

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

**YSGOL COMINS COCH
Comins Coch
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3BQ**

School Number: 667/2303

Date of Inspection: 3-5 October, 2005

by

**Miss D. E. Morris
WO83/16211**

Date: 5 December, 2005

Under Estyn contract number: T/30/05P

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Ysgol Comins 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 Comins Coch took place between 3-5 October, 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Miss D. E. Morris 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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol Comins Coch is situated in the village of Comins Coch two miles north east of Aberystwyth, in the county of Ceredigion. The great majority of the children come from the village itself and the two adjacent communities of Capel Dewi and Waunfawr. A large number of children also travel to the school from outlying districts. There are 141 pupils, aged between 4 and 11 years of age, on the school register. Children are admitted to the reception class in the term following their fourth birthday. The number of pupils on roll remains constant overall.
2. The school considers its natural catchment area to be neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Nine per cent of the pupils are entitled to receive free school meals; this figure is significantly below the county and national average.
3. The nature of the intake is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged and comprises the full range of ability. 34 pupils are designated as having special educational needs [SEN], including one pupil for whom a statement of SEN has been produced.
4. English is the main language spoken in the homes of 96% of pupils. Welsh is taught as a second language at the school.
5. The school was last inspected in 1999. The headteacher has been in post since September 1997.

The school's priorities and targets

6. The school's objectives include:
 - to care for each child as an individual in a warm family environment;
 - to enable every child and every member of staff to develop his or her potential to the full in all aspects of school life;
 - to offer an equal opportunity to all pupils.
7. The school's main priorities and targets for 2005-2006 include:
 - to develop the role of subject co-ordinators and re-distribute responsibilities;
 - to prepare and implement a new policy review timetable;
 - to develop the role of classroom assistants in the school;
 - to prepare and introduce the new Foundation Phase curriculum.

Summary

8. Comins Coch school is a good school. It has maintained the good and very good standards since the last inspection and improved standards further in other subjects and aspects of the provision.

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

Pupils' standards of achievement	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	17%	66%	17%	0%	0%

9. Pupils' standards of achievement are significantly above the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) all-Wales targets of 95% satisfactory by 2004 and 98% satisfactory (Grade 3) by 2007 and 50% good by 2004 and 65% good (Grade 2 or better) by 2007.

Early Years

10. The quality of provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and they make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
11. In the six areas of learning inspected, the children's standards of achievement are as follows:

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

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

12. In key stage 1(KS1) and key stage 2 (KS2), standards of achievement in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Mathematics	Grade 2	Grade 1
Welsh second language	Grade 2	Grade 2
Information Technology	Grade 2	Grade 1
Music	Grade 2	Grade 1
Physical Education	Grade 2	Grade 2

13. Pupils make very good progress in their learning and achieve the agreed learning targets and goals. They gain new knowledge, skills and understanding consistently and effectively as they move through the school. This is an outstanding feature of the work.
14. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve the targets set for them.
15. In Early Years and KS1, pupils' development in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) across the curriculum is good. In KS2, pupils achieve very good standards in using their literacy and ICT skills in their work across the curriculum. This is an outstanding feature of the work. Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects.
16. In both key stages, pupils' make increasing use of Welsh literacy skills in a range of subjects. Good standards are achieved in subjects such as physical education and geography, and in aspects such as the Cwricwlwm Cymreig (Welsh Curriculum) in KS2.
17. In 2005, in KS1, pupils' attainment in the NC assessments according to teacher assessment was above the county and national averages in mathematics but slightly below in English and science. When compared with similar schools across Wales, on the basis of free school meals, the school's results are below the average in each subject. During the last three years pupils' attainment overall has been significantly above the average in most years. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.
18. In KS2, pupils' attainment in the NC tests and assessments in 2005 is above the national and county averages in English, science and mathematics. When compared with similar schools across Wales, based on free school meals, the school's overall results are above the average in English and mathematics but a little below in science. In most recent years there has been a continuous improvement in the school's results as pupils achieve and frequently exceed their targets. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.

19. Pupils' bilingual competency is good. Pupils of all ages communicate effectively in English. They communicate with increasing accuracy, fluency and understanding in Welsh.
20. Pupils work well together and show very good development in their personal and social skills.
21. Pupils' learning skills are good and they show good development in their creative and problem solving skills. In KS2, older pupils' problem solving skills are very good in subjects such as mathematics.
22. Pupils' attitudes to their learning, the interest they show in their work and their ability to sustain concentration are very good. Pupils' ability to work more independently is improving and is very good in those classes where pupils are encouraged to use their subject knowledge and skills regularly in undertaking investigative tasks.
23. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They have a good understanding of what is expected of them and they are considerate and courteous. They have a good awareness of equal opportunities.
24. The school plays an active role in the life of its community and pupils develop an appreciation of belonging to a community.
25. The average rate of pupil attendance is 94.6%. Most pupils attend school regularly and they arrive promptly at the beginning of the school day.

The quality of education and training

26. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
31%	42%	27%	0%	0%

27. Teachers have a very good relationship with their pupils and have high expectations of them. They cater effectively for the learning needs of all pupils.
28. The good teaching with outstanding features includes characteristics such as clear objectives, effective presentations, skilled questioning, relevant tasks and activities, and good use of a variety of learning resources. Where the teaching is less effective, the work is too teacher directed and pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their own ideas and methods of working.
29. Teachers assess pupils' achievements and progress rigorously, accurately and regularly. This is an outstanding feature. Assessment outcomes are shared amongst the staff and are used to plan future teaching and learning. The annual reports to parents conform to statutory requirements and note pupils' achievements and skills in every subject.

30. The school responds effectively to pupils' learning needs and offers equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum in the Early Years and across the key stages. There is good provision to ensure that pupils acquire the necessary basic and key skills.
31. Positive learning experiences effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
32. Parental links are very good. The school's Parent/Teacher Association is very active and provides important funds which are used effectively to enrich pupils' education and experiences. Partnerships with other schools, the community and other institutions are also good.
33. Provision for pupils with SEN is good and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. In classes and during withdrawal sessions, teachers and experienced support staff offer pupils with SEN very good support. This is an outstanding feature.

