

**Inspection under Section 163 of the
Education Act 2002**

**Agincourt School
Dixton Lane
Monmouth
NP25 3SY**

School Number: 6796010

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**by Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for
Education and Training in Wales**

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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE**

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- ▲ primary schools;
- ▲ secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult and community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ LEAs;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies; and
- ▲ the education, guidance and training elements of Jobcentre plus.

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- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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Introduction

Agincourt School was inspected as part of a national programme for the inspection of independent schools under section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

In addition, inspection reports identify good features and shortcomings, so that a school may improve the quality of education it offers and raise the standards its pupils achieve. The inspection of all independent schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Agincourt School took place between 6 November 2006 and 8 November 2006. A team of inspectors from Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Training and Education in Wales, undertook the inspection. Estyn is a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales.

The team made its judgements having considered 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 report is written in accordance with Estyn's Common Inspection Framework (which is available at www.estyn.gov.uk).

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

Year groups and key stages

Independent schools use a variety of systems for numbering year groups. This report, however, uses 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 and parents.

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

Although independent schools are not required to follow the National Curriculum, we use these terms for convenience.

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Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Agincourt School is a co-educational pre-preparatory school for boys and girls aged from three to seven. The school was opened in 1992 and has been owned by the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers since 1997. Agincourt School is set on the outskirts of the town of Monmouth in the Wye Valley. The school itself is housed in a listed building that has recently been renovated and extended.
- 2 At seven years of age most pupils continue their education at one of the Haberdashers' Monmouth preparatory schools - The Grange School for boys or Gilbert Inglefield House for girls. Both schools are academically selective and children are assessed to determine whether the school can cater properly for their needs. A small minority of pupils transfer to maintained schools.
- 3 Agincourt school offers education for four to seven year olds, whilst Agincourt Acorns nursery offers morning, afternoon or all day sessions for children from three to four years.
- 4 Most pupils come from the surrounding rural areas of Monmouth. Abergavenny, Ross on Wye and Chepstow with a small number travelling from Newport and the Welsh valleys.
- 5 All pupils speak English as a first language and no pupil has English as an additional language. The school reports that none of its pupils is socially disadvantaged. No pupil has a statement of special educational need.

The school's priorities and targets

- 6 The school improvement plan (SIP) identifies several areas for development. These are to:
 - establish and further develop the role of subject leaders in monitoring standards, observing lessons and sampling pupils' work;
 - continue to develop pupils' independent learning and problem-solving skills;
 - make the SIP a working document that includes more people in its production and implementation;
 - carry out a review of assessment, recording and reporting (ARR) and develop the use of class assessment files; and
 - develop the provision of standards in ICT by improving resources and providing training for staff.

Summary

- 7 Agincourt School meets almost all of the regulatory requirements necessary to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations (Wales) 2003.
- 8 The school has made substantial progress in recent years under the purposeful and effective leadership of the headteacher. Working successfully together, the headteacher, bursar and governors have improved the school's accommodation, extended the range of resources and increased staffing levels.
- 9 Since the last inspection by OHMCI in 1999, the school has addressed the two issues raised in that report. Procedures for monitoring staff to ensure that planning and classroom practice are maintained at a high standard have been implemented recently and these are developing well. Relationships with parents have been strengthened. Communication between the school and parents has improved, and is now good.

Tables of grades awarded

The inspection team judged the school's work as follows:

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

Standards of achievement

- 10 Overall, pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	81%	11%	0%	0%

- 11 These standards of achievement exceed the targets set by the Welsh Assembly Government for 2007 for maintained schools, that 98% of classes should achieve grade 3 or better and that 65% should be grade 2 or better.

Standards for the under-fives are as follows:

Language, literacy and communication	Grade 2
Personal and social development	Grade 1
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 1

- 12 Standards in each of the areas of learning for under-fives are judged to be at least good in all six areas of learning. There are outstanding features in the standards children achieve in their personal, social and physical development. Most children in both the nursery and reception classes exceed the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning' in these particular areas by the time they are five years of age.

The grades awarded in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1
English	2
Mathematics	2
Science	2
Design and technology	2
History	2
Geography	2
Art	2
Music	2
Physical education	1
Religious studies	2

- 13 The standards of achievement shown in the table above, demonstrate that pupils are making good progress in the subjects being studied at the school. Most pupils make good progress in their learning. Pupils throughout the school listen exceptionally well and have a very good recall of information and instructions. They achieve good standards in the skills of speaking, reading, writing and numeracy.
- 14 At the time of the inspection, pupils in key stage 1 were unable to use the computers because the school's computer suite was not up and running. As a result, no judgment of standards can be made in this area. Children in nursery and reception classes confidently use information and communications technology.
- 15 Pupils are courteous, behave very well and show respect to each other and staff. The ability of pupils to co-operate well with each other is a particularly strong feature of the school. Many pupils work independently and their ability to make choices is developing well. All pupils are very keen to follow instructions but on occasion some are over-reliant on the direction of teachers.

