

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Bedwas Junior School
Church Street
Bedwas
Caerphilly
CF83 8EB**

School Number: 6762323

Date of Inspection: 05/05/09

by

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Date of Publication: 08/07/09

Under Estyn contract number: 1125108

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Bedwas Junior 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 Bedwas Junior School took place between 05/05/09 and 07/05/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by Luned Eleri Betts 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. Bedwas Junior School is situated in the main street of the former mining village of Bedwas to the east of Caerphilly. The accommodation comprises an old single storey Victorian building with adjacent demountable classrooms and hard-surfaced play areas.
2. One hundred and forty two pupils are currently on roll. The decline in the school population over the last three years has not been as great as forecast. Sixty six per cent of pupils come from the local area, which is neither prosperous nor disadvantaged. Sixteen pupils have joined the school at various times during the last four years, many from some distance outside the catchment area.
3. Pupils are taught in five mixed age classes. During the inspection the teacher appointed to teach Welsh and music during teacher's preparation, planning and assessment (PPA) time was absent and the classes were taken by a teacher seconded from a school within the local education authority (LEA).
4. Learners come from a range of backgrounds and represent the full range of ability. Approximately thirty per cent (around forty learners) are on the school's special educational needs (SEN) register a figure, which is higher than local and national percentages. Six pupils have a statement of SEN. No pupil is disapplied from the national curriculum (NC) and no one has been excluded during the last twelve months. Eleven per cent are entitled to free school meals, a figure that is lower than local and national percentages.
5. English is the predominant language of all pupils. No pupil uses Welsh at home. Three per cent of the school population are from minority ethnic groups but no pupil receives support in English as an additional language.
6. The school was last inspected in June 2003. A new headteacher took up post in September 2006. In September 2008 four new members of staff were appointed including a new deputy headteacher.
7. The school received the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the second time in 2007. It has also achieved the Healthy Schools Award twice and was awarded the Eco Schools Green Flag in June 2008.

The school's priorities and targets

8. The school's main aims are to:

- provide a secure, caring and happy school;
- meet all pupils' educational needs, ensuring that every learner achieves his or her potential;
- nurture a feeling of being valued and of valuing others;
- develop highly motivated pupils who take responsibility for their learning; and
- encourage a successful partnership between home, school and the wider community.

9. The school's priorities for 2008-9 are to:

- improve pupils' reading and writing skills;
- improve standards in history, geography and religious education;
- develop pupils' independent learning skills;
- increase pupils' use of information communications technology (ICT) in all subjects;
- deliver the revised national curriculum for Year(Y)3, Y4 and Y5.
- continue to deliver Eco and health related education;
- improve pupils' awareness of the language, culture and heritage of Wales;
- develop a new programme for teaching the dance and gymnastic elements of physical education;
- continue to develop provision for SEN;
- seek pupils' views on a wide range of school issues;
- continue to develop effective relationships with a range of partnerships;
- review health and safety policies; and
- continue to improve the indoor learning environment.

10. The school's mission statement is: Striving for excellence/ Anelu at ragoriaeth.

Summary

11. Bedwas Junior School is a good school with outstanding features. Pupils receive a high quality education provided by a dedicated team of teachers and support staff. Standards are high, the quality of teaching is consistently good or better and the curriculum provided enriches pupils' lives. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding.

Table of grades awarded

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

12. The inspection team agreed with the grades given by the school in its self-evaluation report in five of the seven key questions. In the other two questions the team awarded the school a higher grade because of the many outstanding features

Standards

13. In the 2008 NC assessments in Y6, pupils' performance reflected the steady improvement in attainment since 2006. In English, mathematics and science the percentage of pupils attaining a Level 4, the level expected of pupils who are eleven years' of age, and the Core Subject Indicator(CSI), which is the percentage of pupils who attained a Level 4 in all three subjects, was higher than local and national figures. A significant feature was the improving performance of boys in English.
14. In comparison with similar schools in the same free school meals group, the overall performance shows considerable improvement. In 2006 mathematics was in the third quarter of schools, but English, science and the CSI were all in the lower quarter. In 2007 all subjects moved up to the next quarter and in 2008, while mathematics made little improvement and the CSI remained in the

same position there was a significant improvement in English and science. These figures, however, do not present an accurate picture as they include a 'dual registered' pupil in special provision who had never been taught at the school. When this individual is not included, results in all subjects are in the upper quarter with science being at the top of the upper quarter.

- Analysis of results since 2006 show an increasingly good match between actual targets set and individual attainment. In mathematics in 2008 targets were matched and in English, science and the CSI they were exceeded.

Grades for standards in lessons observed during the inspection

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
54%	46%	-	-	-

- These figures are higher than the national averages as published in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's (HMCI) Annual Report for 2007-8, where overall standards in primary schools in Wales are reported to be Grade 2 or better in 84% of lessons. Standards are very much higher than the Grade 1 national average of 12%. These percentages show a significant increase since the last inspection.

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	
Welsh second language	Grade 2
Science	Grade 1
Design technology	Grade 1
History	Grade 1
Art and design	Grade 1
Religious education	Grade 1

- Pupils achieve outstanding standards in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and the use of ICT. Skills in bilingualism are good. Pupils are confident when using and responding in Welsh during school routines but are less assured in using vocabulary and phrases across subject areas.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of what they are doing. All respond well to the sharing of lesson outcomes across all classes. They also show a clear understanding of what they must do to improve the standards and quality of the work they produce.

19. The progress learners make towards fulfilling their potential, including those with SEN, is outstanding and enables them to move confidently to the next stage in their learning. Their ability to work independently is also outstanding.
20. Pupils' personal, social and learning skills are excellent. Their attitudes to learning, their interest in their work and their ability to sustain concentration are good with outstanding features. They are very well behaved in and around the school.
21. The average level of attendance is good. Percentages are above local and national figures. The majority of pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and all are on time for individual lessons.
22. Throughout the school, pupils' understanding of equal opportunities issues are very good. Their understanding and respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions in society is outstanding.
23. Pupils have a very well developed awareness of their responsibilities to the community and older ones understand what careers they can follow, as well as the working conditions and lives of people in a range of different vocations in the village.

The quality of education and training

Grades for teaching

24. The quality of teaching in sessions observed during the inspection was as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
44%	56%	-	-	-

25. These figures are well above the national averages in HMCI's Annual Report for 2007-8, where the overall quality of teaching in primary schools is reported to be a Grade 2 or better in 83% of lessons and Grade 1 in 16%. These percentages are much higher than during the last inspection. Outstanding teaching was seen in all year groups.
26. Teachers succeed in stimulating and challenging learners extremely well, and ensure a high level of motivation and interest. All establish excellent working relationships with pupils. They demonstrate very good classroom management and control.
27. Teachers have outstanding levels of subject knowledge and have an excellent understanding of how children learn. They promote pupils' independence and thinking skills and provide equal opportunities for those of all backgrounds and abilities, challenging the most able and those with SEN well.
28. The school's assessment procedures are good with many outstanding features. The progress and achievements of pupils are assessed fairly, accurately and

regularly. Pupils' awareness and understanding of the purpose of assessment and their involvement in planning and improving their own progress is outstanding.