Leadership and management

34. The school places pupils' development at the heart of its provision. It is very well led by an experienced headteacher. His management is purposeful and offers the school a clear sense of direction. The whole staff demonstrate considerable commitment to the school and co-operate well as a team.
35. Teaching and support staff are deployed and managed effectively but the strategic role of senior members of staff is insufficiently extended.
36. The school development plan is a comprehensive document that clearly sets out the school's priorities. Information gained through the self-evaluation process is used effectively to inform future planning.
37. The governing body is very supportive, well informed and involved in the life of the school. Governors help to set the school's strategic direction but their role in monitoring the quality of provision and pupils' standards of achievement is at an early stage of development.
38. Subject development responsibilities have been shared amongst the teaching staff and co-ordinators undertake their planning, advisory and supportive roles well. Their role in monitoring standards and the quality of provision through class observations is insufficiently extended.
39. School policies and documentation give good attention to statutory requirements. However, there are a small number of minor omissions in the content of the school prospectus and in the governors' annual report to parents.
40. The self-evaluation report, produced by the school before the inspection, is concise and clear and identifies the strengths and some areas where improvements are needed. The inspection team agreed with the judgments

made by the school in two of the seven key questions. Higher grades were allocated to the other five questions.

41. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The two key issues have been effectively addressed, but the school is aware of the need to extend monitoring procedures further.
42. The management and use of resources is an outstanding feature of the provision. There are enough suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to carry out the work of the school. There is good investment in resources and equipment. They are of good quality and are used effectively. The school buildings and site are very well maintained. Facilities, such as the school hall, are extensively used during the school day. There is good use of the local environment, the community, and educational sites to enrich pupils' learning.

Recommendations

In order to build upon the good practice, the school needs to:

- maintain the good standards with outstanding features, improve further the areas judged good, and address the shortcomings identified in aspects of the work;
- extend the good practice of giving pupils opportunities to work independently and develop their own ideas and methods of working;
- develop further the school self-evaluation system and strengthen the leadership roles of senior members of staff and subject co-ordinators;
- extend the governors' role in monitoring educational provision and standards of achievement
- ensure that the content of the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements in full.

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

Standards

Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 1 good with outstanding features

43. The findings of the inspection team do not match the school's self-evaluation report in that the school judged this key question as Grade 2.

44. In the lessons inspected, pupils' standards of achievement are as follows:

Pupils' standards of achievement	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	17%	66%	17%	0%	0%

45. Pupils' standards of achievement are significantly above the WAG all-Wales targets of 95% satisfactory by 2004 and 98% satisfactory (Grade 3) by 2007 and 50% good by 2004 and 65% good (Grade 2 or better) by 2007.

Early Years

46. The quality of provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

47. In the six areas of learning inspected, the children's standards of achievement are as follows:

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

48. In key stage 1 and key stage 2, standards of achievement in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Mathematics	Grade 2	Grade 1
Welsh second language	Grade 2	Grade 2
Information Technology	Grade 2	Grade 1
Music	Grade 2	Grade 1
Physical Education	Grade 2	Grade 2

49. In the subjects inspected, pupils make very good progress in their learning and achieve the agreed learning targets and goals. They gain new

knowledge, skills and understanding consistently and effectively as they move through the school. This is an outstanding feature of the provision.

50. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve the targets set for them.
51. In the reception class and KS1, pupils' development in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information an ICT across the curriculum is good. In KS2, pupils' literacy and ICT skills across the curriculum are very good. Pupils demonstrate confidence and accuracy in their application of these skills. This is an outstanding feature. Pupils' numeracy skills are good across the subjects.
52. In both key stages, pupils make increasing use of Welsh literacy skills in a range of subjects. Good standards are achieved in subjects such as physical education and geography, and in aspects such as the Cwricwlwm Cymreig in KS2.
53. In 2005, at key stage 1, pupils' attainment in the NC assessments, according to teacher assessment, was above the county and national averages in mathematics but slightly below in English and science. When compared with similar schools across Wales, on the basis of free school meals, the school's results are below the average in each subject. During the last three years pupils' attainment overall has been significantly above the average in most years. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.
54. In KS2, pupils' attainment in the NC tests and assessments in 2005 is above the national and county averages in English, science and mathematics. The percentage of pupils achieving level 5, the higher grade, is above the national average in all subjects. When compared with similar schools across Wales, the school's results, based on free school meals, are above the average in English and mathematics but a little below in science. In most recent years there has been a continuous improvement in the school's results as pupils achieve and frequently exceed their targets. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.
55. Pupils' bilingual competency is good. Pupils of all ages communicate effectively in English. They communicate with increasing accuracy, fluency and understanding in Welsh.
56. Pupils work together effectively and show very good development in their personal and social skills. Pupils relate very well to each other and to adults.
57. Pupils' learning skills are good and they show good development in their creative and problem solving skills. In KS2, older pupils' problem solving skills are very good in subjects such as mathematics.

58. Pupils are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and of the targets set by teachers. They can evaluate their progress effectively and discuss what they have to do to improve.
59. Pupils' attitudes to their learning, the interest they show in their work and their ability to sustain concentration are very good.
60. Pupils work hard in lessons, readily join in the range of activities provided and show enthusiasm for their work. Pupils' ability to work more independently is improving and is very good in those classes where pupils are encouraged to use their subject knowledge and skills regularly in undertaking investigative tasks.
61. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and are considerate and courteous. They move around in an orderly manner and exercise a high degree of self-discipline. This responsible attitude has a positive effect on the progress they make.
62. Pupils have a good awareness of equal opportunities issues and have respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within society. Curriculum topics ensure that diversity is acknowledged and understood positively.
63. Visits to places of interest and involvement in local activities help to extend pupils' understanding of their own community. Pupils have a broad and positive understanding of the world of work.
64. Attendance averaged 94.6% for the three previous terms. Apart from incidental absence for illnesses, term time holidays are noted as an ongoing issue. Most pupils arrive at school on time. Punctuality during school hours is very good.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features

65. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question as Grade 2.
66. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
31%	42%	27%	0%	0%

67. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and the common requirements of the NC. Due regard is paid to Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. Lessons are well structured to include a range of suitable activities.

