

**Inspection under Section 10 of the  
Schools Inspections Act 1996**

**YSGOL TY COCH**

Lansdale Drive  
Tonteg  
Pontypridd  
Rhondda Cynon Taff  
CF38 1PG

**School Number: 674-7015**

**Date of Inspection: 16-19 May 2005**

**by**

**Dr Eric Peagam**

**W200/14943**

**Date: 19 July 2005**

**Under Estyn contract number: T/04/04SP**

**EPPC/Severn Crossing Ltd  
Suite H  
Britannic House  
Britannic Way  
Llandarcy  
Neath  
SA10 6JQ**

© Crown Copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

**Ysgol Ty Coch** was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose 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 more information about their child's school. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of **Ysgol Ty Coch** took place between **16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May 2005**. An independent team of six inspectors, led by **Dr Eric Peagam** 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. This summary report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

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**

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years 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 attain the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who attain 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

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Context</b>	1
<b>Summary</b>	2
<b>Recommendations</b>	5
<b>Standards</b>	6
Key question 1:        How well do learners achieve?	6
<b>The quality of education and training</b>	8
Key question 2:        How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	8
Key question 3:        How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	9
Key question 4:        How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	11
<b>Leadership and management</b>	13
Key question 5:        How effective are leadership and strategic management?	13
Key question 6:        How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	14
Key question 7:        How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	15
<b>Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning</b>	16
Provision for the under-fives	16
English	18
Mathematics	19
Science	20
Welsh Second Language	21
Design and Technology	22
Information Technology	23
Geography	23
History	24
Modern Foreign languages	25
Art	25
Music	26
Physical Education	27
Religious Education	28
<b>School's response to the inspection</b>	29
<b>Appendices</b>	30
A    Basic information about the school	30
B    School data and indicators	30
C    National Curriculum assessments results	30
D    Evidence base of the inspection	31
E    Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	31

## Context

### The nature of the provider

- 1 Ysgol Ty Coch, located in a residential area of Tonteg, provides education for 108 boys and girls aged from three to 19, all of whom have significant special educational needs (SEN) related to severe learning difficulties. The school draws pupils from the whole of the Rhondda Cynon Taff area, although predominantly from the Taff district. There is an assessment nursery that draws pupils from a wider area than the rest of the school and many children transfer from there to other mainstream or special schools. All pupils are transported to school. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, but their SEN is the major determinant of their attainment on entry; just under 50% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much higher than either the local education authority's (LEA) average or that for Wales as a whole. Nearly all pupils' home language is English.
- 2 The school was last inspected in July 1999 when weaknesses were found in assessment, curriculum structure and monitoring, transport arrangements and accommodation. The actual key issues were:
  - meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum (NC) for pupils in Key Stage (KS) 4;
  - further develop procedures for assessment and extend the use of assessment to set learning targets for pupils in all subjects;
  - improve the quality of provision to meet the particular needs of pupils with severe communication, mobility, hearing and/or behaviour difficulties;
  - provide for:
    - (a) the monitoring of the curriculum in each subject;
    - (b) whole-school schemes of work for all subjects, and
    - (c) support and guidance for assessment in each subject according to pupils' needs and achievements;
  - improve the classroom accommodation, access for wheelchairs and facilities for teaching science and technology particularly for pupils in KS3 and KS4;
  - monitor lateness effectively and liaise with the LEA to resolve the complex transport problems, and
  - improve the curriculum links with the residential hostel.
- 3 Since the previous inspection, there have been substantial alterations to accommodation, including creating a separate residential provision and a new senior block providing specialist facilities. In addition, the school has opened three resourced classes for pupils with autism and the area assessment nursery. Pupils are taught in 12 mixed-age classes, with some classes catering for pupils from more than one key stage.

### The school's priorities and targets

- 4 The school has a simple, clear statement of vision which leads in turn to statements of intent under identified areas. These are: the curriculum; the importance of the individual within the school community; preparation for adult life; access to resources and provision; support for staff development; partnership with, and support for, parents and contacts with the community.
- 5 Current specific school development plan (SDP) objectives include aspects of:
  - Individual target setting and assessment;
  - Use of integrated learning programmes;
  - Improving the sensory curriculum;
  - Behaviour management;
  - Vocational and other guidance, including global citizenship;
  - Self-evaluation;
  - Meeting new legislative requirements and Welsh Assembly Government initiatives, and
  - Subject development in history, geography and religious education.
- 6 The school also has action plans in place for improving access and further promotion of basic skills.

### Summary

- 7 Ysgol Ty Coch is a very effective school that has a large number of good features, many of them outstanding, and few shortcomings, none of which are major. The majority of these have already been identified in the SDP and are being addressed. Improvement since the previous inspection in the standards achieved, the quality of education and the facilities for learning has been good. The inspection team agreed with all of the school's judgements about areas of its work, including the standards achieved.

### Table of grades awarded

- 8 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?	1
5. How effective are leadership and strategic management?	2
6. How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	2
7. How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

## Standards

9 The standards of achievement observed in lessons are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
17%	60%	23%	0%	0%

10 These standards exceed the Welsh Assembly Government's all-Wales targets for 95% of standards to be satisfactory (reflected by grade 3) and 50% to be good (reflected by grade 2).

11 The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards achieved in personal development and key learning and social skills are good.

12 Standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

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

13 In KS1-KS4, individual subject grades are as follows:

Subject	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4	16+
English	2	2	2	2	2
Mathematics	2	2	2	2	2
Science	2	2	1	1	1
Welsh	2	2	2	2	2
Design and technology	2	2	2	2	
Information technology	2	2	2	2	
History	2	2	2	2	
Geography	2	2	1	1	
Art	2	2	1	1	
French	n/a	n/a	0	n/a	
Music	2	2	3	n/a	
Physical education	2	2	2	2	
Religious education	2	2	2	2	

14 Shortcomings in music relate to the skills pupils have not developed as a result of insufficient resources to cover some area of learning.

15 Key Stage 4 pupils and post-16 students make good progress through a range of externally accredited courses. These include subject-based examinations and courses that develop their life skills as well as continuing to develop their basic skills.

16 Standards and progress in the key communication skills involving speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and using information and communications technology (ICT), across the curriculum, are good. Pupils develop good creative and imaginative skills as well as their bilingual skills. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with multiple sensory impairment and those with autistic

spectrum disorders, make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). Boys and girls achieve equally well, and there are no discrete groups of pupils who achieve differently.

- 17 Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are both good and contribute well to the quality of learning. Their preparation for life in the community after school is a very strong feature of their personal development. Attendance is good and any issues relating to punctuality arise from transport arrangements.
- 18 The quality of relationships is another outstanding feature of the school. Pupils relate very well to each other and to adults, reflecting the respect and care that they receive. They benefit well from the opportunities that they have to experience and consider diversity, showing interest in, and respect for, a range of views and cultures as well as empathy towards each other's needs.

### The quality of education and training

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
17%	63%	20%	0%	0%

- 19 The percentage of good (grade 2) and very good (grade 1) lessons is well above the Welsh average.
- 20 The most outstanding feature of teaching is the rapport developed as a result of the very good relationships and the high levels of concern for equal opportunities that adults show toward pupils. The quality of short-term planning is variable; in the best examples, lessons are securely located in the subject scheme of work and identify learning objectives at a range of levels to meet individual pupils' needs. However, in some other lessons, learning objectives are too generalised to take account of the wide range of ability within classes. The class teams provide well for all adults to combine to provide very effective teaching. All team members play a key role in teaching, guiding learning and monitoring academic and personal progress. However, there is some inconsistency in the extent to which support staff are enabled to play a full part in planning and assessing learning.
- 21 Arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' progress are good, particularly in core subjects; the school is particularly successful in involving pupils in the process and helping them to take responsibility for their own improvement where appropriate.
- 22 The curriculum is good overall and meets requirements; it is broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs well, as well as ensuring equal access. Schemes of work are generally appropriate, but there is some discontinuity in planning between the primary and secondary phase, resulting from shortcomings in subject monitoring. Good account is taken of Welsh Assembly Government priorities, including development of economic awareness, sustainable development issues, *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* and bilingualism, as well as the Key Skills.
- 23 Community links are good and support learning well in addition to ensuring that the school reflects local and wider community concerns. The school makes good efforts to involve and inform parents, but there is limited involvement by parents in the life of the school.

- 24 There is very good provision for pupils' personal and social education (PSE), and their personal development, including spiritual, moral and cultural development is well promoted. Although extra-curricular activities are limited by transport arrangements and the structure of the school day, there is a good range of additional enrichment activities, including residential experiences. Homework provision is inconsistent; it is better for primary than for secondary pupils. There is very good provision for careers and work experience.
- 25 The arrangements for care, support and guidance are a significant strength of the school. There are very effective links with a range of agencies that are well used to augment the school's resources. Induction procedures are very good and there are very effective arrangements to ensure pupils' safety, health and well-being. Systems to promote good behaviour, address the needs of pupils with behaviour difficulties and ensure that the school is free from any oppressive behaviour are all very effective. There are very good arrangements for identifying and meeting a range of additional special needs; however there are shortcomings in the present support for visually impaired pupils.

