuring pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. As a consequence, the framework for inclusive education is well established.
- 143 The school ensures that all pupils, including those with disabilities, have equal access and opportunity to participate in all the activities the school provides and the school is fully equipped to deal with the disabled. The school's Disability Equality Policy promotes this area of the school's responsibility well.
- 144 The school's arrangements for eliminating racism are good and there is a clear policy for this purpose. Multi-cultural awareness and very positive attitudes towards ethnic minorities are successfully developed in the school by the way it promotes traditions and cultures of ethnic minorities. The school actively promotes respect for diversity.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 145 The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report; there are shortcomings in the way the school staff are managed and the way the strategic direction of the school is set. The school awarded itself a grade 2 for this question.
- 146 In the absence of the head teacher, the deputy head teacher has prepared the school well for the inspection. Staff and learning support assistants have responded positively to her leadership. Together with the staff, she has created a positive environment which reflects the school's caring and supporting ethos.
- 147 The general administration of the school is good, arrangements are well organised with efficient systems and procedures in place. As a result, the school functions smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
- 148 The school's mission statement and values are explicitly expressed in policy statements and openly displayed in the school's main foyer. They are scheduled to be reviewed and updated. It is planned that all members of staff will contribute to these to ensure a shared sense of ownership. Equal opportunity is actively promoted, and practice in this respect is consistent across the school.
- 149 The school takes account of national priorities and these are integrated into the daily life of the school; health promotion and sustainability are good examples of this. These initiatives are having a positive impact on pupils' learning and well being.
- 150 The school works very effectively in partnership with its 'family' of local primary schools. They meet regularly to discuss local and national initiatives. The school is used as a pioneering example of good practice for developing the foundation phase for learning. Induction and transitional arrangements with the local high school are good.
- 151 There are clear systems and procedures in place to set end of key stage targets which comply with statutory requirements. The process of setting targets is well established, with teachers from year 1 to year 6 actively involved. An opportunity for the governors to question and challenge the targets is arranged with the LA also providing a challenge in relation to these. However, these targets are not sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils.
- 152 The self-evaluation process has not developed sufficiently as part of the school's management strategy and the role of subject coordinators in the process has not developed fully. There are, therefore, shortcomings in the manner in which the school staff is managed and in the way in which the strategic direction of the school is set.

- 153 The current performance management arrangements do not have a positive impact on the school's work in relation to the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve.
- 154 The governing body is very supportive and is kept regularly involved via a number of pro-active sub-committees where they discuss and debate issues. However, they are not currently active enough in monitoring standards and setting a strategic direction for the school.
- 155 The governing body meets all regulatory and legal requirements, with the exception of some minor omissions in the prospectus and annual report to parents.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 156 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 157 The self-evaluation report is a useful document in that it identifies some of the school's good features and areas for development, but judgements on progress and the standards pupils achieve across all subjects are limited. The current report was produced during the past six months involving all members of the teaching staff, it was subject to revisions before being presented and discussed by the governing body. There was no direct involvement of pupils, parents or the wider school community in this process.
- 158 The inspection team did not agree with the judgement of the school in five key questions. The school judged key questions 1, 2, 5 and 7 to be a grade 2 but it is the view of the team that there are shortcomings in all areas. However the team judged the care, support and guidance which pupils receive as a grade 2; the school awarded itself a grade 3 for this key question. There was an agreement with the school's judgement on key questions 3 and 6.
- 159 Arrangements for monitoring provision in NC subjects has begun through the school's newly established monitoring cycle where one core and three non-core subjects are reviewed annually, this works well.
- 160 There is a good tracking system in place to monitor pupils' progress in the core subjects; this, along with the careful analysis of end of key stage data, clearly identifies strengths and shortcomings. However, the information is not used effectively to set challenging targets for pupils or to improve practice.
- 161 There has been limited monitoring of other subjects, such as scrutinising pupils' books and resources and the direct monitoring of teaching and learning through lesson observation is yet to be introduced.

