

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**St Thomas Primary School
Windmill Terrace
Swansea
SA1 8DN**

School Number: 670/2057

Date of Inspection: 5th to 7th February 2007

by

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W170/15942**

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St Thomas Primary School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of St Thomas Primary School took place between 5th and 7th of February 2007. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mr R Isaac 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	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y 13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. St Thomas Primary is a medium sized school situated on a hill overlooking the city of Swansea. It serves a community on the east of Swansea and is housed in a very large, five storey building which is over 100 years old. The pupils are taught on the upper floors of the building. As at the time of the last inspection, although extensive maintenance work has been undertaken during the last 15 years, the school remains in a poor state of repair. This is the last term it will be used for St Thomas Primary School. From April 2007 onwards, its pupils and the children at Margaret Street Nursery School will be educated in brand new, purpose-built premises for St Thomas Community Primary School. Unemployment in the area is well above average and about 50 per cent of adults eligible to work are unemployed. There are 227 pupils on roll aged from four to eleven years. These numbers have decreased over the last six years. About 35 per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, which is about twice the national average. The school has no nursery. The current head teacher has been in post since May 1990 and has been re-appointed recently as the head teacher of the new primary school.
2. The school has identified 56 pupils – or 25 per cent – as having special educational needs (SEN), which is above the national average. Four pupils hold a formal statement of SEN, which is average. English is the sole or predominant home language in 91 per cent of pupils' homes. No pupils come from a Welsh speaking home and two are "looked after" by the local authority. About nine per cent of the pupils have minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language (EAL). Their home languages include Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Creole, French, Italian, Malayalam and Russian. About 11 per cent of pupils are transient and enter or leave the school at times of the year other than September.
3. The school has nine classes, 12 teachers, including the head teacher, and six teaching assistants. Members of staff from the Ethnic Minority Language Achievement Service (EMLAS) support pupils on a weekly basis. All class sizes are below 30 and three contain mixed-age groups. St Thomas school was last inspected in March 2001. It gained the Quality Mark of the Basic Skills Agency in 2000 and this was renewed for the second time in 2006.

The school's aims, priorities and targets

4. The school's vision statement is "to maintain and develop a positive and optimistic school community in which everybody feels safe, welcome and respected". Its leaders have identified the following objectives for 2006–07 in its development plan. They include to: revise a policy for teaching and learning; re-evaluate the policy for the assessment of learning; further improve pupils' speaking and listening skills; improve the provision for pupils with SEN; and improve monitoring by subject coordinators.

Summary

5. St Thomas Primary School is an outgoing, vibrant and stable community where pupils make excellent progress from Reception to the end of year 6. The school has outstanding features in its leadership, its teaching and its care for individuals. It evaluates its provision accurately and thoroughly and it has made outstanding progress since its last inspection.

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

6. In six key questions, the inspection team found evidence to validate the school's own judgments in its self-evaluation report. Inspectors found evidence to support the judgment on key question 7 to be grade 1 because of the many outstanding features seen.

Subjects and/or areas of learning for under-fives

Area of learning	Reception
Language, literacy and communication	Grade 1
Personal and social development	Grade 1
Mathematical development	Grade 1
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 1
Creative development	Grade 1
Physical development	Grade 1

7. Most children enter the Reception class with attainments below those expected for their age. Over time, pupils, including those with SEN and those in vulnerable circumstances, make very good progress in their learning.
8. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Children under five years of age make very good progress in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT). They also make very good progress in their personal and social development.

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

9. Standards of achievement are usually high and often outstanding. Standards have improved considerably since the last inspection and pupils regularly achieve highly over time.

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	Grade 1	Grade 1
Design and Technology	Grade 1	Grade 1
Information Technology	Grade 1	Grade 1
History	Grade 2	Grade 2
Art	Grade 2	Grade 2

10. In the 44 lessons inspected, the grades awarded for standards achieved were as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
56%	44%	0%	0%	0%

11. This shows that in 100 per cent of lessons, standards are at least good with no important shortcomings. This compares well with national standards which were judged as 77 per cent at least good in the latest report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in Wales. Standards of achievement in 56 per cent of pupils' work have outstanding features, as opposed to 12 per cent nationally. These are high figures.
12. Overall, pupils' achievements on entry to the school are below average, when compared nationally.
13. In 2006, the key stage 1 collective results, for the proportion of pupils attaining at least level 2 in English, mathematics and science together, were below national and local averages. The school's results over the last five years, however, have been in line with those of similar schools more often than not. The difference in the results of girls and boys has been variable.
14. Overall, pupils' standards rise, the longer they study at St Thomas. The key stage 2 collective results for pupils, who achieved at least Level 4 in all three core subjects together, were in line with national averages and well above the average achieved by pupils in similar schools nationally for three of the last five years. Many, including those with SEN, make very good progress in that they start their education with below average achievements. Girls have consistently outperformed boys over the last six years by a wide margin. The school continues to make every effort to improve the achievements of boys.
15. Overall standards have steadily improved over the last six years. This is a considerable accomplishment given the achievements of many pupils on entry, the transient population, and the increasing numbers of pupils with EAL.

16. Pupils who have English as an additional language achieve well by the end of year 6, but start slowly when they have had little or no previous experience of the language. They get good help from the EMLAS staff.
17. Learners progress well in their personal, moral, social and wider development. From Reception to year 6, they make at least good and often outstanding progress in developing their personal and social skills. Learning experiences promote pupils' moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well. Many pupils have a sense of ownership and responsibility to the school, its environment, their community and the wider world. The school has a strong sense of family and its ethos encourages pupils to care for individuals and to appreciate other people's values.
18. Pupils' standards and progress in speaking and listening are good in key stages 1 and 2. Standards in writing across the curriculum are good in both key stages, and standards in reading are also good. Standards in the use of numeracy are good in both key stages. Pupils achieve well in the use of incidental Welsh throughout the school, and standards in the use of information technology are outstanding.
19. Pupils achieve well, when collaborating on problem-solving activities. They explore their own creative ideas well in many areas, but not enough in art.
20. Most pupils enjoy being in school. Their behaviour is usually very good. Most pupils understand the school rules and recognise the need to take responsibility for their actions. All adults in the school consistently encourage pupils to understand, manage and develop their standards of behaviour to the best of their abilities.
21. Pupils' attitudes toward learning, the interest they show in their work and their ability to concentrate, often for extended periods, are outstanding features. Pupils work diligently in lessons and are keen to do their best. They display great enthusiasm towards their work and know their teachers appreciate their efforts.
22. Good features outweigh shortcomings in the attendance rates pupils achieve. Attendance rates for the past academic year average 91 per cent, a figure some two per cent below the Welsh Assembly Government's target for attendance.
23. Much of the absence is caused by a small group of pupils who are absent often. This has an adverse impact on the continuity of their education and the standards they achieve. Holidays taken during the school term continue to have a negative effect on overall attendance rates.
24. A proportion of about 11 per cent of the school's population is transient and this situation impacts negatively upon attendance rates. Pupils are often withdrawn from school without explanation. The school makes every effort to trace these pupils and keeps them on roll until a satisfactory explanation can be found.

25. Registration is conducted efficiently but not always promptly enough at the start of the school day. In all other respects, the school complies with attendance requirements set out in the National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99, *Pupil Support and Social Inclusion*.
26. Despite the school's best efforts, a small minority of pupils is unpunctual and often arrives late for school. As a result, they miss important parts of the first lesson.
27. Most pupils demonstrate an awareness of the principles of equal opportunity and recognise that people should be treated fairly and without favouritism.