### **Leadership and management**

- 26 The school is very effectively managed in spite of the current temporary arrangements for senior management; there are effective systems in place to ensure that the very clear vision is translated into practice. The governing body is highly effective, pursues its responsibilities assiduously and is very active in setting and monitoring the school's strategic direction. There are effective systems by which they monitor the quality of provision and legal requirements are met. The school has very good overall systems for staff support and development, including making good provision for the professional development of support staff.
- 27 Within the school structure, other management systems are effective and the role of subject leaders is being developed; however subject leaders still do not play a sufficient part in monitoring and evaluating the delivery of schemes of work or the learning outcomes.
- 28 The school has made good progress since the last inspection, both in terms of addressing the shortcomings identified then and in meeting additional requirements, including significant changes to its own role. Self-evaluation is now a strong feature of the school and inspires confidence in the systems for identifying and pursuing improvement.
- 29 The school is well staffed and staff are deployed well. The accommodation is very good and has been significantly upgraded to provide appropriate facilities. Resources are generally good, with few shortcomings and, in the main, are efficiently used. Overall, the school offers good value for money.

### **Recommendations**

Although there are no significant shortcomings, In order to improve the school further, the staff and governing body need to:

- R1. enable all support staff to play a full part in planning and assessing pupils' work to ensure that learning objectives for lessons are sufficiently focussed to meet the needs of all learners and that their progress is fully monitored;

- R2. ensure that there is consistent continuity of learning between primary and secondary phases, including in the provision of homework;
- R3. extend monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure that these focus clearly and consistently on standards of achievement; in particular by ensuring that co-ordinators play a full part in the monitoring of their subjects;
- R4. address all shortcomings noted in the report that have not been separately listed.

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 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

- 30 The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
- 31 Pupils' standards of achievement in lessons overall exceed the Welsh Assembly Government's all-Wales targets for 95% of standards to be satisfactory (reflected by grade 3) and 50% to be good (reflected by grade 2).
- 32 The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards achieved in personal development and key learning and social skills are good.
- 33 Children in the assessment nursery make good progress and many are enabled to join mainstream schools or special schools catering for pupils with lesser difficulties than are found in Ty Coch.
- 34 Children up to six years of age, and those older pupils for whom an early years curriculum is deemed appropriate, are given a good start and, overall, achieve well in the Desirable Learning Outcomes appropriate to their age.
- 35 In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the results of structured testing using a small-step teaching and assessment programme show that overall results have significantly improved in both primary and secondary departments.
- 36 Basic skills are developed well and the school has been awarded the Basic Skills Agency Quality Award in both primary and secondary phases. Pupils' standards and progress in the key communication skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and using ICT, across the curriculum, are good. For pupils with limited language, these skills develop well through the use of augmentative communication aids.
- 37 Pupils make good progress in PSE, both through formal lessons and in daily interactions. Pupils also demonstrate good creative and imaginative skills. In particular, they increasingly develop the ability to transfer learning from subject

to subject and to apply previous learning to new situations. Because of their SEN, few pupils develop high levels of bilingual competence. However, they increasingly respond to instructions in Welsh and, on occasion, will choose to use Welsh, for example when identifying colours.

- 38 Key Stage 4 pupils and post-16 students make good progress through a range of externally accredited courses. These include subject-based examinations as well as courses that develop their life skills as well as continuing to develop their basic skills.
- 39 All pupils, including those with significant additional needs make good progress towards the targets in their IEPs. Boys and girls achieve equally well, and there are no categories of pupils whose achievement is out of line with that overall. The school is particularly effective in ensuring that pupils succeed regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background.
- 40 While it is inappropriate for the school to set overall targets for attainment, pupils are given individual targets in English, mathematics and personal development and these are aggregated to provide a measure of achievement for each class. These measures, together with the annual review reports and records of achievement, demonstrate that progress towards targets is good and continuing to improve.
- 41 The behaviour of pupils and students is good. They show respect and are friendly towards each other, staff and visitors and have a positive attitude to their work. They enter the school in an orderly manner and settle quickly and well.
- 42 The average attendance over the three terms prior to the inspection was good at 90% with no instances of unauthorised absence. Many of the pupils are physically frail or in need of regular medical intervention so that the vast majority of absence is due to sickness; very rarely are pupils taken out of school to go on holiday during term time and there is no unauthorised absence. Most pupils are punctual at the start of the day; instances observed of pupils arriving late were mainly attributable to problems with transport. Registers are kept neatly and comply with current legislation.
- 43 The school encourages pupils to become independent and to make decisions for themselves. Preparation for life in the community is a particular strength. Pupils experience the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of society through their lessons and through appropriate visits and visitors to the school and respond well to diversity.
- 44 The school has very effective procedures for integrating the pupils into the community through the numerous visits they make to places of historical and cultural interest as well as to local businesses. Pupils are very well supported during their work experience placements, both by the school and the partnership it has with the supporting agency; this enhances their understanding of the world of work well.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
19%	62%	19%	0%	0%

- 46 The quality of teaching is usually at least good and, in a significant minority of lessons, there are features that are outstanding. The percentage of good (grade 2) and very good (grade 1) lessons is well above the Welsh average. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- 47 The most significant features of teaching are the very high quality of relationships within the classroom and the unremitting promotion of equal opportunities. These result in very effective rapport between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves, which has a very beneficial effect on the climate for teaching and learning, contributing well to pupils' self-confidence in attempting new learning.
- 48 The quality of short-term planning is variable; in the best examples, lessons are securely located in the subject scheme of work and identify learning objectives at a range of levels to meet individual pupils' needs. However, in some other lessons, planning is more diffuse and learning objectives are too generalised to take account of the wide range of ability within classes. In the best lessons, the clear objectives for teaching and learning are clearly stated and shared with pupils; this is particularly evident with older secondary and post-16 students, where they review their learning at the end of the lesson.
- 49 Teaching and support staff work very effectively together in coherent and mutually supportive teams. Well-qualified and high quality support staff contribute significantly to the high overall quality of teaching. All adults play a key role in teaching, guiding learning and monitoring academic and personal progress. However, there is some inconsistency in the extent to which support staff are able to play an effective part in planning and assessing pupils' learning.
- 50 Staff consistently and conscientiously promote and reinforce pupils' basic skills and create and exploit opportunities to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in work in other subjects. They show flexibility of approach, engaging pupils' interest by a good range of approaches, monitoring carefully to ensure that they are aware when a change of activity is indicated. Pupils' bilingual skills are promoted well through use of incidental Welsh.
- 51 In general, staff have high expectations of pupils and this is reflected in the range of tasks they are given. However, at times, higher-ability pupils are insufficiently stretched, particularly where a class activity is pitched at too low a level.
- 52 Teachers show a strong commitment to the identification of pupils' preferred learning styles and ensure that activities reflect these. Very good use is made of oral question and answer sessions, which are well supported by augmented communication such as signing and, wherever practicable, visual and aural

learning is reinforced by practical activities. However, at times, there is an insufficient range of activities to provide for the diverse needs within the class.

- 53 The assessment of learners' achievement and progress is consistently good throughout the school. The school has a very comprehensive assessment response that includes target-setting and working with external support agencies. Physical development is assessed and outcomes are built into planning. Behaviour support is well developed and staff have been trained in Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention (SCIP) and manual handling. Transition planning is in place for learners in Y6 and Y14 and it is planned to develop this to include Y9 learners.
- 54 Structured assessment is now in its second cycle and very good quality information has been obtained and effectively analysed to produce accurate profile information; providing class teachers with an overview of the ability profile in each class and to set appropriate individual targets. Support staff contribute significantly by supporting IEP targets, particularly where targets include both academic and medical (for example, posture) aspects. Records of Achievement provide readily accessible information on learners' individual progress. For non-communicating learners symbolic communication and signing support wider assessment.
- 55 Overall, assessment is comprehensive and thorough and supports teachers and support staff in targeting, monitoring and reviewing progress. In best practice, IEP and daily subordinate targets are discussed with individual learners and they are actively involved in assessing their own achievement. Staff knowledge of their pupils is excellent and this is reflected in the quality of teaching and support provided and through the continuous assessment that takes place during lessons.
- 56 Learners' class work is well monitored and extensive use is made of oral feedback. Strategic use of praise and encouragement and some recording in learners' workbooks is common practice. Invariably, such input is highly sensitive to learners' emotional and social as well as academic needs.
- 57 Primary and secondary annual reports to parents and carers provide comprehensive information that is easily accessible and meaningful. Reports give information on the learner's achievements and progress made as well as information on future targets. Statements are reviewed annually and Transition Plans meet statutory requirements.

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

**Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

- 58 The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
- 59 The curriculum complies with legal requirements and satisfies the regulations of examination boards. Provision for children for whom an under fives curriculum is appropriate, clearly addresses the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- 60 The school responds well to pupils' learning needs and provides equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils with a wide range of learning needs.