- 16 Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of their own culture and are aware of and respect the cultures of others.
- 17 Attendance rates and levels of punctuality are good with an average of over 95% attendance for the previous three full terms.

The quality of education

- 18 Overall, the quality of teaching in the areas of learning and subjects inspected is as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	61%	31%	0%	0%

- 19 Very good relationships exist throughout the school and the rapport between staff and pupils in particular has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to work. Staff encourage and support pupils to be positive in their attitudes. Staff are consistent in their use of strategies to encourage positive behaviour which includes giving praise and awards.
- 20 Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects and areas of learning they teach. The school makes particularly good use of staff expertise in areas such as music and sport. Staff also contribute well to the extra-curricular programme, which includes dance and karate.
- 21 Where the lessons were judged to have some outstanding features, staff used a variety of teaching methods, lessons had a brisk pace and pupils were interested and challenged.
- 22 The most common good features in teaching include: planning well, recapping previous work and emphasising key learning points. In these lessons, teachers share learning objectives with pupils and provide very clear instructions to ensure that pupils know exactly what they have to do.
- 23 Teachers and support staff work very well together. Support staff play a valuable role and their work generally has a positive effect on pupils' learning.
- 24 Where there are shortcomings in the teaching it is often because introductions are too long and this limits the time for pupils to complete their work. Sometimes the pace of the lesson is too slow and explanations are not clear enough to allow the pupils to begin work quickly and work independently.
- 25 Assessment, recording and reporting have some good features that outweigh shortcomings. Teachers use a range of assessment procedures to help monitor pupils' progress. The quality of teachers' records and assessments is often good but information about pupils' progress is not used enough to plan further learning.
- 26 Parents have frequent opportunities to meet teachers to discuss their children's progress. The twice-yearly reports for parents are of good quality and help parents know what to do to support their children.

- 27 There are good schemes of work for all subjects and areas of learning. Generally, teachers' plans are of good quality. However, there is some inconsistency in how teachers plan to improve key skills. As a result there is not always a clear focus on key skills across the curriculum.
- 28 A wide range of extra-curricular activities cater very well for pupils' musical, sporting, artistic and other interests. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school provide valuable contributions to the range of learning experiences offered by the school.
- 29 Effective links with the local community further enhance pupils' learning. Assemblies and acts of collective worship also make an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 30 Staff develop pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship through recycling and planting programmes and the development of conservation areas. Recently-established links with a school in Sri Lanka help pupils to learn about life in another country
- 31 The curriculum takes good account of national priorities and gives attention to ensuring pupils develop the skills for lifelong learning.
- 32 The school provides a happy, supportive, caring and safe environment. Behaviour is monitored effectively and a rewards and sanctions system is used well.
- 33 Effective routines are in place to help new pupils to settle into the school. The school has appropriate arrangements to ensure that health and safety and risk assessments are carried out regularly. The headteacher is appropriately the nominated child protection officer and staff understand child protection procedures. The school has clear guidelines for dealing with bullying. It ensures that pupils have equal opportunities, regardless of their gender, social or ethnic background.
- 34 Parents are strong advocates of the school and feel that their children are very well cared for. The commitment of parents to the school and its values is reflected in the work of 'The Friends of Agincourt'.

Leadership and management

- 35 Staff have made substantial progress in recent years under the leadership of the headteacher who has established a good team spirit and sense of purpose throughout the school. There is openness and a willingness to recognise areas in which the school can improve.
- 36 The governing body of the school is kept well informed of developments and progress at the school through the reports of the headteacher and bursar and the regular contact that they have with the school.
- 37 Self-evaluation arrangements are developing well and the self-evaluation report (SER) is a comprehensive document. However, senior leadership and management roles are unclear. The contribution of all staff to monitoring and evaluating standards

is underdeveloped. The school improvement plan (SIP) appropriately identifies suitable areas for improvement, time scales and those responsible for the actions. However this plan lacks the success criteria and clear links to financial planning that would make it really useful as a tool for school improvement.

- 38 Professional development opportunities are available to all staff. The process of identifying and providing training is developing but not yet not fully linked to the needs and priorities of the school.
- 39 Staffing levels are very good throughout the school and the expertise of teachers and support staff is used effectively to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- 40 Overall, the accommodation provided for learners is good with some outstanding features. The well-maintained and attractive grounds are an outstanding feature of the school. They are used very effectively as a learning and teaching resource.
- 41 The school is well resourced to deliver the subjects and areas of learning that it offers. These resources have a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- 42 Financial management at the school is very good. In particular the bursar manages the finances very effectively. Over the past three years, careful investment has ensured that the quality of accommodation and resources has improved. There are good processes in place to ensure sound financial scrutiny. The school provides value for money.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

The quality of education provided by the school

- 43 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003, the school should:
- draw up a written policy on the curriculum. [1(2)].

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 44 The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 45 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003, the school should:
- maintain and record attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995. [3(9)].