29. An outstanding feature is the way in which the school reports to parents about the progress of their children.
30. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that is accessible to the full range of pupils and fulfils statutory requirements.
31. The overall quality of curriculum planning and organisation is an outstanding feature. Since the beginning of this year, the school has developed an exemplary skills progression overview for each curriculum area.
32. Planning of lessons to indicate where the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are to be developed is excellent. Pupils' thinking, problem solving and independent learning skills receive a clear focus through a variety of projects in language, mathematics and science. However, although the provision for bilingualism is a focus in planning, it does not feature consistently in all lessons.
33. The range of extra-curricular activities demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities for pupils from all backgrounds, abilities and gender. This is outstanding. Homework successfully builds on class activities. Visits to places in the community and further afield enhance pupils' understanding of what they are learning.
34. The school's provision for sustainable development is outstanding. The clear policy for education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC) ensures that the school acts in a sustainable way and pupils are made aware of the need to help others less fortunate than themselves.
35. Provision for ensuring that pupils are aware of other cultures is good with outstanding features. The school also has a strong Welsh ethos.
36. Spiritual development is outstanding. Class activities provide pupils with a sense of awe and wonder. Collective worship fulfils statutory requirements.
37. Strategies for moral and social development is outstanding. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop social skills while engaged in collaborative tasks. Moral development is driven by the seven school rules and by the positive ethos and the good role models provided by adults. The personal and social education (PSE) programme is fully integrated into teacher's planning, in order to consolidate pupils' understanding of issues on a daily basis.
38. Very effective partnerships with parents, other schools and initial teacher training institutions enrich pupils' learning experiences. This is an outstanding feature. Partnerships with the community are excellent.

39. Arrangements for developing entrepreneurial skills is very good and linked to pupils' knowledge of the world of work. The school is extremely successful in providing opportunities to encourage pupils to be lifelong learners.
40. The school plans and manages care arrangements particularly well, resulting in pupils being extremely well supported by all adults, as well as by a wide range of external agencies. In a recent external survey, measuring pupils' sense of well-being, safety and comfort in school, the school was placed in the high to very high category.
41. Induction programmes to help learners settle quickly in school are outstanding. Pupils who start at the school at a later stage confirm that they also settle easily, because of the care of pupils and staff.
42. The school promotes the healthy development and well-being of pupils very well indeed.
43. An outstanding feature of the school is the provision for pupils with SEN. Individual needs are identified and assessed most effectively and appropriate actions are determined to provide support. The school secures equal treatment of disabled learners.
44. Highly effective behaviour management systems are in place, with appropriate behaviour plans for particular pupils. Measures to eliminate oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, are extremely good. The monitoring of pupils' attendance is also of a high standard.

Leadership and management

45. Although in post for less than three years, the headteacher has been very successful in sharing her high expectations with a relatively new team of teachers and governors and has implemented a clear and highly successful strategy for school improvement.
46. The headteacher is extremely well supported by the deputy who is in her first year at the school; both lead by example. This year they have undertaken a range of curriculum responsibilities allowing newly appointed members of staff to shadow them as prospective leaders. The work load of both is at present extremely heavy.
47. The induction of new teachers is outstanding. Those with responsibilities are highly effective in their roles. All adults linked with the school share a common sense of purpose.
48. The school's documentation relating to school improvement is outstanding. The school development plan (SDP) appropriately reflects current priorities, which results from very effective monitoring and analysis of data on pupil progress.
49. The governing body (GB) meets statutory requirements and makes an outstanding contribution to the school. Members have a very good

understanding of the school's current situation and monitor all expenditure rigorously to ensure cost effectiveness Their input to the judgements made in the self-evaluation report was substantial.

50. The school's self-evaluation report is a detailed document which clearly presents the school's perceived strengths and areas for development. Progress since the last inspection has been outstanding.
51. Although the team of staff and governors are relatively new, a sound self-evaluation culture has been embedded which is firmly based on first hand evidence. The systematic arrangements, which include pupils and parents, are an outstanding feature.
52. Teachers are suitably qualified and have the knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the curriculum. Support staff work extremely well with teachers to plan, teach, assess and record pupils' progress, with all staff members sharing views and experiences in the best interests of pupils. Staff are managed and deployed to ensure maximum effectiveness.
53. Accommodation is good. Even though the building is old and needs a great deal of regular maintenance, the state of the accommodation inside and outside is good. It is warm and welcoming for parents, visitors and pupils. The grounds are well maintained.
54. Pupils' learning is very well supported by an outstanding range of high quality resources that are used effectively in all areas of the curriculum and which are well matched to school priorities for development; they are regularly reviewed by leaders and managers at all levels.
55. Finances are extremely well managed and resources are under constant review. Budgetary control is stringent.
56. In view of the school's rising standards, the excellent quality of teaching, the care of its pupils, the strong leadership and the effective and efficient use of resources, the school provides very good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to continue the significant progress made by the school, the staff and GB need to:

- R1 continue to raise standards and develop the provision for the learning of Welsh as a second language across the school and extend pupils' use of bilingualism; and
- R2 distribute responsibilities appropriately between new members of teaching staff and develop the roles of leaders at all levels.

N.B. R1 is already prioritised in the current SDP.

The GB 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

- 57. The grade awarded by the inspection team does not match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report because the team felt that there were many outstanding features in this key question.
- 58. In the 2008 NC assessments in Y6 pupils' performance reflected the steady improvement in attainment since 2006. In English, mathematics and science the percentage of pupils attaining a Level 4 and in the CSI was higher than local and national figures. Despite the high number of pupils with SEN, the number performing at the higher Level 5 in English was thirty five per cent, reflecting the improving performance of boys in relation to girls. In mathematics over fifty per cent of the cohort attained the high Level 5 while in science the figure was sixty per cent.
- 59. In comparison with similar schools, the overall performance shows considerable improvement. In 2006 mathematics was in the third quarter of schools, but English, science and the CSI, were all in the lower quarter. In 2007 all subjects moved up to the next quarter and in 2008, while mathematics made little improvement and the CSI remained in the same position, there was a significant improvement in English and science. These figures, however, do not present an accurate picture as they include a 'dual registered' pupil in special provision who had never been taught at the school. When this individual

is not included, results in all subjects are in the upper quarter with science being at the top of the upper quarter.

60. Analysis of results since 2006 show an increasingly good match between actual targets set and individual attainment. In mathematics in 2008 targets were matched and in English, science and in the CSI they were exceeded.
61. The school has tracked in detail the progress made by pupils who entered the school in the autumn term of 2008. Data indicates that their progress in their first term has been significant especially in language. This suggests that these pupils will achieve the challenging targets set for them by the end of KS2.

Grades for standards in lessons observed during the inspection

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
54%	46%	-	-	-

62. These figures are higher than the national averages as published in HMCI's Annual Report for 2007-8, where overall standards in primary schools in Wales are reported to be Grade 2 or better in 84% of lessons. Standards are very much higher than the Grade1 national average of 12%.These percentages show a significant increase since the last inspection.

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	
Welsh second language	Grade 2
Science	Grade 1
Design technology	Grade 1
History	Grade 1
Art and design	Grade 1
Religious education	Grade 1

63. Pupils achieve outstanding standards in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and the use of ICT. Across all subjects they develop outstanding competence in listening and speaking when engaged in paired tasks and reporting on activities in front of peers. Reading skills develop well when they research for information and read creative texts in books and on the computer. They write successfully for a range of purposes producing questionnaires, diary entries, newspaper reports and character sketches.