68. The school employs a range of teaching strategies, including a system of exchanging classes for music and physical education to utilise the subject specialisms of members of staff. This successfully extends pupils' knowledge and skills in these subjects.
69. Pupils' bilingual competency is effectively fostered in lessons by means of purposeful consolidation and reinforcement. Teachers take every opportunity to develop Welsh vocabulary and language patterns. There is good use of Welsh as a teaching medium in subjects such as geography and physical education.
70. In the lessons with good and outstanding features, the following characteristics are evident:
- lesson objectives are clear and are shared with the pupils;
 - initial teacher presentations are purposeful and reinforce previous learning;
 - tasks and activities consistently extend pupils' learning;
 - skilled questioning enables pupils to explore issues in increasing depth;
 - there is good use of a variety of resources to stimulate and support pupils' learning.
 - lessons proceed at a good pace and plenary sessions are used effectively to review pupils' progress.
71. Where the teaching is less effective:
- the work is too teacher directed and pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their own ideas and methods of working;
 - activities lack sufficient challenge to extend pupils' learning, particularly the more able;
 - classroom organisation lacks sufficient structure to maximise the learning potential of the activities provided.
72. The school meets all statutory requirements for assessment, recording and reporting. Teachers assess pupils' achievements and progress rigorously, accurately and regularly. This is an outstanding feature.
73. Good use is made of assessment outcomes to guide future planning. In KS1 and KS2, standardised tests and teachers' own assessments are used effectively to identify areas for improvement and to set individual targets.
74. Arrangements for assessing the under-fives are good. The baseline assessment is correctly implemented and targets are set for further development. Children's progress in the six areas of learning is clearly recorded.
75. In KS1 and KS2, teachers keep detailed records and samples of pupils' work in the core subjects. These records are used effectively to ensure continuity and progression from year to year. Moderated exemplars of pupils' work support teachers' monitoring of pupils' standards in the foundation subjects.

Good arrangements are in place for the transfer of information from class to class.

76. The school is developing a useful electronic format for recording pupils' progress throughout his or her time at school. This system provides up to date information on each pupil's progress.
77. A very good feature of the assessment process is the development of pupils' own portfolios of work. Pupils select samples of their work, assess their own progress and identify areas for improvement. They discuss their own progress with understanding.
78. Marking of pupils' work highlights the supportive ethos of the school. Teachers mark work alongside the pupils. Positive comments are included on pupils' work and in best practice indicate clearly to pupils what they need to do in order to improve.
79. The statutory requirements for the regular assessment, recording and review of the needs of pupils with SEN are met.
80. The annual reports to parents conform to statutory requirements. They note pupils' achievements and skills in every subject, and include comments about their personal and social development. The reports provide clear guidance on what pupils need to do to make progress. Parents value the meetings with staff to discuss their children's progress and development.

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

Grade 1- Good with outstanding features

81. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question as Grade 2.
82. The school responds effectively to pupils' learning needs and offers equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum in the Early Years and across the key stages. The curriculum meets the requirements of the NC and religious education, and the Desirable Outcomes for under-fives. The provision reflects social inclusion in every aspect.
83. The whole-school schemes of work are detailed and comprehensive and offer clear guidelines to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning. NC subjects are introduced effectively using a thematic approach although some subjects and skills are taught independently. The planning of play activities for children under five can be further enhanced.
84. Teachers are aware of the need to ensure that every pupil gains proficiency in key and basic skills. Careful planning ensures good opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.

85. In KS1, pupils are organised into age related classes. In KS2, two year-groups are split due to class sizes. Careful planning and discussion ensures that appropriate continuity and progression is achieved overall.
86. The school provides a wide range of out-of-school learning opportunities for pupils. Educational trips enhance pupils' learning and visits to outdoor pursuits centres enrich the curriculum. Pupils benefit from the range of extra-curricular sporting and cultural activities provided.
87. The school makes good use of community links to support teaching and learning. The Woodland Project is a very good example of the use of the local community to enhance the curriculum whilst promoting pupils' learning in a stimulating and interesting way across a number of subjects. This is an outstanding feature of the provision.
88. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good while pupils' spiritual development is generally good. Collective acts of worship offer pupils good opportunities to reflect on moral and social issues. On occasion, class assemblies lack sufficient focus and structure.
89. The school takes good account of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales' Personal and Social Education (PSE) Framework. PSE is taught as a separate subject and ensures that all the elements are incorporated. The values and standards promoted are developed and practised successfully across the school. This is an outstanding feature.
90. Partnerships with parents, schools and other institutions are good with outstanding features. The school has effective links with the community. Parents appreciate the open, professional and friendly relationship with the headteacher and his staff and also appreciate the information provided through the school brochure, letters and informal discussions. The home-school partnership agreement is clear and concise and reflects respective roles and commitments to a child's learning.
91. The school uses the local community effectively and arranges visits to local attractions, utilises local businesses and invites speakers from the community into the school. There are exciting plans, in collaboration with the Community Association, to develop a new community base at the school.
92. The school works in close partnership with the local playgroup and with both local secondary schools. There are close links with other primary schools in the area especially in sporting activities. Transition projects with the feeder secondary schools are well developed. The school works in close partnership with local colleges and take an active role in mentoring student teachers and support staff.
93. The school has a clear policy and effectively promotes pupils' bilingual skills. The school benefits from considerable 'athrawon bro'(language teacher) input and there is good co-operation and planning between the staff. This

includes teaching of aspects of the curriculum, such as geography and physical education, through the medium of Welsh. This is a very effective initiative.

94. There is very good emphasis on studying the heritage and culture of Wales and Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig through aspects of the curriculum and other activities. This includes a study of Welsh history and geography and of Welsh artists. It also includes activities such as concerts in the school and in the local community, St. David's Day celebrations and Urdd activities.
95. The school effectively promotes education for sustainable development and global citizenship through the PSE programme and its successful European partnerships. The school has exchanged work relating to recycling and environmental issues with partner schools in Denmark and Ireland. The school has an energy policy and is developing other methods of working in a sustainable way.
96. Pupils are given a good understanding of the world of work. Pupils visit farms, supermarkets and eating establishments to enrich curricular work and local business people visit the school to talk to pupils about aspects of their work.
97. Pupils leave the school with appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning. Further opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning would enrich this feature.