Policies and schemes of work have been updated and the curriculum generally takes good account of what has gone on before and what will follow. However, there are some discontinuities between the primary and secondary schemes of work.

- 61 The provision and planning for key skills are good. The school also provides pupils with a good range of opportunities to obtain accreditation in a variety of subjects that are very well matched to pupils' needs.
- 62 There is good provision for homework for primary pupils, but this is underdeveloped at secondary level. The school offers all pupils a wide range of activities which both complement and enhance the curriculum. Pupils are taken on visits to shops, castles, garden centres and beaches in the locality.
- 63 Extra-curricular activities are limited by transport arrangements and the structure of the school day. However, good examples of opportunities for out-of-school learning include activities provided through the Duke of Edinburgh Award and residential visits. These make a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development. Older pupils particularly enjoy the chance to partake in new outdoor pursuits, such as canoeing.
- 64 The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, offering a supportive ethos built on care and respect for others. Collective worship, classroom assemblies and PSE sessions play an important part in developing pupils' spiritual awareness and pupils are very well encouraged to reflect on their own experiences.
- 65 The provision for moral development is good and classroom work in PSE for instance, gives good opportunities to discuss personal and moral dilemmas. Pupils take part in a variety of activities in order to raise money for charity.
- 66 Pupils' social development is good and at times very good. Many incidental opportunities are created to foster and encourage their development. The very good relationships between pupils and staff in the classroom have a significant impact on their social development. The school council gives pupils opportunities to take responsibility and be involved in decision making.
- 67 The provision for cultural development is good. Pupils' understanding of the culture of Wales is enhanced through a very good range of educational visits. The school ensures that pupils develop a good understanding of other world faiths and cultures. They learn about different social and cultural traditions through their work on the Jewish and Islamic faiths, and about places such as India in geography.
- 68 The school has a number of well-developed links in the local community and wider community that have a significant impact on pupils' academic progress as well as their personal skills. The school provides regular training facilities for nursery nurse training and students undertaking vocational qualifications.
- 69 The school has links with the local Welsh-medium primary school and also secondary schools, and a number of pupils have moved into mainstream schools following integration sessions with these schools. It has good links with the local colleges where pupils attend effective integration sessions on a weekly basis.

- 70 The provision for work-related education is very good and a strength of the school. There are many opportunities in the curriculum to learn about the world of work for pupils of all ages. Purposeful visits give pupils meaningful first hand experiences. Older pupils are very well matched to appropriate placements, with youngsters reporting their experiences enthusiastically.
- 71 There is good provision for promoting bilingual skills. The wide use of the Welsh language for daily activities such as assembly and for annual occasions such as the Eisteddfod, enrich their understanding of both their language and culture. The requirements for *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* are fully met and it is well promoted in all areas of school life.
- 72 Sustainable development and global citizenship are well promoted by the school. The school makes very good use of the school site, particularly the large garden, to aid understanding of the environment. The school acts in a sustainable way by recycling and composting. The school has won the Eco Schools award and encourages older, more-able pupils to discuss issues such as pollution and say why we need to recycle knowledgeably.
- 73 Pupils develop economic awareness though responsibility for running the school 'fruit shop'. They purchase fruit from wholesalers, which they sell to staff and pupils taking care to make enough money to buy the fruit the following week as well as a small profit that they spend annually on an activity or visit of their choice.

#### **Key question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?**

<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>
--

- 74 The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
- 75 The care, guidance and support for learners are strengths of the school. Care and positive affirmation are provided for all learners, who are treated with dignity at all times. Staff have a capacity of insight and caring for learners' needs that is exemplary and provides an ethos of tolerance and individual respect.
- 76 Procedures to manage care and support arrangements and services are very good. These provide high levels of care and understanding from entry to the school, throughout all key stages and at post-16. Relationships with outside agencies are very positive and in particular those with service providers such as the LEA, Education Psychology Service, Speech and Language Therapy and sensory impairment support services. Close, productive, contacts also exist with a wide range of agencies, including the Education Business Partnership (EBP) and the Careers Service, as well as with library, Portage, Physiotherapy Service and a Nurse who also supports parent training. The provision of a health suite for use by external agencies and services is a very positive feature.
- 77 The residential provision is highly positive and provides high quality personal support for a small number of pupils who reside on a weekly basis. Activities are carefully chosen and balanced to augment and complement the provision in school.
- 78 Parents are encouraged to participate fully through involvement in annual reviews and through regular access to information about progress. Home/school

books provide a continuing link for information exchange. An appropriate home/school agreement is in place. However there is limited evidence of parental involvement in the everyday life of the school and these links are underdeveloped.

- 79 Well-structured induction or transition programmes, including peer support, help learners to settle in quickly. Information and advice are collated prior to entry and used as the foundation for individual learners' educational and care plans. Risk assessment procedures and personal, 'Consistent Handling' planning ensure that optimum provision is in place to meet the diversity of learner needs and that emotional, social and behavioural needs are managed effectively and with dignity and respect.
- 80 The school makes good provision for PSE, which is very well embedded in all areas of the curriculum, for instance, good attention is paid to pupils' health development through many initiatives, and a healthy eating programme is being developed. Circle time makes a good contribution to social and emotional development; pupils often show a good awareness of each other's needs, supporting and listening carefully to one another.
- 81 Arrangements for a secondary School Council are highly productive and give learners a practical role in deciding how their school is to be managed and developed. The council has a budget and organises a range of fundraising activities, monitors the school environment, discusses a wide range of school related issues and has been instrumental in the introduction of a house system. Plans to extend the representation to include primary aged members are well advanced.
- 82 Very effective links with Careers Wales provide guidance in making informed choices, giving pupils a wide choice of well-researched placements, and the school ensures that pupils are confident participants in this process. This is reflected in the numbers of learners leaving the school to take up college places, training or employment. Where appropriate, EBP provides ongoing support.
- 83 The school pays good attention to health and safety and school security issues. The school has well-established child protection procedures, each member of staff is trained and the policy reviewed and amended regularly. The school works in close partnership with the social services department. Procedures for dealing with complaints are effective and the vast majority of parents (94%) are happy, or very happy, with the support and guidance given to their children.
- 84 There is good support for pupils with significant additional learning needs, including a well-qualified and effective team of support staff. Response to these needs include a collaborative approach to speech therapy; assessment of and provision for augmentative communication, specialist provision for pupils with profound and multiple difficulties and those with autistic spectrum disorder.
- 85 Good provision is made for pupils with hearing impairment. This is coordinated by a specialist teacher who monitors and evaluates provision across the school. There are also two specialist teachers of the visually impaired. However, due to the current interim management arrangements, there are insufficient arrangements to monitor and evaluate provision. The curriculum is not sufficiently modified for severely visually impaired pupils. However, very good training is provided by the mobility specialist who visits the school weekly.

- 86 The school has clear and effective policies in place in relation to sex education, race equality and equal opportunities, ensuring that there is no discrimination on gender, ethnicity or any other grounds. The school is very effective in its promotion of the knowledge and understanding of diversity, particularly through PSE and religious education. Multicultural awareness is also promoted through wall displays in the school hall and the whole-school and class assemblies.
- 87 The school has a positive approach to behaviour management and there are effective strategies in place to eliminate any form of oppressive behaviour, discrimination or harassment. Pupils who present behavioural problems are dealt with sensitively and effectively. There is a consistent handling policy and plan in place for every pupil that requires it.

## **Leadership and Management**

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

#### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

- 88 The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
- 89 Present senior management arrangements are temporary owing to the recent early retirement of the deputy headteacher. Arrangements are in hand for a permanent appointment.
- 90 The school is effectively managed at senior management level. The headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and senior managers have established a clear vision and a sense of purpose. The school's mission statement is complemented by a set of aims that was formulated by, and are therefore shared by, the whole staff.
- 91 The aims, and values inherent within them, reflect the ethos of the school giving particular attention to the dignity and respect of each child, maximising potential and thereby raising standards.
- 92 The school has set challenging and appropriate targets at individual, class and whole-school levels in the core subjects. Individual targets are derived from a consideration of pupils' assessment data. These are aggregated to give class and whole-school targets.
- 93 The school provides an extensive range of documents, mostly of good quality that provide a clear focus for provision in all areas of the school. Subject coordinators supervise subject provision through monitoring teachers' medium and short term planning, but insufficient attention is given to monitoring and evaluating classroom delivery and standards of achievement.
- 94 A significant strength of the school is the system in place for performance management. This has been recognised by Investors in People. Continuing professional development is an important aspect of these arrangements. The identification of training needs is emphasised and appropriate training provided. This has impacted favourably on the quality of teaching and learning and progress made since the last inspection.
- 95 A very active and effective governing body helps to set and monitor the school's strategic direction. Governors have a clear understanding of their

responsibilities; they regard themselves as 'critical friends' and have identified a number of priorities for development within the school. They have ensured that issues for action identified during the previous inspection have been addressed.