The quality of education and training

28. The overall quality of teaching is good with outstanding features. In the 44 lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
62%	38%	0%	0%	0%

29. Teaching shows at least good features with no important shortcomings in 100 per cent of lessons observed, comparing very well nationally where teaching is at least good in 79 per cent of lessons. Within this proportion, 62 per cent of teaching has outstanding features, as opposed to 17 per cent nationally. This shows much improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
30. The outstanding features of teaching include:
 - excellent working relationships between teachers, learners and other adults that promote a high quality ethos in lessons;
 - the high but appropriate levels of challenge in the tasks teachers set pupils;
 - the way that teachers skilfully build and develop imaginative lessons and succeed in catching pupils' attention so that their concentration is sustained for extended periods of time;
 - the way that teachers prepare a wide range of resources and activities to engage pupils fully in their learning; and
 - the way that teachers use interactive whiteboards to enliven their lessons and enhance pupils' understanding of many concepts.
31. The overall quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good and the quality of leadership of this aspect of school life is outstanding.
32. Learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners in an outstanding way. The curriculum complies with statutory requirements, and, to a significant degree, pupils have equal access to a broad, balanced, enhanced and exciting curriculum. The curriculum's outstanding features include:
 - the manner in which the school responds to pupils' learning needs;
 - the overall nature and richness of curricular experiences;
 - the quality and range of extra-curricular opportunities; and
 - the partnerships in learning with a wide range of external specialists.

33. The school's partnerships with parents, the local community, other schools and higher education institutions, and the local education authority (LEA) are highly successful and have outstanding features that enrich pupils' lives and enhance their learning experiences on a regular basis.
34. The promotion of pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good with outstanding features. Provision for spiritual development is good with no important shortcomings. Learners have experiences of a high standard in lessons which give them cause to reflect upon the world in which they live. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements.
35. The quality of care, support and guidance and the attention paid to pupils' welfare is outstanding. Older pupils experience good opportunities to express their views on how their needs are met through membership of the school council. The school council is well organised and helps pupils to be involved in decision-making, gives them a sense of responsibility and makes them feel valued. It is effective in furthering pupils' personal and social development.
36. The provision for pupils with SEN has outstanding features in the leadership of SEN and in the early diagnosis of need.

Leadership and management

37. The overall quality of leadership and management is good with outstanding features. The best features of leadership include:
 - excellent team work between all the school's stakeholders;
 - the outstanding leadership provided by the head teacher;
 - the able support of the deputy head teacher;
 - the very strong leadership of subject coordinators; and
 - the involvement of pupils in leadership through the school council.
38. The head teacher, deputy head teacher and subject coordinators regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
39. The Governing Body (GB) makes a good contribution to leadership and strategic management through its monitoring role and the quality of its involvement as a committed and well-informed friend of the school.
40. The school's self-evaluation processes and planning for improvement are of high quality. The findings of the inspection team match closely those of the school in its self-evaluation report.
41. The self-evaluation process is outstandingly inclusive of all the school's stakeholders and the self-evaluation report is thorough, incisive and accurate. This is a school which has steadily raised its standards over the last six years. It is completely committed to improving what it does, and has successfully developed very good self-evaluation procedures.
42. These have been instrumental in the excellent progress it has made since its last inspection. Over the last six years, the school has improved the standards

its pupils achieve, the quality of teaching provided, the quality of leadership and management and the accuracy and thoroughness of its self-evaluation.

43. Leaders and managers are highly effective in obtaining and using resources. Learners benefit from having an able, hardworking and very committed staff. Resources are plentiful and of high quality. Although the accommodation, both internally and externally is poor, the pupils are shortly to move to brand new, state-of-the-art premises, which are purpose-built and of high quality.
44. St Thomas Primary School gives very good value for money. This is borne out by the high standards pupils achieve, the excellent quality of teaching, the outstanding leadership and the first class progress the school has made since its last inspection.

Recommendations

45. The head teacher, governors and staff should now consider the following recommendations in their plans to improve provision:
 - R1 Increase the opportunities for pupils to fulfil their artistic potential; and
 - R2 Continue efforts to improve punctuality and 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. 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

46. The overall standards pupils achieve are good with outstanding features. The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in its self-evaluation report.

Subjects and/or areas of learning for under-fives

Area of learning	Reception
Language, literacy and communication	Grade 1
Personal and social development	Grade 1
Mathematical development	Grade 1
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 1
Creative development	Grade 1
Physical development	Grade 1

47. Most children enter the Reception class with attainments below those expected for their age. Over time, pupils, including those with SEN and those in vulnerable circumstances, make very good progress in their learning.
48. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Children under five years of age make very good progress in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and ICT. They also make very good progress in their personal and social development.

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	Grade 1	Grade 1
Information Technology	Grade 1	Grade 1
Design and Technology	Grade 1	Grade 1
History	Grade 2	Grade 2
Art	Grade 2	Grade 2

49. Standards have improved significantly in many subjects since the last inspection. In the 44 lessons inspected, the grades awarded for standards achieved were as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
56%	44%	0%	0%	0%

50. This shows that in 100 per cent of lessons, standards are at least good with no important shortcomings. This compares very well with national standards which were judged as 77 per cent at least good in the latest report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in Wales. It also compares very well with standards achieved in the school at the time of the last inspection, which were much lower. Standards of achievement in 56 per cent of pupils' work have

outstanding features, as opposed to 12 per cent nationally. These are high figures.

51. Overall, pupils' achievements on entry to the school are below average, when compared nationally.
52. In 2006, the key stage 1 collective results, for the proportion of pupils attaining at least level 2 in English, mathematics and science together, were below national and local averages. The school's results over the last five years, however, have been in line with those of similar schools more often than not. The difference in the results of girls and boys has been variable.
53. Pupils' standards rise, the longer they study at St Thomas. The key stage 2 collective results for pupils, who achieved at least Level 4 in all three core subjects together, were in line with national averages and well above the average achieved by pupils in similar schools nationally for three of the last five years. Many, including those with SEN, make very good progress in that they start their education with below average achievements. Girls in key stage 2 have consistently outperformed boys over the last six years by a wide margin. The school continues to make every effort to improve the achievements of boys and works with many outside agencies to achieve this.
54. Overall standards have steadily improved over the last six years. This is a considerable accomplishment given the achievements of many pupils on entry, the transient population, and the increasing numbers of pupils with EAL. It must be borne in mind that up to 11 per cent of the school's intake arrives at the school at any point from Reception to year 6, often from very vulnerable backgrounds.
55. Pupils who have English as an additional language achieve well by the end of year 6, but start slowly when they have had little or no previous experience of the language. They get good help from the EMLAS staff.
56. Learners progress very well in their personal, moral, social and wider development. From nursery to year 6, they make at least good and often outstanding progress in developing their personal and social skills. Learning experiences promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well. Many pupils have a sense of ownership and responsibility to the school, its environment, their community and the wider world. The school has a strong sense of family and its ethos encourages pupils to care for individuals and to appreciate other people's values.
57. Overall, pupils' development of key skills is good with no important shortcomings. Pupils are increasingly aware at the start of lessons or as part of plenary sessions of the key skills that are related to particular activities.
58. In key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils speak confidently and clearly. They listen and concentrate well for long periods. Pupils develop increasingly good reading skills as they progress through the school and they make good use of these skills to access information in a range of subjects. Pupils' writing in a

range of forms and in subjects such as history is particularly good. They match their writing well to the needs of the reader and use an increasingly adventurous vocabulary.

59. Pupils' numeracy skills are good. In both key stages, pupils use their mathematical skills well in a range of subjects. They record data in tables and present their results in a variety of graphs. They use their numeracy skills well in practical subjects such as design and technology.
60. Pupils' capability in using ICT is often very good. They make confident use of computers to obtain, prepare, process and present information and communicate ideas. Their use of the interactive whiteboard contributes positively to their knowledge and understanding of ICT.
61. Pupils across the key stages use their bilingual skills confidently in their classrooms. They speak in Welsh well in informal situations, for example, when talking to visitors. Bilingual displays in many areas of the school help pupils to learn both languages. In a few classes, there is inconsistency in the use of incidental Welsh, however, in general, standards are good.
62. Pupils' personal and social skills are a particularly strong feature. They co-operate well with each other and with adults. They are sensible when working independently. Pupils' responsible attitudes have a very positive effect on their achievements.
63. Pupils usually have a very clear picture of what they need to do to improve their own learning. Their creative skills are good in a range of subjects, however, their creativity is under-developed in art because of the lack of enough opportunity to fulfil it.
64. The very good behaviour of many pupils is an outstanding feature and contributes significantly to the standards they achieve and to the quality of school life. The head teacher and his staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond positively to their calm, supportive and consistent approach.
65. The school has implemented a range of strategies to enhance pupils' self-esteem and confidence, and this has contributed significantly to their positive behaviour. Pupils are courteous, polite and relate well to each other and to staff. They are particularly welcoming to visitors and take delight in sharing and celebrating their school's many achievements.
66. Pupils' attitudes toward learning, the interest they show in their work and their ability to concentrate, often for extended periods, are outstanding features. They work diligently in lessons and are keen to do their best. They display great enthusiasm for learning and know their teachers appreciate their efforts.
67. Good features outweigh shortcomings in the attendance rates pupils achieve. Attendance rates for the past academic year average 91 per cent, a figure

some two per cent below the Welsh Assembly Government's target for attendance.