64. All pupils develop a range of very good numeracy skills through activities in subjects which are often linked to problem solving tasks. Their skills in using computers and interactive whiteboards are highly developed. They are extremely confident when using programs in history for example, to gain information, extending their awareness of artistic techniques and in presenting information through data and graphs.
65. Skills in bilingualism are good. Pupils are confident when using and responding in Welsh during school routines but are less assured in using vocabulary and phrases across subject areas.
66. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what they are doing. All respond well to the sharing of lesson outcomes across all classes. Their discussions with teachers and peers during tasks show a clear understanding of what they are doing. Their oral and written dialogues in responses to teachers' comment on their work show a clear understanding of what they must do to improve the standards and quality of the work they produce.
67. The progress learners, including those with SEN, make towards fulfilling their potential is outstanding and enables them to move confidently to the next stage in their learning.
68. Pupils' personal, social and learning skills are excellent. Their attitudes to learning, their interest in their work and their ability to sustain concentration are good with outstanding features. They are keen to work in lessons; they reply, ask questions and work with enthusiasm.
69. Pupils are very well behaved in and around the school. Excellent behaviour and positive attitudes and relationships are particularly evident during break times and lunchtimes. Pupils respond well to the very good relationships with peers, teachers and non-teaching staff. They are friendly and courteous to each other and to visitors. They are motivated by the rewards received for good behaviour as well as by the general attitudes to learning in school.
70. The average level of attendance is good. For the three terms prior to the inspection it was just under ninety five per cent, a figure which exceeds local and national percentages. The majority of pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and all are on time for individual lessons.
71. Pupils' ability to work independently is excellent. A very good feature is how they also help one another as they move through the key stages of the school. Most are able to express and explore their views openly and honestly. They ask questions, and explore answers for themselves confidently.
72. Throughout the school pupils' understanding of equal opportunities issues is very good. They develop an outstanding understanding and respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions in society through the many multi cultural learning activities provided.

73. Pupils have a very well developed awareness of their responsibilities to the community, as well as the necessity to develop their own personal values and to accept the values of others. They broaden their understanding of their own locality and the workplace as a result of meeting many visitors from the community.
74. Older pupils are involved with a 'World of Work' week. They respond very well to activities which show what careers they can follow and the working conditions and lives of people in a range of different vocations in their community. They benefit from workshops including constructing a bridge with a team of civil engineers.
75. Pupils are regularly involved in a mini-enterprise project in which they set up a company, make products and sell them at the school summer fair.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

76. The grade awarded by the inspection team does not match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report, because the school underestimated the many outstanding features in the quality of teaching.
77. The quality of teaching in sessions observed during the inspection was as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
44%	56%	-	-	-

78. These figures are well above the national averages in HMCI's Annual Report for 2007-8, where the overall quality of teaching in primary schools is reported to be Grade 2 or better in 83% of lessons and a Grade 1 in 16%. These percentages are also much higher than during the last inspection. Outstanding teaching was seen in all year groups.
79. Teachers succeed in stimulating and challenging learners extremely well, and ensure a high level of motivation and interest. Suitable time limits are set for the completion of work.
80. All teachers establish excellent working relationships with pupils that foster learning, and offer praise and encouragement. They demonstrate very good classroom management and control.
81. Teachers show outstanding levels of subject knowledge and familiarity with recent developments, such as the revised NC orders and the philosophy of the 'Making the Most of Learning' document. They display an excellent

understanding of how children learn and use particularly effective measures to promote independence and to develop pupils' thinking skills.

82. Planning is of a very high quality. It is well structured and is adapted very well to match pupils' needs. Teachers show flexibility in the way they are able to respond effectively to unexpected events.
83. Teachers use an excellent range of methods and high quality resources to foster and supplement learning. Very good use is made of various types of class organisation, and lessons proceed at a lively pace. Homework tasks are closely linked to classroom work and are marked regularly by teachers.
84. Teachers provide equal opportunities for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities, including the more able and those with SEN. They meet the language needs of pupils successfully by providing good access overall to bilingual teaching. Programmes, such as Catch-Up, are used very effectively to impact positively on pupils' English standards.
85. Support staff make an extremely valuable contribution to the quality of teaching. They work closely with teachers to plan, teach, assess and record pupils' work.
86. Other outstanding features seen in teaching include:
 - high expectations of achievement and behaviour;
 - clear objectives and success criteria in lessons which are shared with pupils; and
 - the respect teachers show to each individual pupil.
87. Good features in teaching include:
 - challenging tasks;
 - skilful and purposeful questioning and clear explanations; and
 - differentiation through support and appropriate tasks.
88. Where there are minor shortcomings in teaching there is too much direction by teachers.
89. The school's assessment procedures are good with many outstanding features. Assessment in the school is a process that promotes learning and is used exceptionally well to inform planning.
90. Pupils' progress and achievements are assessed fairly, accurately and regularly; the 'Assessment for Learning' handbook produced by the school, and related practice have been identified as exemplary by the school's advisers.
91. Pupils' learning in the core subjects is assessed, recorded and tracked most effectively on a termly basis and individual pupil profiles display attainment. A rigorous internal system for the moderation and standardisation of teacher assessment is in place and effective moderation also takes place with cluster schools.

92. Recently developed innovative learner profiles have replaced portfolios of levelled work as an improved way of standardising assessment and ensuring accuracy; this is an outstanding feature.
93. The school complies with statutory requirements for recording learners' achievements.
94. Pupils' awareness and understanding of the purpose of assessment and their involvement in planning and improving their own progress is outstanding. Teachers provide high quality oral and written feedback and often engage in valuable dialogue with pupils, who thus become aware of their strengths and areas for development and reflect on their learning.
95. Under teacher guidance, pupils set their own targets for improvement in the core subjects and Welsh, and Y5 and Y6 pupils are involved in identifying their own skill targets.
96. An outstanding feature is the way in which the school reports to parents about the progress of their children. Parents are very happy to attend termly parent teacher consultations to discuss their children's development. Annual reports to parents include details about learners' achievements in all subjects, accompanied by the next steps in learning. An outstanding feature is the way in which pupils provide their own perspective on their achievements in the reports over the year and identify their own targets for the following year.
97. Relevant information is transferred to the local secondary school, to the LEA, and to various outside agencies in order to ensure continuity and progress in pupils' learning.

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

98. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
99. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that is accessible to the full range of pupils and fulfils statutory requirements. The school is very effective in meeting learners' aspirations across the key stage.
100. The overall quality of curriculum planning and organisation is an outstanding feature. Since the beginning of this year, the school has developed an exemplary skills progression overview for each curriculum area. Planning ensures that the curriculum builds systematically on existing knowledge, understanding and skills in order to pitch work flexibly to meet individual needs. Continuity and progression are promoted through collaboration in planning between all teachers and the organisation of a four year cycle to cater for mixed age classes.