- 96 Each governor has responsibility for a subject and/or aspect of the school's provision and governors visit the school regularly to observe and monitor provision within their specific field. They report back to the whole governing body and senior management team. Liaison between the governing body and the senior management team is extensive and governors are well informed of any issues which may affect the performance of the school.
- 97 Governors are well aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure that statutory requirements are met. The school recognises the importance of the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities and reflects this in its planning.

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

<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
---

- 98 The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
- 99 The school has successfully embraced self-evaluation. The self-evaluation report presented by the school is detailed and identifies strengths and areas for development. All staff are aware of how the process works within the school. The inspection team agreed with the school's judgements in each of the seven key questions. However the report tends to be descriptive rather than evaluative and does not provide detailed information about how the school's work has impacted on standards.
- 100 The headteacher, governors and staff are committed to raising standards and improving the school's provision. Improvement since the last report is good overall. Governors are kept informed about the performance of the school through regular reports from the headteacher. They also have sub-committees that oversee various aspects of the school's work as well as being linked to individual subjects. The governing body itself has been proactive in undergoing its own self-evaluation led by the Chair. It has used this information to become more influential in managing the school.
- 101 The SDP covers a three year period with due regard given to responsibilities, timescales and success criteria. Each subject co-ordinator produces an action plan, which outlines the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Priorities for the current year are planned in detail with those for subsequent academic years in outline only. An evaluation of the previous year's plan is produced by the headteacher; however there is limited indication of how these successes impact on quality and standards.
- 102 Target- setting is based mainly around assessment systems which provide targets from statements of achievement. In some classes pupils have more individualised targets set by their class teacher.

## **Key question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?**

### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

- 103 The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
- 104 Staffing levels are very good and organised to ensure that all classes and activities are effectively supported. Teachers and support staff are appropriately qualified and work very well together in class teams to ensure the needs of each pupil are met. However, the role of support staff in planning and assessment is inconsistent. All staff receive in-service training and, in addition, both teaching and support staff are well supported in their studies to gain further qualifications. All staff receive mandatory training on a rolling programme for Child Protection and Manual Handling; the school has on its staff two qualified trainers who also provide training for other schools and the LEA. Through multi-agency links, the school also has the support of a physiotherapist and a speech and language therapist.
- 105 Overall resources within the school are good and effective use is made of them. However, there are shortcomings in the arrangements for the use of the interactive whiteboard. Resources are purchased according to priorities within the current SDP and good use is made of the local community and further afield to enhance the provision with numerous visits to appropriate places of interest. However, there is a lack of provision of tuned instruments in music and appropriate books and tapes in Welsh that have a detrimental effect on the learning in these subjects.
- 106 The school has very good accommodation which provides a pleasant and effective learning environment. Although some areas of the original school building are in need of refurbishment, accommodation is of a high standard and very well maintained. Most classrooms are spacious although KS1 and KS2 classrooms are small but good use is made of the shared communal space. The interior of the school is very clean. Good use is made of the spacious school hall for assemblies, physical education and lunchtimes. Good use is also made of the hydrotherapy pool that is also available to members of the community who would benefit from this facility. The school has two sensory gardens, one of which is very large and extensively used. The school grounds are well planned and most classrooms have their own exterior play area; these also are kept to a high standard. The school has received much support from the Prince's Trust and British Aerospace in the development of the sensory gardens and play areas.
- 107 The school budget is well managed, monitored and controlled and funds are strategically used to achieve the objectives outlined in the priorities identified in the SDP. Though retained funds exceed the recommended five per cent reserve this is almost entirely due to the 'windfall' assistance from the LEA who are improving the fabric of the building by replacing some roofing, windows and toilets. The Finance Sub-Committee meets termly supported by a senior LEA Finance Officer. All recommendations of the most recent 'Internal Audit' have been addressed satisfactorily. In line with the periodic review of meeting SDP targets, the use of resources is regularly reviewed in order to ensure value for money. In light of the standards achieved, the quality of provision and the planning for improvement, the school offers good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Provision for the under-fives

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

108 The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives and those pupils for whom an under-fives curriculum is appropriate and meets their needs well; the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

#### Language, literacy and communications skills

##### Good features

109 Children of all abilities listen well to adults, with the more able demonstrating good understanding of what is said. Less-able children respond very well to a familiar voice, particularly when there is one to one intervention. The more-able show increasing confidence in responding to questions, often using the key vocabulary being learnt. They understand and respond to instructions in Welsh.

110 In the nursery class they confidently handle books and many understand that signs, words and pictures carry meaning. They handle books appropriately, talking about and finding sea creatures with a high level of interest.

111 They enjoy making marks on paper and are beginning to form shapes; the more-able can write their name independently.

#### Personal and social development

##### Good features

112 Children of all abilities respond well to classroom routines and the care shown by staff for their welfare. They are often eager to explore new learning. Children make good progress in developing their social skills, forming good relationships with teaching and non-teaching staff. More-able children take turns and are beginning to play alongside and with others. They often help the less-able readily.

113 Many are beginning to develop independence in dressing and personal hygiene: they respond well to teeth brushing and personal care routines. Children confidently make choices about play opportunities and activities as well as sensibly undertaking responsibilities within the class. The more-able sustain concentration well.

114 Children show a good level of acceptance and co-operation in care routines with some responding vocally to them. They respond well to familiar adults and show increasing understanding of what is to happen next through the use of the objects of reference.

#### Mathematical development

##### Good features

115 Children in the nursery are developing a good concept of number through a range of practical activities. They count to 10, identifying and recognising numbers from one to five.

116 Children show positive reactions when listening to a number song. They recognise two animals in the story of Noah's Ark.

117 Less-able children are beginning to feel shapes and textures when retrieving objects and materials from a “feely” sock. They are beginning to recognise routine. More-able children are developing and using basic mathematical language such as ‘more’ and ‘less’ when sorting objects according to size.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

#### **Good features**

118 Children talk or sign about themselves, and they know, name and can point to body parts. They are developing a good level of interest in their environment through many purposeful visits. Following a visit to Barry Island, they recall aspects of their experience well, naming features of the beach and the sea. They recognise changes in the weather and suggest appropriate clothing for the weather of the day.

119 They show an interest in information technology equipment and a number use the mouse on the computer to make choices. Less-able children react well to a stimulus, such as the bubble tube or audiotapes. They feel materials of different textures and explore a variety of objects.

### **Physical development**

#### **Good features**

120 Children’s manipulative skills are developing well. Children handle small items of equipment such as pencils, crayons and rolling pins with dexterity and manage malleable materials well for their creative work. With support they make good use of rollers in painting. Less- able children make good progress in becoming increasingly aware of using hands and fingers through a well-matched physiotherapy programme.

121 In the nursery, gross motor skills are developing well. Children use climbing apparatus with agility and confidence. They use tricycles and ‘sit and ride’ cars with due regard for others. The more-able are developing good kicking and throwing skills when playing with balls. Less-able children perform a range of educational tasks whilst sitting, with some making good progress in developing independent movement with the use of aids. With support, children move their limbs confidently when using the hydrotherapy pool.

### **Creative development**

#### **Good features**

122 Children enjoy listening to music and songs, beginning to be aware of the song starting and stopping. They clap in response to songs. They enjoy joining in familiar rhymes and songs in English and Welsh. Many know a good range of songs.

123 In the nursery, children use paint to experiment with shape and colour and choose colours to produce effective paintings of fish. Children explore texture and shape making choices between three colours and two rollers before printing patterns for their seaside buckets.

### **Shortcomings**

124 At times, in the development language and literacy, some less-able children’s visual awareness and early visual tracking and matching skills are underdeveloped.

## English

### **Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

#### **Good features**

- 125 Standards in speaking and listening are good in all key stages and at post-16. The majority of learners listen well when spoken with, and are able to respond through speech, vocalisation or signing. They respond well to recorded information and enjoy looking at, and reading, books in a variety of forms.
- 126 Learners in KS1 and KS2 are enthusiastic in their reading, story, singing and action activities. They learn to follow a simple series of instructions and to follow cues. Activities based on their own experiences of themselves and their world are central to their activities and responses are well vocalised. Overwriting, underwriting and follow the line tasks introduce them to recording activities. Fine motor skills are developed through cutting and sticking exercises and through tracing and copying. First steps are founded in recording information of direct personal relevance and include representations of family members and themselves and their names or roles. Good use is made of tapes, videos, CDs and puppets in developing listening and attending skills.
- 127 Some learners in these key stages use objects of reference, photographs and symbols to support communication. The majority engage purposefully as listeners and sustain attention during individual or group activities such as circle time.
- 128 More-able learners respond to cues, are able to state a preferred choice and express themselves orally. These learners show an understanding of the functions of books and describe the role of the author and the illustrator.
- 129 Many learners in KS3 and KS4 speak confidently, coherently and with enthusiasm. Those learners with the greatest learning difficulty are able to respond to auditory, visual and touch stimulus and take an active role in drama-based activity appropriate to their needs.
- 130 In all key stages there is a range of ability in reading and writing, ranging from those at the pre-reading stages of development to those who read and write functionally and independently. Good use is made of ICT to support access to recorded language and reinforcement activities. The majority of learners record significant events by exploiting a range of media including writing, drawing, painting, pictorial cues and images to promote recall and understanding.
- 131 In KS1 and KS2, learners build on basic skills to include use of key words and social vocabulary to enhance their reading and writing skills. Words beginning with specific letter sounds are identified and used to build a growing phonic awareness.
- 132 In KS3 and KS4, more-able learners develop confidence in their skills and move from copy writing to more independent work. They compose, draft and present their work, sometimes to a high standard. In a small number of cases, less-able learners have patchy decoding skills and a high dependence upon visual and contextual cueing and guessing.
- 133 In all key stages, pupils learn to balance their language for a range of purposes and for different groups of listeners or readers. Older, more-able learners have

produced examples of tactile books for their own use and that of younger students.