68. Much of the absence is caused by a small group of pupils who are absent often. This has an adverse impact on the continuity of their education and the standards they achieve. Holidays taken during the school term continue to have a negative effect on overall attendance rates.
69. A proportion of about 11 per cent of the school's population is transient and this situation impacts negatively upon attendance rates. A few pupils are withdrawn from school without explanation. The school makes every effort to trace these pupils and keeps them on roll until a satisfactory explanation can be found.
70. Registration is conducted efficiently, but not always promptly enough at the start of the school day. In all other respects, teachers comply with the attendance requirements set out in the National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99, *Pupil Support and Social Inclusion*.
71. Despite the school's best efforts, a small minority of pupils is unpunctual and often arrives late. As a result, these pupils miss important parts of the first lesson.
72. Pupils do well when working independently, in pairs or as part of a group. They organise group activities fairly, share responsibilities and ensure everyone contributes.
73. Older pupils, in particular, plan and organise their own work with minimum supervision. They use their initiative and make decisions to improve their own learning. They are confident, articulate and highly self-disciplined.
74. Children aged four develop the capacity to work independently and are encouraged to make their own choices and decisions. They are confident and eager to explore new learning situations.
75. The progress pupils make in their personal, social, moral and wider development is outstanding. The caring ethos of the school, the exemplary relationships between staff and pupils and the sensitive moral elements of collective worship provide pupils with a wholesome set of moral values. Pupils take responsibility for their actions and show great respect for the views of others.
76. Pupils demonstrate a genuine respect for other faiths and cultural traditions and feel strongly that everyone should be treated equally, fairly and respectfully.
77. Pupils are very proud of their community and are well prepared to learn about work and participate in a range of community initiatives and activities. The school is highly committed to the local community and is at its heart.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

The quality of teaching

78. The overall quality of teaching is good with outstanding features. The findings of the inspection team agree with those of the school in its self-evaluation report. In the 44 lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
62%	38%	0%	0%	0%

79. Teaching shows at least good features with no important shortcomings in 100 per cent of lessons observed, comparing very well nationally where teaching is at least good in 79 per cent of lessons. Within this proportion, 62 per cent of teaching has outstanding features, as opposed to 17 per cent nationally. This shows much improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, when much less teaching was good or better and a little had significant shortcomings.

80. The outstanding features of teaching include:

- excellent working relationships between teachers and pupils that promote a high quality ethos in lessons;
- the high but appropriate level of challenge in the tasks teachers set pupils;
- the way that teachers skilfully build and develop imaginative lessons and succeed in catching pupils' attention so that their concentration is sustained for extended periods of time; and
- the way that teachers prepare a wide range of resources and activities to engage pupils fully in their learning.
- the way that teachers use interactive whiteboards to enliven their lessons and enhance pupils' understanding of many concepts.

81. Teachers work in very good partnerships with part-time teachers and teaching assistants, including those with NNEB (National Nursery Examination Board) accreditation, to provide interesting sessions. Many parents speak and write warmly of their appreciation of the school's high quality of teaching.

82. Teachers stimulate and challenge pupils of all abilities well in carefully differentiated activities. They set clear and appropriate time limits for pupils to complete tasks and this ensures that lessons progress at a good pace. They intervene sensitively to support and encourage pupils in their work.

83. Teachers exercise their authority firmly and fairly. They establish high standards for pupils' behaviour and effort in classrooms in a positive way. This has an excellent impact on attitudes to learning.

84. Teachers have good, up-to-date subject knowledge and use this effectively in lessons. They are enthusiastic in their teaching and use a good range of contexts and resources to capture pupils' interest and assist their understanding. They use questions skilfully to gauge pupils' knowledge and understanding.
85. Many lessons are planned very well and have a clear structure and purpose. This is particularly true of the consistent planning for key skills. Teachers share objectives with pupils at the beginning and revisit them towards the end of lessons to monitor progress. Plenary sessions are often of good quality. Where appropriate, teachers show versatility in adapting lessons to accommodate the needs of all pupils.
86. Teachers promote equality of opportunity and ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, irrespective of their abilities and backgrounds. They provide very rich opportunities for pupils to consolidate their understanding of the Welsh dimension in appropriate contexts.
87. Pupils with SEN play a full part in learning. They are supported well by their teachers and teaching assistants. Arrangements for organising pupils with SEN are very effective. These ensure that they follow the National Curriculum (NC) closely and are fully included.
88. Teachers' use of the school's interactive whiteboards has a very good impact on teaching and learning. Pupils' progress in ICT is significantly enhanced in many subjects when teachers present custom-designed lessons using interactive whiteboards as an integral part of their teaching. Many concepts are made easy to understand in a clear and compelling way through this innovative use of sophisticated technology.
89. Teachers support pupils in their problem solving by using consistent and appropriate strategies. They effectively support the development of pupils' independent, research skills, and help them apply these regularly in a range of contexts. They have a good understanding of the requirements and guidance of the Welsh Assembly and Estyn for cross-curricular aspects of study such as key skills.
90. Teaching has no important shortcomings, but on occasion, teachers do not allow pupils enough scope to explore their creative potential in art.

Assessment, recording and reporting

91. The overall quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good and the quality of leadership of this aspect of school life is outstanding. Pupils' achievement in all of the NC subjects is understood well by staff, in order to ensure progression through the school. Assessment takes place on a regular basis during all lessons and as part of marking.
92. The school has a clear policy on assessment, which is being effectively implemented. Assessment is linked closely to teachers' planning. All teachers

are conscientious in measuring pupils' progress regularly. They ensure that pupils are on track to fulfil their potential. When evaluating lessons, teachers regularly assess pupils' achievements against the learning objectives. Portfolios and samples of work in all NC subjects help teachers to assess accurately the standards pupils achieve. All pupils are ascribed NC levels at the end of each key stage for every subject.

93. Very good strategies are in place for assessing pupils with SEN. Teachers use assessment well to ensure that pupils get appropriate support. Pupils with SEN are provided with IEPs (Individual Education Plans) of very good quality and personal targets are monitored and updated often.
94. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the beginning and end of lessons. They foster good discussions about what has been learnt. In the best lessons, pupils are asked to closely evaluate their own progress and that of their peers and identify how they might improve.
95. The quality of teachers' marking is often good. It is positive and constructive. Marking clearly indicates the ways in which pupils can improve their learning. This is good practice.
96. The annual reports to parents conform to statutory requirements and are of good quality. Teachers' comments are evaluative and clearly describe what pupils know and can do in each subject. Parents have the opportunity to discuss the reports at the end of the academic year. Teachers meet with parents in both the autumn and spring term. Attendance at these meetings is exceptionally high. There are very good opportunities for parents to meet with teachers formally and informally to discuss their children's progress and if necessary to be informed of how they can support their learning out of school. This is very good practice.

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
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97. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement in the school's self-evaluation report.
98. Learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners in an outstanding way. The curriculum complies with statutory requirements. To a significant degree, pupils have equal access to a broad, balanced, enhanced and exciting curriculum. The curriculum's outstanding features include:
 - the manner in which the school responds to pupils' learning needs;
 - the overall nature and richness of curricular experiences;
 - the quality and range of extra-curricular opportunities; and
 - the partnerships in learning with a wide range of external specialists.