101. The school is successfully adopting a thematic approach to planning in order to exploit links between subject programmes of study and to transfer skills between subjects.
102. Planning of lessons to indicate where the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are to be developed is excellent. The school has a clear policy for developing, monitoring and co-ordinating these skills and at present is appropriately auditing its coverage as it proceeds with its curriculum revision. Pupils' thinking, problem solving and independent learning skills receive a clear focus through a variety of projects in language, mathematics and science. However, although the provision for bilingualism is a focus in planning, the use of Welsh does not feature consistently in all lessons.
103. Homework and home-school tasks encourage parental participation while extension tasks involving individual research successfully promote pupils' independent learning and thinking skills. This is an outstanding feature.
104. The range of extra-curricular activities demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities for pupils from all backgrounds, abilities and gender. This provision is outstanding and includes gardening, healthy cooking and newspaper clubs, as well as a range of sporting activities and drama. Other off-site activities include performing in a range of community musical and cluster sporting events. Older pupils benefit greatly from residential experiences, while groups of pupils, such as members of the school council who visited the Houses of Parliament as guests of the local Member of Parliament, are provided with an outstanding variety of experiences to develop their personal and social skills across a wide range of contexts.
105. Visits to places in the community and further afield enhance pupils' understanding of what they are learning. Visits to the National Museum of Wales, the Museum of Welsh life, the National Botanical Gardens of Wales, as well as visits to local supermarkets and businesses are a very prominent and effective part of the school's provision.
106. The school's provision for sustainable development is outstanding. The clear policy for ESDGC ensures that the school acts in a sustainable way. Opportunities to promote these aspects feature in teacher's planning for subjects. The school's Eco-committee is very active, producing an Eco newsletter termly to keep both parents and members of the community aware of their activities. Projects include a school garden, inspired by the National Eisteddfod gorsedd stones, a gardening club, planting trees at the old steel works site in Ebbw Vale and preparations for an Eco focused day. Pupils are encouraged to be highly involved in the school's recycling strategies which includes the recycling of paper, cans and plastic and composting food.
107. The vast range of activities linked to sustainability ensures that pupils are very aware of their responsibilities as global citizens. They are provided with opportunities to understand the difficulties facing people in less developed countries. The school shows its commitment to supporting fair trade events and causes through the displays around the school.

108. Celebration days are held regularly to remind pupils that they are citizens of one world; for example celebrating Martin Luther King Day. Displays focusing on the 2008 United States presidential election successfully highlight important turning points in world history. The school also ensures that pupils empathise with people across the world who recently became victims of fires and earthquakes. A link with schools in Africa through web cam provides pupils with an understanding how other children live. Activities, such as collecting for Red Nose Day and Children in Need, makes pupils aware of the need to help others.
109. Provision for ensuring that pupils are aware of other cultures is good with outstanding features. The Aboriginee culture is highlighted for example, through sessions which show how their creativity has evolved. Chinese customs are celebrated and visitors from places such as India are invited to school to share aspects of their culture with pupils.
110. The school has a strong Welsh ethos. Short term planning identifies good opportunities for extending pupils' awareness of the cwricwlwm Cymreig. Activities include stories in English with a Welsh setting, the work of Welsh artists, the talent of Welsh singers, the variety of Welsh materials used to build the Millennium centre and the history of the local area as a mining village.
111. Spiritual development is outstanding. Class activities provide pupils with a sense of awe and wonder, while collective worship fulfils statutory requirements. It provides pupils with valuable time to think and reflect on issues, such as those affecting themselves as well as how the world was created, the diversity of people and the need to ensure the continuity of life on the planet. Members of the local clergy who often lead collective worship contribute greatly to the spiritual development of pupils.
112. Strategies for developing moral and social development is outstanding. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop social skills while engaged in collaborative tasks. They are encouraged through school activities to undertake a range of responsibilities and are guided to do so competently and confidently. Moral development is driven by the seven school rules and by the school's positive ethos and the good role models provided by adults. The PSE programme is fully integrated into teachers' planning in order to consolidate pupils' understanding of issues on a daily basis. Formal sessions in PSE respond appropriately to current needs.
113. An outstanding feature is the very effective partnerships with parents, community, other schools and initial teacher training institutions, which enrich pupils' learning experiences.
114. Parents are welcomed into the school to talk about their child, with a 'drop in' clinic on a half-termly basis. Information meetings and invitations to class assemblies help parents understand what goes on in the school and how they can help their own child. Curriculum workshops are also run for parents and their children. An effective parent- teacher association is very supportive of the

school. An excellent weekly newsletter is provided for parents which fully informs them of what events take place and what pupils have achieved.

115. Links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer are excellent and include staff and pupil visits, a cluster school Eisteddfod and assemblies. The school uses the premises and resources of the secondary school often. Links with the feeder infants are also well established. Transition plans to both infant and secondary sectors are organised according to the "Five Bridges" approach, as recommended by the Welsh Assembly Government.
116. There are also very effective links with other schools in the cluster group for music projects and sports tournaments. The school's international links with Malta and Spain and the newly formed link with schools in Africa enriches pupils' learning and understanding.
117. Links with a local teacher training institution are very effective; the school benefits from workshops provided by college staff and the trainee teachers who come on work experience to the school.
118. Partnerships with the community are excellent. Visitors and visits arranged by the school promote learning. There are active links, for example, with the Bedwas and Trethomas Historical Society and the Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen Brass Band. Pupils visit the garden of a well know local figure regularly.
119. Provision for developing entrepreneurial skills is very good and linked to pupils' knowledge of the world of work. The school's link with a range of small businesses in the village reinforces pupils' awareness of how small businesses operate to make money. All classes have benefited from educational business partnerships (EBP) projects; these include constructing a bridge with a team of engineers and visiting St David's Two development in Cardiff. Teachers' placements with EBP are used well to promote pupils' awareness of the working world. These have recently enhanced provision in design technology and sustainable development..
120. The school is extremely successful in providing opportunities to encourage pupils to be lifelong learners. This is an outstanding feature. The focus on ensuring that all pupils are independent thinkers is also a key factor.
121. The inclusion of parents in the 'Healthy Cooking' after school club is a good example of the school's role in community regeneration. The school has recently been awarded a grant which enables it to hold an open day for the community in the recently established garden when the residents will learn about the sustainability and fair trade activities promoted at the school.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

122. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
123. The school plans and manages care arrangements particularly well, resulting in pupils being extremely well supported by all adults, as well as by a wide range of external agencies. In a recent external survey measuring pupils' sense of well-being, safety and comfort in school, the school was placed in the high to very high category.
124. A notable feature of the school's care systems is its close partnership with parents and carers. They are frequently invited to complete questionnaires about their views on the support their children receive and are actively consulted about the guidance required.
125. The school displays a range of informative pamphlets giving details about various support services. At the pre-inspection meeting parents stated that the school cares very well for pupils and they expressed the opinion that it responds well to any concerns raised.
126. Induction programmes to help learners settle quickly in school are outstanding. New pupils benefit from attending many events in the school, and having opportunities to meet staff members. They make very effective use of an excellent 'Joining the Juniors' pack, devised by Y6 pupils, as well as the special separate prospectus. Pupils who start at the school at a later stage confirm that they also settle easily, because of the care of pupils and staff.
127. The quality of care and personal guidance for pupils is of a very high standard, and is an outstanding feature of the provision. Pupils produce short pieces of information about themselves to be included on the 'We've got talent' notice boards in classrooms. This is an outstanding way of raising their self-esteem.
128. Teachers and support staff know pupils well and are able to meet their individual needs most effectively. Additional help for those identified for the student assistance programme as needing personal support are allocated a member of staff to whom they have ready and regular access.
129. The highly effective PSE programme, which includes valuable activities such as circle time, has a positive impact on the well-being of pupils. The activities of school council contribute greatly to pupils' social development; breakfast club is a social occasion enjoyed by those who attend.
130. The school promotes the healthy development and well-being of pupils very well indeed, for example through the healthy tuck shop, and has detailed health and safety policies and procedures covering all aspects.