134 Post-16 learners make good progress as they focus upon functional literacy and follow the ASDAN 'Transitional Challenge Towards Independent Living Skills' module.

135 Learners with multiple disabilities have experiences in communication skills and interaction through drama and massage/aromatherapy. These themed sensory sessions are highly successful in that learners produce a range of responses that include visual and auditory tracking, vocalisation and the display of humour and smiling.

### **Shortcomings**

136 There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Mathematics**

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

137 Pupils steadily develop and reinforce their understanding of number, shape and data- handling. Results using a range of assessment procedures show a steady increase in attainment across the school.

138 Younger pupils recognise numbers to 10 and identify standard two-dimensional shapes by their properties. Older pupils work with numbers to 100 and identify three-dimensional solid shapes. Pupils make good use of a range of computer programmes to help develop mathematical concepts.

139 In KS1, the pupils use the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar' to recognise size, using the language of 'bigger' and 'smaller'. They use the computer to match shapes using both colour and size. In relation to the story they match the correct numbers to the numbers of fruits eaten by the caterpillar.

140 Younger pupils with multiple difficulties become aware of number by being involved in number songs, accompanied by sensory experiences, whereby they hear the numbers in the song while feeling the objects in the 'magic box'.

141 In KS2, pupils work practically to partition numbers into tens and units. They sort objects to more than one attribute. Some tell the time using half and quarter past. They use the language of measure: 'tall', 'short', 'big' and 'small'. The more-able recognise the signs of addition and equality and carry out computations using these symbols.

142 Pupils in KS3 using non-standard measures, know that the measurement will alter because of the difference in size of their hands and feet. They identify numbers using a 100 square and can count in tens using visual clues. Using the data from their 'wellie wanging' competition they record distances using a simple bar chart. Those with more severe learning difficulties identify two-dimensional shapes and complete simple number jigsaws.

143 In KS3, pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make very good progress as a result of the highly individualised teaching and well-planned activities. Using apparatus, they partition and manipulate numbers and also convert these to a written format. Some count in tens forwards and backwards. They recognise

symmetrical shapes, identify the line of symmetry and draw the mirror image of a given shape. Most adopt more than one strategy to solve various problems.

144 Pupils in KS4, tell the time with increasing confidence, using a 24-hour digital clock. They use the four rules of number to calculate and predict number patterns accurately. Some successfully work with fractions to one-eighth.

145 Post-16 students use the ASDAN money module and have transferred these skills to help them to organise a trip to Cardiff on the train successfully. This involved telephoning for the train times, purchasing their tickets and checking they had the correct change.

### **Shortcomings**

146 Pupils' investigational and problem solving activities are inconsistently developed across the school.

## **Science**

**KS1 and KS2 - Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

**KS3, KS4 and 16+ - Grade 1:** Good with outstanding features

### **Good and outstanding features**

147 Pupils make good progress in developing knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. They develop good inquiry skills through a good range of investigative and research activities. They gain an increasingly secure understanding of the characteristics of a fair test and consider how they can improve on their method.

148 They build on previous learning and apply it effectively in new situations, as when the youngest pupils identify equipment that works by electricity while KS4 pupils use circuit boards to demonstrate simple circuits.

149 The youngest pupils develop an awareness of life cycles and illustrate the life cycle of the butterfly. They look at the weather and discover the rainbow, making plasticene models to show the colours.

150 Older pupils look at states of matter and consider whether slimy mixtures are liquids or solids. They explore habitats in a study of minibeasts, which they examine carefully using magnifying glasses and recording the results well.

151 Key Stage 3 pupils develop an effective understanding of some characteristics of light. They identify transparent and opaque materials and use shadows to generate silhouettes that they draw round and fill. They discover how sound travels and consider what materials provide best insulation, by finding the best place to hide an alarm clock. They gain understanding of sound vibrations by observing beads on a drum. They sort forces into various kinds, looking at the effect they have on objects. They extend their understanding of forces, when they examine the pulling and pushing forces used in kneading dough.

152 They understand that we use different kinds of teeth for chewing and biting and that they have both types in their mouth. They learn how teeth can be attacked if they are not cleaned properly and that this leads to toothache and loss of teeth.

153 Key Stage 4 pupils look at materials from the standpoint of varying densities. They apply their knowledge of sound to making a range of musical instruments.

- 154 Students in the post-16 class show good awareness of the structure and function of a range of organs of the human body. They know that bones provide support and protection; they place the heart correctly within the skeleton and know that the heart operates as a pump for circulating blood. Higher-attaining students know that blood is oxygenated in the lungs and that the heart is made up of muscle tissue.
- 155 They explore a range of scientific concepts and increase their understanding well through their ASDAN challenge work.
- 156 Autistic pupils learn about facial features, and correctly locate elements of these. They describe the accommodation for a range of farm animals and make and label pictures showing the parts of a plant.
- 157 Pupils with the greatest disability experience a range of materials and physical processes, including participating in environmental science. They construct a shaker to demonstrate how sound is made and learn effectively about movement and shape by making and testing paper aeroplanes.
- 158 Pupils throughout the secondary department develop good understanding of aspects of environmental science when they plant and nurture seeds.
- 159 Throughout the school, pupils make effective use of ICT skills to acquire and extend their scientific knowledge as well as recording their results.

### **Shortcomings**

- 160 There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Welsh**

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

- 161 Pupils' good standards are well supported by the prominence given to the Welsh language and the culture of Wales in the school. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards the subject and respond well to the incidental Welsh spoken throughout the day. They know a number of hymns, prayers, songs and rhymes in Welsh. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developing particularly well across the school.
- 162 Pupils of all ages and abilities listen well. They listen carefully to questions, concentrating generally well on known sentence patterns. They often respond easily and confidently, showing a sound understanding of vocabulary used in current work.
- 163 Pupils' familiarity with spoken Welsh is developing well across the school. They are building a range of everyday vocabulary and sentence patterns. Pupils of all abilities respond well to simple commands and greetings. In KS1 and KS2, pupils know a range of songs and rhymes in Welsh. They know their colours with the most-able linking the Welsh and English vocabulary well. Key Stage 2 pupils use the appropriate vocabulary when buying fruit in the shop. They speak clearly and confidently.
- 164 In KS3, pupils enjoy recalling familiar speech patterns when asking and answering questions in their 'hot seating' session. They interact with each other confidently. In KS4, pupils speak with good pronunciation. Pupils answer simple

questions such as “*Sut wyt ti?*” using and recalling the correct speech pattern with some prompting. The more-able speak confidently and ask and answer questions readily and independently in conversation about the food that is available at “*Caffi Ty Coch*” for instance.

- 165 In KS4, older, more-able pupils read their own familiar written work with good pronunciation and understanding. In KS3 and KS4 pupils make good progress in writing and overwriting. They write about a range of interesting topics. Written work of the most-able is well presented and the more able are writing full sentences about the weather for instance independently.

### **Shortcomings**

- 166 Pupils’ reading skills are underdeveloped in comparison with other areas.
- 167 Pupils take limited advantage of opportunities to use ICT both for practising basic skills and for word-processing.

## **Design and technology**

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

- 168 Standards in design and technology are good throughout the school. In all key stages, learners acquire good skills in design and making, using a wide range of materials and media and applying a range of techniques.
- 169 In the primary phase, learners acquire competence and confidence using a wide range of materials, tools and equipment. In most cases, they use design and technology skills in a variety of forms to support cross-curricular themes.
- 170 As learners progress through KS1 and KS2 they show a growing awareness of a range of materials and their properties. They test the suitability of materials for a purpose as they explore with, for example, clay, plasticene, wood, cardboard and cloth. They use a range of materials for building, construction and creative purposes and develop an understanding of basic technological principles.
- 171 In food technology, they learn about measuring, preparation, cutting, shaping, hygiene and health. Throughout their activities, they learn to cooperate with others, organise and choose appropriate tools for their tasks. For example, learners made Easter cards using card, paint, crayon, glue and feathers. Articulated wings were added.
- 172 In the secondary phase, learners make informed choices about materials and express their preferences, likes and dislikes. In the best practice, learners plan and draft design ideas and produce prototypes before making the end product. Good examples of these skills are evidenced in the work on making faces and masks, pocket games and musical instruments.
- 173 In KS3 and KS4, learners develop a sound understanding of design and making processes. They evaluate their work and cooperate with each other in that evaluation.
- 174 In food technology, learners plan and make a wide range of items that more recently have included garlic bread and spaghetti Bolognese. They develop a good understanding of food safety and hygiene and what constitutes a healthy and balanced diet.