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

Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features

98. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question as Grade 2.
99. The quality of the school's care, support and guidance to learners is an outstanding feature of the provision. School staff treat all pupils with respect. Support systems are well planned and have been effectively integrated into the school's work to satisfy pupils' needs and to ensure equal opportunities for all. This is an outstanding feature of the provision.
100. Effective policies are in place for promoting the health and well being of pupils. Child protection policies are clearly recorded and all members of staff and the governors are aware of the correct procedures. Health and Safety policies, including fire prevention and first aid are in place, and appropriate procedures are followed. Risk assessments are held for important activities at the school. Suitable procedures are in place for dealing with appeals and complaints.
101. The policies on discipline and bullying are clear, and the school acts promptly to solve any problems appertaining to unacceptable conduct.

There was no evidence of bullying or aggressive behaviour during the inspection period.

102. There are successful approaches to help new pupils settle into school. All the indications are that pupils, regardless of the age they come to the school, adjust well to being there. The 'My first days at Comins Coch School' booklet, for parents of children who are attending the Reception class for the first time, is a very useful document.
103. The quality of the school's procedures for monitoring pupil's punctuality and attendance are good. Teachers meet with parents twice a year to discuss pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour.
104. The school is part of the Healthy Schools Initiative, which successfully fosters pupils' understanding of health related issues as well as developing play and playground facilities.
105. Equal opportunities policies are in place and the school gives good attention to the work of fostering gender and racial equality. The work in a number of subjects, as well as in collective worship, lead pupils to learn about the importance of respect and tolerance. As a result, pupils acquire a good understanding of the need to respect others, including those who are different from themselves.
106. The quality of provision for additional learning needs is good and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. 34 pupils receive SEN support and there are effective procedures to diagnose and address individual learning needs. Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are appropriately detailed and attainable targets are clearly noted in the planning. More able pupils' learning is effectively developed overall through suitable tasks.
107. In classes and during withdrawal sessions, pupils with SEN are very well supported by teachers and experienced support staff. This is an outstanding feature. The educational provision is in line with pupils' statements of special needs and IEPs. Pupils have full access to the curriculum and are fully integrated into the work and activities of the school. The school also works well with parents and outside agencies in reviewing the progress made by SEN pupils and in meeting specified needs.
108. The school takes appropriate steps to ensure that pupils with physical disabilities are treated just as favourably as able-bodied pupils, from the point of view of the opportunities and support they receive.
109. The school has effective partnerships with the police, health, psychological and social services and makes appropriate use of them as required.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings

110. The findings of the inspection team match the judgment of grade 2 made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
111. The school places pupils' development at the heart of its provision. Shared values and norms about learning and behaviour, which promote equality for all, are very well reflected in the school's work. Whole school policies have been formulated and are known and implemented by staff.
112. The school is very well led. The headteacher's management is purposeful and offers the school a clear sense of direction. The staff co-operate well as a team under his leadership.
113. Teaching and support staff are deployed and managed effectively but the strategic role of senior members of staff is insufficiently extended.
114. The school takes good account of national priorities including the development of the Healthy School initiative and the PSE programme. The School's Council also helps pupils to contribute to the decisions that affect them. The school participates fully in local initiatives such as developing pupil assessment procedures.
115. Suitable procedures are in place for monitoring the quality of the educational provision but the role of subject co-ordinators in directly monitoring and evaluating pupils' standards of achievement in the classroom is insufficiently extended.
116. Performance management structures are in place involving focused staff appraisal that contributes to effective professional development. There is a strong commitment to ensuring the continuing professional development of staff. It is guided by the demands of the SDP or teachers' individual development needs. There is good use of national grants and links with a range of providers to offer staff effective opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills. The good teaching seen in the school reflects the positive effect of training.
117. The SDP is a very well structured document and sets appropriate and realistic targets in a range of issues. Relevant processes are in place for setting and reviewing targets and good progress is being made in addressing the main targets set. The budget is managed very effectively and expenditure is closely linked to school priorities.
118. The governing body, which includes a number of new members, is very supportive and involved in the life of the school. Governors know their roles

and contribute appropriately to strategic planning. Their role in monitoring standards and quality is at an early stage of development.

119. The governing body meets regularly and fulfils its regulatory and legal responsibilities. School policies and documentation give good attention to statutory requirements. However, there are a small number of minor omissions in the content of the school prospectus and in the governors' annual report to governors.

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

Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings

120. The findings of the inspection team match the judgment of grade 2 made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
121. The headteacher, governors and staff are committed to improving standards and a number of effective processes are in place to monitor the quality of the educational provision.
122. Regular staff meetings provide a useful forum for reviewing policies and new initiatives, and for discussing pupils' work and progress. Detailed staff discussion and an evaluation of each pupil's progress and development on transition from class to class contributes to the monitoring and evaluation of standards.
123. The headteacher monitors pupils' standards of achievement and the quality of provision in classrooms and offers staff useful feedback. General outcomes are discussed in staff meetings and actions agreed.
124. Subject development responsibilities have been shared amongst the teaching staff and co-ordinators undertake their planning, advisory and supportive roles well. Co-ordinators model lessons for colleagues and effectively monitor whole-school subject planning. Opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor provision through class observations and to develop a broader understanding of provision in the areas for which they are responsible are insufficiently extended.
125. Pupils are consulted about aspects of school life through the school's council. The views of parents and carers are sought through the range of parents' evenings that are held and through their representatives on the governing body.
126. A good feature of the school's self-evaluation process is the involvement of all staff in identifying strengths and areas for further development. These meetings are well structured and the outcomes are carefully analysed. Governors make regular visits to the school but their role in the self-evaluation process is at an early stage of development.