- 162 The current SIP sets out the school's main priorities for the current year but there are no details beyond that. The plan is sufficiently detailed and includes timescales, responsibilities and success indicators. The impact of these priorities in improving teaching and learning and tackling underachievement is not sufficiently evident.
- 163 There are areas for improvement identified in the last inspection where insufficient progress has been made, particularly linking effectively performance management to maintaining and improving standards. Good progress has been made in addressing some of the other key issues.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 164 The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgements made by the school in its self evaluation report. It is the view of the inspection team that there are shortcomings in the way members of staff are developed and the way resources are used. The school awarded itself a grade 2 for this question.
- 165 The school employs an appropriate number of qualified and experienced teachers who deliver a broad and generally well balanced curriculum. The use of specialist teaching where appropriate has a positive impact on standards. Teaching and learning assistants work well with the teachers in supporting pupils with their learning.
- 166 Arrangements to provide class teachers with the required time for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) are appropriate. However, these arrangements do not have a positive impact on teaching and learning in some classes.
- 167 The school secretary provides good administrative support. The caretaker and cleaners maintain a high standard of cleanliness throughout the school. The canteen staff and midday supervisors contribute well in providing a healthy, nutritious lunch. Their role is clearly recognised as an important aspect of the daily life of the school, contributing to the school functioning as a caring community.
- 168 At key stages 1 and 2, there is an appropriate level of resources for most subjects but some need updating. They are generally accessible to pupils but opportunities for pupils to select their own resources for learning are limited. By contrast, the nursery and reception classrooms, including outside play areas, are very well resourced.
- 169 Pupils have good access to a computer suite and the use of interactive whiteboards supports teaching and learning well.
- 170 The accommodation provides a good setting for teaching and learning. Classrooms are spacious and the school hall provides adequate space for assemblies, physical education and dining. The use of the additional 'Community Room' is an added bonus. The good hard play areas, the pupils' adventure playground and the spacious grassed areas overlooking the 'Castle' positively enhance the external environment.

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- 171 Appropriate learning resources are identified and costed. However, curriculum audits across both key stages to identify specific needs are not in place. Current arrangements do not ensure the economic and efficient use of resources to enhance curriculum delivery and to meet the needs of pupils effectively.
- 172 In liaison with the local authority finance department, the head teacher and governors oversee spending decisions. An overall surplus of funds in previous years has been earmarked to maintain current staffing levels. There is only limited evidence to demonstrate the positive impact of spending decisions on standards.
- 173 The most recent auditor's report undertaken ten years ago makes a number of important recommendations, namely the drawing up of a school's inventory into which designated purchases can be recorded. This awaits completion.
- 174 Additional funding is secured through a range of grant applications and successful fund raising activities. All this additional income is put to appropriate use.
- 175 Taking into account the limited progress made in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection report and the findings of this inspection, the school provides adequate value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

Key Stage 1: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key Stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

- 176 Building upon their very effective early years experiences, pupils at key stage 1 make good progress in speaking and listening. Most pupils willingly talk and share their likes and dislikes with others, including visitors, and confidently use a developing vocabulary, contributing enthusiastically to a range of discussions. The majority of pupils enjoy listening to stories and follow instructions correctly.
- 177 Most pupils at key stage 1 make good progress in reading at appropriate levels, reading accurately with good levels of understanding and enjoyment. They approach reading with confidence and achieve good levels of fluency when required to read out loud.
- 178 Throughout key stage 1 most pupils make steady progress in writing. They write accounts and descriptions and sequence stories. More able pupils are beginning to have a good understanding of how to set out a letter. By the end of the key stage many pupils have a good understanding of when to use capital letters and full stops and have an understanding of basic sentence construction.
- 179 Speaking and listening skills by the majority of pupils at key stage 2 are consistently good. At appropriate levels most pupils listen attentively and speak clearly and confidently. Younger key stage 2 pupils discuss a range of poetry effectively whilst older pupils imaginatively focus on scenes from Macbeth.
- 180 Throughout key stage 2, most pupils continue to build upon the reading skills they have gained previously. The majority of pupils in upper key stage 2 are enthusiastic readers, demonstrating good understanding, discussing characters, plots and their favourite authors sensibly. Most pupils make good predictions about the outcome of stories. Older pupils demonstrate good skills in gathering information on a range of subjects including important facts related to life in Kenya.
- 181 Overall, most key stage 2 pupils make good progress in writing. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are aware of paragraphs and confidently write for a range of audiences and purposes.
- 182 Most pupils develop appropriate skills in drafting and redrafting work using information and communication technology. The more able pupils write at length and make imaginative use of ideas to appeal to the reader. More able pupils use empathy well in their writing, varying sentences, paragraphing text to create different effects and spell and punctuate with an increasing measure of accuracy.

