

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

**Cwmaber Infants School  
Bryngelli Terrace  
Abertridwr  
Caerphilly  
CF83 4FF**

**School Number: 6762347**

**Date of Inspection: 3 – 5 October 2005**

**by**

**Margaret Morgan  
WO49/5542**

**Date: 5 December 2005**

**Under Estyn contract number: T/080/05**

© Crown Copyright 2005

This Report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the Report specified.

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.

Cwmaber Infants School 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 Cwmaber Infants School took place between 3 – 5 October 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Margaret Morgan 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:

<b>Grade 1</b>	good with outstanding features
<b>Grade 2</b>	good features and no important shortcomings
<b>Grade 3</b>	good features outweigh shortcomings
<b>Grade 4</b>	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
<b>Grade 5</b>	many important shortcomings

There are three types of inspection.

For **all** inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject sections.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports on all subjects.

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a standard inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years 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	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The national curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Context</b>	6
<b>Summary</b>	8
<b>Recommendations</b>	14
<b>Standards</b>	15
Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?	15
<b>The quality of education and training</b>	18
Key question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	18
Key question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	19
Key question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	22
<b>Leadership and management</b>	24
Key question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	24
Key question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	25
Key question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	26
<b>Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning</b>	28
Subject 1: Early Years	28
Subject 2: English	31
Subject 3: Mathematics	32
Subject 4: Welsh (Second Language)	32
Subject 5: Design and Technology	33
Subject 6: Information Technology	34
<b>School's response to the inspection</b>	36
<b>Appendices</b>	36
A Basic information about the school	36
B School data and indicators	37
C National Curriculum assessments results	38
D Evidence base of the inspection	39
E Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	40

## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Cwmaber Infants School is situated in the village of Abertridwr, which is about three miles from Caerphilly. The area surrounding the school is economically disadvantaged and is a designated 'Communities First' area. Housing consists of a mixture of privately owned and rented accommodation. The school was opened in 1912 and was formerly a boys' secondary modern school. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People Award.
2. Currently, the school has 120 pupils aged between three and seven years including 34 part-time nursery children. The number of pupils on the school roll has dropped by 17 since the previous inspection in October 1999. Children are admitted to the nursery on a part-time basis at the beginning of the term following their third birthday. They begin full-time education in the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. About 75 per cent of the pupils have disadvantaged social or economic backgrounds and the remainder are neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. English is the home language of all pupils and 98 per cent come from Welsh family backgrounds and the remaining two per cent are of Pakistani origin. Over the past few years the percentage of pupils entitled to receive free school meals has been about 40 per cent. However, at the time of the inspection, 26 per cent of pupils had free school dinners. This figure is above both the local education authority (LEA) and all-Wales averages.
3. Over recent years, pupils' attainment on entry has been considerably lower than the LEA and neighbouring authorities' averages, particularly in language and mathematics. Thirty-nine pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN). One additional pupil has a statement of SEN and a further two are awaiting a statement. The proportion of pupils with SEN is well above the national average. The National Curriculum is not modified or disapplied for any pupil. One pupil was subject to a temporary exclusion during the last 12 months.
4. There are one part-time and six full-time teachers (including the head teacher) at the school, two of whom are on temporary contracts. The number of teaching assistants has increased significantly since the last inspection and there is one full-time and six part-time teachers' aides. During the inspection, the school was operating a limited timetable due to health and safety restrictions imposed by the Local Health Authority because of an outbreak of an infectious disease.

### **The school's priorities and targets**

5. The school motto is 'Only our best is good enough'. The school aims to provide a safe, secure environment in which every child feels happy and valued that enables them to 'reach maximum potential in all areas of learning – social, emotional, aesthetic, spiritual, moral, linguistic, mathematical, scientific and technological'. The main shorter-term targets outlined in the school development plan include:
- Raising standards in English, mathematics, and science;
  - Raising standards of achievement and attainment of SEN and gifted and talented pupils;
  - Improving and refining teachers' assessment and record keeping procedures;
  - Continuing to develop the school grounds;
  - Promoting healthy lifestyles, assertive discipline, self-esteem, inclusion, workforce remodelling, a school council, multicultural issues and training for the foundation phase.

## Summary

6. During their time at Cwmaber Infants School, pupils make good progress. They leave the school with the skills necessary for them to tackle the next stage of their education.

### Table of grades awarded

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

### Standards

#### Areas of Learning

7. In the early years, standards in the areas of learning are as follows:

Area of Learning	Nursery	Reception
Language, literacy and communication	3	3
Personal and social development	2	3
Mathematical development	2	3
Knowledge and understanding of the world	2	2
Creative development	2	2
Physical development	2	3

8. The overall quality of provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Many children start school with very limited skills and experiences. However, in nursery and reception classes, they make good progress overall. They settle into school quickly and soon adapt to school routines.