127. A detailed analysis is made of NC assessments, baseline assessments and school-based tests. School results in NC tests and tasks are analysed against county and national outcomes and the information acquired is used appropriately to identify and address areas for improvement. The school's day-to-day assessment processes contribute effectively to monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress and in setting individual and whole school targets for improvement.
128. Performance management contributes well to the identification of the professional needs of staff. Staff training and development programmes also impact effectively on classroom practice.
129. The SDP provides a very good structure for the development of the school. Key areas for improvement are identified from the self-evaluation process and are built into the SDP, giving a clear focus for school improvement. The action plans include relevant targets to bring about improvement. They include realistic time-scales, qualitative and quantitative targets and also success criteria. Targets are costed and supported with an adequate allocation of resources.
130. Through discussion, the headteacher, staff and governors are involved in identifying the development priorities in the SDP and in reviewing the progress made in meeting the targets set. The good actions taken have resulted in measurable improvements.
131. The self-evaluation report, produced by the school before the inspection, is concise and clear. The document reflects the inspection framework, and the comments are based on sound evidence and data. The inspection team agreed with the judgments made by the school in two of the seven key questions. Higher grades were allocated to the other five questions.
132. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The two key issues have been addressed, but the school is aware of the need to extend monitoring procedures further. In the subjects inspected, the school has retained the good and very good standards and improved standards further in subjects such as physical education and information technology.

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

Grade 1- Good with outstanding features

133. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question as Grade 2.
134. Pupils are well supported by sufficient, suitably qualified and experienced teachers. The school's staff as a whole has the knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the schools' curriculum. There is good use of subject specialisms in teaching subjects such as music and physical education.

Specific skills and expertise is also used effectively in areas such as provision for special needs.

135. The school has suitably skilled support staff. They work very effectively in supporting teachers and pupils.
136. The school has a clear policy for staff development, which incorporates both teaching and support staff. Staff have attended a range of courses, which have contributed well to developing subject knowledge, teaching and learning. This is an outstanding feature of the provision.
137. The quality of resources is good. Every curricular area has a good range of resources, which are used effectively. The staff makes effective use of local resources, such as museums, the Arts Centre and field centres, to enrich the curriculum. Every class has a good range of reading and reference books and the school is currently updating its central library. In a small number of classes, the range and display of Welsh books is less evident.
138. The school's communications technology resources are used effectively and the school has a development plan which appropriately incorporates purchasing further ICT resources.
139. The overall quality of accommodation is very good. Recent improvements to the building offer additional staff and pupil accommodation. The level of maintenance, and the standards of décor and cleaning are very high. The outside environment is neat, stimulating and well maintained. At times, when the field or bark area is not in use the playground area can become congested. The building allows good access for the disabled.
140. The displays around the school contribute towards creating an appropriate ethos. They are neat and respect pupils' work.
141. Financial management is an outstanding feature of the provision. Priorities for expenditure and development are clearly identified in the SDP and actual expenditure reflects the school's priorities. The headteacher carefully plans, monitors and analyses all areas of expenditure. Arrangements for the implementation of the National Agreement: Raising Standards and Tackling Workload are well in hand and are providing value for money.
142. The regular auditing and reviewing of resource needs enables the school to make efficient use of all resources. The school offers very good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Provision for under-fives

143. The provision for the under-fives is appropriate and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

Areas of Learning

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Good and outstanding features

144. Children's listening skills are very good. They use a developing vocabulary with increasing fluency to express their thoughts and to talk about their experiences. Many of the older children speak confidently, accurately and at length. This is an outstanding feature. Children enjoy looking at books and handle them correctly. They know that words and pictures carry meaning and can describe and interpret illustrations effectively. Older children know their letter sounds and individuals can read simple books. Children can write their names and underwrite sentences with accurate letter formation.

145. The children benefit from the regular use of incidental Welsh and respond with understanding to greetings and instructions. They can count and name familiar colours in Welsh.

Shortcomings

146. There are no significant shortcomings.

Personal and Social Development

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Good and outstanding features

147. Children feel secure. They behave well, take turns and share fairly. They establish good relationships with other children and with adults. They work very effectively as part of a group and independently. They concentrate and persevere well and are eager to explore new learning. These are outstanding features. They demonstrate independence in dressing and personal hygiene. Through suitable stories and circle time, they know about friendship and care for others.

Shortcomings

148. There are no significant shortcomings.

Mathematical Development

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

149. The children understand mathematical language in relevant contexts. They can sort, match, order and count familiar objects. They can count to ten and recognise numbers to at least five. They match numbers to signs and sounds correctly. Older children have a good understanding of number patterns and of mathematical concepts such as 'less' and 'more'. They can name and describe the features of two -dimensional (2D) shapes correctly.

Shortcomings

150. There are no significant shortcomings.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

151. The children's observation skills are good. They observe the colour and features of their eyes correctly and can identify similarities and differences. They discuss and record their observations accurately in drawings and graphical forms. They observe and record the weather and can describe the changes from day to day. They talk confidently about their homes and families and older children can describe their journey to school. They can name different materials and describe their features correctly. The children's IT skills are developing well.

Shortcomings

152. There are no significant shortcomings.

Physical Development

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

153. During movement lessons in the hall, the children move with increasing control and respond accurately to instructions. They work and experiment with a variety of materials and use a range of small equipment well as they draw, colour, build and use scissors. They handle bikes safely and with good control.

Shortcomings

154. There are no significant shortcomings.

Creative Development

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

155. The children work and experiment effectively with a variety of materials and techniques. They use colour and apply paint carefully. They observe objects and can create a collage using different techniques and materials. They participate enthusiastically in singing sessions and know a good range of songs in Welsh and English. They respond to and enjoy rhythm in music.

Shortcomings

156. A significant number of children do not express their own ideas sufficiently in their work.

Mathematics

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

Key Stage 2 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Good and outstanding features

157. In KS1, pupils have a good understanding of number bonds and patterns. They count confidently upwards and backwards, can recognise and name larger numbers, and can count accurately in multiples of 2, 5 and 10s. Pupils know the difference between odd and even numbers and can double and halve numbers correctly.

158. Pupils use mental addition strategies correctly to calculate number problems. They can explain their methods of working well.

159. Pupils know the value of different coins and can calculate sums of money. They have a good knowledge of 2D shapes and can identify the features of more familiar 3D shapes.