The suitability of proprietors and staff

- 46 The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

- 47 The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

- 48 The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

- 49 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003, the school should:
- ensure that the panel appointed by the governors to hear complaints is made up in accordance with the regulations. [7(f)].

Recommendations

- 50 In order to improve the school further, the staff and proprietors need to:
- R1 take steps to comply fully with all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations;
 - R2* strengthen the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning as part of the self-evaluation process;
 - R3* continue to develop assessment procedures that contribute to planning new learning;
 - R4* complete work on the IT suite to ensure that all pupils in key stage 1 have access to these resources; and
 - R5* strengthen the management structure in the school by having a senior member of staff who can provide cover and increased support for the headteacher.
- * Aspects of these recommendations have been identified by the school in its SIP as areas for development.
- 51 Since the inspection report notes that the school does not meet some of the standards required for registration, the National Assembly for Wales will require the governors to submit an action plan within a specified period of time. This plan must set out the steps that the school will take to meet the standards, and the timescales within which it will complete each step.
- 52 Estyn also advises the governors to produce a development plan to show what action they intend to take in response to the recommendations. It is advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents at the school.

Standards

Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

53 The judgements of the inspection team do not match the grade 1 awarded by the school for this key question. Although the inspection identified many good features in standards, the team did not see enough outstanding features.

54 Overall, pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons inspected were as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	81%	11%	0%	0%

55 Standards in all lessons were judged to be satisfactory or better, and were good or very good (grade 1 and 2) in 89% of classes inspected. These standards of achievement exceed the targets set by the Welsh Assembly government for 2007 for maintained schools.

56 The grades awarded for the subjects inspected appear in the summary section of the report.

57 The overall quality of the educational provision for children under-five is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards for the under-fives appear in the summary section.

58 Teacher assessments for the National Curriculum tests show that the pupils attain well in comparison to pupils in maintained schools which have the smallest number of pupils entitled to free school meals (a socio-economic indicator used by the Welsh Assembly Government for comparing schools). Boys and girls attain equally well.

59 Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make suitable progress in their learning. The majority of pupils throughout the school listen exceptionally well and have a very good recall of information and instructions. They achieve good standards in the key skills of speaking, reading, and writing and numeracy. In the nursery and reception classes, children confidently use computers and other technology regularly. In key stage 1, pupils did not use computers during the inspection due to building work being undertaken in the school's IT suite.

60 The development of personal and social skills, including the ability of pupils to work together, is a very strong feature at the school. Pupils follow instructions and directions well. Their ability to work independently and to make choices is developing well. However, on occasion, they are over-reliant on the direction of teachers.

61 Pupils behave very well, are courteous and show respect for each other and staff. They participate thoughtfully and respectfully during collective worship.

- 62 Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of their own culture and are aware of and respect the cultures of others. Although the school does not aim for pupils to become bilingual, children throughout the school can use some simple words and phrases in Welsh.
- 63 Attendance rates of pupils are good, and have been over 95% for the past twelve months. Levels of punctuality are also good.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

64 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in the self-evaluation report.

65 In the lessons observed, the inspection team judged the quality of teaching as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	61%	31%	0%	0%

66 Very good relationships are evident across the school and the rapport between staff and pupils has a good effect on pupils' attitudes to work. Staff are consistent in their use of positive behavioural strategies which includes giving praise and rewards and encouraging pupils to give of their best.

67 Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects and areas of learning, they teach. The expertise of staff in music, art and physical education in particular, contribute very effectively to pupils' learning in these subjects. Staff also make very good use of their personal expertise, in dance and karate for instance, when contributing to the extra-curricular programme.

68 A small number of lessons have some outstanding features. In these lessons, staff use varied teaching methods very skilfully. Learning moves along at a brisk pace, which keeps pupils fully engaged and teachers have high expectations.

69 The most common good features in teaching are the:

- well-planned lessons that provide continuity and progression in learning;
- consolidation of previous work at the start of lessons to establish a sound basis for new work;
- sharing of clear learning objectives; and
- clear instructions and regular checks that ensure pupils know what they have to do.

70 Staff promote equal opportunities well and treat all pupils fairly. They make good use of opportunities to use incidental Welsh. In many lessons, a good range of resources enhances pupils' learning.

71 Teachers and support staff work well together. The work of support staff generally has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