## Subjects

Standards in the subjects inspected at key stage 1 are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1
English	3
Mathematics	3
Welsh (Second Language)	2
Design and Technology	2
Information Technology	2

9. In many cases, from starting points that are considerably below the average, the majority of learners, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background make good progress. By the end of key stage 1, the majority exceed the targets that the school sets for them.
10. Pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons observed during the inspection are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	52%	43%	5%	0%

11. Overall, pupils achieve good standards in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils with SEN achieve well relative to their age and ability and those pupils with the capacity to achieve higher standards also maximise their potential.
12. Pupils achieve appropriate levels in the acquisition of their key and basic skills but there are some shortcomings. Pupils' listening skills are good and so are their information and communications technology and bilingual skills. They have a good understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales through *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*. Their personal and social skills along with their ability to work with others are also good. However, there are some limitations in pupils' ability to use speaking, reading, writing and mathematical skills for a range of purposes. Their ability to improve their own learning and also their problem solving and creative skills have some shortcomings.
13. Over the past few years, pupils' National Curriculum key stage 1 teacher assessment results have exceeded the targets set in conjunction with the LEA following their baseline scores. Pupils make good progress by the end of key stage 1, but results remain below LEA and all-Wales averages. However, the overall trend over the past five years is improving. Boys' results have shown improvement but girls' results are generally significantly better than those of boys.
14. During the academic year 2004–2005, 41 per cent of pupils received free school meals. When Cwmaber pupils' 2005 key stage 1 National Curriculum teacher assessment results are compared with those in similar schools (English medium school with between 41 and 48 per cent of pupils entitled to

receive free school meals), they are between the bottom 25 per cent and the average for mathematics and average for English and science.

15. Few pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. Some more able pupils are aware that they have targets. They talk about the targets they have already achieved but are unaware of the next steps needed for improvement.
16. Overall, pupils are well motivated and have good attitudes to their work and school life. Almost all pupils sustain concentration and work productively, especially when work is challenging and exciting. Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils behave well as they move around the school and when outside at play. Pupils, when given the opportunity, work well independently. However, their skills for life long learning do not develop consistently and systematically across the school.
17. Attendance rates are well below the national and LEA average and also below those for similar schools. They have declined from the time of the last inspection. A small minority of pupils is frequently and persistently late each day, often missing the introduction to their lessons.
18. Pupils' progress in their personal, social, moral and wider development is good with no important shortcomings. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of equal opportunities and the diversity of other cultures. However, pupils' spiritual awareness is less well developed.

### **The quality of education and training**

19. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching is as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
7%	74%	11%	4%	0%

20. During the inspection, teaching was consistently good in nursery classes and key stage 1. Teaching assistants and the nursery nurse make a valuable contribution to lessons and they provide good support for pupils. The school is fortunate to benefit from several volunteers who offer valuable support in classes.
21. Generally teachers challenge pupils to do their best. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Expectations of behaviour are high and in the majority of lessons, teachers create a calm, purposeful working environment.
22. Teachers all plan their lessons in detail and this subsequently results in good quality teaching. They take into account what pupils have learnt previously; they consider the differing needs and abilities of learners and plan how the key and basic skills can be incorporated into lessons. However, despite the detail contained in plans, planning for reception children is not always

appropriate. Some lessons are formal in nature and do not always cater for the active involvement of young children.

23. Teachers consistently ensure equality of opportunity and treat all pupils, irrespective of their race, gender or ability equally. Teachers mark work regularly, congratulating pupils on their success but they do not regularly indicate how they might improve the quality of their work or remind pupils of their targets for improvement.
24. Assessment arrangements are good. The staff have a very comprehensive view of pupils' abilities through their regular assessment of learners' achievements and progress. This is an outstanding feature of the school. All statutory assessment requirements are fully met. However, the school does not ensure that all pupils fully understand what their targets are and how best to achieve them. Reporting procedures are very good. Annual reports are clearly presented and offer parents and pupils the opportunity to make comments.
25. The school responds well to pupils' needs and provides a broad, balanced curriculum that meets legal requirements. A broad range of extra-curricular opportunities enhances the basic curriculum. The provision for pupils with additional needs is good. No pupil is disadvantaged because of his or her social background or ability. Equality of opportunity is clearly evident in the school.
26. The school makes good provision to develop pupils' bilingual skills and their understanding of Welsh culture and heritage. There is a well-planned programme to develop pupils' understanding of the world of work. The provision for developing pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship is in the very early stages of development. Environmental issues have been addressed successfully through the development of the school grounds.
27. Pupils are well looked after in a caring environment and the school gives good attention to their support and guidance. There are clear policies and procedures to ensure everyone's health, safety and welfare. However, the governing body does not take a sufficiently active role in overseeing the school's health and safety arrangements; too much reliance is placed on the head teacher. Child protection arrangements are clear, secure and well documented and known to all that work in the school.
28. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) ensures very good procedures are in place for the early identification of learners with additional needs. When necessary, outside agencies and professionals work closely with the school to support pupils very effectively. This is an outstanding feature.
29. Positive behaviour is encouraged through class reward systems and pupils are regularly praised for their good behaviour. The school places great

importance on the development of good self esteem in pupils. Pupils are treated with kindness and respect and the majority of pupils respond well.

30. The school is an inclusive community. Fairness, tolerance, equality and respect for different views and values are clearly promoted. Pupils, whatever their gender or social background have equal opportunity to take part in all activities.