## Shortcomings

175 There are no significant shortcomings.

## Information technology

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

### Good features

176 Most pupils are confident, make good progress and develop appropriate skills in using a wide range of information technology hardware and software. Younger pupils do so initially with support but as they progress through the school they develop increasing confidence and independence.

177 Pupils make good use of the excellent range of resources apart from the interactive whiteboard which is insufficiently used.

178 Pupils with severe speech and language difficulties are confident users of a wide range of switches, varying in complexity, to augment their communication.

179 Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder use information technology extensively to assist communication and to support their work in English and mathematics. These pupils work on individual programmes and achieve varying levels of independence.

180 Older pupils develop good independent learning skills. They use an extensive range of software and select appropriate applications. They use information technology to support their work in subjects across the curriculum, but noticeably so in English and art. Two pupils have used information technology as a module in their externally accredited art examination.

181 They scale and rescale objects, graphic images and text boxes, relocating them in publications to enhance visual effect and in doing so learn design skills.

182 Older pupils develop research skills by searching and retrieving relevant information from the Internet. They select and import graphic images into text documents. They are confident users of word processing and desktop publishing, editing, formatting, saving and printing their work. A particular strength is the self-assessment of their work.

## Shortcomings

183 There are no significant shortcomings.

## Geography

**KS1, KS2 - Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

**KS3, KS4 - Grade 1:** Good with some outstanding features

### Good and outstanding features

184 Pupils of all abilities are acquiring good and sometimes very good geographical knowledge of their locality from purposeful well-planned work in the field. Map-work skills are developing very well across the school as the many visits undertaken also include many opportunities to develop and use basic geographical skills.

185 Key Stage 1 pupils are making good progress in understanding features of their immediate environment around the school. They follow a simple trail by using

clues from the classroom to the playground and talk about a map to follow. They know about their journey to school.

- 186 Pupils are developing a good idea of place. Key Stage 2 pupils identify a number of local premises well, using photographs taken in the High Street. They locate and place shops on a whiteboard map accurately. Most pupils transfer work from the whiteboard to their own map of the local high street. They know about aspects of life and customs in India.
- 187 In KS3, pupils know about features of Cardiff Bay. The more able use appropriate vocabulary well to describe the barrage and the journey made on the boat across the bay. In their study of Sri Lanka, their writing shows understanding of the effect of the tsunami on the homes and people on the coast. They match features on a map of Sri Lanka.
- 188 In KS4, pupils know much about the physical and human features of Wales through much fieldwork and practical activities. They compare their locality with Snowdonia well. They use key vocabulary well to describe physical features of North Wales and suggest leisure activities to follow there. They have a good understanding of compass direction, with the more able relating it to Ordnance Survey maps well.
- 189 Pupils' abilities are very well enhanced by the use made of the school site for practising basic map-work skills. In KS4, pupils use their grid reference skills very well both in the classroom and in the field to locate features in the local environment. Pupils of all abilities demonstrate high levels of interest and ability in applying their understanding of the map to locate real examples in the field.
- 190 Pupils make good use of numeracy skills and ICT skills in this subject. KS2 pupils make a tally of cars near the school, counting the numbers accurately, and record their work in graphical format. The more able are competent in using a digital camera to record their work on features of the local environment.

### **Shortcomings**

- 191 There are no significant shortcomings.

### **History**

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

#### **Good features**

- 192 Pupils use a range of sources to support their learning of historical topics. These sources include books, artefacts, photographs and the Internet. They also enhance these experiences by visits to a wide range of places of historical interest. This has a positive impact on the standards they achieve.
- 193 In KS1, pupils are developing their sense of the past through role-play. Using a washboard they experience washing in 'Granny's time.' They also make comparisons of today and long ago using photographs of washing utensils and the Big Book story 'Rachel's Birthday.'
- 194 Key Stage1 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, using the theme of night and day, talk about the passing of time. They experience change having visited St.Fagans, using this as an opportunity to use PECS outside the classroom.

- 195 At KS2, pupils develop a sense of chronology and begin to relate events to dates, and to understand terms relating to the passage of time. They have a good knowledge of the lives and customs of people from the Celtic Age, having studied their food, jewellery and clothes. They build their own model roundhouse from materials found in the sensory garden. Those KS2 pupils who study ships and sailors learn about Henri Morgan and make their own pirate hats.
- 196 As part of the KS2 study of the local environment, pupils with autistic spectrum disorder make a comparison of houses 'now' and 'then'. Using a Big Book on Homes and a range of photographs they identify and compare rooms such as the bathroom, kitchen and toilets in new and old houses.
- 197 Pupils in KS3 study the Norman and Tudor periods. They show an understanding of the lifestyle during these periods and make simple comparisons between rich and poor, now and then. Their visit to Cosmeston Medieval Village enhanced their learning experience and gave them a clear insight into life at this time. They produce good quality model castles, helmets, hats and shields. Other visits to Castell Coch and Caerphilly Castle were well used to experience life in a castle.

### **Shortcomings**

- 198 There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Modern foreign language**

### **Insufficient evidence to award a grade**

- 199 French, consisting of oral and experiential activities, based on a published scheme covering basic communication on a range of topics, is offered throughout Key Stage 3. As the subject is taught in blocks, no lessons were seen in the subject, and other evidence was insufficient to make a judgement about standards in the subject. Pupils in the KS3 autistic class are offered experience of oral Spanish, in which they participate with enjoyment.

## **Art**

**KS1, KS2 & post-16 - Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings  
**KS3, KS4 - Grade 1:** Good with outstanding features

### **Good and outstanding features**

- 200 Throughout the school, there is clear evidence of the quality of learners' artwork. Examples are mounted and displayed in common areas alongside that of established artists. The displayed work provides evidence of a wide range of styles, media and scales. Some work is entirely original whilst other represents work in the style of famous artists. There is also evidence of art used as a cross curricular support as, for example, mathematics, where it has been used to demonstrate recurring themes and patterns.
- 201 Pupils in all key stages progressively develop a wide range of experience, working with a variety of media. As they move through the school learners show progression in skills acquisition, techniques and processes.
- 202 In KS1 and KS2, pupils acquire good skills as they experience a range of materials and enjoy art through a multi-sensory approach. More-able learners produce good representations of themselves and familiar key figures and items.

For other learners, art, in this case drawing provides an excellent example of progress made across a broad area through the evolution from original scribbling to that of a recognisable self-image.

- 203 Learners produce good two- and three-dimensional shapes and models using clay and cardboard to support their project and thematic work. Supportive illustrations in learners' workbooks develop from simple two-dimensional representation to include collage and foil augmented images as in the case of the Rainbow Fish story in one KS2 class.
- 204 As they progress, learners experience the work of famous artists and begin to produce work of their own in the same style.
- 205 In KS3 and KS4, learners have a growing understanding that design ideas are always drafted and are given supportive writing and explanation. They increasingly ICT to produce computer-generated images and to support their written work. They learn to produce sketches as end product and also to plan a bigger, more extensive piece of work. In these key stages, learners use a wide variety of media and materials. They make considered judgements and observations of their environment.
- 206 Pupils have achieved very good results in their entries for Certificate of Educational Achievement (COEA) accreditation this academic year.
- 207 Pupils work very effectively with established artists, as is evidenced by the nature-themed clay work on the wall adjacent to the school entrance.

### Shortcomings

- 208 Some elements of pupils' work in KS1 and KS2 show evidence of being too adult-directed.

## Music

**KS1, KS2 - Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

**KS3, KS4 - Grade 3:** Good features outweigh shortcomings

### Good features

- 209 Pupils throughout the school sing with enthusiasm and increasing regard for tuning; the younger pupils perform nursery rhymes, number songs and action songs in both English and Welsh with increasing confidence. The youngest pupils show good progress in learning the words and tune of 'Listen to the train', while older KS2 pupils sing a number of verses of 'The busy farmer'.
- 210 Secondary pupils participate with gusto in singing in assembly, particularly when they know the songs as with '*Diolch Duw*' or 'Thank you Lord'. They particularly enjoy singing 'Happy Birthday', in both English and Welsh.
- 211 A number of pupils reach a good standard in singing when they perform with the school choir at concerts and performances either in school, at a local hospice or taking part in carols jointly with another special school.
- 212 The youngest pupils learn about pulse and use untuned percussion instruments to demonstrate a fast or slow pulse, reflecting the movement of a rabbit or a tortoise. Older KS2 pupils clap the names of farm animals and the pulse of a song while higher attaining pupils demonstrate different dynamics using a drum.