131. Risk assessments are completed, and members of staff, including lunchtime supervisors, have up-to-date first aid qualifications. Activities such as road safety, the use of the internet and mobile phones are important aspects of the personal safety section of the school's PSE programme.
132. Child protection procedures are well documented and are known to all who work in the school. Two staff members and a governor are named in the documentation with responsibility for this area, and training for all staff is up-to-date.
133. An outstanding feature of the school is the provision for pupils with SEN. Individual needs are identified and assessed most effectively and appropriate actions are determined to provide support. Through thoughtfully differentiated activities in class, pupils with SEN and also the more able and talented are challenged on a daily basis.
134. Pupils with SEN assist teachers in preparing their own individual education plans (IEP)s, which are shared with their parents and which include specific, measurable and achievable targets. They are reviewed once a term. Pupils with statements receive in-class assistance of a high standard from support staff as well as excellent withdrawal help from a specialist peripatetic teacher who tailors the work to suit individual needs. Effective assistance is also provided by support staff who use programmes such as Catch-Up to help pupils in need of help with literacy and numeracy.
135. The school works very closely with a wide range of outside agencies, such as the educational psychologist and the LEA advisory teacher, so that pupils can benefit from additional valuable expertise. Many parents are very appreciative of the half-termly sessions when they can speak to the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) or SEN advisory teacher; this is an outstanding feature of the provision.
136. Highly effective behaviour management systems are in place, with appropriate behaviour plans for particular pupils. There are strong links with the behaviour support service. The monitoring of pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The school operates a "Traffic Light" system as a means of managing behaviour; this is effective in all classes. Strategies are displayed prominently and all staff and pupils are aware of procedures. 'Excellent behaviour' awards are given out on a termly basis for pupils whose behaviour is of the highest standard.
137. The monitoring of pupils' attendance is also of a high standard. The school has a good comprehensive procedure for ensuring good attendance and patterns of absence are systematically evaluated. The school refers pupils with persistent absences to the education welfare officer (EWO). Registration procedures are good and fully comply with requirements.
138. The school's equal opportunities policy clearly defines its position in ensuring the highest quality provision for all learners. It promotes gender equality and avoids stereotypes in pupils' choices well, and works hard to address underachievement and under-attainment for both genders.

139. Good race relations are promoted very well across all areas of activity. The school's documentation fulfils statutory requirements.
140. Measures to eliminate oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, are extremely good, and the school keeps detailed records of any incidents and how it has dealt with them. Anti-bullying as a theme is always high on the school's agenda.
141. The school secures equal treatment of disabled learners, and reasonable adjustments have been made to ensure they do not suffer from less favourable treatment. The suitable disability access plan describes further improvements.
142. Pupils are positively encouraged by staff to recognise and respect diversity. Multicultural understanding and tolerance is actively promoted through cross-curricular links, displays and role play; pupils show excellent respect for the contributions of others.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

143. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
144. The school has explicit aims, key values and a bilingual motto which underpins all aspects of school life. The very positive ethos is indicative of the school's commitment to achieving the highest standards within a supportive and caring environment.
145. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. Although in post for less than three years, she has been very successful in sharing her high expectations with a relatively new team of teachers and governors and has implemented a clear and highly successful strategy for school improvement. Her leadership qualities have been recognised by the LEA, which uses her expertise to advise other schools. These qualities have also been recognised by teacher training institutions who invite her to contribute to courses.
146. The headteacher is extremely well supported by the deputy who is in her first year at the school; both lead by example. This year they have undertaken a range of curriculum responsibilities allowing newly appointed members of staff to shadow them as prospective leaders. The workload of both is at present extremely heavy. The school has not yet appointed a specific member of staff with teaching and learning responsibilities because the majority of teachers are new.

147. The induction of new staff is an outstanding feature. A very effective training programme has provided opportunities for them to familiarise themselves with policies and procedures, as well as providing training in teaching and learning. Provision for teachers PPA time is effectively managed.
148. Teachers with responsibilities are highly effective in their roles. They are fully aware of their responsibilities through explicit job descriptions and carry out their tasks diligently.
149. All adults linked with the school share a common sense of purpose. This is an outstanding feature. Communication on a day to day basis and in regular staff meetings is excellent. The school day runs at a brisk and effective pace.
150. Training needs are identified through the school's highly effective performance management and self-evaluation process. As part of professional development targets are set which successfully match the needs of individual staff and link to pupil progress and the needs of the school. External and in-house in-service education and training (INSET) opportunities are highly appropriate and have an outstanding impact on pupils' learning.
151. A range of teaching and learning policies reflect the very efficient strategies recently put in place. All stakeholders are fully aware of the school's philosophies which are coherent and embedded.
152. The school's annual SDP appropriately reflects current priorities. It also ensures a clear focus on local and Welsh Assembly Government priorities in order to move the school forward. The school's leadership is also very clear of what it needs to develop in the long term and identifies these targets in a three year outline plan. Each SDP is evaluated effectively and ensures that actions not fully achieved receive further attention. The school's documentation relating to school improvement is outstanding.
153. The GB meets statutory requirements and makes an outstanding contribution to the school. Regular full GB meetings and relevant sub committees very effectively support the strategic development process. The focus of governor meetings is mapped out over the year to ensure adequate attention to all aspects of school development. Group activities are a regular feature of meetings; minutes recording discussions show that these are extremely effective. Meetings are very well led by the chair.
154. Individual members of the GB show a good knowledge of their subject responsibilities through observations in classes and their meetings with subject leaders. Excellent use is made of the expertise and interests of individual governors to develop community regeneration, life-long learning and pupils' links with the world of work.
155. Strategy meetings including the headteacher and her deputy as well as the chair and vice chair of the GB are a recent development; this reflects the outstanding commitment of the GB.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

156. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
157. The school's self-evaluation report prepared for this inspection is a detailed document which clearly presents the school's perceived strengths and areas for development. The inspection team agreed with the school in five of the seven key questions. Where grades differed the team awarded a higher grade because of the many outstanding features.
158. Although the team of staff and governors are relatively new, a sound self-evaluation culture has been embedded which is firmly based on first hand evidence. The systematic arrangements are an outstanding feature.
159. Staff, governors and pupils have established an excellent shared set of criteria for monitoring standards which matches the Estyn Inspection Framework closely.
160. All members of staff are fully involved in the self-evaluation process. Subject leaders and shadow leaders fully understand the importance of self-evaluation in school development. They have a clear knowledge of their subject areas as a result of first-hand observations in classrooms, listening to learners, scrutinising planning and recording levels of sampled work across subjects and classes.
161. Subject leader reports are an excellent feature of the self-evaluation process. They effectively indicate the way forward in subjects by identifying training needs and subsequently provide overviews of progress and new strategies to be implemented. Information from monitoring feeds directly into subject action plans and performance management targets.
162. Subject leaders are supported in their monitoring roles by the headteacher and deputy. Monitoring of teaching by management is followed by individual written feedback accompanied by a grade in line with the Estyn Framework. The grading of standards in evaluations enables the school to see that actions have resulted in measurable improvements or that more action is needed.
163. The school makes outstanding use of data from continuous internal and end of key stage assessment to improve pupils' performance. Data received from the main feeder infant school is analysed in detail in order to cater for the needs of individual pupils and to improve their skills further. This enables the school to set challenging targets for each cohort.
164. The SDP draws from all monitoring, assessment and evaluation evidence. Details of specific actions to be taken, costs and timescales involved, responsibilities and success criteria are identified. Targets and actions are

clearly displayed on the staff SDP board to ensure that all are constantly aware of actions necessary for school improvement. This is an outstanding feature.