Shortcomings

- 183 At key stage 1, many pupils are not confident in using dictionaries.
- 184 More able pupils, at both key stages, are not challenged sufficiently to reach higher levels of attainment in writing.
- 185 Pupils do not develop their handwriting and presentation skills well enough as they progress through the school.
- 186 Pupils' written skills in English are not consistently transferred to other subjects.

Welsh second language

Key Stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

- 187 At key stage 1, the majority of pupils listen attentively to teachers, respond enthusiastically to questions and work well with each other.
- 188 They have a reasonable understanding of basic incidental Welsh, they respond appropriately to simple commands which reinforce and develop their language skills. Pupils have acquired suitable working vocabulary to sustain simple conversations about animals. Their pronunciation is developing well.
- 189 In their scripts, some of the pupils read back what they have written with sound pronunciation. They show an understanding of what they have read by responding orally to the content.
- 190 At key stage 1, pupils' writing skills are developing appropriately through tasks that include labelling, matching exercises and simple sentences based on a given pattern.
- 191 At key stage 2, most pupils react appropriately to simple greetings and have an understanding of everyday classroom phrases. They ask and respond to a range of basic questions by teachers. Older pupils say their name, how they feel and comment on their likes and dislikes. The more able recall a sufficient range of simple phrases and sentence patterns to sustain a simple conversation.
- 192 Generally, the majority of pupils read familiar words accurately when presented in the form of flash cards and in classroom displays. The more able pupils read aloud their own work and other printed texts confidently and with understanding.
- 193 As pupils progress through the key stage, pupils increasingly engage in written tasks which help them to become familiar with sentence structures and reinforce vocabulary. By the end of the key stage, some are able to plan, draft and improve their work.

Shortcomings

- 194 At key stage 2, opportunities for pupils to read Welsh texts to enhance their reading skills are limited.
- 195 Limited progression is evident in pupils' extended writing skills by the end of key stage 2.

Science

Key Stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

- 196 Across the key stages, pupils make progress in predicting, explaining and drawing conclusions. They build successfully on their knowledge and understanding of the science programme of study and most understand how to turn ideas into a form that can be investigated.
- 197 Pupils record their work using a range of forms which include note taking, diagrams, drawings, charts and graphs and many are able to report their work clearly in speech and writing using a growing vocabulary of scientific language.
- 198 Key stage 1 pupils explore the familiar world around them and most recognise and name parts of flowering plants. They understand that plants need light and water to grow.
- 199 Pupils at key stage 1 identify and name the main parts of the human body.
- 200 They understand that there is a circuit within a torch and that a battery is needed to light the torch.
- 201 Pupils classify and sort materials into groups on the basis of simple properties. They recognise similarities and differences between materials and many name common types of materials, for example, plastic.
- 202 At the start of key stage 2, the majority of pupils identify characteristics of different materials and group materials by characteristic.
- 203 Pupils apply their scientific skills to their work on solar panels in design and technology.
- 204 Pupils in key stage 2 recognise that changes in some materials can be reversed, for example, water to ice, and other materials cannot be reversed, for example, if baked.
- 205 Pupils understand how vibrations from sound sources can travel through materials.

- 206 Many pupils, including the less able, understand how the force of friction varies according to the nature of the shoe surface and understand the principle of fair testing.
- 207 Pupils at key stage 2 have a good understanding of simple circuits and that a complete conducting circuit, including a power supply, is needed for a current to flow to make electrical devices work and how switches can be used to control devices.

Shortcomings

- 208 At key stage 2, opportunities for pupils to plan and investigate their own ideas are underdeveloped. A few pupils do not plan and follow the investigative process appropriately nor record their work accurately.
- 209 Pupils' use of IT to access and present scientific information is underdeveloped.