### **Leadership and management**

31. The governing body, the head teacher and the acting deputy head teacher are clear about the aims and the values of the school. Staff are familiar with the school motto 'Only our best is good enough', and, at all times work with the pupils to implement its principles.
32. The governing body is supportive and is regularly provided with information about the school's performance and activities. Governors have good knowledge of the aims and vision of the school and a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development.
33. Documentation including policies and schemes of work are thorough, well managed and organised. Subject leaders have relevant knowledge and expertise in the areas for which they are responsible.
34. Senior managers are aware of how the school's performance compares with other similar schools. They are increasingly aware of the importance of self-evaluation and its role in improving standards and provision and as a result the views of pupils, parents, governors and staff are considered seriously.
35. Based on the information obtained from a variety of sources, the school produces an annual school development plan that is clearly focussed on improving standards of pupils' work. Clear, precise priorities are set and success or failure is measured at the end of the year. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection. All the key issues for action identified at that time have been addressed successfully. Standards continue to show upward trends. The majority of pupils exceed the targets set for them.
36. The quality of the self-evaluation report prepared for the inspection has good features that outweigh some shortcomings. The inspection team agreed with the school's grades in four out of the seven key questions. In each case where there was a difference, the inspection team allocated one grade lower than that given by the school itself. The self-evaluation processes established by the school are comprehensive and take into account the views of all interested parties. In the main, the areas suggested for further development by the school are similar to those identified by the inspection team.
37. The school makes good use of its resources. They are effectively managed and monitored by the staff and governing body. An outstanding feature of the

school is the way the finance committee of the governing body very carefully analyses the school's developmental needs and allocates resources accordingly. For example, the governors have very recently appointed an additional part-time teacher in the school to cater for the large number of children in the nursery. Spending decisions are very well matched to priorities and the school offers good value for money.

## Recommendations

38. In order for the school to continue to improve, it needs to:

- R1 Undertake further work to improve standards in English and mathematics, paying particular attention to reducing the difference between girls' and boys' attainment \*
- R2 Ensure greater consistency in the planning for and the teaching of the under-fives
- R3 Improve attendance and punctuality
- R4 Ensure pupils have an understanding of precisely what they have to do to improve the quality of their work \*

(Those recommendations marked with an asterix have already been identified in the school development plan as requiring further development)

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.

39. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this question.

### Areas of Learning

In the early years, standards in the areas of learning are as follows:

Area of Learning	Nursery	Reception
Language, literacy and communication	3	3
Personal and social development	2	3
Mathematical development	2	3
Knowledge and understanding of the world	2	2
Creative development	2	2
Physical development	2	3

40. The overall quality of provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Many children start school with very limited skills and experiences. However, in nursery and reception classes, they make good progress overall. They settle into school quickly and soon adapt to school routines. They are keen to talk to each other and adults but some have difficulty expressing themselves. Their mathematical awareness has some good features that outweigh shortcomings. Children's knowledge of the world about them develops well as do their creative skills. Their manipulative skills develop appropriately but they are not as controlled when engaged in more rigorous exercise.

41. In key stage 1, standards in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1
English	3
Mathematics	3
Welsh (Second Language)	2
Design and Technology	2
Information Technology	2

42. In many cases, from starting points that are considerably below the average, the majority of learners, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background make good progress. They often exceed the targets that the school sets for them. They leave the school with the skills necessary for them to tackle the next stage of their education.

43. During the inspection, pupils' standards of achievement in the areas of learning and subjects are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	52%	43%	5%	0%

44. Overall, pupils achieve good standards in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils with SEN achieve well relative to their age and ability and those pupils with the capacity to achieve higher standards also maximise their potential.
45. Pupils achieve appropriate levels in the acquisition of their key skills but there are some shortcomings. Many pupils enter school with low communication skills. By the time they are in key stage 1, pupils listen well but they are not always confident speaking, reading and writing about a range of issues. They also lack confidence using their mathematical knowledge in different contexts. Pupils' information technology skills and their bilingual skills are well developed; they are confident and competent using computers and the Welsh language for appropriate purposes throughout the school day. Even very young pupils turn to adults to thank them in Welsh for something that has been done for them. Through *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*, pupils develop a good understanding and are proud of their Welsh cultural heritage. Pupils' personal and social skills and also their ability to work with others are well developed. However, pupils' creative skills, their understanding of how to improve their own work are not as well established.
46. Over the past few years, pupils' National Curriculum key stage 1 teacher assessment results have exceeded the targets set in conjunction with the LEA following their baseline scores. Average baseline scores have been approximately 17 per cent below the average. Pupils make good progress by the end of key stage 1, but results remain below LEA and all-Wales averages. However, the overall trend over the past five years is improving. More pupils are now attaining the higher level three. Boys' results have shown improvement but girls' results are generally significantly better than those of boys.
47. During the academic year 2004–2005, 41 per cent of pupils received free school meals. When Cwmaber pupils' 2005 key stage 1 National Curriculum teacher assessment results are compared with those in similar schools (English medium school with between 41 and 48 per cent of pupils entitled to receive free school meals), they are between the bottom 25 per cent and the average for mathematics and average for English and science.
48. Even though the school has undertaken a lot of work devising targets for individual pupils, few are aware of what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. Targets to be achieved are placed in pupils' workbooks. Some more able pupils are aware that they have targets. They talk about the targets they have already achieved but are unaware of the next steps needed for improvement.