99. The school provides pupils with a well-planned curriculum that meets their needs and aspirations. This includes pupils with SEN and those who learn English as an additional language. The provision for children under five years of age clearly addresses the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and ensures that they make very good progress. Teachers ensure that subject policies and schemes of work are up to date and of very good quality. All legal requirements are met.
100. In every subject, teachers make very good provision for developing pupils' key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The widespread use of cross-curricular approaches inspires and enriches pupils' learning on a regular basis. Pupils often use their IT skills in a broad range of other subjects. English lessons sometimes include strong elements of history. Drama is often used to enhance learning in religious education, history and English. Teachers are highly skilled in teaching basic and key skills and the school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark on three occasions.
101. The curriculum is enriched by a broad spectrum of interesting experiences provided before, during and after school. Pupils' learning experiences are significantly enhanced by a programme of outdoor learning carried out in partnership with Swansea University's Childhood Studies Department. Year 5 and year 6 pupils experience separate residential weeks at local authority outdoor-pursuit centres. All these extra opportunities make pupils want to attend school and enjoy learning.
102. The school has a rich programme of visits to external locations and this involves all pupils. Visitors to the school include theatre groups, local residents to discuss history in the locality, poets and artists. The school provides extra-curricular activities, both sporting and cultural, which are very good and have a positive effect on pupils' learning and help to promote their social development.
103. Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills. This permeates school life. As a result, many pupils are happy at school.
104. Overall, the school makes very good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. The provision for spiritual development is good. Assemblies provide pupils with opportunities to sing hymns and pray. Pupils learn to respect the other religious traditions which are represented in the school and the wider community.
105. Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils have a very clear sense of what is right and wrong. Teachers promote this well in assemblies and discussion in many lessons and in PSE (personal and social education).
106. Provision for social development is very good. The School Council gives pupils a genuine voice in school leadership as local citizens. They also have opportunities to develop their social skills through sporting and musical

activities, local and residential visits and the school's extra-curricular programme.

107. Provision for cultural development is very good. Pupils are introduced to a broad range of human achievement in most subjects. This includes visits to exhibitions and studies which offer insights into the lives of people who have had a connection with Swansea, such as Paul Robeson and John Charles. Pupils develop a very good appreciation of their own culture and those of others.
108. The school promotes Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig successfully. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn about their Welsh heritage and culture. Pupils enjoy participating in Welsh cultural activities such as St. David's Day celebrations and Welsh Folk Dancing. Year 6 pupils have visited the Welsh Assembly Government in Cardiff Bay. Provision for pupils with EAL (English as an additional language) is planned carefully. These pupils receive very good support from members of the EMLAS staff, who ensure that they are well integrated.
109. The school's partnerships with parents, other providers and interested parties are good with outstanding features. These partnerships enrich the life and work of the school and enhance pupils' learning experiences.
110. In the pre-inspection meeting and in the questionnaires returned to the inspection team, parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school and are supportive of the aims and values that it promotes.
111. Parents value the school's welcoming nature and the ready access they have to the head teacher and staff. A notable feature of this partnership is the way in which the school conscientiously seeks parents' views and often acts upon them.
112. Many parents and friends give freely of their time supporting school activities, accompanying pupils on educational visits and in fund-raising for the school. The Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) organises social and fund-raising activities that enhance links with the local community and provide the school with a valuable source of additional income. The RAISE initiative (Raising Attainment and Individual Standards in Wales) has also helped a great deal to develop further the links between teachers, parents and pupils.
113. Communication with parents is very effective. Parents are kept well informed through regular newsletters, information about curriculum topics, an informative annual report of the governing body, a useful prospectus and by regular meetings with teachers to discuss their children's work and progress. These meetings are very well attended by parents. A useful home-school agreement is in place, which has readily been accepted by parents.
114. The school has developed very good pastoral, administrative and curricular links with its main receiving secondary school at Cefn Hengoed. Regular liaison meetings, an exchange of information and ideas, teacher exchanges

and work that spans year 6 and year 7 all help to promote continuity of education for pupils.

115. The school has established successful partnerships with several institutes of higher education and regularly provides training facilities for student teachers and students undertaking vocational qualifications. During the inspection, a significant number of students were on placement at the school. They make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Without exception, students confirm that they are very well supported and mentored by staff and made to feel most welcome.
116. The school is at the heart of the St. Thomas area and greatly valued by the local community. Links with the community are wide ranging and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
117. The school provides effective work related education for pupils. Teachers use the locality well to support this area of the curriculum and visits to commercial and retail sites enhance pupils' understanding of the world of work.
118. Few teachers have undertaken business or industrial placements with a view to enhancing professional development and enriching curriculum provision for pupils.
119. The head teacher and staff are highly successful in tackling social disadvantage and promoting equal opportunities for all. Teachers have high expectations of pupils with regard to behaviour and achievement. They also work hard to enhance pupils' confidence and self-esteem. This ensures that all pupils know they are valued equally and as individuals.
120. The school works in close partnership with a range of external welfare agencies to secure the best possible support for children and their families. The school's commitment to social inclusion is exemplary.
121. The promotion of education for sustainable development and global citizenship is good. Pupils are involved in re-cycling schemes and understand the problems of litter and pollution, and the necessity for water and energy conservation. Pupils and teachers have been actively involved in ensuring their new school is 'eco friendly' and are very pleased with the extensive plans for sustainability reflected in the design of the new school.
122. The school promotes pupils' understanding of global citizenship well. Older pupils, in particular, are made aware of the economic and social inequalities that exist nationally and throughout the world.
123. The school fosters pupils' entrepreneurial skills well. They run the school's healthy-eating tuck shop, which gives them valuable insight into the running of a business. They have good opportunities to show initiative and flair in fund-raising efforts for a range of local and national charities.

124. The school is fully committed to lifelong learning and national priorities are reflected well in its work. The provision offered to children through the breakfast club and a good range of after-school activities is valued greatly by families.
125. The head teacher, staff and governors are fully committed to the local community and work in close partnership with a range of local agencies to support pupils and their families.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features.

126. The findings of the inspection team match the judgments made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
127. The quality of care, support and guidance and the attention paid to pupils' welfare throughout the school is outstanding. The warmth, care and mutual respect between staff and pupils are outstanding features and enable pupils to make very good progress in their academic, personal and social development.
128. The school works in full and productive partnership with a wide range of agencies and support services. This ensures that pupils' needs are carefully assessed and addressed. This is particularly beneficial for pupils in challenging or vulnerable circumstances.
129. The school enjoys close and effective working partnerships with parents and carers, which contribute significantly to the quality of guidance offered to pupils. The school listens carefully to parents and carers and takes their views fully into consideration.
130. All adults provide very good support for pupils who are new to St. Thomas. As a result, they settle in quickly and confidently. Effective induction procedures ensure pupils are well supported when moving class or when transferring to secondary school.
131. Pupils work and play in a happy, supportive environment where they are valued by staff. The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good and this contributes significantly to pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The head teacher, teaching and support staff know pupils very well and effectively monitor and support their academic progress, their social development and their personal welfare.
132. In discussions, pupils expressed high levels of satisfaction with the help and support they receive from their teachers. They feel teachers are supportive and respect them as individuals.
133. Older pupils experience good opportunities to express their views on how their needs are met through membership of the school council. The school council

is well organised and helps pupils to be involved in decision-making, gives them a sense of responsibility and makes them feel valued. It is effective in furthering pupils' personal and social development.

134. Pupils have access to an effective PSE programme, which is in line with national recommendations. It contributes significantly to the quality of support and guidance offered to pupils. Within the PSE programme, 'circle time' discussions contribute significantly to the development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
135. Pupils' behaviour, attendance, punctuality and performance are monitored carefully. The school's policies and procedures to promote good behaviour are highly effective. Pupils whose behaviour gives cause for concern are counselled, parents are involved and support is sought from external agencies and the LEA when necessary. These arrangements work well.
136. Effective procedures are in place to encourage good attendance and punctuality, to ensure pupils' absence is adequately explained, and to monitor progress where necessary.
137. The school's partnership with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is productive. Regular meetings contribute to the successful monitoring of attendance and to the development of further strategies to improve attendance rates and punctuality. In addition, a support worker from the welfare service works closely with a small number of families and provides intensive support for parents and children.
138. Pupils' academic progress is monitored carefully and pupils take an active role in the setting and monitoring of their individual targets.
139. The school makes every effort to ensure the healthy development, safety and well-being of pupils and is successful in establishing an environment where pupils feel safe. There is a detailed policy and procedures to promote health and safety. This includes risk assessments, which are monitored and implemented consistently by the head teacher, staff and governors.
140. The school makes very good efforts to promote healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. Pupils purchase fruit at break-time and have access to fresh water throughout the day.
141. All members of staff work in pupils' best interests to safeguard their welfare and protect them from harm. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures to deal with child protection issues and takes into account national guidelines. The head teacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection and he ensures all members of staff are fully aware of the correct procedures to be followed. The school has developed positive working partnerships with social services and other external welfare agencies.