160. Pupils are able to gather data and present it accurately in the form of simple graphs.

161. In KS2, pupils have a secure grasp of number processes and apply them accurately in different contexts. By the end of KS2, pupils use and apply combinations of operations accurately to calculate number tasks. This is an outstanding feature.

162. Pupils' mental skills are well developed. Pupils can calculate the answers to number problems quickly and accurately. Older pupils develop their own techniques to solve problems and they can explain their reasoning effectively. This is an outstanding feature of the work.

163. Pupils can apply their knowledge well to calculate problems involving measures of time, length, weight, and capacity. They can choose the appropriate units of measurement for different tasks. By the end of the key stage, pupils' estimating skills are very good.
164. Pupils use mathematical language confidently and demonstrate a good understanding of a range of terms.
165. Pupils access ICT confidently to handle data and produce mathematical graphs and charts.
166. In both key stages, the standard of presentation of pupils' work is very good.

Shortcomings

167. There are no significant shortcomings.

Welsh second language

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

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

Good features

168. In KS1, pupils respond accurately to instructions and greetings. They understand the phrases used during the lessons and use them accurately to respond to questions and to contribute to simple conversations. They speak with good pronunciation and intonation. Pupils sing rhymes and interpret action songs correctly.
169. Pupils read their own work with understanding and their pronunciation is good.
170. During lessons, older pupils use familiar words and phrases accurately to record their tasks.
171. In KS2, pupils listen intently and a good number readily answer questions using familiar speech patterns and a basic working vocabulary. Accuracy in pronunciation is good.
172. Pupils read accurately with clear expression and suitable intonation. The more able readers display a good understanding of the content of the books they read, and they can describe the features of their favourite books.
173. Pupils write for different purposes and record their experiences accurately using a range of patterns and relevant vocabulary. By the end of the key stage, a significant number write accurately, at length and with good expression. Individual pieces of writing are of a very good standard.

Shortcomings

174. In KS2, a significant minority of the older pupils lack confidence when speaking and offer only brief responses.

Information Technology

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

Key Stage 2 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Good and outstanding features

175. In KS1, pupils use word processing and data handling software competently to achieve specific outcomes. Pupils can choose appropriate fonts and change their size and colour confidently. They can modify the text as required and print their completed work.

176. Pupils use art packages well to create pictures and patterns.

177. The pupils' modelling skills develop well. They can input instructions correctly to control the floor turtle.

178. Pupils use a range of CD ROMs effectively to develop their linguistic and mathematical skills and to find information.

179. In KS2, pupils acquire and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills of information technology in different contexts and to increasingly challenging situations. This is an outstanding feature.

180. They use word processing packages effectively using the tools to edit and improve their work. Pupils devise attractive posters and information sheets using desktop publishing packages. They have a very good awareness of the way in which information and communications technology may be used to refine and present their work.

181. Older pupils use PowerPoint confidently to report on school visits and activities, and to support individual oral presentations to the class. This is an outstanding feature.

182. Pupils use the LOGO control program effectively, inputting instructions correctly and confidently to make different shapes and patterns.

183. Pupils enter, store, retrieve and present data in a range of forms. In subjects such as mathematics, they can effectively analyse and discuss the information presented.

184. Pupils collect, access and interrogate information effectively to support their investigations in their work across the curriculum. Older pupils can present information effectively in a range of forms incorporating text and graphics.
185. Pupils know that computers play an important part in everyday life and can describe and comment on their use and value in different contexts.

Shortcomings

186. In KS1, the more able pupils' ability to manage their work including saving and accessing files and information is insufficiently extended.

Music

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

Key Stage 2 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Good and outstanding features

187. In KS1, pupils know a variety of rhymes, songs and hymns from memory. They sing enthusiastically and to a good standard.
188. Pupils listen to different types of music and can describe its main features effectively. They record their observations in the form of drawings and writing. Pupils can recognise and name familiar instruments correctly.
189. Y2 pupils display increasing knowledge of basic notation and follow it correctly when performing a musical sequence. They can evaluate their performances and are beginning to use correct musical vocabulary.
190. In KS2, pupils sing accurately and the quality of their singing is good. They maintain pitch and pay attention to dynamics and duration.
191. KS2 pupils learn to play a range of musical instruments. They perform confidently, with expression demonstrating technical competence and accuracy. This is an outstanding feature of the work.
192. Pupils are familiar with music from a range of styles and cultures. In some classes, pupils use their IT skills effectively to gather information about the work of different composers.
193. Pupils listen well to music on tape and can recognise changes in the character and form of the music. Younger KS2 pupils can interpret and perform their own musical sequences effectively. They do this confidently and achieve good technical and expressive standards. This is an outstanding feature of the work.

194. Pupils appraise their own and others' music focusing on specific elements. They demonstrate a good understanding of musical elements

Shortcomings

195. There are no major shortcomings.

Physical Education

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

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

Good features

196. In both key stages, pupils understand and can explain the importance of safe warm up and cool down routines.

197. In KS1, pupils move in a variety of ways demonstrating good body control. They use space effectively.

198. Pupils can create different shapes using their hands and feet. A good number display good balancing skills.

199. In KS2, the majority of pupils can perform a sequence of movements and balances demonstrating good control. In best practice, pupils demonstrate increased efficiency and fluency in more complex tasks.

200. Pupils can refine and improve their performances giving due attention to clarity of body shape and greater precision. They have a good understanding of relevant terms.

201. In both key stages, pupils have a developing knowledge of the benefits of regular exercise to a healthy lifestyle.

202. In both key stages, pupils pay good attention to their own and others' safety and can adapt their performance in response to changing situations. Pupils work effectively and safely in teams to set up apparatus and clear it away at the end of lessons.

203. Pupils benefit from the extra-curricular programme of activities through opportunities to participate in inter-school games and competitions.

Shortcomings

204. In both key stages, a small minority of pupils do not listen sufficiently to instructions.

School's response to the inspection

The staff, governors and pupils are delighted with the findings of the report that Ysgol Comins Coch is a good school. The report gives a true and accurate picture of the school and the standards achieved.

We are very proud of our children and were most pleased that inspectors found the children to be considerate and courteous and their behaviour to be very good. Equally we agree that our pupils leave the school with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning.