49. Overall pupils are well motivated and have good attitudes to their work and school life. They enjoy their lessons and work well in pairs and small groups. These features are more distinct in the nursery and key stage one. Almost all pupils sustain concentration and work productively, especially when work is challenging and exciting.
50. Behaviour in lessons is good. It is at its best in the nursery and key stage one. Pupils behave well as they move around the school and when outside at play. In the last reporting year there was one temporary exclusion. However, this pupil remains at the school because there is a successful strategy in place to provide support. Pupils are friendly towards visitors. Their relationship with each other and with their teachers is good. Neither the pupils nor their parents view bullying or oppressive behaviour as an issue.
51. Pupils, when given the opportunity, work well independently. They enjoy carrying out simple responsibilities for their teachers. However, their skills for life long learning are not developed consistently and systematically across the school. Pupils often rely too heavily on adults to undertake simple tasks for them, such as cutting and sticking.
52. Attendance levels have declined since the last inspection. Overall rates for the three terms prior to the inspection were affected by the phased entry arrangements to school as well as an outbreak of chicken pox. Family holidays taken during the term time also lower the overall figures. Nevertheless rates are well below the national and LEA average and also below those for similar schools. A small minority of pupils is frequently and persistently late each day, often missing the introduction to their lessons.
53. Pupils' progress in their personal, social, moral and wider development is good with no important shortcomings. Pupils' moral and social awareness has a positive impact on helping them develop self-discipline and confidence. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of equal opportunities and the diversity of other cultures. They have a growing understanding, appropriate to their age, of life in a multi-cultural society. However, pupils' spiritual awareness is less well developed.
54. Pupils have a good understanding of their place in the community and of community related issues. Their awareness of the working world is also developing well because of the school's good provision for his aspect.

## The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

55. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this question.
56. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching is as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
7%	74%	11%	4%	0%

57. During the inspection, teaching was consistently good in nursery classes and key stage 1. Teaching assistants and the nursery nurse make a valuable contribution to lessons and they provide good support for pupils. The interaction between the teacher and the nursery nurse in the nursery class is particularly effective and together they successfully motivate young children. The school is fortunate to benefit from several volunteers who support both pupils and teachers in classes.
58. Generally teachers challenge pupils to do their best. The pace of lessons is good and learning objectives are clearly relayed to pupils. All lessons have a definite introduction and effective concluding sessions.
59. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. The majority of the time, interventions on the part of adults are empathetic and members of staff use praise frequently to reward and encourage pupils. Expectations of behaviour are high and, in the majority of lessons, teachers create a calm, purposeful working environment. Very occasionally, teachers do not ensure pupils' full attention. However, classroom routines are firmly established.
60. Teachers show good subject knowledge and are fully aware of the requirements of the Desirable Learning Outcomes, the National Curriculum, religious education and personal and social education. They are also very aware of the different ways in which children learn and use this knowledge successfully during lessons. Over recent years, teachers have improved their skills in teaching a number of subjects including information technology and design technology that were considered to need improving at the time of the previous inspection. In all classes, teachers successfully incorporate bilingual teaching into lessons.
61. Teachers all plan their lessons in detail and this subsequently results in good quality teaching. They take into account what pupils have learnt previously; they consider the differing needs and abilities of learners and plan how the key and basic skills can be incorporated into lessons. However, despite the detail contained in plans, planning for reception children is not always appropriate because, occasionally, lessons are formal in nature and do not

always cater for the active engagement of all children. Some of the activities planned and the resources used are more suitable for older pupils.

62. Teachers consistently ensure equality of opportunity and treat all pupils, irrespective of their race, gender or ability equally. They ensure that those pupils with additional learning needs are fully incorporated into class activities at appropriate levels. Teachers mark work regularly, congratulating pupils on their success but they do not always indicate how they might improve the quality of their work or remind pupils of their targets for improvement.
63. Assessment arrangements are good. The staff have a very comprehensive view of pupils' abilities through their regular assessment of learners' achievements and progress. This is an outstanding feature of the school. All statutory assessment requirements are fully met. Useful information on pupils is gained from a range of commercially produced materials and teachers' day-to-day assessments. The staff very carefully analyse the data obtained from the tests to set appropriate improvement targets for individual pupils, year groups and the whole school.
64. The school is developing portfolios that contain examples of assessed work and indicate the levels that pupils achieve. These allow teachers to gain a good overview of expectations at different ages and stages in order to challenge pupils appropriately. Record of achievement files are kept for all pupils that contain examples of assessed work. These help pupils and teachers track and celebrate progress in a focussed manner.
65. Teachers carefully identify assessment opportunities in their planning. Learning objectives are shared with pupils in the majority of sessions in order to check pupils' understanding at the end of lessons. In some lessons, interactive whiteboards are used to effectively display and remind pupils of the learning objectives. Pupils' targets are included in numeracy, literacy and science books. Statements are highlighted when achieved and completed target sheets are transferred to pupils' record of achievement files. However, the school does not ensure that all pupils fully understand what their targets are and how best to achieve them.
66. Reporting procedures are very good. Parent teacher interviews are organised each term when parents discuss their children's progress and receive advice on how best to support their children's learning. Annual reports are clearly presented and offer parents and pupils the opportunity to make comments.

**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.

67. The inspection team does not agree with the school's evaluation of this question. The school graded this question as grade 1. The main reason for the difference in grading is the fact that the inspection team felt that provision

for outdoor learning, sustainable development and lifelong learning are at an early stage of development.