- 213 Pupils, including those from the autistic classes develop good rhythmic skills and relate well to a range of drums in a therapeutic session, exploring the sounds made by striking different parts and with different force. They copy rhythms, including their own names and listen while the leader demonstrates skills to them. Pupils with more severe disability enjoy the experience and respond to the physical sensations when staff work closely with them.
- 214 Older primary aged pupils use individual hand-bells to perform a range of tunes confidently and well. They start and stop following the conductor and respond to colour-coded cues that tell them when to play. They listen carefully to ensure that they play in the right order.
- 215 When listening to music such as 'moon dance' or 'unchained lullaby', younger pupils differentiate between different tempos, discuss how the music makes them feel and move their bodies to reflect the music.
- 216 They show great interest and increasing skill when listening to, or performing with, professional musicians, such as those from 'Live Music Now' who regularly visit the school.

### **Shortcomings**

- 217 Overall, pupils do not develop sufficient awareness of, or ability to work with, varying pitch, as they have limited access to pitched instruments.
- 218 Pupils' skills for small group and ensemble work are underdeveloped.

## **Physical education**

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

- 219 Standards of achievement in physical education are good throughout the school. Pupils' physical education experiences in lessons are extended through participation in horse riding and visits to events such as the multi-sports festival at Sophia Gardens that enhance their understanding of the range of activities available.
- 220 Pupils with multiple difficulties benefit significantly from well-planned hydrotherapy sessions for therapeutic exercise and respond to a range of sensory activities. They make good progress in response to individual programmes including input from the physiotherapists.
- 221 Pupils develop their swimming skills well as a result of a structured swimming programme. Many pupils are making good progress and achieving 'Duckling' and 'Water Skills' awards.
- 222 In KS1, as part of their dance programme, pupils have followed the theme of 'Weather and Seasons' and used poems and music as a stimulus to express themselves and develop their spatial awareness and body control. Younger pupils with autistic spectrum disorder produce simple sequences on the floor and bench using rolls and pulls.
- 223 As part of the health related programme KS2 pupils use skipping ropes to exercise all parts of their body. They are aware of the effect of vigorous exercise on their bodies and to explain that their heart beats faster and their skin reddens.

- 224 Year 7 pupils are developing rugby skills through work with sports disability and development officers. This has resulted in both boys and girls achieving good standards in passing, catching and using space. They perform intricate team passing procedures. All the pupils enjoy these sessions and will be making a visit to the Millennium Stadium as the culmination of this programme.
- 225 Key Stage 3 pupils develop a range of skills in orienteering. They identify locations in the sensory garden using photographs. They locate these places on a map and also use visual clues to retrieve objects left within the grounds.
- 226 Older pupils develop a range of outdoor pursuits' skills when they use Dolygaer Outdoor Pursuits Centre as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
- 227 In all classes, pupils' attitudes towards each other and their tasks are good. This makes a good contribution to the development of their social skills and raises their self-esteem on the basis of the success they achieve.

### **Shortcomings**

- 228 Pupils do not always dress appropriately for the activity being undertaken.

## **Religious education**

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

- 229 Pupils throughout the school make good progress following the locally agreed syllabus which has been modified to meet their needs.
- 230 Pupils with multiple difficulties experience a modified syllabus and respond according to their ability.
- 231 Pupils at KS1 and KS2 experience a range of stories from the Old Testament and relate their own feelings and emotions to those of the characters in the stories.
- 232 As pupils progress through the school they develop a secure understanding of Christianity. They also develop an understanding of the other main religious faiths through their experience of a wide range of artefacts and other resources.
- 233 Key Stage 3 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder have a sound understanding of the main features of a mosque. They identify and describe the significance of the minaret and the direction Muslims face to pray. They know of the importance of the call to prayer and of the prayer mat.
- 234 At KS4 and at post-16, pupils identify places of worship, festivals and celebrations of the major religions. They have a good understanding of religious celebrations and underpin this by use of drama and role-play, such as acting out wedding ceremonies. This understanding is enhanced during their visits to places of worship such as a Hindu Temple. They develop a good awareness of cultural diversity.
- 235 Pupils throughout the school respond well to the encouragement they receive to reflect upon their feelings, emotions and actions and to develop respect for each other.

### **Shortcomings**

- 236 There are no significant shortcomings.

## **School's Response to the Inspection**

The inspection findings recognise that we have moved on considerably and addressed all the key issues from our previous inspection. We were pleased that the inspection team could endorse our gradings of the seven key questions. We are proud that we achieved a grade 1 for KQ4 as this reflects the ethos of our school.

It recognises that we have achieved high standards in nearly all areas. The school has exceeded the Welsh Assembly Government's all-Wales targets on standards achieved. The inspectors found that pupils' attitudes to their learning, the interest they show in their work and the support staff give to them are outstanding features. In addition, the care and support systems we have in place and that underpin our curricular provision are recognised as very effective.

The skills and dedication of teachers and the care and talent of support staff are duly acknowledged. The governors are also credited for their advice and support. Most importantly, the inspection report makes clear the elements that make our school what it is. In particular, the report confirms that we are achieving our aim to make our school a happy and secure place in which pupils grow in confidence and independence.

A draft action plan has already gone to staff and governors for consultation and will be put in place to address the recommendations of the report. The recommendations for improving our resources for music and visual impairment and to look at planning ensuring support staff play a full role will be a priority. The issue of homework in the secondary department is already under discussion.

A copy of all the school's action plan in response to the inspection will be sent to all parents. The governors' annual report to parents will report on the progress we are making on the inspection recommendations.

## Appendix A

### Basic Information About the School

Name of School	Ysgol Ty Coch
School type	Community Special
Age-range of pupils	3-19
Address of school	Lansdale Drive Tonteg Pontypridd Rhondda Cynon Taff
Post-Code	CF38 1PG
Telephone Number	01443 203471
Headteacher	Mrs H Hodges
Date of appointment	September 1997
Chair of Appropriate Authority	Mrs N Gardner
Registered Inspector	Dr Eric Peagam
Dates of inspection	16–19 May 2005

## Appendix B

### School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group								
Year group	NU	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Number of pupils	7	3	6	7	14	6	8	7
Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Y14
Number of pupils	7	6	9	7	8	6	4	3
							Total	108

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	16	0	16

Staffing information	
Pupil:teacher ratio	6.8: 1
Average teaching group size	8.3
Overall teacher contact ratio	87.5%
Pupil: adult ratio	2.7: 1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection		
Term	Nursery	Whole School
Summer 2004	82%	92.08%
Autumn 2004	90%	90.16%
Spring 2005	85%	87.75%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	47%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

## Appendix C

### National Curriculum Assessment Results

Pupils are not subject to national curriculum testing by virtue of their SEN.

## Appendix D

### Evidence base of the inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of six inspectors over a period of four days, and the report was based on evidence from:

- pre-inspection meetings held with the headteacher, staff and the governing body;
- the analysis of 18 returned parents' questionnaires and a meeting with five parents;
- the observation of 64 lessons or part lessons and observation of extra-curricular activities;
- a scrutiny of pupils' work in a range of subjects and evidence from subject leaders of pupils' progress;
- an examination of assessment records and reports to parents;
- observation of registration procedures;
- the scrutiny of school documentation, teachers' plans and assessment records;
- observation of pupils' behaviour in and around the school at break-times, lunch-times and before and after school;
- discussions with the headteacher and other staff;
- discussions with visiting specialists and other support services;
- post-inspection meetings with senior management and governing body.

## Appendix E Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection team

Inspector	Type	Aspect Responsibilities	Subjects
Eric Peagam	Rgl	Context, Summary, Key Questions 1 and 2.	science modern foreign language music
Janice Davies	Lay	Contributions to Key Questions 1,3, 4 and 7	
Delyth Parris	Team	Key Question 3	early years Welsh geography
Godfrey Lewis	Team	Key Question 6.	mathematics history physical education
Phil Taylor	Team	Key Question 4. Contributions to Key Question 2 and 7	English design and technology, art
Paul Donovan	Team	Key Question 5 Contributions to Key Question 4.	information technology religious education

### Acknowledgement

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

**Inspection under Section 10 of the  
Schools Inspections Act 1996**

**A SUMMARY REPORT FOR PARENTS**

**YSGOL TY COCH**

Lansdale Drive  
Tonteg  
Pontypridd  
Rhondda Cynon Taff  
CF38 1PG

**Date of Inspection: 16-19 May 2005**

**by**

**Dr Eric Peagam**

**W200/14943**

**Date: 19 July 2005**

**Under Estyn contract number: T/04/04SP**

*This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.*

*Copies of this report are available from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.*

**Ysgol Ty Coch** was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose 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 more information about their child's school. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of **Ysgol Ty Coch** took place between **16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May 2005**. An independent team of six inspectors, led by **Dr Eric Peagam** 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. This summary report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

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

#### **Basic Information About the School**

Name of School	Ysgol Ty Coch
School type	Community Special
Age-range of pupils	3-19
Address of school	Lansdale Drive Tonteg Pontypridd Rhondda Cynon Taff
Post-Code	CF38 1PG
Telephone Number	01443 203471
Headteacher	Mrs H Hodges
Date of appointment	September 1997
Chair of Appropriate Authority	Mrs N Gardner
Registered Inspector	Dr Eric Peagam
Dates of inspection	16–19 May 2005