- 72 Where there are shortcomings in the teaching, it is often because introductions to lessons are too long. When this happens there is not enough time for pupils to complete their work. At other times, the pace of the lesson is too slow and pupils become less engaged in their work. Sometimes explanations are not clear enough to help pupils begin work quickly and independently.
- 73 The quality of assessment has good features which outweigh shortcomings. This area has been a focus over several years and is developing well. Across the school, teachers use a suitable range of assessment procedures to help them monitor pupils' progress. Pupils receive good feedback on their progress during lessons. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, identify where pupils need to improve their spelling and punctuation and provide encouraging comments. However, constructive written comments that would help older pupils to improve other aspects of their work are not used often enough.
- 74 Teachers keep ongoing records of pupils' progress and achievement in comments books. In the best practice, these include specific comments about pupils' learning and help plan new work. In other cases, information is limited or not recorded regularly enough to be useful in changing planning to meet pupils' needs.
- 75 Completed portfolios of pupils' work in English and mathematics indicate the standards expected of pupils. These portfolios provide a good basis for ensuring the accuracy of teacher assessment. The school has yet to collect samples of pupils' work in other subjects.
- 76 Parents have opportunities to meet teachers to discuss their children's progress. The twice-yearly reports for parents are of good quality. They present a detailed account of pupils' achievements and progress in subjects or areas of learning, and their social and personal development. The reports also include improvement targets. In most cases these are very clear and specific and help parents to know what to do to support their children.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 77 In its self-evaluation report, the school awarded this key question a grade 1. The findings of the inspection team do not match the school's judgement that work in this area is good with outstanding features. The school identified the use of resources to meet the needs of learners as an outstanding feature. This does not apply to this particular key question. Although there is a great deal of good practice in the school the inspection team did not identify enough outstanding features.
- 78 The overall quality of the educational provision for children under five is appropriate to their needs and they make good progress towards achieving the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. In the nursery class, children have a very well-balanced programme of indoor and outdoor activities. In the reception class children build effectively on the skills they have already gained.

- 79 In key stage 1, pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum which offers good continuity and progression in their learning. The work and timetable arrangements fully reflect the school's aims to give priority to developing pupils' skills in English and mathematics. There is a good mix of subject-focused study and cross-curricular projects. This project work helps pupils to draw on the knowledge and skills they acquire in other areas. A good range of policies help to guide teachers' planning. However, there is no whole-school curriculum policy, as required.
- 80 All subjects and areas of learning have suitable schemes of work. Generally, teachers' plans are of good quality but there is some inconsistency in detailing the skills to be developed. As a result, there is not always a clear focus on the development of key skills in every lesson.
- 81 A wide range of extra-curricular activities cater very well for pupils' musical, sporting, artistic and other interests. Many pupils attend these clubs and benefit greatly from the quality experiences they receive. Visits to places of interest, as well as visitors to the school, such as local artists and pupils from the Haberdashers' Boys' Senior School who contribute to sports lessons, make valuable contributions to the range of learning experiences provided by the school. Effective links with the local community enhance pupils' knowledge about their locality and places and types of work.
- 82 Across the school, planning for pupils' personal, social, moral and cultural development is good. 'Circle time' experiences contribute well to promoting pupils' self-esteem and self-discipline. There is a good focus on healthy eating and healthy living. Pupils have good opportunities develop moral values and support a number of charities. Fundraising activities also help in developing entrepreneurial skills. Work is planned to include learning about the culture and heritage of Wales. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about the world of work through visits to places of work, such as those to a veterinary practice.
- 83 Whole-school assemblies and acts of collective worship make important contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Visits by local clergy also contribute well to these occasions. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in class assemblies.
- 84 Staff develop pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship. The conservation areas, vegetable planting and recycling schemes help to raising pupils' awareness of environmental issues. Recently-established links with a school in Sri Lanka help pupils to learn about life in another country.
- 85 Parents are provided with helpful information about the school's work. Strong links with the Friends of Agincourt parents' group help to strengthen the partnership between home and school.
- 86 The school's curriculum takes good account of national priorities and gives good attention to ensuring that pupils develop the skills for lifelong learning.

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

Grade 2 : Good features and no important shortcomings
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- 87 In its self-evaluation the school awarded this key question a grade 1. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgements made by the school. Some of the outstanding features identified by the school do not apply to this particular key question. Although there are many good features the inspection team did not identify enough outstanding features.
- 88 The school provides a happy, supportive and caring environment. Parents are very strong advocates of the school and feel their children are very well cared for.
- 89 The school provides formal opportunities to discuss pupil's academic progress and many opportunities for informal contact. Parents receive a good range of information about the school. The commitment of parents to the school and its values is reflected in the work of The Friends of Agincourt.
- 90 The routines in place to help new pupils settle into school are good. In particular, the Early Years staff ensure learners under-five feel safe and secure.
- 91 Transition arrangements for pupils transferring to other independent schools such as the Grange School for boys and Gilbert Inglefield School for girls are well established and effective.
- 92 The school provides good personal support and guidance through its PSE programme. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle by providing opportunities for fitness activities such as Playball and rugby as an extra curricular activity. Lunches and fruit snacks ensure that children receive a healthy, balanced diet at school.
- 93 Appropriate arrangements exist to encourage the wellbeing of pupils of pupils and risk assessments are carried out. The headteacher is the nominated child protection officer and staff are aware of child protection procedures.
- 94 At present the school has no pupil with a statement of educational need. The support staff give to pupils who experience difficulty in their work is generally effective. In a small minority of cases support staff do not support pupils' learning enough.
- 95 Behaviour is monitored effectively as part of the rewards and sanctions system. The school has an anti-bullying policy which contains clear guidelines. Parents are confident about the school's ability to address bullying. A school council has been established recently and this is providing the opportunities for pupils to comment on the life and work of the school.
- 96 The school has good partnerships with external agencies. The school also has good links with Monmouthshire LEA and benefit from visits from their Early Years advisory teacher.
- 97 The school successfully promotes respect for other cultures and equal opportunities.