68. The school's aims and mission statement are reflected in the curriculum offered to pupils. The curriculum complies with all legal requirements
69. The school responds well to pupils' needs and provides a broad, balanced curriculum. Schemes of work are carefully prepared ensuring continuity, progress and full coverage of the National Curriculum. Teachers' planning identifies opportunities for the development of key skills and caters for pupils' different learning styles. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Kite Marks 1 and 2 for offering pupils good support in literacy and numeracy.
70. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good and is well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo).
71. Good cross-curricular links enhance pupils' learning. For example, they use the 'Dazzle' computer program and mix primary colours when creating autumn trees. Year 1 pupils effectively use the data collected on homes, as part of their geography studies, to construct graphs and charts.
72. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances the school's basic curriculum; these include folk dancing, choir, computer, recorder and Bible clubs. Pupils benefit from visits to places of local interest for example, the lifeboat centre at Porthcawl, and Techniquest. Friends of Caerphilly Music Club perform at the school and pupils enjoy taking part in concerts organised by the Caerphilly Rotary Club. However, there is limited access to planned experiences outdoors in the school grounds.
73. The school works in partnership with Ystrad Mynach College of Further Education and the University of Wales in Cardiff in supporting and developing students. The head teacher and subject leaders have strong links with the junior school and other local schools.
74. The school successfully promotes pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A circle-time approach enables pupils to discuss and consider topics in a relaxed open manner. Pupils learn to express their feelings and develop empathy for others. For example, year 1 pupils carefully consider the feelings of a teddy bear whose friends let him down. The Harvest Service, led by a local curate presents an opportunity for pupils to consider others and recognise the importance of sharing. However, although collective worship meets statutory requirements, it sometimes fails to inspire awe and wonder and does not create opportunities for pupils to reflect and explore their own experiences.
75. Visits from fire officers, the police, road safety co-ordinators, clergy from the local church and other community members help pupils to understand the

importance of working together. As part of the school's educational business partnership links, teachers have been linked to local museums and churches. Although the school has identified the further development of educational business partnerships as a future priority, it is currently under-developed.

76. Regular newsletters and a welcoming ethos ensure parents and carers are well informed about school life. An attractive courtyard where parents may gather to wait for their children reflects the caring partnership between home and school. Parents' support in the classes and for other school initiatives is highly valued by the school.
77. The school makes good provision to develop pupils' bilingual skills. There is a specific framework that develops progressively through the school. Pupils are encouraged to use Welsh when engaging in many of their routines. The school carefully plans pupils' understanding of their Welsh culture and heritage. Pupils learn about their immediate locality and about other aspects of Welsh life today and in the past in geography, history physical education and music for example.
78. There is a well-planned programme to develop pupils' understanding of the world of work. A good range of experiences is provided appropriate to the age range of the pupils. Staff placements to industry and business have benefited the development and enrichment of the curriculum in subjects such as geography.
79. The provision for developing pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship is in the very early stages of development. For example, the school is currently working towards the bronze eco-school award. Environmental issues have been addressed successfully through the development of the school grounds.
80. Throughout the school, pupils have good age appropriate opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Money is successfully raised for local and national charities. Membership of the eco-committee provides pupils with the opportunity to develop their decision-making skills.
81. Transition arrangements for pupils at the end of year 2 to their next stage of learning are good and reflect the priorities for lifelong learning well. In some classes, pupils are encouraged to become independent learners. However, this is not consistent practice across the school and there is often a lack of opportunity for pupils to make choices in relation to their own learning.
82. No pupil is disadvantaged because of his or her social background or ability. Equality of opportunity is clearly evident in the school. For instance, during the inspection all pupils, including those from the morning nursery, took part in a harvest assembly. However, after lunch those pupils attending the afternoon nursery were also given the chance to take part in a short assembly and to see the harvest produce on display.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

83. The inspection team does not agree with the school's evaluation of this question. The school graded this question as grade 1. The main reason for the difference in grading is the fact that the inspection team felt that there were not sufficient outstanding features to merit grade 1.
84. Pupils are well looked after in a caring environment and the school gives good attention to their support and guidance. In discussion, pupils confirm this and state they feel safe and well supported by the all adults who work in the school. When required the school is quick to seek additional help and guidance from external agencies. The school ensures parents and carers are fully involved in discussions about the care of their children. Parents' confidence in the care that is provided for their children throughout the school is well founded.
85. Arrangements to help children settle into the nursery class are well organised. Parents are fully involved in the process and this helps to establish a good working relationship with them. Arrangements to ensure pupils settle into the reception class or for those who start school at other times of the year are equally good.
86. Pupils are well known to all adults within the school and the day-to-day care and support they give is very good. There are clear policies and procedures to ensure everyone's health, safety and welfare. However, the governing body does not take a sufficiently active role in overseeing the school's health and safety arrangements; too much reliance is placed on the head teacher. Child protection arrangements are clear, secure and well documented and known to all that work in the school. Good systems are in place to deal with any pupils who may become unwell or who hurt themselves during the school day.
87. Personal and Social Education is well planned throughout the school; suitable attention is given to sex education and drugs awareness appropriate to the age of the pupils. Good use is made of the expertise from visiting specialist agencies and speakers. The school is also involved in good initiatives to develop healthy lifestyles and has recently achieved an award from the LEA for this.
88. Attendance, punctuality and pupils' behaviour are monitored closely. Swift and effective action is taken if there are any concerns in relation to any pupils who misbehave. However, although there are some initiatives in place to address the well below average level of attendance, these have not been rigorous and wide ranging enough to improve overall levels. Pupils' performance is very carefully tracked but the information gained from this monitoring is not used well enough to ensure that pupils themselves clearly know how to improve their work.

89. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) ensures very good procedures are in place for the early identification of learners with additional needs. This is an outstanding feature. Very detailed information on pupils is gained from a range of commercially produced materials and teachers' day-to-day assessments. This information is very carefully analysed to ensure the best possible support for pupils. For example, several pupils receive extra reading support through the *Catch Up* programme as a result of careful tracking of their reading progress.
90. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and receives effective, additional support from a well qualified learning assistant. Careful planning ensures that all pupils with SEN have full access to the National Curriculum. Individual educational programmes (IEPs) are carefully drawn up by the SENCo, class teachers and where appropriate the reading support teacher, to ensure that pupils are able to make good progress. IEPs are reviewed termly and parents are encouraged to play an active part. The chairman of governors, a former special needs teacher, is the governor with responsibility for SEN and is involved with reviewing IEPs. The educational psychologist and other professionals work closely with the school to support pupils very effectively.
91. The majority of pupils behave well. School rules are displayed and pupils know and understand them. Additional support for pupils who display challenging behaviour is accessed from the behaviour support team. Positive behaviour is encouraged through class reward systems and pupils are regularly praised for their good behaviour. The school places great importance on the development of good self esteem in pupils. Pupils are treated with kindness and respect and the majority of pupils respond well. Staff have received training in positive behaviour management. Very occasionally, more sensitive intervention is required to ensure pupils pay full attention in lessons.
92. The school is an inclusive community. Fairness, tolerance, equality and respect for different views and values are clearly promoted. Pupils, whatever their gender or social background have equal opportunity to take part in all activities. The school has an appropriate race equality and diversity policy and action plan. The school's arrangements to eliminate oppressive behaviour, bullying and harassment are good. Even though access to the school is difficult via the many steps, suitable measures are in place to ensure no one is disadvantaged because of their disability. There is an appropriate accessibility plan in place.

## Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

93. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this question.
94. At the time of the inspection, an acting deputy head teacher was in position. The governing body, the head teacher and the acting deputy head teacher are clear about the aims and the values of the school. Staff are familiar with the school motto 'Only our best is good enough', and at all times, work with the pupils to implement its principles.
95. Documentation including policies, schemes of work and the development plan are thorough, well managed and organised. Subject leaders have relevant knowledge and expertise in the areas for which they are responsible. They provide their colleagues with good quality help and support.
96. The school is successful in ensuring equality for all. Parents and others from the community are encouraged to be involved in many aspects of school life. They are welcomed by the head teacher and governors and as a result are fully committed to the continuing development of the school and its initiatives.
97. The school development plan is a detailed document that clearly identifies the main priorities for the ongoing improvement of the school. It rightly takes account of issues identified by the staff and governors of the school but also includes other local and national priorities such as reference to healthy living and the *Catch Up* programme to help improve standards in reading. It sets clear targets for improvement that are based on continuing to improve pupils' standards of achievement. Even though not a legal requirement, the school sets targets for pupils' end of key stage 1 achievements.
98. Staff appraisal is undertaken regularly. The work of teaching and non-teaching staff is monitored and reviewed regularly. As a consequence, all are able to access appropriate training either to meet their individual professional development needs or those of the school. Training over recent years has had a direct impact on improving standards, for example training in the use of information technology. All members of teaching staff are allowed sufficient time for the planning, preparation and assessment of work. Good arrangements are made to cover staff when they are away from their classes.
99. The governing body is supportive and is regularly provided with information about the school's performance and activities. Governors have good knowledge of the aims and vision of the school and a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. They meet regularly and have a well-established and effective committee structure, all of which have suitable terms of reference.

100. Many governors regularly visit the school, often working in classrooms. They are also linked to subject areas of the curriculum. They work closely with the head teacher and this contributes well towards setting the strategic direction of the school and to monitoring the quality of provision and the standards that pupils achieve.
101. In almost every area of their work the governing body fulfils its legal and statutory requirements. However there are a few minor omissions in the provision of information for parents through the prospectus and annual governors' report.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

102. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation of this question.
103. Leaders and managers are well informed about the areas for which they are responsible. Senior managers are aware of how the school's performance compares with other similar schools. They are increasingly aware of the importance of self-evaluation and its role in improving standards and provision.
104. Subject leaders undertake a review of provision in their subjects each term. They use a variety of strategies to monitor standards and progress including reviewing pupils' work, evaluating teaching and learning, considering plans and auditing resources. Subject leaders produce an annual written report outlining strengths and shortcomings. The shortcomings are subsequently included in the next school development plan.
105. The views of pupils, parents, governors and staff are considered seriously. Parents are asked to complete questionnaires. Many parents visit the school regularly to discuss issues with members of staff. Non-teaching staff say that they feel fully involved in all school developments and their ideas for improvement are taken seriously. Pupils regularly discuss their views with teachers and recently they have had considerable influence on the development of the outdoor area.
106. Based on the information obtained from a variety of sources, the school produces an annual school development plan that is clearly focussed on improving standards of pupils' work. Clear, precise priorities are set and success or failure is measured at the end of the year. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection. All the key issues for action identified at that time have been addressed successfully. Standards continue to show upward trends. The majority of pupils exceed the targets set for them.