## Context

### The nature of the provider

- 1 Ysgol Ty Coch, located in a residential area of Tonteg, provides education for 108 boys and girls aged from three to 19, all of whom have significant special educational needs (SEN) related to severe learning difficulties. The school draws pupils from the whole of the Rhondda Cynon Taff area, although predominantly from the Taff district. There is an assessment nursery that draws pupils from a wider area than the rest of the school and many children transfer from there to other mainstream or special schools. All pupils are transported to school. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, but their SEN is the major determinant of their attainment on entry; just under 50% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much higher than either the local education authority's (LEA) average or that for Wales as a whole. Nearly all pupils' home language is English.
- 2 The school was last inspected in July 1999 when weaknesses were found in assessment, curriculum structure and monitoring, transport arrangements and accommodation. The actual key issues were:
  - meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum (NC) for pupils in Key Stage (KS) 4;
  - further develop procedures for assessment and extend the use of assessment to set learning targets for pupils in all subjects;
  - improve the quality of provision to meet the particular needs of pupils with severe communication, mobility, hearing and/or behaviour difficulties;
  - provide for:
    - (a) the monitoring of the curriculum in each subject;
    - (b) whole-school schemes of work for all subjects, and
    - (c) support and guidance for assessment in each subject according to pupils' needs and achievements;
  - improve the classroom accommodation, access for wheelchairs and facilities for teaching science and technology particularly for pupils in KS3 and KS4;
  - monitor lateness effectively and liaise with the LEA to resolve the complex transport problems, and
  - improve the curriculum links with the residential hostel.
- 3 Since the previous inspection, there have been substantial alterations to accommodation, including creating a separate residential provision and a new senior block providing specialist facilities. In addition, the school has opened three resourced classes for pupils with autism and the area assessment nursery. Pupils are taught in 12 mixed-age classes, with some classes catering for pupils from more than one key stage.

## The school's priorities and targets

- 4 The school has a simple, clear statement of vision which leads in turn to statements of intent under identified areas. These are: the curriculum; the importance of the individual within the school community; preparation for adult life; access to resources and provision; support for staff development; partnership with, and support for, parents and contacts with the community.
- 5 Current specific school development plan (SDP) objectives include aspects of:
  - Individual target setting and assessment;
  - Use of integrated learning programmes;
  - Improving the sensory curriculum;
  - Behaviour management;
  - Vocational and other guidance, including global citizenship;
  - Self-evaluation;
  - Meeting new legislative requirements and Welsh Assembly Government initiatives, and
  - Subject development in history, geography and religious education.
- 6 The school also has action plans in place for improving access and further promotion of basic skills.

## Summary

- 7 Ysgol Ty Coch is a very effective school that has a large number of good features, many of them outstanding, and few shortcomings, none of which are major. The majority of these have already been identified in the SDP and are being addressed. Improvement since the previous inspection in the standards achieved, the quality of education and the facilities for learning has been good. The inspection team agreed with all of the school's judgements about areas of its work, including the standards achieved.

### Table of grades awarded

- 8 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?	1
5. How effective are leadership and strategic management?	2
6. How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	2
7. How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

## Standards

9 The standards of achievement observed in lessons are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
17%	60%	23%	0%	0%

10 These standards exceed the Welsh Assembly Government's all-Wales targets for 95% of standards to be satisfactory (reflected by grade 3) and 50% to be good (reflected by grade 2).

11 The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards achieved in personal development and key learning and social skills are good.

12 Standards in the six areas of learning are as follows:

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

13 In KS1-KS4, individual subject grades are as follows:

Subject	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4	16+
English	2	2	2	2	2
Mathematics	2	2	2	2	2
Science	2	2	1	1	1
Welsh	2	2	2	2	2
Design and technology	2	2	2	2	
Information technology	2	2	2	2	
History	2	2	2	2	
Geography	2	2	1	1	
Art	2	2	1	1	
French	n/a	n/a	0	n/a	
Music	2	2	3	n/a	
Physical education	2	2	2	2	
Religious education	2	2	2	2	

14 Shortcomings in music relate to the skills pupils have not developed as a result of insufficient resources to cover some area of learning.

15 Key Stage 4 pupils and post-16 students make good progress through a range of externally accredited courses. These include subject-based examinations and courses that develop their life skills as well as continuing to develop their basic skills.

16 Standards and progress in the key communication skills involving speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and using information and communications technology (ICT), across the curriculum, are good. Pupils develop good creative and imaginative skills as well as their bilingual skills. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with multiple sensory impairment and those with autistic spectrum disorders, make

good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). Boys and girls achieve equally well, and there are no discrete groups of pupils who achieve differently.

- 17 Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are both good and contribute well to the quality of learning. Their preparation for life in the community after school is a very strong feature of their personal development. Attendance is good and any issues relating to punctuality arise from transport arrangements.
- 18 The quality of relationships is another outstanding feature of the school. Pupils relate very well to each other and to adults, reflecting the respect and care that they receive. They benefit well from the opportunities that they have to experience and consider diversity, showing interest in, and respect for, a range of views and cultures as well as empathy towards each other's needs.

### The quality of education and training

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
17%	63%	20%	0%	0%

- 19 The percentage of good (grade 2) and very good (grade 1) lessons is well above the Welsh average.
- 20 The most outstanding feature of teaching is the rapport developed as a result of the very good relationships and the high levels of concern for equal opportunities that adults show toward pupils. The quality of short-term planning is variable; in the best examples, lessons are securely located in the subject scheme of work and identify learning objectives at a range of levels to meet individual pupils' needs. However, in some other lessons, learning objectives are too generalised to take account of the wide range of ability within classes. The class teams provide well for all adults to combine to provide very effective teaching. All team members play a key role in teaching, guiding learning and monitoring academic and personal progress. However, there is some inconsistency in the extent to which support staff are enabled to play a full part in planning and assessing learning.
- 21 Arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' progress are good, particularly in core subjects; the school is particularly successful in involving pupils in the process and helping them to take responsibility for their own improvement where appropriate.
- 22 The curriculum is good overall and meets requirements; it is broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs well, as well as ensuring equal access. Schemes of work are generally appropriate, but there is some discontinuity in planning between the primary and secondary phase, resulting from shortcomings in subject monitoring. Good account is taken of Welsh Assembly Government priorities, including development of economic awareness, sustainable development issues, *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* and bilingualism, as well as the Key Skills.
- 23 Community links are good and support learning well in addition to ensuring that the school reflects local and wider community concerns. The school makes good efforts to involve and inform parents, but there is limited involvement by parents in the life of the school.
- 24 There is very good provision for pupils' personal and social education (PSE), and their personal development, including spiritual, moral and cultural development is well

promoted. Although extra-curricular activities are limited by transport arrangements and the structure of the school day, there is a good range of additional enrichment activities, including residential experiences. Homework provision is inconsistent; it is better for primary than for secondary pupils. There is very good provision for careers and work experience.

- 25 The arrangements for care, support and guidance are a significant strength of the school. There are very effective links with a range of agencies that are well used to augment the school's resources. Induction procedures are very good and there are very effective arrangements to ensure pupils' safety, health and well-being. Systems to promote good behaviour, address the needs of pupils with behaviour difficulties and ensure that the school is free from any oppressive behaviour are all very effective. There are very good arrangements for identifying and meeting a range of additional special needs; however there are shortcomings in the present support for visually impaired pupils.

### **Leadership and management**

- 26 The school is very effectively managed in spite of the current temporary arrangements for senior management; there are effective systems in place to ensure that the very clear vision is translated into practice. The governing body is highly effective, pursues its responsibilities assiduously and is very active in setting and monitoring the school's strategic direction. There are effective systems by which they monitor the quality of provision and legal requirements are met. The school has very good overall systems for staff support and development, including making good provision for the professional development of support staff.
- 27 Within the school structure, other management systems are effective and the role of subject leaders is being developed; however subject leaders still do not play a sufficient part in monitoring and evaluating the delivery of schemes of work or the learning outcomes.
- 28 The school has made good progress since the last inspection, both in terms of addressing the shortcomings identified then and in meeting additional requirements, including significant changes to its own role. Self-evaluation is now a strong feature of the school and inspires confidence in the systems for identifying and pursuing improvement.
- 29 The school is well staffed and staff are deployed well. The accommodation is very good and has been significantly upgraded to provide appropriate facilities. Resources are generally good, with few shortcomings and, in the main, are efficiently used. Overall, the school offers good value for money.

### **Recommendations**

Although there are no significant shortcomings, In order to improve the school further, the staff and governing body need to:

- R1. enable all support staff to play a full part in planning and assessing pupils' work to ensure that learning objectives for lessons are sufficiently focussed to meet the needs of all learners and that their progress is fully monitored;
- R2. ensure that there is consistent continuity of learning between primary and secondary phases, including in the provision of homework;

- R3. extend monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure that these focus clearly and consistently on standards of achievement; in particular by ensuring that co-ordinators play a full part in the monitoring of their subjects;
- R4. address all shortcomings noted in the report that have not been separately listed.

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.

***Acknowledgement***

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