We greatly value our role of community school and foster open, professional and friendly relationships with parents, schools and other organisations. We are pleased that the report confirms that these are good with outstanding features. The school remains concerned over its level of funding and accepts the inspectors' findings that the school offers very good value for money.

The school prides itself on thorough and continuous self-evaluation. The inspectors graded us higher than we ourselves as we were over cautious in our grading. However, we believe this reflects the school's ethos of always seeking continuous improvement and higher achievement.

The school is appreciative of the professional, effective and dedicated work of both the registered and team inspector. It was a thorough and rigorous process with positive feedback which provides clarity for the future development of the school.

The head teacher, staff and governors take pride in this report. We celebrate the success of the whole team linked to the life of the school and agree that, the quality of the school's care, support and guidance to learners is an outstanding feature of the provision.

Appendix A

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Comins Coch
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Address of school	Comins Coch Aberystwyth Ceredigion
Post-code	SY23 3BQ
Telephone number	01970 623497

Headteacher	Mr T Fanning
Date of appointment	Medi 1997
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr T Pugh
Registered inspector	Miss D Morris
Dates of inspection	3-5 October, 2005

Appendix B

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	-	20	20	20	18	23	18	22	141

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	6	2	7

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	20.1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	-
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	23.5
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.2:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection				
Term	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School
Autumn 2004	92	94	95	94.6
Spring 2005	94	93	93	93.6
Winter 2005	95	92	96.8	94.7

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	9%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

Appendix C

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 1: (National Results 2004)

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2005			Number of pupils in Y2:		18			
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
English	Teacher Assessment	School			18	82		
		National		4	13	63	20	
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School		6	6	65	24	
		National		2	11	63	24	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School			18	82		
		National		2	10	66	23	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment

In the school	77%	In Wales	80%
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D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 2: (National results 2004)

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2005			Number of pupils in Y6		14							
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School						5	9	50	36	
		National	1	0	0		0	5	16	46	30	
	Test/Task	School						5	0	41	55	
		National	1	1	1	2	0	4	13	42	37	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School						5	9	45	45	
		National	0				1	3	17	46	31	
	Test/Task	School						5	9	36	50	
		National	1	2	1	1		3	15	34	36	
Science	Teacher assessment	School							5	59	36	
		National	0	0	0		0	1	11	50	37	
	Test/Task	School							9	50	41	
		National	1	2	0	0		1	8	51	39	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)

by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	86%	In the school	86%
In Wales	72%	In Wales	72%

D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum

A	Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
F	Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
W	Pupils who are working towards level 1

Appendix D

Evidence base of the inspection

- The inspection was undertaken by a team of three inspectors who were present in the school for 6 inspector days.
- Pre-inspection meetings were held with the parents and the Governing Body to discuss the life and work of the school.
- 84 questionnaires were completed by parents and they were carefully analysed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff with specific responsibilities and support staff.
- The school's documentation was examined.
- 26 lessons were observed, as well as other parts of teaching sessions.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from the whole ability range in every year-group reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils about their work and the life of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during break-times, lunch-time and the beginning and end of school sessions.
- The inspectors attended daily services.
- Post-inspection meetings were held with the staff and the governing body.

Appendix E

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Miss D Morris	Summary, Key Questions 1,2, 5, 6. Subjects: provision for under-fives, Welsh second language, music.
Mr G Morgans	Key Questions 3,4,7. Subjects: mathematics, information technology, physical education
Mr G Morris	Contributions to key questions 1,3,4,7
Mr T Fanning	Nominee

Contractors

Cwmni Blaen, Blaensarngoch, Llanboidy, Hendygywn ar dâf,
Carmarthenshire. SA34 ODE

Acknowledgement

The inspectors wish to thank the governors, the headteacher, staff, pupils and parents of the school for their willing co-operation during the inspection.

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

**YSGOL COMINS COCH
Comins Coch
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3BQ**

A SUMMARY REPORT FOR PARENTS

School Number: 667/2303

Date of Inspection: 3-5 October, 2005

by

**Miss D. E. Morris
WO83/16211**

Date: 5 December, 2005

Under Estyn contract number: T/30/05P

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Ysgol Comins 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 Comins Coch took place between 3-5 October, 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Miss D. E. Morris 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

Context

The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol Comins Coch is situated in the village of Comins Coch two miles north east of Aberystwyth, in the county of Ceredigion. The great majority of the children come from the village itself and the two adjacent communities of Capel Dewi and Waunfawr. A large number of children also travel to the school from outlying districts. There are 141 pupils, aged between 4 and 11 years of age, on the school register. Children are admitted to the reception class in the term following their fourth birthday. The number of pupils on roll remains constant overall.
2. The school considers its natural catchment area to be neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Nine per cent of the pupils are entitled to receive free school meals; this figure is significantly below the county and national average.
3. The nature of the intake is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged and comprises the full range of ability. 34 pupils are designated as having special educational needs [SEN], including one pupil for whom a statement of SEN has been produced.
4. English is the main language spoken in the homes of 96% of pupils. Welsh is taught as a second language at the school.
5. The school was last inspected in 1999. The headteacher has been in post since September 1997.

The school's priorities and targets

6. The school's objectives include:
 - to care for each child as an individual in a warm family environment;
 - to enable every child and every member of staff to develop his or her potential to the full in all aspects of school life;
 - to offer an equal opportunity to all pupils.
7. The school's main priorities and targets for 2005-2006 include:
 - to develop the role of subject co-ordinators and re-distribute responsibilities;
 - to prepare and implement a new policy review timetable;
 - to develop the role of classroom assistants in the school;
 - to prepare and introduce the new Foundation Phase curriculum.

Summary

8. Comins Coch school is a good school. It has maintained the good and very good standards since the last inspection and improved standards further in other subjects and aspects of the provision.

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

Pupils' standards of achievement	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	17%	66%	17%	0%	0%

9. Pupils' standards of achievement are significantly above the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) all-Wales targets of 95% satisfactory by 2004 and 98% satisfactory (Grade 3) by 2007 and 50% good by 2004 and 65% good (Grade 2 or better) by 2007.