- 98 The school complies with the Disability Discrimination Act and has a plan in place to address the needs of pupils who have a disability.
- 99 In some classes the registers are not completed properly and do not include totals or details about the pupils.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 100 In its self-evaluation report the school awarded this key question a grade 2. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school.
- 101 The school has made substantial progress in recent years under the leadership of the current headteacher. There is a clear sense of values and purpose which is reflected in the ethos and aims of the school. The school promotes equality for all and there are positive relationships between all members of the school community. Routines are well established and the school runs smoothly.
- 102 There has been good progress in developing the roles of curriculum leaders. These staff have taken responsibility for developing school policies and schemes of work across the school. Staff speak positively about their developing role and involvement in evaluating the work of the school. However, senior leadership and management roles are unclear.
- 103 A performance management process has been implemented and the headteacher monitors lessons as part of the staff appraisal procedure. This process is developing well however, the contribution of all staff to monitoring and evaluating standards is underdeveloped.
- 104 Appropriate arrangements are in place with Monmouth LEA for the induction of newly-qualified teachers. These staff receive good support from their school mentors and have adequate non-contact time. However, staff in the nursery do not receive non-contact time. The school also offers placements for student teachers and work-experience students and supports them well.
- 105 The governors are kept well informed of progress at the school through the reports of the headteacher and the bursar and through the regular visits of the chair of governors.
- 106 The governors have a broad range of experiences and are knowledgeable about the school. They are appropriately involved in agreeing policies and expenditure with the headteacher and bursar.
- 107 At present, the headteacher has a significant teaching and management workload, which limits the time she has to carry out some important functions of her leadership role.
- 108 The school meets almost all the requirements for registration set out in the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. There are three issues that need to be addressed.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh important shortcomings

- 109 In its self-evaluation report the school awarded this key question a grade 2. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement made by the school because self-evaluation and planning for improvement have some shortcomings.
- 110 The self-evaluation report is comprehensive and focuses well on strengths and areas for development. The inspection team's grades agreed with the school's in three out of the seven key questions. In the remaining key questions a lower grade was awarded by the team although, in many instances, there was broad agreement about the school's strengths and areas for development. Where there was a difference, such as in key question 3, this was because some features that the school judged to be outstanding were included incorrectly.
- 111 The process of self-evaluation is at an early stage of development in the school although the school is making progress in establishing methods of review. While staff contributed to the report, their involvement in regular monitoring and evaluation is at an early stage. Some staff are not yet confident enough about evaluating standards of work. Currently, only the headteacher monitors pupils' workbooks and observes lessons on a regular basis. Subject leaders monitor their subject policies, teachers' planning and resources and use their knowledge to support staff. However, subject leaders are not yet involved in monitoring and evaluating the work that goes on in classrooms.
- 112 Recently, the headteacher has introduced a number of good initiatives including consistent arrangements for writing lesson plans, revised reporting arrangements for parents, and a staff handbook. These have contributed to improving the quality of provision. A start has been made on preparing portfolios of pupils' work in English and mathematics. These have helped the teachers assess the level of work being achieved by the pupils in these subjects.
- 113 The school seeks the views of partners through staff reviews, parent questionnaires and by listening to comments from parents during the interviews to discuss pupils' progress. Staff also take account of the views of pupils. Altogether, this work has helped to bring about improvements, such as the ongoing work on the IT suite and identifying preferred learning styles for some pupils.
- 114 Although there is a programme for professional development for staff, it is not yet clearly linked to the needs and priorities of the school.
- 115 The school improvement plan (SIP) identifies areas for improvement, time scales and the people responsible for the actions. However, it lacks the success criteria and clear links to financial planning that would make it really useful as a tool for school improvement.

- 116 The SIP does not focus enough on raising standards or on providing ways to support the work of the headteacher. Not all members of staff are fully aware of the objectives and targets prioritised by the school.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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- 117 In its self-evaluation report the school awarded this question a grade 1. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school.
- 118 Staffing levels are excellent throughout the school and support staff expertise is used effectively to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding. The skilled practitioners in the nursery provide good support for young children. Specialist support staff enhance the curriculum by providing additional help in subjects such as music, physical education, art and science. The ratio of staff to pupils is generous.
- 119 All teachers in key stage 1 have non-contact time which allows them some time for preparation, planning and assessment (PPA). However, teachers in the nursery do not have this time.
- 120 The accommodation provided for learners is very good and the extensive and very well-maintained grounds are an outstanding feature. The school provides an excellent range of opportunities for physical development and environmental investigation. Classrooms have good displays and also provide a stimulating environment for learning. Specialist rooms are provided for art and music.
- 121 The school is well resourced to deliver nearly all areas of the curriculum. Resources are of good quality, particularly in maths, science, art and music. The well-decorated, very attractive library is well resourced and supports pupils' learning well. The outdoor play area is an excellent resource for all the pupils.
- 122 At the time of inspection, the school's IT suite was under development. As a result, in key stage 1, pupils were unable to use the facilities to develop their skills. There are firm plans to make use of the suite by the end of December 2006
- 123 Financial management is sound. The bursar manages the school finances very effectively through systematic budgeting and close monitoring of spending. He works closely with the headteacher to ensure that spending is linked to the school's priorities. Over recent times, considerable investment has improved the quality of accommodation and resources.
- 124 The full Governing Body of Haberdashers' as well as the subcommittee for Agincourt scrutinise the financial affairs closely and ensure the school provides value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Under 5s