142. Good provision is made for pupils with SEN. A comprehensive range of assessments identifies pupils with SEN accurately and diagnoses their needs swiftly. The detailed assessment and subsequent monitoring of individual pupils' needs ensure that many make good progress. Teachers make good use of initial assessments and a number of other tests, as well as teacher assessments. The documentation is very good and includes a system of record keeping which involves all staff. This is good practice.
143. Pupils on school action and school action plus of the SEN register have individual education plans (IEPs), which include targets to help pupils make the best possible progress. The quality and impact of IEPs are regularly reviewed and parents are fully involved. Pupils are increasingly involved as partners in the assessment and planning process.
144. Four pupils have statements of SEN. The arrangements for the annual review of statements are well established and comply with the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice Wales 2002.
145. The SEN register and other records are well organised and kept fully up to date. These records are useful working documents, the details of which are used successfully to monitor the progress of individual pupils and provide appropriate support.
146. The head teacher is also the SEN Co-ordinator and he makes an outstanding contribution as such. He is supported well by the deputy head teacher, class teachers and teaching assistants. Together they ensure that provision for pupils with SEN is well managed, monitored and effective.
147. Pupils benefit from the good support of all teachers, teaching assistants and NNEB accredited assistants in key stage 1 and key stage 2. The close collaboration between teachers and well-deployed teaching assistants enables pupils with SEN to progress well.
148. The school has established good links with a number of outside agencies for speech therapy and educational psychology.
149. Pupils who have English as an additional language are given appropriate support in learning English to increase their confidence. They are supported well in their classrooms and in withdrawal sessions with EMLAS staff.
150. The school provides very effective support for those pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress and those of others. No bullying or anti-social behaviour was observed during the inspection. In discussion, all the pupils serving on the school council confirmed that misbehaviour and incidents of bullying are not tolerated and teachers deal very promptly with any concern.
151. The quality of provision for equal opportunities is outstanding. The school recognises the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and ensures the support and guidance offered reflects this. The school actively promotes gender equality

and challenges stereotypes. Teachers ensure boys and girls enjoy equal opportunities.

152. Teachers promote good race relations successfully and the school values and celebrates diversity. Clear, effective documentation underpins good practice and the head teacher and governors monitor and evaluate the school's work carefully.
153. The school makes all reasonable efforts to secure the equal treatment of disabled pupils. An accessibility plan is in place to demonstrate how staff will make improvements in access to the curriculum and physical access to the building for disabled pupils. Shortcomings in the present building make physical access for wheelchair-bound users very difficult in the short term. Planning, however, in the new school takes full account of the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and it is fully accessible to disabled people.
154. There are very effective measures in place to eliminate oppressive behaviour, such as racial discrimination and other forms of harassment. The school monitors and responds to any incident promptly. Such incidents are infrequent.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features.

155. The overall quality of leadership and management is good with outstanding features. This is an improvement achieved since the last inspection when leadership was judged as good. The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in its self-evaluation report.
156. The chief features of leadership include:
- the outstanding leadership provided by the head teacher;
 - the able support of the deputy head teacher;
 - the very good leadership of subject coordinators;
 - the strength of governance provided by the governors;
 - excellent team work between all those who take part in school life; and
 - the full inclusion of many pupils in leadership through their involvement in the school council.
157. The school has a very clear sense of its educational direction and high standards are promoted with great persistence. The essence of the school's effectiveness is in the excellent teamwork between senior managers, governors, teachers and learners and teaching assistants.
158. The quality of leadership provided by the head teacher is outstanding. He has successfully led the school through a period of improvement. His management is inclusive, very sensitive and dedicated. He retains the loyalty and respect of governors, staff and pupils alike. He has succeeded in building and retaining a team which has a high morale, which is reflected in the excellent attitudes of pupils. The head teacher gives a clear sense of direction to the school's work and shares with other teachers, pupils and parents a commitment to improvement.
159. The deputy head teacher provides excellent support to the head teacher in managing the school. She plays a very active and effective part in teaching as well as in monitoring and evaluating the work of colleagues. The deputy head teacher's organisation of a school council helps pupils gain a good understanding of citizenship as well as leadership, and they grasp this opportunity willingly. Her leadership of the assessment process is outstanding. Senior managers support student teachers very well and induction procedures for staff new to the school are good. The school has a long-standing role as mentor for student teachers. This means that student teachers are often involved in class teaching under the close tutelage of the school's staff. The school takes excellent account of national priorities, local partnerships and cluster arrangements.
160. The school helps develop the expertise of both teachers and teaching assistants in an inclusive way. Performance management procedures successfully promote teachers' continuing professional development. The

school's leaders keep a good balance between meeting the professional needs of individual teachers and achieving its educational priorities.

161. The quality of subject co-ordination is good with outstanding features. The very good work of subject co-ordinators is reflected in the very good standards pupils achieve. Subject co-ordinators have been closely involved in policy-making and have designed and implemented very good schemes of work. Co-ordinators are actively involved in monitoring and evaluating the teaching of colleagues across the school.
162. The pupils benefit from their involvement in the democratic process through a well-organised school council. This body meets very regularly and has many delegates from years 5 and 6, who are all appointed to represent individual classes throughout the school. There are also representatives from years 3 and 4 present at meetings. These delegates are elected for a term only. This means many pupils experience leadership through being school council members and there is a healthy turn-around in the membership. The council is supervised well by the deputy head teacher in a discreet way and its healthy development is nurtured well.
163. The GB makes a strong contribution to leadership and strategic management through its monitoring role and the quality of its involvement as a committed and well-informed friend of the school. Governors are hard working, supportive and pro-active. They meet regularly and ensure all legal requirements are met. They are well-informed about whole-school target setting and the standards achieved from year to year.
164. The head teacher appraises governors about many aspects of school life through his reports and subject coordinators make regular presentations on subject development. Governors' knowledge and understanding is further enhanced through their visits to the school. The GB's committee system is effective and plays a role in decision-making, including budget setting and the allocation of finance.
165. Governors are closely involved in shaping the school's strategic direction and they play prominent roles in monitoring the progress and success of initiatives the school adopts. Their pro-active focus on teachers' workload agreements and the new responsibility structures is vital in ensuring the success of these initiatives. Many governors are also members of the "shadow" governing body of the new St. Thomas Community Primary School. They and others have worked very hard to bring this new school into being.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features.

166. The school's self-evaluation processes and planning for improvement are of high quality. The findings of the inspection team match those of the school in its self-evaluation report. The quality of self-evaluation has improved significantly since the last inspection when some shortcomings were identified.

167. The self-evaluation process is outstandingly inclusive of all those involved in school life and the self-evaluation report is thorough, incisive and accurate.
168. This is a school which has raised its standards since its last inspection. It is completely committed to improving standards, and has successfully developed very good self-evaluation procedures.
169. The findings of the inspection team were in line with six of the seven judgments made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The school's judgment for Key Question 7 was upgraded to grade 1 because of the evidence which inspectors analysed.
170. The self-evaluation report is honest and thorough and all governors, staff and LEA advisers were involved in its development. Self-evaluation arrangements are rigorous, systematic, and based on first-hand evidence. Parents contribute their views often either formally or informally. Many were particularly keen to inform the inspection team about their very positive views of the school. No parents had any critical comments to make to inspectors. Pupils often have opportunities to make their views known through the school council's very regular meetings.
171. The head teacher, deputy head teacher and subject coordinators regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Coordinators also take in pupils' work to assess the outcomes of teaching on a regular basis.
172. Performance management and appraisal procedures are of good quality. Teachers receive in-service training (INSET) of high quality and often find promotion to other schools after their time spent teaching at St Thomas.
173. The quality of planning for improvement is outstanding as shown by the school's excellent improvement since its last inspection. The school assesses its strengths and its areas for improvement through a clear and well-composed school development plan (SDP). This notes the school's needs and responsibilities well. Financial implications and timescales are stated clearly. It is a useful working document with specific, measurable success criteria. The head teacher and GB ensure that very good resources are provided to achieve key targets. Governors, teachers and teaching assistants are closely involved in planning for improvement and their views are carefully considered.
174. The head teacher and the deputy head teacher monitor teaching carefully and have an accurate picture of the staff's many strengths and few areas for improvement. The school has put in place a very good system which ensures that pupils get good specialist teaching in important areas.
175. Subject co-ordinators share information about pupils' achievements in their subjects by monitoring lessons taught by colleagues, collecting in subject work often and maintaining portfolios of pupils' work.
176. The school has responded positively to the key issues identified in the last inspection report and since then many improvements have occurred. It has

made excellent progress since its last inspection. Over the last six years, the school has improved the standards its pupils achieve, the quality of teaching provided, the quality of leadership and management and the accuracy and thoroughness of its self-evaluation.