Early Years

10. The quality of provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and they make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
11. In the six areas of learning inspected, the children's standards of achievement are as follows:

Areas of learning	Reception
Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 1
Personal and social development	Grade 1
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2

Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

12. In Key Stage 1(KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2), standards of achievement in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Mathematics	Grade 2	Grade 1
Welsh second language	Grade 2	Grade 2
Information Technology	Grade 2	Grade 1
Music	Grade 2	Grade 1
Physical Education	Grade 2	Grade 2

13. Pupils make very good progress in their learning and achieve the agreed learning targets and goals. They gain new knowledge, skills and understanding consistently and effectively as they move through the school. This is an outstanding feature of the work.
14. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve the targets set for them.
15. In Early Years and KS1, pupils' development in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) across the curriculum is good. In KS2, pupils achieve very good standards in using their literacy and ICT skills in their work across the curriculum. This is an outstanding feature of the work. Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects.
16. In both key stages, pupils' make increasing use of Welsh literacy skills in a range of subjects. Good standards are achieved in subjects such as physical education and geography, and in aspects such as the Cwricwlwm Cymreig (Welsh Curriculum) in KS2.
17. In 2005, in KS1, pupils' attainment in the NC assessments according to teacher assessment was above the county and national averages in mathematics but slightly below in English and science. When compared with similar schools across Wales, on the basis of free school meals, the school's results are below the average in each subject. During the last three years pupils' attainment overall has been significantly above the average in most years. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.
18. In KS2, pupils' attainment in the NC tests and assessments in 2005 is above the national and county averages in English, science and mathematics. When compared with similar schools across Wales, based on free school meals, the school's overall results are above the average in English and mathematics but a little below in science. In most recent years there has been a continuous improvement in the school's results as

pupils achieve and frequently exceed their targets. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.

19. Pupils' bilingual competency is good. Pupils of all ages communicate effectively in English. They communicate with increasing accuracy, fluency and understanding in Welsh.
20. Pupils work well together and show very good development in their personal and social skills.
21. Pupils' learning skills are good and they show good development in their creative and problem solving skills. In KS2, older pupils' problem solving skills are very good in subjects such as mathematics.
22. Pupils' attitudes to their learning, the interest they show in their work and their ability to sustain concentration are very good. Pupils' ability to work more independently is improving and is very good in those classes where pupils are encouraged to use their subject knowledge and skills regularly in undertaking investigative tasks.
23. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They have a good understanding of what is expected of them and they are considerate and courteous. They have a good awareness of equal opportunities.
24. The school plays an active role in the life of its community and pupils develop an appreciation of belonging to a community.
25. The average rate of pupil attendance is 94.6%. Most pupils attend school regularly and they arrive promptly at the beginning of the school day.

The quality of education and training

26. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
31%	42%	27%	0%	0%

27. Teachers have a very good relationship with their pupils and have high expectations of them. They cater effectively for the learning needs of all pupils.
28. The good teaching with outstanding features includes characteristics such as clear objectives, effective presentations, skilled questioning, relevant tasks and activities, and good use of a variety of learning resources. Where the teaching is less effective, the work is too teacher directed and pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their own ideas and methods of working.
29. Teachers assess pupils' achievements and progress rigorously, accurately and regularly. This is an outstanding feature. Assessment outcomes are

shared amongst the staff and are used to plan future teaching and learning. The annual reports to parents conform to statutory requirements and note pupils' achievements and skills in every subject.

30. The school responds effectively to pupils' learning needs and offers equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum in the Early Years and across the key stages. There is good provision to ensure that pupils acquire the necessary basic and key skills.
31. Positive learning experiences effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
32. Parental links are very good. The school's Parent/Teacher Association is very active and provides important funds which are used effectively to enrich pupils' education and experiences. Partnerships with other schools, the community and other institutions are also good.
33. Provision for pupils with SEN is good and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. In classes and during withdrawal sessions, teachers and experienced support staff offer pupils with SEN very good support. This is an outstanding feature.

Leadership and management

34. The school places pupils' development at the heart of its provision. It is very well led by an experienced headteacher. His management is purposeful and offers the school a clear sense of direction. The whole staff demonstrate considerable commitment to the school and co-operate well as a team.
35. Teaching and support staff are deployed and managed effectively but the strategic role of senior members of staff is insufficiently extended.
36. The school development plan is a comprehensive document that clearly sets out the school's priorities. Information gained through the self-evaluation process is used effectively to inform future planning.
37. The governing body is very supportive, well informed and involved in the life of the school. Governors help to set the school's strategic direction but their role in monitoring the quality of provision and pupils' standards of achievement is at an early stage of development.
38. Subject development responsibilities have been shared amongst the teaching staff and co-ordinators undertake their planning, advisory and supportive roles well. Their role in monitoring standards and the quality of provision through class observations is insufficiently extended.
39. School policies and documentation give good attention to statutory requirements. However, there are a small number of minor omissions in

the content of the school prospectus and in the governors' annual report to parents.

40. The self-evaluation report, produced by the school before the inspection, is concise and clear and identifies the strengths and some areas where improvements are needed. The inspection team agreed with the judgments made by the school in two of the seven key questions. Higher grades were allocated to the other five questions.
41. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The two key issues have been effectively addressed, but the school is aware of the need to extend monitoring procedures further.
42. The management and use of resources is an outstanding feature of the provision. There are enough suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to carry out the work of the school. There is good investment in resources and equipment. They are of good quality and are used effectively. The school buildings and site are very well maintained. Facilities, such as the school hall, are extensively used during the school day. There is good use of the local environment, the community, and educational sites to enrich pupils' learning.

Recommendations

In order to build upon the good practice, the school needs to:

- maintain the good standards with outstanding features, improve further the areas judged good, and address the shortcomings identified in aspects of the work;
- extend the good practice of giving pupils opportunities to work independently and develop their own ideas and methods of working;
- develop further the school self-evaluation system and strengthen the leadership roles of senior members of staff and subject co-ordinators;
- extend the governors' role in monitoring educational provision and standards of achievement
- ensure that the content of the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements in full.

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.

The inspectors wish to thank the governors, the headteacher, staff, pupils and the parents of the school for their co-operation during the inspection.