165. Parents' views in relation to specific areas of improvement are sought regularly. Where areas for improvement are identified they feed into the next year's SDP.
166. Pupils' views are gained from a variety of forums. Suggestion boxes, school council and Eco-committee meetings, assemblies and PSE sessions all offer pupils opportunities to voice their opinions and offer suggestions. For example they have been asked to share their perceptions of what makes a good lesson. The focus on listening to learners is an outstanding feature.
167. The GB has a very good understanding of the school's current situation. Members work very effectively alongside the headteacher to ensure that the actions needed to improve aspects identified through the self-evaluation process can be realised. Their input to the judgements made in the self-evaluation report was substantial.
168. Progress since the last inspection has been outstanding. Standards in Welsh, design technology and religious education have all improved significantly. Planning and teaching to promote the key skills of writing, numeracy and ICT is now an outstanding feature. The quality of short term planning in foundation subjects in order to identify learning outcomes more clearly and the match of work to pupils' abilities is also outstanding.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

169. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
170. Pupils are extremely well supported by a highly effective team of experienced and suitably qualified teachers, who have the knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the curriculum.
171. Leaders and managers at all levels are consulted about aspects of the curriculum in which they feel most confident and they are matched to these wherever possible; they provide excellent support for colleagues.
172. A newly qualified teacher is mentored very well by the deputy head. The specialist teacher of pupils with SEN is particularly effective, as are the peripatetic music tutors.
173. The school uses its resources for workforce remodelling in a very efficient way, resulting in fewer clerical and administrative tasks for teachers and role changes for support staff.
174. There are good arrangements for giving teachers PPA time, with an experienced teacher covering classes and ensuring that high standards are

maintained. This member of staff also covers weekly leadership time for leaders and managers.

175. Support staff vary in experience and qualifications, and these are matched appropriately to the demands of their roles, with support staff having more than one role. For example, a learning support assistant with the appropriate qualification capably plans and leads literacy support programmes and also leads the Y6 transition programme. Another member of the support staff leads the student assistance programme and the library is run effectively by a learning support assistant.
176. Support staff work extremely well with teachers to plan, teach, assess and record pupils' progress, with all staff members sharing views and experiences in the best interests of pupils.
177. The school support officer, the clerk, caretaker, cleaners, midday supervisors and canteen staff provide good support and contribute effectively to pupils' well being.
178. Pupils' learning is very well supported by an outstanding range of high quality resources that are used effectively in all areas of the curriculum. For example, the school library has been remodelled recently, and is used well by pupils during lunchtimes, resulting in effective development of independent learning skills.
179. The provision of ICT resources is very good and the school is well equipped with tools and materials for practical and creative work. Resources are well matched to school priorities for development and are regularly reviewed by leaders and managers at all levels.
180. Staff are managed and deployed to ensure maximum effectiveness, and the school benefits from the services of student teachers and volunteers who assist most effectively in classes and on the Eco-committee.
181. The use and impact of human resources is reviewed appropriately on a regular basis through a variety of systems, for example, performance management and the monitoring of teaching standards. All staff members receive training to meet their developmental needs.
182. Finances are extremely well managed and resources are under constant review. The school's systems and practices are good with outstanding features. Budgetary control is stringent, and the GB monitors all expenditure rigorously to ensure cost effectiveness.
183. Accommodation is good. Even though the building is old and needs a great deal of regular maintenance, the state of the accommodation inside and outside is good. Staff make good use of the space available. The majority of classrooms and the ICT suite are of a good size. However the room used for teaching classes during teachers' PPA time is small and makes the teaching of

practical subjects with older pupils difficult. At present the school is in the process of further improving its accommodation for a pupil in a wheel chair.

184. The school's reception area is warm and welcoming for parents, visitors and pupils. The hall provides a very effective setting for collective worship; dinners are served in a separate canteen in the school grounds. The yard at the back of the school is of an excellent size and includes seating areas where pupils can sit and socialise. The community garden at the front of the school and another at the rear provide excellent settings for an outside classroom. The school grounds are well maintained. The building and site are secure.
185. Excellent displays reflect the school's very effective provision and the high standards achieved by pupils. The accommodation is extremely clean and tidy and treated with respect by pupils and all who work at the school.
186. In view of the school's rising standards, the excellent quality of teaching, the care of its pupils, the strong leadership and the effective and efficient use of resources, the school provides very good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Welsh second language

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

Good features

187. Pupils' attitudes to Welsh are positive and they are eager to practise their newly learnt vocabulary and language patterns with peers, adults and visitors. They make good use of their Welsh during the school day in a number of routines.
188. The majority of pupils communicate clearly and speak with good intonation and pronunciation. They listen well and therefore use clues effectively to understand what they are told.
189. Pupils across the key stage show progression in the range of vocabulary and sentence patterns they know and use. Many older ones are able to interchange words and phrases confidently in a range of contexts.
190. Older and younger pupils use a range of greetings when they arrive and depart from school at the end of the day. They respond to a range of questions in registration sessions and talk about daily routines. They conduct a daily survey of those who have walked or come by bicycle to school in Welsh. At the end of the day, they sing a Welsh song and older ones often sing the national anthem remembering all the words.
191. Younger pupils use a number of question forms correctly. The majority can state correctly what they want, like, dislike and can do. They count up to thirty

and more and understand how the counting system in Welsh is structured. They know the vocabulary for parts of the body, the weather, objects they see around school and clothes.

192. Older pupils effectively extend their knowledge of vocabulary and language patterns. They can talk about pets and families and are able to extend sentences, grouping parts of speech in the correct order of the Welsh sentence structure. They use the negative forms of responses in the singular and plural form correctly.
193. In Y5 and Y6 pupils use a range of vocabulary needed to discuss holidays and countries correctly and perform extended dialogues relating to a visit to a travel agent. The majority use the short form of the past tense accurately.
194. Pupils show a good understanding of texts read and can identify the main ideas in simple stories and information texts. They read aloud in class confidently and many can self-correct. They make good use of their reading skills to read the vocabulary and patterns on display in the dedicated Welsh room where they are often taught.
195. Pupils across the key stage write for a variety of purposes. Younger ones write labels, compose letters and create questionnaires. Older ones write party invitations, diary entries, personal profiles for passports, dialogues and illustrated strip stories.
196. The majority spell most key words correctly and a few older ones write independently without the support of structured writing frames.

Shortcomings

197. There are no important shortcomings, but pupils' use of Welsh within subject areas is not sufficiently developed.

Science

Key stage 2: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

198. Pupils across the school have excellent investigation skills. Nearly all pupils have a thorough understanding of a fair test, make reasoned predictions, identify variables and form sound conclusions on the basis of their findings.
199. Most pupils measure accurately and record their results in the form of tables, posters, diagrams and graphs. They interpret information particularly well, and often make effective use of ICT to present their findings.
200. When choosing their own pattern-seeking investigation in discussion with their peers, Y5 and Y6 pupils plan their investigation into taller pupils being able to jump further than shorter pupils very effectively. Most collaborate exceedingly well in small groups to decide which is the best method of gathering information

and recording results. They are very much aware that detailed observation is an integral part of forming correct conclusions and the more able realise the importance of checking results against initial predictions.

201. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate outstanding knowledge of the human body and the importance of diet and exercise. Y3 and Y4 name healthy foods and sort foods knowledgeably into different categories. Most describe the function of the heart accurately and investigate the effect of exercise and rest on their pulse rate and body heat in an extremely organised way. Y5 and Y6 pupils display excellent knowledge about the location and functions of organs in the human body. Their investigations into the effects of exercise on the body and other experiments relating to the human body are of a very high quality.
202. Across the school pupils' knowledge about sustainability is excellent. In Y3 and Y4 they have a very good understanding of recycling and pollution. Y5 and Y6 pupils display a mature understanding of the contribution made by science to society and of its impact on the environment.
203. Nearly all pupils have a very good recall of previous work. For example, at the younger end of the school, they recall effectively how switches control lights in circuits. They explore a wide range of musical instruments to find out how sound is produced.
204. Y5 and Y6 pupils have excellent recall and very good understanding of what is meant by friction and gravity and they discuss knowledgeably experiments made with magnetic and non-magnetic materials. They also have outstanding knowledge of the water cycle and as a result of successful investigations, can describe how they discovered factors that affect the rate of evaporation.

Good features

205. Y3 and Y4 pupils differentiate easily between living and non-living things and have a good understanding of life processes through growing plants. They know what conditions plants need to flourish.
206. Pupils across the school group and classify materials accurately. Y3 and Y4 pupils describe accurately the way in which some materials, for example, water, change when they are heated or cooled. Y5 and Y6 pupils classify solids, liquids and gases correctly and describe in detail investigations they use to separate insoluble materials from liquids.
207. Most pupils have a good scientific vocabulary when discussing their work.

Shortcomings

208. There are no important shortcomings.

Design technology

Key stage 2: Grade 1 : Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

209. Pupils across the school show an excellent awareness of the design process. They make prototypes and use evaluations in a most effective way to assess the quality of their work as it develops. They produce design specifications and research thoroughly before planning. For example, Y3 and Y4 pupils look critically at various types of puppets on the market before designing their own. A few more able pupils in Y5 and Y6 purposefully question a visitor with expertise in the field when investigating the designs of logos on items of clothing.
210. Many pupils apply knowledge and skills from mathematics and science particularly well when completing design tasks. The majority in Y3 and Y4 demonstrate a very good knowledge of how simple mechanisms can be used to produce different types of movement in their junk material robots. When designing toys with moving mechanisms for young children, Y5 and Y6 consider carefully the appearance, safety elements and function of the toys and ensure that they are fit for purpose.
211. Most older pupils have outstanding knowledge of the place of design technology in meeting the needs of society. Their awareness and understanding of environmental issues at a local, national and worldwide level are demonstrated very effectively in the mature way in which they discuss such matters when making vehicles and when designing environmentally friendly t-shirts.
212. Pupils across the school succeed in producing high quality designs, using a wide range of tools and materials, such as electrical components, textiles, fabric paints and waste material. They join materials very effectively in various ways, for example, through sewing when using appliqué techniques on t-shirts and through gluing in their home/school tasks.
213. In general, pupils evaluate their work in an outstanding way. They are aware of new skills they have learnt, discuss difficulties and how they overcome them, rethink designs as their ideas develop and evaluate their final products critically. Finished products are of a high quality.

Good features

214. Most pupils use design technology vocabulary effectively when discussing their work in groups.
215. All pupils have a good awareness of health and safety factors when using equipment, tools and materials for example, when making biscuits pupils with SEN demonstrate a thorough understanding of the importance of hygiene.

Shortcomings

216. There are no important shortcomings.

History

Key stage 2: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

217. No lessons in history were observed during the inspection but evidence in pupils' work, the school portfolio of activities and talking to pupils indicate that overall standards are good with outstanding features.

Outstanding features

218. All pupils have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the periods they study in relation to their community, Wales and the British Isles.
219. Most pupils across the key stage have an excellent chronological awareness and understand how timelines can help them sequence events and periods in history.
220. Both younger and older pupils have a very sound understanding of the cause and effect of events. Younger pupils know the effect of the Education Act on the lives of children in the nineteenth century while older ones have a clear awareness of the causes of the Chartist uprising in South East Wales.
221. Across the key stage pupils make excellent use of evidence to establish their understanding of the past. Younger ones become effective history detectives when using artefacts and photographs. Older ones have a clear understanding of what constitutes primary and secondary evidence. They explain in detail why a census form gives more accurate information than novels and stories set in the past.
222. Pupils' use all sources of evidence very well to extend their investigation and enquiry skills.

Good features

223. Across the key stage the majority of pupils use historical terminology well. Younger ones use every day terms accurately to discuss the passage of time while older ones use terms such as 'decade' and 'century' appropriately when talking of past events.
224. Younger pupils have a good understanding of working and living conditions in the nineteenth century. They empathise with the miners, women and children who lived then. They make good use of visits to Big Pit to see the working conditions and Rhydycar cottages in the Museum of Welsh life to see how workers lived.

225. Pupils in Y3 and Y4 have a good awareness of how Bedwas has changed over the years. On a historical walk, they can identify the houses and shops that have been there a long time. They also understand how the tramline and the railway were important features of the mining community.
226. Younger pupils ask appropriate questions about schools in Victorian times. They respond well to an actor from a theatre company taking on the role of a Victorian teacher and make comparisons between aspects of school life then and now.
227. Older pupils record their investigations in a variety of ways. They relate information accurately and in their creative writing show empathy with past events and characters. In Y5 and Y6 they write interesting newspaper reports recording the activities of the Chartists in Newport empathising with the fate of leading characters like John Frost.
228. Older pupils understand how some people have had a significant effect on the lives of others; the majority understand the importance of Alexandra Graham Bell, William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli. They are aware of the influence of Queen Victoria on the lives of people.
229. Older pupils have a good understanding how wars in the nineteenth century changed history. They know that the Boer and Crimean Wars were important and understand the part played by people such as Florence Nightingale.
230. Older pupils ask appropriate questions when interviewing an imaginary nineteenth century person. A few understand how different historical characters see things from a particular viewpoint and conclude that a range of evidence is needed to gain an accurate picture of past times.

Shortcomings

231. There are no important shortcomings.

Art and design

Key stage 2: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

232. Pupils' individual sketchbooks reflect the very high standards and progress they make in a range of skills. Their sketches are an integral part of the art and design process; they show a very good understanding of the reasons professional artists use sketchbooks to plan their work.
233. Pupils in all classes have an outstanding knowledge of the cultural diversity of art. They can identify features and techniques peculiar to a range of cultures. They are also very aware of the subjects popular with a range of Welsh artists.

234. Pupils' make outstanding use of a wide range of materials and techniques. They use a number of computer programs confidently to create a range of images, reflecting their knowledge of the elements involved in art and design.