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

Grade 1: good with outstanding features
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177. The findings of the inspection team differ from the judgment made by the school in its self-evaluation report because inspectors found evidence that there were outstanding features in:
- the school's very effective use of its accommodation;
 - the quality and deployment of a skilled and committed staff; and
 - the provision of very good resources in many lessons.
178. The school's concern about the poor quality of its accommodation explains its grading of this key question. The quality of the accommodation for all pupils, including those who might be disabled, will be resolved when the school closes in April 2007 and its present pupils continue their education at brand new premises for St. Thomas Community Primary School.
179. Teachers make very good use of the accommodation. Exciting, stimulating, high-quality displays are used to brighten and enhance the learning environment and celebrate pupils' achievement. Teachers compensate for the limited opportunities for outdoor learning in the playgrounds by considerable use of external sites such as Tawe Woodland Area, Bishops Wood, Kilvey Hill, Gower Heritage Centre and Plantasia.
180. The very good quantity and quality of staffing meets the needs of pupils very well. Teachers get appropriate time for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA). The implementation of workforce remodelling has been effective in helping to raise standards further. The deputy head teacher is deployed successfully to provide PPA cover through the school. PPA cover is also provided effectively by a teacher specialising in ICT teaching. This teacher has rightly been shortlisted for the BECTa Award (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) for teaching of high quality.
181. The quantity, quality and deployment of teaching assistants are very good. They contribute very effectively to the quality of learning throughout the school, especially with pupils who have SEN or who speak English as an additional language.
182. The school shows a strong commitment to staff development. INSET is matched well to the school's needs and the professional development of individual staff. Teachers undertake further studies which have led to external accreditation, for example, at Masters' Degree level.

183. Teachers in the early stages of their career are very well guided and supported. In recent years, seven members of staff have left the school to become deputy head teachers. The school's mentoring of new members of staff and student teachers are outstanding features.
184. Administrative staff, lunch-time supervisors, the caretaker and cleaning staff undertake their tasks efficiently.
185. Spending is closely linked to the priorities identified in the SDP. Senior leaders and the GB ensure that resources are very well matched to their priorities for development. This is shown by the completion of a new, state-of-the-art school.
186. The quality of subject resources is very good overall and they are accessible to all learners. All classes have an interactive whiteboard and there are sufficient classroom computers to meet the needs of pupils. A well equipped ICT suite is used very effectively. At the invitation of the Welsh Assembly Government the school is piloting the BECTa award for ICT.
187. The head teacher is strongly committed to enabling pupils to work with writers, poets, musicians and artists. This is an outstanding feature of the school's work.
188. The head teacher and governors regularly review the use of resources. The school provides very good value for money. This is shown in the high quality of learning and teaching, the very good leadership and the excellent progress made since the last inspection.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Under 5s

189. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
190. Standards of achievement in the areas of learning for children under five years of age in Reception classes are judged as follows:

Language, Literacy and Communication	Grade 1
Personal and Social Development	Grade 1
Mathematical Development	Grade 1
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Grade 1
Creative Development	Grade 1
Physical Development	Grade 1

191. Children start school in the reception class and good transition procedures are in place for transfer from Margaret Street Nursery. Initial assessments show that on entry children's levels of achievement are often about ten per cent below those of children in other local schools.

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills

Outstanding features

192. Children make very good progress in language, literacy and communication skills.
193. Children listen very attentively and respond to adult intervention with an extremely good level of understanding.
194. Children use special words such as 'author' when talking about books chosen independently.

Good features

195. Children express opinions confidently in whole-class discussions when considering the items needed for a journey into the jungle and the actions needed to prepare food. Oral language skills develop very well through a range of stimulating role-play settings linked to the theme of jungle exploration.
196. They enjoy making books such as 'We're going on a Gorilla Hunt' using pictures and text. Children use their phonic skills and knowledge to read and write sentences. They are beginning to recognise and understand what question marks are. They develop their independent writing skills well in a wide range of activities including role-play.

197. Children with limited language skills respond to good quality support by teaching assistants, EMLAS staff and parent helpers.
198. Bilingual skills are developing appropriately through daily registrations and by the 'Helpur Y Dydd' (Helper of the day) system. Children question their peers as to how they feel and discuss the weather in Welsh.

Personal and Social Development

Outstanding features

199. Standards in personal and social skills are very good. Children work independently to a large extent and organise their own activities with increasing confidence. They confidently state what they are good at and show high self-esteem.
200. They share and cooperate in very happy relationships with each other and adults and show much respect toward others. Living things such as Giant African Land Snails are treated with great care and sensitivity.

Good features

201. Children demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning and concentrate for extended periods of time, remaining focused on task. Pupils develop their problem-solving and social skills well through classroom activities and outdoor learning.
202. Children are aware of the need for good hygiene after handling living creatures and when preparing for activities involving food. They dress themselves for outdoor play and indoor activities with minimum support from adults.

Mathematical Development

Outstanding features

203. Children's mathematical development has outstanding features. They use their mathematical skills very effectively in registration. Children demonstrate very good understanding of positional language when travelling on a 'gorilla hunt'.

Good features

204. Initial assessment indicates that on entry to school, pupils' numeric skills are 20 per cent behind other pupils in Swansea. During the Reception year, children's mathematical skills develop to a high standard.
205. Children confidently recognise and count numbers to twenty and beyond. They make very good progress through extensive use of challenging, stimulating, practical activities including role-play.

206. They use software independently to add groups of objects. During a practical activity, hunting for jungle creatures, children could say which group includes the most animals and made good attempts at calculating how many more are needed to make up the group to a given number.
207. They recognise and recreate patterns carefully using large building blocks and a wide variety of small equipment.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Outstanding features

208. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good with outstanding features. This is very well developed through the considerable number of visits to local places of interest, including Plantasia, the Gower Heritage Centre and the Marina.
209. Children's confident use of ICT is an outstanding feature. Most use the interactive white board and classroom computers independently. They use a digital camera and video recorder to record their activities. They record stories on the interactive whiteboard and develop good observational skills through the use of a digital microscope.

Good features

210. When working with a health professional, children demonstrate a good understanding of healthy and unhealthy food giving logical reasons for their answers. Children describe what their African Land Snails need to survive. They acquire an awareness of the culture and heritage of Wales through role-play and stories about people such as Laura Ashley.

Creative Development

Outstanding features

211. Children's creative development is good with outstanding features. The huge variety of creative activities offered to children through working with artists in school or at other locations enables them to make very good progress. Children produce imaginative work confidently when using a range of media to create collages, animal puppets, wax resist pictures and observational drawings.

Good features

212. When using junk materials to create an object of their choosing they work with a high degree of independence. Their ability to select their own resources and give reasons for their choices is very well developed.

213. Children make 'fruit salad' using plasticine. They handle tools such as knives, graters and slicers appropriately when preparing carrots and tomatoes. They pay due care to health and safety.
214. Children confidently explore musical instruments and sing enthusiastically a variety of songs and rhymes.

Physical Development

Outstanding features

215. Children's physical development is good with outstanding features. Although there are limited opportunities for children in the present building to use outdoor play equipment they exhibit very good skills.