Language, literacy and communication skills

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 125 In the nursery, children listen attentively and respond well to questions. They recite and sing rhymes and songs confidently and speak clearly about their play activities. They know that pictures and words carry meaning and choose books independently. They experiment with mark-making, drawing and writing and some children can form letters and write their name.
- 126 In reception classes, most children speak clearly and thoughtfully expressing their ideas well. They identify sounds associated with letters and most apply this when reading. They enjoy sharing their books with adults and some are able to offer suggestions about the story. Most can write simple sentences independently.

Personal and social development

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

- 127 The respect and care children show for one another is an outstanding feature.

Good features

- 128 In the nursery, children are relaxed and confident with each other and with adults. They settle well when they arrive and engage immediately with the well-planned activities. They play co-operatively, share and take turns and are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.
- 129 In reception, most children concentrate on planned tasks for longer periods. They undress and dress themselves for Playball activities and take responsibility for their personal hygiene. They have a sense of what is right and wrong and show respect for adults.

Mathematical development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 130 In both nursery and reception, children make good progress in learning their numbers. All children enjoy counting activities and know a range of number songs and rhymes.
- 131 In the nursery, most children are familiar with and can use numbers to five. They sort objects correctly by colour, size and shape and successfully identify and follow patterns. They are beginning to know mathematical concepts of weight and capacity.
- 132 In reception, most children can count up to 20 and write numbers accurately. Most children are able to add numbers to 10 and some are beginning to understand the concept of adding one more. They are developing an understanding of 2D and 3D shapes and their properties

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Outstanding feature

- 133 Through their outdoor garden activities, all children have a very good understanding of the seasons. They show a good awareness of the world around them as the result of their planting activities.

Good features

- 134 In the nursery, children describe the weather using appropriate vocabulary.
- 135 They understand where food comes from and use apples to make apple turn over. They make bread at harvest time and make butter following their visit to the farm. The children further enhance their understanding of the world of work through role play. They make choices, selecting different materials and play imaginatively with small equipment and create dens using boxes.
- 136 In reception, children's learning is further developed by their involvement in the garden projects. They look after the vegetables and flowers and develop a secure understanding of where food comes from and the conditions needed for growth. Their scientific skills are also developed effectively through their work on electricity. Many children are able to identify symbols and landmarks on a map.

Physical development

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

- 137 In the nursery, children's hand and eye co-ordination is very good and reception children's spatial awareness is outstanding.

Good features

- 138 In nursery, children handle small tools and equipment very well. They use scissors accurately and safely. Outdoors they ride and steer wheeled toys with good control and co-ordination.
- 139 In reception, children move confidently with control and co-ordination. They run, hop and jump with control through an obstacle course. They demonstrate very good and accurate ball skills, catching, kicking and heading.

Creative development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

Good features.

- 140 In the nursery, children respond positively to music. They enjoy making music with a range of instruments and their voices. They sing and march enthusiastically in time. They engage in imaginative play in the shop and travel agency. They make choices from a range of paints and colours when making pictures and talk readily about their selections.
- 141 In reception, children experiment successfully with a variety of materials to produce pictures and collages. They demonstrate an understanding of pattern when printing shapes for their paper T-shirt and make a variety of models and use construction kits confidently.

English

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

Outstanding features

- 142 In key stage 1, most pupils' listen purposefully and intently to their teachers and others. They have a very good recall of what they have heard and can remember specific points that interest them.

Good features

- 143 Most pupils use talk confidently to describe events. They speak clearly and use a wide range of vocabulary. Some pupils know when they need to adjust their speaking to take account of the needs of listeners.
- 144 Most pupils make good progress in developing reading skills and become accurate and fluent readers. They use a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words and usually check the sense of what they read. They talk about stories, poems and non-fiction with interest, understanding and enjoyment. Many pupils use punctuation well to help them read with expression. Many pupils know how to find information using contents and index pages. Older pupils understand what a glossary provides.
- 145 Most pupils' written work is of good quality. They can write in different forms, such as stories, instructions, letters and reports, and they make good progress in controlling the structure of their work. The spelling of words that pupils use regularly is usually correct and most pupils use full stops and capital letters accurately. Most pupils produce legible handwriting and present their work neatly.