107. The governing body ensures that adequate resources are provided to support priorities. The school is also fortunate that governors along with many parents and volunteers willingly support the school in order to help it achieve its aims, for example, the development of the information technology suite and the 'Writing Club'.
108. The quality of the self-evaluation report prepared for the inspection has good features that outweigh some shortcomings. The inspection team agreed with the school's grades in four out of the seven key questions. In each case where there was a difference, the inspection team allocated one grade lower than that given by the school itself. The self-evaluation processes established by the school are comprehensive and take into account the views of all interested parties. In the main, the areas suggested for further development by the school are similar to those identified by the inspection team.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

109. The inspection team does not agree with the school's evaluation of this question. The school graded this question as grade 1. The main reason for the difference in grading is the fact that the inspection team felt that some outdoor play equipment is limited and the accommodation has limitations.
110. The school is well staffed with experienced and qualified teachers. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise. During the teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time (PPA), the school effectively uses a permanent member of the teaching staff with good expertise in Design Technology to teach year 1 and 2 classes. The school makes effective use of teaching assistants. Their effectiveness is increased through access to the detailed planning they received from the class teachers. The school secretary ensures that daily routines run smoothly and efficiently.
111. The school is well resourced with a range of appropriate resources for all curriculum areas. Resources are well organised, ensuring adults and pupils have easy access. Good provision is made for information communications technology (ICT) with a computer suite linked to the Internet as well as computers in classrooms. Investment in three classroom interactive whiteboards has increased teachers' and pupils' confidence in the use of ICT. Nursery pupils have access to a secure play area that has an appropriate climbing frame, slide, tricycles and scooters. However, other outdoor play equipment is limited.
112. The school buildings are well maintained. Staff have put a great deal of energy into improving the outside play areas but the steep steps leading to the main entrance do not provide easy access. The caretaker and cleaning staff keep the accommodation in a good state of cleanliness.

113. In addition to professional development activities provided by the local education authority (LEA) and other outside agencies, the teaching staff benefit from the good support provided by the head teacher and subject leaders who regularly monitor the curriculum and suggest how improvements may be made. Training for learning support staff is provided in areas such as behaviour management and first aid.
  
114. The school makes good use of its resources. They are effectively managed and monitored by the staff and governing body. An outstanding feature of the school is the way the finance committee of the governing body very carefully analyses the school's developmental needs and allocates resources accordingly. For example, the governors have very recently appointed an additional part-time teacher in the school to cater for the large number of children in the nursery. Spending decisions are very well matched to priorities and the school offers good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Subject 1: Early Years

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

115. 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.

#### Good features

##### Language, literacy and communication skills

116. In the nursery children happily recite and sing nursery rhymes and songs. They enjoy counting in English and in Welsh and know the names of many colours. Children listen carefully to adults when they explain what they should do and are confident in making suggestions. They know how to handle books appropriately and explain the importance of taking care of their books and toys. Some children communicate clearly and confidently.
117. In reception, children are beginning to recognise some of the letters of the alphabet and know some of the initial letter sounds. For example, they form the letter 't' correctly with pipe cleaners, paint, crayons and pencils, make tiger masks and with adult support, sort familiar objects according to their initial sounds. They enjoy sharing their books with adults and tell stories from the pictures. Some more able pupils are beginning to read words. They like to talk about their activities and enjoy singing in English and in Welsh. Some children write their names independently and are confident undertaking mark making activities.

#### Shortcomings

118. A significant number of children in the nursery have limited or unclear speech and have to rely on gesture and demonstration to make themselves understood.
119. Some reception class children have difficulty in explaining what they are doing because their expressive skills are limited.

#### Personal and social development

120. In the nursery, children are relaxed and confident with each other and adults. The youngest children, who attend in the afternoon, have settled quickly and happily into the nursery routines because of the warmth and care of the staff. These children are already demonstrating a growing independence. Children who have been in the nursery longer seek help to bring out their favourite equipment and are learning to dress and undress themselves for physical

education. With some encouragement, they are learning to take turns, share and say 'please' and 'thank you'.

121. In reception, most children concentrate on planned tasks for longer periods. They quickly dress and undress themselves for physical education lessons and put their clothes in neat piles. They take turns and share equipment, help each other and give praise to friends for trying hard and being 'clever'. Most children are confident with adults and behave well.

### **Shortcomings**

122. Some reception class children behave inappropriately during whole-class teaching sessions because they find it difficult to sit and listen.

### **Mathematical development**

123. In the nursery, children are excited by numbers. They love to count in both English and Welsh and enjoy number songs and rhymes. The most able children correctly sort objects using two criteria and recite numbers to ten.
124. In reception, children are beginning to play number bingo and are gaining an understanding of the concept of numbers up to five. More able children quickly sort into number sets of two, three, four and five. They develop their mathematical language appropriately in every day situations. For example, when making masks they discuss 'more' or 'less' stripes for the tiger.

### **Shortcomings**

125. Children do not regularly use money in play situations in order to develop some understanding of the mathematics of money.
126. Children's use of mathematical language is under-developed.

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

127. In the nursery, many children have a good idea about the passage of time through developing an understanding of the pattern of their day. They know that 'tidy up time' is before 'milk time' and that they come to school in the morning. Children develop an empathetic awareness of their environment. For example, when talking about harvest, they say that God gives them fruit and vegetables. They are developing an understanding of different cultures through stories about a Chinese child and enjoy trying to use chopsticks.
128. In reception, children talk enthusiastically about where they live, their family and what they like doing. Many talk about the times of the school day in some detail, explaining break times, lunchtimes and activities. They understand the need to look after their clothes and belongings. They know that harvest is at the time of year when leaves fall from the trees and understand that farmers play an important part in providing their food.

### **Shortcomings**

129. There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Physical development**

130. Nursery children are developing an awareness of the parts of their bodies and understand 'up', 'down', 'underneath' and 'behind'. In their weekly physical education lesson, they show an increasing awareness of the space they are using and most children move around the hall with improving confidence. Outside, they pedal tricycles, climb up and slide down their small climbing frame confidently. They enjoy using pencils, crayons and paintbrushes and are developing increasing control.

131. Some reception children move confidently during physical education lessons. Most children understand the need to change for physical education lessons. Children's fine manipulative skills are well developed; they twist pipe cleaners, cut out using scissors and are beginning to form letters and figures.