Good features

235. Pupils across the school explore the use of colour in the work of a range of artists confidently. Younger ones can identify primary and secondary colours and experiment successfully when exploring tones and shades. Older pupils discuss the use of colour in artistic work to convey a range of emotions effectively.
236. Pupils' understanding of the importance of line and pattern is good. Younger pupils use their understanding of these elements well when creating tiles emulating the work of an African tile maker. They also consolidate their awareness of colour when emulating the artist's use of warm and cold colours to convey the climate and cool coastal waters of parts of that continent.
237. Pupils' understanding of line is extended when looking in detail at the works of a number of well known artists. They understand the effect of straight and curved lines in the work of Van Gogh and how Bridget Riley uses line to convey movement and perspective. Older ones show in their sketches of houses that they can use lines themselves to convey perspective. They produce good and often very good observational drawings of shoes based on the effect of line using a variety of media.
238. Younger pupils develop a good awareness of the features of Aboriginal art. All fully understand the link between the people's art and their past and present environment. They can identify the symbols, patterns and colour that consistently feature in their images. They successfully create their own version of an Aboriginee map by emulating patterns and colours in an aerial map of Bedwas using collaging and ICT.
239. Pupils of all abilities collaborate well in Y4 and Y5 when creating a clay model of a fish. They use a range of tools and resources efficiently and produce models showing good observational and collaboration skills.
240. Most pupils across the key stage use a range of printing materials and tools competently to achieve the process of printing. They use a roller effectively to create attractive and realistic ink images of houses.
241. Older pupils understand what is meant by industrial art. They plan their own sculptures based on a selection of Welsh artists who have painted industrial scenes of South Wales. They justify why they choose to emulate a particular artist when creating their sculptures.
242. Pupils evaluate their work effectively identifying clearly how they could improve. Older ones, in particular, make good use of a range of subject terminology when discussing the process and end products they produce.

Shortcomings

243. There are no important shortcomings.

Religious education

Key stage 2: Grade 1 : Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

244. Most pupils across the school have an excellent knowledge of events in the Christian calendar and link them appropriately with events in the Bible. They show a clear understanding of the significance of Christmas and Easter. Y3 and Y4 pupils' role play and their 'Diaries of Mary', show how well most of them identify with the feelings and emotions of characters in the Easter story.
245. A visit by a local clergyman has considerably extended the understanding of pupils throughout the school of the meaning and purpose of Lent and their knowledge of Easter symbols.
246. Many pupils have a very good recall of Bible stories, such as the Creation, Noah and the Tower of Babel. They retell them vividly and a few more able older ones relate them very well to their own lives. For example, they liken school rules to the Ten Commandments and discuss the leadership qualities shown by Jesus in a mature way.
247. Pupils' knowledge of the life of Jesus is particularly good and they describe his miracles and parables very well. They have excellent recall of the story of the temptation of Jesus and link it most effectively with fasting customs in other religions.
248. Pupils in all classes are aware of other religions and are familiar with features of Hinduism and Judaism. They have outstanding knowledge and understanding of Islam. Y3 and Y4 pupils undertake independent research into the Five Pillars of Islam and demonstrate excellent knowledge of the names and significance of the Pillars. Y5 and Y6 pupils' work on aspects of the Muslim faith, such as Ramadan and Eid, is of a particularly high standard. Many pupils make informed comparisons between Christianity and Islam.
249. Most older pupils consider, appreciate, respect and empathise with the viewpoints of others; they have an excellent understanding of the fact that all people have similarities and differences.
250. All pupils have a strong awareness of the importance of safeguarding the environment and protecting the world. Many respond with awe and wonder to the natural world around them.

Good features

251. Pupils have good knowledge of a few figures who have contributed to religious life in Wales, for example, Mary Jones and Saint David. They understand well how religious beliefs of people such as Nelson Mandela have influenced the lives of others worldwide.
252. Many pupils in the school reflect thoughtfully upon the value of relationships, and their understanding of social and moral principles, such as forgiveness, tolerance and care for others, is good.

Shortcomings

253. There are no important shortcomings.

School's response to the inspection

254. The Governing Body and staff of Bedwas Junior School are very proud to receive the inspection report, which is testament to the dedication and commitment of all associated with the school. The outcomes confirm that our aspirations in 'striving for excellence' have been realised.
255. Bedwas Junior School aims to educate its pupils 'to be caring, confident and communicative, with a love of learning and no fear of failure'. The newly formed team has embraced the changes of the Revised Curriculum and will endeavour to continually improve upon the very high standards achieved across the seven key questions in order to give all our learners 'a flying start in life'. The school will respond to the report's recommendations in its action plan which will be communicated to all stakeholders. This will be followed by timely reports on progress towards meeting our targets, using the range of very effective communication systems the school has in place.
256. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the inspection team for their very professional and personable approach throughout the whole process in what was a rigorous assessment of the standard of education provided by the school. We would also like to thank parents/carers, the wider community and the Local Authority for their continuing support. Bedwas is a school at the heart of the community and its success belongs to all within the community.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Bedwas Junior School
School type	Primary inc Foundation Phase
Age-range of pupils	7-11years of age
Address of school	Church Street, Bedwas Caerphilly.
Postcode	CF83 8EB
Telephone number	02920 852511

Headteacher	Mrs Liz Barry
Date of appointment	September 1 st 2006
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Richard Crook
Registered inspector	Mrs L.E.Betts
Dates of inspection	May 5 th -7 th 2009

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	NA	NA	NA	NA	40	36	44	22	142

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	5	3	6.6

Staffing information		
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)		21.5:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes		28
Teacher (fte): class ratio		1.3:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Summer 2008	N/A	N/A	94.6%
Autumn 2008	N/A	N/A	94.2%
Spring 2009	N/A	N/A	95.5%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	11%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2008			Number of pupils in Y6:		47				
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	2.1	0	2.1	10.6	51.1	34
		National	0.2	0.5	0.6	3.1	15.6	51.3	28.5
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	4.3	10.6	31.9	53
		National	0.2	0.5	0.6	2.7	14.7	51.4	29.9
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	4.3	0	29.8	66
		National	0.2	0.5	0.5	1.8	11.4	53.9	31.7

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by teacher assessment		by test	
In the school	80.9%	In the school	N/A
In Wales	75.5%	In Wales	N/A

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

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Three inspectors spent the equivalent of eight inspector days in the school. The school's nominee and a peer assessor were also part of the team. All members met as a team before the inspection.

These inspectors visited:

- thirty-four lessons or part lessons- twenty- four of which were in the subjects inspected;
- registrations and acts of collective worship; and
- a range of extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- staff, governors and parents before the inspection;
- teachers, support and administrative staff;
- groups of pupils representing each year group; and
- the school council and representatives of organisations associated with the school.

The team also considered;

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- eighteen responses to a parents' questionnaire of which one hundred per cent of answers were positive;
- documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- a wide range of pupils' past and current work; and
- samples of pupils' reports.

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

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mrs Eleri Betts Registered Inspector	Context, Summary, Recommendations Key Questions 1,3,5,6. Welsh second language, History, Art and design.
Mr Stewart Hammond Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1,3,4,7
Mrs Zohrah Evans Team Inspector	Key Questions 2,4,7 Science, Design technology, Religious education.
Mrs Catherine Power Peer Assessor	Attending team meetings and observing in classrooms
Mrs Liz Barry Nominee/ Headteacher	Attending team meetings, providing information and writing the school's response.

Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, headteacher, members of staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.

Contractor:

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