Shortcomings

- 146 A small number of pupils have an insecure knowledge of initial letter sounds and blends. This hinders their use of phonics as one of the strategies to help them read.

Mathematics

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

Good features:

- 147 Most pupils make good progress in work in number, shape and space, and data handling. They recall well knowledge and skills learned in previous lessons.
- 148 Most pupils use numbers fluently, both in written and mental calculations. Many pupils can recognise 2D and 3D shapes. Older pupils know about the properties of triangles and quadrilaterals and can name other regular 2D shapes such as hexagon and octagon. A few pupils make sensible estimates relating to number, length and height.
- 149 Many pupils are able to explain their work logically, and almost always use appropriate mathematical language. Some pupils can tell the time to a quarter of an hour using analogue clocks and they are able to read and record the time in digital form.
- 150 More able pupils know their 2, 5 and 10 times tables and confidently double and halve numbers to 100. They look confidently for patterns, can see connections and apply their learning to unfamiliar situations.

Shortcomings:

- 151 Some pupils do not use mathematics confidently to solve simple problems.

Science

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

Good features

- 152 Most pupils develop their ability to use scientific terminology and understand scientific processes. They have studied topics on sound, light, electricity, materials, living and non-living things and many can recall the information well.
- 153 Many pupils make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and skills during lessons and retain knowledge from previous topics. Pupils can describe investigations that they have carried out. Many record accurately what they observe and make sensible predictions. More able pupils can record their findings in tabular form, label diagrams and describe a sequence of events.
- 154 Some pupils successfully apply facts from their earlier work to help their understanding of new work. Some pupils are able to talk knowledgeably about different materials and their properties. A few can explain insulation and are aware of changes that could be permanent or temporary.
- 155 Pupils know the difference between living and non-living things and can describe the best conditions for plants to grow well. They can name the main parts of the body.
- 156 Most pupils have a good understanding and knowledge about items that require electricity, and know about the dangers of electricity. Younger pupils know that items can be powered by electricity from the mains or from a battery. Older pupils understand how circuits work. Many pupils can draw diagrams of simple electric circuits accurately.

Shortcomings

- 157 When planning investigations some pupils lack the skills to work independently and do not recognise the need for fair testing.

Design technology

- 158 Due to the way the school organises the curriculum, design technology was not observed during the inspection. The school provided evidence of work undertaken by pupils over the current and previous year.

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

Good features

- 159 Younger pupils can produce a simple design brief for making a puppet, choose features to give realism to their work and make decisions. Older pupils' design briefs show clear progression in planning skills. Most pupils can identify a suitable range of materials appropriate for the task.

- 160 Pupils use a range of materials such as paper, textiles and cardboard competently. Younger pupils have experimented with sewing, sticking and gluing as ways of joining fabric and have successfully used at least one way to create their puppets. Older pupils successfully use a range of components and tools, such as hacksaws, as well as simple mechanisms such as wheels.
- 161 Pupils consider suitable finishing techniques in their modelling. Pupils' evaluations of their work refer to sensible ways in which they can improve their original design brief.

Shortcomings

- 162 There are no discernible shortcomings.

History

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

Good features

- 163 Most pupils talk confidently about how the past is different from the present, for example, when younger pupils describe how they have changed since they were babies. By the end of the key stage, pupils have developed a firm sense of the past.
- 164 Many pupils use vocabulary related to the passage of time appropriately. Older pupils are beginning to identify why some events occurred and draw simple conclusions about what happened as a result.
- 165 Pupils find out about the past from a range of sources. Pupils in year 2 have studied and understand about the different lifestyles of the Romans. They can explain what is different as well as similar to their own lives. Many pupils have a sound range of knowledge about this period of history.

Shortcomings

- 166 There are no discernible shortcomings.

Geography

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

Good features

- 167 Most pupils know about the location of their homes and about their surroundings. They know about the school and can name major towns and rivers in the area. Most pupils can describe their journey to school and can name important features of this. Some younger pupils use computer software to place geographical features on a simple diagram.
- 168 Many pupils understand well the concept of plans and maps and know how to locate a place on a map and use symbols and keys. Older pupils can locate and identify

features on simple charts and plans. Most pupils have completed successfully a map of a treasure island using symbols to mark the location of trees, mountains, rivers and the treasure.

- 169 Pupils can describe some features of town and country in simple terms. They also have knowledge and understanding of a contrasting place of study, for example the seaside.
- 170 Older pupils are aware of other countries and many can locate some of these on a map of the world.
- 171 Most pupils have a good awareness of weather and its impact on their lives and on their environment. Pupils are also aware of issues relating to recycling and caring for our planet.