Geography

Key Stage 1: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key Stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 210 At key stage 1, good use is made of the local environment. Pupils plot routes on a map and talk with confidence about features, both human and physical, when they follow the route around the school. Their progress in early mapping is good.
- 211 When conducting simple traffic surveys they interpret information successfully and discuss their findings confidently. Pupils are beginning to use and understand appropriate vocabulary associated with their studies.
- 212 Pupils, through the adventures of Barnaby bear are beginning to learn about the similarities and differences between their own country and Brittany. They respond enthusiastically about the weather, language and the different currency that's used.
- 213 At key stage 1, pupils are beginning to understand the impact of pollution on the environment and the contribution they can make to help.
- 214 At key stage 2, pupils acquire good mapping skills. Using a range of different maps, they interpret information well and clearly understand the purpose of symbols, scale and grid references.
- 215 In their study of contrasting localities they describe geographical differences and appreciate the importance of location in understanding places. They recognise and describe physical and human processes. They use secondary sources with confidence to gather information, ideas and explanations.
- 216 Pupils display a good understanding of environmental issues and sustainable development, and identify ways in which human activity affects the environment.

They describe how people can both improve and damage the environment. In doing so, they pose geographical questions, make observations and analyse evidence.

Shortcomings

- 217 At key stage 1, pupils' knowledge of a contrasting locality is not sufficiently developed.

Art

Key Stage 1: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key Stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

- 218 Most key stage 1 pupils experiment with an appropriate range of materials and techniques. The majority of younger pupils use pencils correctly when experimenting with light and shade. Most are beginning to be aware of contrast within the pictures they create.
- 219 The majority of younger pupils at key stage 1 confidently observe the shape and form of objects for example, the drawing of plants and leaves, and produce accurate observational drawings.
- 220 Most younger pupils use a range of paper weaving techniques to create differing patterns, selecting interesting combinations of colour to create the desired impact. Most pupils explore ideas related to a 'Winter World' to create a range of artwork.
- 221 The majority of older pupils at key stage 1 use a range of materials sensitively to create a life size portrait of themselves, accurately developing proportion, position and texture within individual styles.
- 222 The majority of younger pupils at key stage 2 continue with their appreciation of pattern in a variety of natural forms. Work on lines is built on successfully when pupils take an imaginary journey that links a range of shapes and patterns from a bird's eye view.
- 223 Most older pupils at key stage 2 confidently evaluate the work of Paul Klee. Creating their own work, pupils use an appropriate range of warm colours onto which a number of recognisable shapes are positioned to give the desired impact.
- 224 Using a range of photographs, pupils use perspective appropriately. Completed drawings are further embellished by painting with water colours. They appraise the aesthetic quality captured in their drawings and paintings and explore ways of improving the final product.
- 225 Clay work is undertaken by the majority of older pupils in key stage 2 in the production of thumb pots and clay tiles, supervised by a local artist.

226 Throughout the key stage, good links with art and geography are successfully combined by the study and exploration of Aboriginal Art forms. Using clay figures, pupils confidently created animated stories using a range of information and communication technology techniques.

Shortcomings

227 As pupils progress through the school, their skills are not progressively developed.

Music

Key Stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

228 Pupils at both key stages make good progress in performing on un-tuned percussion instruments and represent changes in tempo and pitch.

229 They retain good posture whilst singing a variety of English and Welsh songs.

230 Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress in evaluating their own and other pupils' performances and key stage 2 pupils listen effectively, to make distinctions within the musical elements.

231 At the start of key stage 1, pupils identify high/low and loud/quiet sounds.

232 Pupils successfully repeat a simple rhythm on a range of non-tuned percussion instruments which they can name, for example, castanets.

233 Pupils maintain a steady beat and match this beat to the changing dynamics of their singing.

234 Younger pupils at key stage 2 demonstrate a good awareness of rhythm. They switch rhythms using body percussion and un-tuned percussion instruments.

235 Pupils work together successfully to compose, perform and evaluate a jingle with a range of musical elements. At key stage 2, pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of how to evaluate and refine their musical performance.