Good features

216. Children enjoy an extensive range of activities and develop very good gross and fine motor control. On a visit to Tawe Riverside children collected material energetically to build a den and create a seesaw.
217. When travelling on a 'gorilla hunt' in the hall, children move confidently and imaginatively and demonstrate good spatial awareness. They manipulate small equipment such as writing and drawing implements with very good control and use construction kits effectively. Children control the computer mouse to good effect.

Shortcomings

218. There are no discernible shortcomings in any of the above areas of learning.

English

Key stage 1: Grade 1 Good with outstanding features
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Key Stage 2: Grade 1 Good with outstanding features
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Outstanding features

219. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 write outstanding and very evocative, passionate poetry about their desire for a world free of want and pain. Many write very creatively about a range of topics and write effectively in a broad range of forms and genres.

Good features

220. Many pupils enter the school with below average skills in reading, writing and speaking. Their language abilities are often below those expected for their

- age. However, because of consistently good teaching they make very good progress from year to year.
221. Pupils in key stage 1 listen carefully to their teachers' explanations and the contributions of other pupils. They listen carefully to stories, sequence events and retell stories using their own words. They make good progress in speaking for different purposes and audiences and collaborate well in discussions. They speak in a variety of contexts with increasing confidence.
 222. Standards in reading in key stage 1 are good. Pupils display a good understanding of the characters, settings and structure of stories. Some identify grammatical conventions, such as an exclamation mark or a question mark in a big book. Most Year 1 pupils recognise full stops and capital letters. By the end of key stage 1, the more-able pupils read unfamiliar texts with growing confidence. Other readers have a positive attitude to reading and use a range of reading strategies to help them understand the text. Many pupils develop a good knowledge of the alphabetical order of letters.
 223. Pupils in key stage 1, including those with SEN, make very good progress in learning to write. By the end of key stage 1, many write creatively using some of the key features of narrative. Year 2 pupils suggest good, creative ideas for the endings to stories read aloud to the class. A few more-able pupils in key stage 1 write at length. Their writing is well organised and they plan and revise their work well.
 224. Most pupils in key stage 2 listen respectfully to their teachers and to others. In lessons, they remain focused for a sustained time. When answering questions, most give answers in writing and orally in phrases or full sentences. They make very good progress in speaking for different purposes and audiences and collaborate well in discussions. They show good skills in building and presenting arguments when discussing the question "Should a new restaurant be built on the summit of Mount Snowdon (Y Wyddfa)?".
 225. Pupils in key stage 2, including those with SEN and those in vulnerable circumstances, read aloud expressively. Many make good progress from a low starting point. They ask questions about the topics they investigate and suggest and use appropriate sources of information. Most have a good understanding of the basic skills in reading, and develop strategies to deal with unfamiliar words. Most can identify types of words such as nouns or verbs.
 226. Most key stage 2 pupils identify various descriptive figures of speech, such as similes and metaphors. They have good strategies to understand figures of speech and they use them aptly. Pupils with SEN make rapid progress because of the support they get from very good specialist teachers and teaching assistants, both in mainstream as well as in withdrawal groups. They use phonic strategies well to read unfamiliar words. They show a good vocabulary and use words like *abduct* correctly.
 227. By Year 6, pupils' skills in reading have many good features. They have a number of favourite authors. They are confident in discussing plot and

character and have benefited greatly from visits to the school by poets, writers and actors. The more-able readers read with expression, using different voices for different characters. They use improvisational role-play in pairs and groups well to explore the feelings of refugees in World War II. Girls portray children making emotional farewells to the parents movingly. Boys portray their fear of being evacuated from London tellingly.

228. Pupils in key stage 2 understand some of the characteristics of myths and legends and, as a result, when they write creatively, they recall important aspects and find appropriate adjectives well. Many make good use of the school library, and the choice of reading books on offer is broad. Most pupils in key stage 2 show a good awareness of different degrees of formality in writing. Their handwriting is usually neat and well formed. They write formal and informal letters very well.
229. Pupils in upper key stage 2 often write outstandingly well. Their work shows a command of the characteristics of creative, persuasive and informational writing. They have a good understanding of how to write for different audiences. Many understand how to use punctuation and develop a sound vocabulary.
230. Pupils have a good grasp of literacy. They often understand new concepts in language better because teachers use interactive whiteboards well. Older pupils in key stage 2 use computers skilfully for word-processing or presenting their stories and poems. They combine suitable images and text very well.
231. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well by the end of year 6 in learning English.

Information technology

Key stage 1: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Key stage 2: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

232. Pupils achieve outstandingly by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. Almost 60 per cent attain NC Level 5 in teacher assessments in year 6.
233. Pupils in year 6 show outstanding achievements in web design and the use of PowerPoint. They create index pages, hot spots, various types of hyperlink and appropriate transition effects between slides.

Good features

234. Pupils learn to use ICT to communicate and handle information, to a good degree, in a range of subjects. They occasionally use a digital camera well to record their work.

235. In key stage 1, pupils program a robotic toy to move backwards and forwards and make right-angled turns. They develop their understanding of mathematics as well as ICT through learning how to control this robot.
236. Pupils develop a number of basic skills such as executing program commands, saving their work, using the mouse and pointer, and operating a number of facilities on the tool bar such as the airbrush, the spray and the pen.
237. Pupils in key stage 1 develop pictograms from tallies they have made. They use the mouse, icons and the screen pointer competently. They draw themselves using electronic imaging software to replicate images in patterns to good effect. They have also developed skills in word-processing, creating and printing simple sentences.
238. Pupils with SEN make good progress with good support from teaching assistants. In year 2, they know that people communicate via the telephone or electronic mail as well as by writing. They are competent when highlighting blocks of text and change the colour, type and size of font carefully. They produce good quality posters.
239. In key stage 2, pupils research the internet for information about social or educational conditions in the past. They access appropriate sites on the internet and some manipulate digital imagery skilfully.
240. Pupils find appropriate files on a hard disk and open and use them. They use computers well to support their research, for example, by using digital encyclopaedias on compact discs.
241. Pupils in key stage 2 improve their ICT capability in their word-processed writing, for example, by using a range of fonts and styles of text in poetry and letters. They use computers to combine text and images of good quality. They manipulate sounds and explore simulations.
242. Pupils in key stage 2 explain the meaning and purpose of different menu commands such as edit and print. They describe how to use the shift key to make a capital letter or the CTRL key to take shortcuts. They suggest appropriate names for different fields in setting up a file to store information about themselves.
243. Pupils write for different audiences using commercial software programs. They also explore branching databases, collect and present information and model effects on screen.
244. Older pupils have a very good understanding of how to use computers. They know, for example, how to format cells in a spreadsheet and how to widen columns or use cell addresses correctly in formulae. They can automate the calculation of a column of ten cells accurately. They use the internet effectively to research and gather information for a range of subjects.

Design technology

Key stage 1: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Key stage 2: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

245. Year 6 pupils make controllable vehicles to a very high standard. Although pupils work in groups, they all record their own resources and ideas separately. They successfully combine understanding of structures and mechanisms and discuss the processes they go through. They use technical vocabulary when demonstrating and testing their vehicles. They are also perceptive in suggesting modifications.

Good features

246. In both key stages, pupils, including those with SEN, work effectively in groups to design and complete pieces of work. They apply their skills well in designing and creating artefacts and products. Pupils develop very good skills in the use of a wide range of materials.

247. Year 1 pupils use a range of tools including saws and bench hooks to construct their moving vehicles. Year 2 pupils explore different materials through touch. They use both magnifying glasses and a microscope linked to the interactive whiteboard to look closely at the way fabrics are constructed. They work enthusiastically on their project designing a coat for Joseph.

248. Year 3 pupils evaluate purchased products and then make their own purses. They investigate different stitching techniques and practise sewing a range of materials. Pupils investigate using different fabric crayons and felts for decoration purposes. They consider different methods of fastening their purses. They make design choices before making and evaluating their finished product.

249. Year 4 pupils develop an awareness of product design as they evaluate bread according to a specified range of characteristics and consider how well they would fit a specified purpose. They use what they have learned to make bread rolls for a specific market.