Shortcomings

- 172 There are no discernible shortcomings

Art

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

- 173 Pupils throughout the school respond well to a wide range of media and produce interesting work.
- 174 Year 1 pupils use a variety of materials and processes when making their African masks. They confidently review their work and identify what they need to do to improve it.
- 175 Year 2 pupils explore ideas and take photographs from their immediate environment to help them develop their collage work. They confidently discuss the properties of materials and show an understanding of texture using a variety of materials to reflect their feelings and produce a collage.
- 176 Most Year 2 pupils respond imaginatively to the work of artists and produce good pastel drawings in the style of Picasso.

Shortcomings

- 177 There are no discernible shortcomings

Music

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

Good features

- 178 The quality of singing in the school is good. Pupils sing with clear diction and clarity. They sing with confidence when performing concerts in front of a large audience.

- 179 Year 1 pupils use their voices in different ways to make the sound of fireworks. They also choose instruments carefully to represent the sound of the fireworks. They sing the bonfire song and create sounds in response to the mood of the music. They are beginning to evaluate their performance and suggest improvements.
- 180 Year 2 pupils are able to correctly repeat a given rhythm by clapping and playing an instrument. Most pupils are able to distinguish between beat and rhythm and transfer this when playing instruments. They perform confidently in two groups with one keeping the beat and one the rhythm and add singing to improve the performance.
- 181 Pupils take advantage of the extensive opportunities provided to learn to play a variety of tuned and un-tuned musical instruments.

Shortcomings

- 182 There are no discernible shortcomings

Physical education

- 183 Inspectors observed games lessons during the week of the inspection. Over the school year, there is good coverage of other elements of physical education, including dance, gymnastics, athletics and swimming.

Key Stage 1: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

- 184 By the end of the key stage, pupils show high levels of skill when controlling a large ball. Pupils co-operate very well together to play simple, competitive games safely. Some pupils develop very good attacking and retrieving skills
- 185 Pupils observe the conventions of fair play and good sporting behaviour exceptionally well when they play competitive games. They are learning to cope with the success and limitations of their performance in a mature manner.

Good features

- 186 Pupils understand the effects of exercise on the body and the importance of warming up, stretching and warming down properly. Most pupils move with co-ordination and control. Most pupils show spatial awareness and include running, chasing and dodging to avoid others. Many pupils are developing the skills to analyse and comment on their own and others' performance.
- 187 Younger pupils co-operate well in pairs and small groups. They show good control and co-ordination and can imitate movements and create different body shapes. Some pupils link movements together effectively.

Shortcomings

- 188 There are no discernible shortcomings.

Religious education

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

Good features

- 189 Most children have a good understanding of the main Christian festivals. Pupils are able to recall the stories of Jesus well.
- 190 In year 1 they recount the Christmas story and sequence events. In year 2 they retell the story. They identify aspects of their own experience and feelings in relation to giving gifts.
- 191 Pupils reflect on stories and relate them to their own experiences. They have learned stories from the Old Testament, such as the story of Jonah and the whale. They respond sensitively to the experiences and feelings of others. Many pupils know the Lord's Prayer and join in well when it is being said.

Shortcomings

- 192 Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other religions is under developed.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Agincourt School
School type	Independent and Independent Special
Age-range of pupils	3 - 7
Address of school	Agincourt School Dixton Lane, Monmouth
Postcode	NP25 3FY
Telephone number	01600 713970

Headteacher	Elizabeth Thomas
Date of appointment	2002
Proprietor / Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs Melanie Molyneux
Lead inspector	Terry L Williams
Dates of inspection	6 – 8 November 2006

Appendix 2

Primary 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	21	29	25	27	0	0	0	0	102

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	7	2	7.5

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	11.5 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	5.1 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	13.5: 1
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.1 : 1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Y1-Y2
Summer 2005	95	97.5	98
Autumn 2005	95	98.2	96.8
Spring 2006	95	93	95

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0
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Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of Key Stage 1:

The school only uses national curriculum assessments for English and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. In 2005-06 all pupils achieved level two or above.

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Four inspectors, including a peer assessor, spent a total of eleven inspector days in the school.

These inspectors visited:

- thirty-six lessons or part lessons;
- all classes;
- acts of collective worship;
- a cross section of registration; and
- a range of extra-curricular activities.

Members of the team had meetings with:

- the headteacher, staff, governing body and parents before the inspection;
- the school nominee, a wide range of teachers, support staff and administrative staff; and
- groups of pupils.

The team also considered:

- documents provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation report;
- a selection of pupils' work, ensuring an appropriate range in terms of age and ability;
- forty-nine responses to a parents' questionnaire; and
- several letters from parents, organisations and businesses with which the school has links.

The inspection team held post inspection meetings with the headteacher, staff, and the governing body of the school.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Terry Williams	Reporting inspector. Key question 1 Key question 5 Key question 6 Key stage 1 mathematics, science, and geography
Linda Vittle	Early years and pre-school standards Key question 4 Key question 7 Key stage 1 music, religious education and art
Wendy Young	Key question 2 Key question 3 Key stage 1 English, design technology, history and physical education
Rhian Ferriman	Peer assessor. Contributions to standards and key questions
Elizabeth Thomas Headteacher	School nominee

Acknowledgement

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