236 Towards the end of key stage 2, pupils sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. They sing with increasing diction and use of dynamics. Most pupils, whilst performing a piece, maintain their part well whether it be individually or as a group.

Shortcomings

237 There are no important shortcomings.

School's response to the inspection

Staff and governors at Ysgol y Castell view the inspection as a positive and informed step forward for further developing aspects of the life and work of the school. It was very pleasing to note that the inspection team judged Ysgol y Castell to be a caring school, where pupils are respected and valued within an environment where hard-working staff and pupils work happily together.

Staff and governors considered this inspection to be a thorough and constructive process carried out by a team in a professionally constructive and courteous manner.

We are particularly pleased that our emphasis on providing good quality learning experiences and effective care, support and guidance for our pupils has received praise from the inspection team in Key Questions 3 and 4.

The recommendations of the inspection report will be addressed as a priority and a planned timetable will be implemented. The plan will rigorously pursue the development and implementation of procedures to improve standards, assessment, strategic direction, monitoring arrangements and improving pupils' attendance.

A copy of the school's Action Plan in response to the inspection recommendations will be sent to all parents. The Governors' Annual Report to parents will also report on the progress the school is making with its action plan.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Y Castell
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Hylas Lane, Rhuddlan Denbighshire
Postcode	LL18 5AG
Telephone number	01745 590545

Headteacher	Mr Nigel Evans
Date of appointment	January 1988
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Gwilym Williams
Registered inspector	Mr Merfyn Lloyd Jones
Dates of inspection	22 nd – 24 th April 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	14	26	26	27	26	28	27	20	194

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	4	9.3

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	21:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	9.3:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	n/a
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25.7
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.3:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Summer 2007	85.3	92.3	91.8
Autumn 2007	80.5	89.3	93.7
Spring 2008	91.0	91.1	93.5

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

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results - End of Key Stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2007			Number of pupils in Y2:		26		
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	7	85	8
		National	0	3	14	63	20
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	19	62	19
		National	0	4	15	55	26
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	11	81	8
		National	0	5	16	68	11
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	100	0
		National	0	2	11	64	23
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	8	77	15
		National	0	2	11	65	22
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	4	96	0
		National	0	1	9	66	24

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	92.3%	In Wales	80.1%

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

National Curriculum Assessment Results - End of Key Stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2007			Number of pupils in Y6:		25					
Percentage of pupils at each level										
			D	A	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	13	75	13
		National	0	0	0	1	4	16	50	29
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	4	16	76	4
		National	0	0	0	1	3	15	50	30
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	20	76	4
		National	0	0	0	0	2	12	53	32

by Teacher Assessment	
In the school	71%
In Wales	74.1%

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 and a peer assessor inspected the school over a period of 10 inspector days.

The deputy head teacher was the nominee and she played an extensive role during the inspection.

Thirty three lessons or part lessons were observed and a selection of the pupils' practical and written work was scrutinised.

Registration, collective worship and extra-curricular activities were inspected.

Discussions were held with staff and pupils about their work.

All documents presented by the school prior to and during the inspection, were scrutinised.

Meetings were held prior to the inspection with the head teacher, staff, parents and the governing body.

Four parents attended the meeting held prior to the inspection, and the parents' responses (86 in all) to the questionnaires distributed were analysed.

Post inspection meetings were held with the head teacher, staff and governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Members	Responsibilities	Subjects/areas of learning
Mr. Merfyn Lloyd Jones Registered Inspector	Context Summary and recommendations Key questions 1, 2, 5 and 6	Welsh second language Geography
Mr Peter Clark Team Member	Key question 4 and 7; and contributions to Key Questions 1 and 2	English Art
Mrs Janice Dickens Team Member	Key question 3 + contributions to Key Question 2	Science Music
Mrs Justine Barlow Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7	
Mr Richard Owen Lloyd Peer Assessor	Contribution to all seven key questions	
Mrs Joanne Evans Nominee	Contributions to all questions by providing information	

Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, the head teacher, the deputy head teacher, the staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation during the inspection.

Contractor

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