250. Year 5 pupils design structures such as shelters well. They make systematic plans and record these in simple format. They measure, mark out and cut materials with accuracy. They join them in a variety of ways and think carefully about the purpose of the structure. They show good understanding of the nature and purpose of structures and reinforcement in their study of traditional shelters from around the world and the different types of animal shelters. They test a variety of materials for their resistance to water. They apply this experience to a technology shelter building in the Tawe Wood.

251. Across the school, pupils take care over their work, have a sensible approach to safety and try hard to achieve a successful outcome. They are aware of the importance of good presentation and finish.
252. Pupils in both key stages have gained valuable knowledge in significant areas of the subject. They have experience of mechanisms such as levers, pivots, pneumatics and hydraulics and have knowledge of structures and strengthening as well as aspects of control technology.
253. Pupils across the key stages identify a design need and address it, working to criteria and evaluating the outcome against their intention to improve upon the design. The work produced is well finished and show pupils have used models, pictures, ICT and discussions appropriately to develop their designs. The quality of their work is of a high standard.

History

Key stage 1: Grade 2: Good and no important shortcomings

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

Good features

254. Throughout the school pupils' key skills are developed through their studies in history. Pupils are interested in the subject and they listen well and show a good recall of previous learning using relevant language and vocabulary.
255. Younger pupils in key stage 1 have a good grasp of the changes that occur over time in contexts they understand. They interpret the passage of time through changes in their own lives and within their own families and changes to familiar places such as their own community and school.
256. Older pupils in key stage 1 study life in Victorian Schools showing good understanding of the differences between Victorian education and their own. In developing their knowledge of Florence Nightingale, they discuss Betsi Cadwaladr and her role in the Crimean War. Pupils are beginning to understand that people do certain things for a reason and that actions have their consequences.
257. Key stage 1 pupils visit the National Waterfront Museum to learn about the famous dog-hero, Swansea Jack. They use a range of specialist sound equipment to make sound effects for the story of Jack. They successfully develop a sense of historical enquiry and know how to find out aspects of the period studied from a range of sources including artefacts, books, videos, ICT and music.
258. Younger pupils in key stage 2 use Pinnacle to create a play of life in World War II, which is now based on the intranet. They increase their understanding of the Blitz on Swansea during World War II by interviewing members of the local history society on their childhood memories.

259. Older pupils in key stage 2 develop their historical understanding of enquiry using the internet to examine the local census and access the BBC's People at War website. Pupils use photo-editing software well to create a presentation on World War II. They demonstrate a good understanding of the plight of evacuees and take on their roles by describing their circumstances in letters to parents.
260. Across the key stages, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of Welsh history through visits to historical sites such as Swansea Museum and the Museum of Welsh Life at St. Fagan's.
261. Pupils' social and cultural development is enhanced through their work in history. They enjoy talks with visiting speakers to increase their understanding of historical events and excellent community links make history come alive for pupils.
262. Across the school, pupils with SEN make very good progress in history.

Art

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

263. Pupils' artwork is consistently of at least good quality. They are generally very enthusiastic in their approach to art and are excited by the work they do. They collaborate well and show appreciation of each other's work.
264. All pupils enjoy art and create vivid pictures and crafts in both key stages. They learn a wide range of different skills.
265. In key stage 1, pupils experiment with shade, tone and mix colours effectively, after initial group work using an interactive whiteboard. They show their work with pride and can explain their choices well.
266. Younger and older pupils enjoy art very much. They are confident and daring when using paint, pastels, marbling inks, charcoal or pencil to create imaginative images.
267. Pupils work on textile designs using hot and cold wax techniques on batik to good effect.
268. Key stage 2 pupils learn the specific styles of artists who have painted in Wales, such as Jac Jones, L.S. Lowry, Catrin Jones and Mari Lloyd Jones. Their paintings in the style of these artists capture the pictorial detail of their work.

269. Pupils show good listening skills and then take part in lively discussions before creating their own paintings in the style of famous artists. They appraise their own and each other's work constructively.
270. Pupils in key stage 2 make, bake and display tiles which are colourful and vivid. Their stained glass windows are imaginative and their three-dimensional models are of good quality.
271. Pupils' artwork shows that art makes a considerable contribution to their spiritual development. Their artwork on the story of Rama and Sita, or the Muslim art patterns they paint, or the Sri Lankan and African masks they make, all help pupils to a greater understanding of other cultures and faiths.
272. Many pupils create digital art on a computer, for example in the style of Mondrian or Josef Albers, a little of which is outstanding.

Shortcomings

273. Pupils have under-developed skills in exploring their individual creativity when working in the style of other artists and spend too long simply copying the work of other artists.

School's response to the inspection

276. The governors and staff of St Thomas Primary School consider that this inspection report accurately represents the many strengths of the school. It is a fitting tribute to the collaborative, friendly ethos of the school, the tremendous commitment of all staff, the ability, enthusiasm and humility of pupils and the support of parents and the community.
277. We recognise that we were fortunate in having an experienced, rigorous and reflective inspection team, who took the time to fully understand and appreciate our approach to educating our children.
278. The report highlights many outstanding features and we are particularly pleased that the school's self-evaluation was endorsed. With pupils and staff transferring to an exciting and well-equipped new building in April 2007, this report is testimony to insightful leadership and outstanding teaching.
279. The school intends to increase the opportunities for pupils to fulfil their artistic potential in the near and mid-term; and will continue to prioritise its efforts to improve punctuality and attendance.
280. This report therefore, is not only a fitting final chapter in the school's long history, but also acts as a solid foundation for the opening chapter of a new school for the community of St Thomas.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	St Thomas Primary School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	4 to 11
Address of school	Windmill Terrace St Thomas SWANSEA
Postcode	SA1 8DN
Telephone number	01972 650052

Head teacher	Mr D Tyler
Date of appointment	May 1990
Chair of governors	Mrs G Scannell
Registered Inspector	Mr R Isaac
Dates of inspection	5 th to 7 th February 2007

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	N/A	36	30	35	36	35	25	24	221

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	11	1	11.5

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	19.2 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	N/A
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	24.5
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.27

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection		
Term	Reception	Rest of School
Spring 2006	85%	90%
Summer 2006	89%	90%
Autumn 2006	90%	93%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	35%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	NIL

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2006			Number of pupils in Y2:		35		
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	26	57	17
		National	0	4	12	64	20
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	26	51	23
		National	0	4	14	56	26
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	29	54	17
		National	0	5	14	69	12
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	26	65	9
		National	0	2	11	64	23
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	20	69	11
		National	0	2	10	63	25
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	20	60	20
		National	0	2	9	65	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	63%	In Wales	81%

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 20__			Number of pupils in Y6								36	
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	3	3	16	51	27	
		National	0	0	1	0	1	4	15	47	32	
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
		National	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	3	19	43	35	
		National	0	0	1	0	1	3	15	47	32	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	35	62	
		National	0	0	1	0	0	2	11	51	35	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)		
by Teacher Assessment		
In the school	76%	
In Wales	74%	

- 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 a total of nine inspector days in the school and met as a team before the inspection started.

The inspectors visited:

- forty-four lessons or parts of lessons;
- all classes;
- three 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 began; and
- senior managers, teachers, support and administrative staff and groups of pupils, including the school council, during the inspection.

The team considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- responses to a questionnaire from 100 parents;
- documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection; and
- a wide range of pupils' past and present work.

The inspection team also held post-inspection meetings with the staff and governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subject Responsibilities
Mr Robert Isaac	Registered Inspector	Key Question 1 Key Question 2 (Teaching) Key Question 5 Key Question 6	English Information Technology Art
Mr David Tyler	Nominee & Head teacher	Contributing to all discussions	All
Mrs Janet Warr	Lay Inspector	Contributing to: Key Question 1 Key Question 3 and Key Question 4	None
Mr David Beaumont Morgan	Team Inspector	KQ1: Standards in Key Skills Key Question 2 (Assessment) Key Question 3 Key Question 4 (SEN)	Design Technology History (Welsh/Bilingualism)
Mrs Elizabeth Mayo	Team Inspector	Key Question 7	Early Years

Acknowledgement

The visiting inspectors wish to thank the head teacher, the governors, all the staff and the pupils for their unfailing co-operation and courtesy during the inspection.

Inspection Contractor:

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