### **Shortcomings**

132. In both nursery and reception classes, a minority of children's physical control, mobility and awareness of space is not well developed.

### **Creative development**

133. In nursery, children join in and sing rhymes and songs enthusiastically. They imaginatively create their own music, selecting from a range of musical instruments. They enjoy dressing up as fairies and animals and play busily in the home corner making meals and answering the telephone. They talk readily about their selections of paper shapes, colours, markers and glue when making Humpty Dumpty.

134. Reception children show an increasing ability to make choices about colour and shape when making furniture and coverings for the house they have made. They sing tunefully a range of hymns and songs in English and Welsh. When painting they show a growing ability to praise the work of their friends and many explain and discuss their paintings and constructions in a sensible way.

### **Shortcomings**

135. Pupils do not fully engage in imaginative drama and role-play often enough, particularly in the reception class.

## Subject 2: English

### Key Stage 1 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

#### Good features

136. Throughout the key stage, pupils listen well. They listen attentively to each other and adults. They enjoy listening to stories and visitors to the school. Pupils listen to instructions carefully and successfully carry out what is asked of them. Many pupils start school with limited language skills but they are keen to answer teachers' questions. They talk enthusiastically with adults in small group situations and they are keen to discuss their experiences. The majority discuss books they have read in detail.
137. Pupils reading skills develop well and standards in reading are good. The recent initiatives such as *Catch Up* and group and shared reading sessions have had a positive impact on standards, and, as a result, pupils are keen to read. Pupils have access to a range of reading books and they enjoy reading. They are familiar with the characters in their reading books and quickly identify many of the books' features such as *title, blurb or illustrations*. Pupils regularly practise their reading skills both at home and in school and by the end of the key stage, the majority read fluently and with expression. Year 2 pupils correctly sequence events in a story and retell favourite stories with genuine enthusiasm.
138. Pupils' writing skills have good features that outweigh shortcomings. Generally, pupils develop a cursive style of handwriting. They also make effective use of word-processing to write short pieces. Pupils' spelling is reasonably accurate; they build up an understanding of phonics to help them spell simple words and are confident attempting to spell less familiar words independently. Older pupils develop a good understanding of alphabetic order and use dictionaries to find the spelling and meaning of words. By year 2, pupils write for a range of purposes such as letters, descriptions, accounts, simple poems and personal experiences.

#### Shortcomings

139. A significant minority of pupils have difficulty expressing themselves in extended responses. They are hesitant and sometimes reluctant to take part in role-play situations and their persuasive speaking skills are under-developed.
140. A few older pupils do not adopt a consistent writing style and are unaware of the need for punctuation in their writing.
141. Few pupils, particularly boys, write at length or make effective use of descriptive language.

### **Subject 3: Mathematics**

#### **Key Stage 1 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

142. In year 1, many pupils count, order, add, subtract and write numbers confidently to 10. The most able work to 20 and beyond. They find a number one more than and one less than a given number up to 10, with more able pupils working beyond 20. Pupils order numbers to ten correctly and some more able pupils explain their ordering in simple mathematical language. They are confident naming common two-dimensional shapes including circles, triangles, squares and rectangles. They understand 'longer than', 'shorter than' and the 'same length as' by accurately making direct comparisons between their paper chains and a metre stick.
143. In year 2, most pupils count in twos and the most able count in fives and 10's. Pupils use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 10, with the most able responding quickly and accurately. Many pupils identify even numbers correctly. Some of the most able pupils recognise a half of a shape. With assistance, pupils accurately present their data in graphs using an information technology program. They correctly name common two and three-dimensional shapes and are beginning to describe their properties, including the number of sides, corners and faces.

#### **Shortcomings**

144. Pupils do not use and apply mathematics in practical situations often enough.
145. Many pupils are unable to use their graphs to answer appropriate questions and rely instead on the collected data.
146. Pupils have difficulty expressing themselves using mathematical vocabulary and terminology.

### **Subject 4: Welsh (Second Language)**

#### **Key Stage 1 – Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### **Good features**

147. Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh and they use the Welsh language appropriately at different times throughout the school day encouraged by their teachers.
148. Year 1 pupils are building up a range of vocabulary. They count to 20 in Welsh without hesitation. They name parts of the body and a number of different colours. Pupils have a good understanding of what is said or asked in Welsh. They reply to simple questions about the weather for example using short but correct phrases. They enjoy singing simple Welsh songs and

rhymes. Year 2 pupils respond to questions using more complex sentence structures by adding adjectives for example or joining two phrases together.

149. Year 1 pupils read labels on displays and understand what they have read. By year 2, pupils join in with their teachers as they read from a good selection of Welsh books. They answer questions about the story in Welsh obviously having understood the storyline.
150. Younger key stage 1 pupils begin to write in Welsh by labelling their drawings. They successfully use written phrases when writing about the weather and answering questions such as *Ble mae Tomi?* They complete worksheets by adding correct words or phrases.
151. Year 2 pupils write sets of instructions and, using familiar phrases, compose simple dialogues and descriptions using correct vocabulary and phraseology. Throughout the key stage, pupils competently use computers to enhance their written Welsh work.

### **Shortcomings**

152. A small minority of pupils lack confidence to answer questions using sentences or phrases; they tend to rely on single word replies.

<b>Subject 5: Design Technology</b>
-------------------------------------

**Key Stage 1** – Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

153. Across key stage 1, pupils make effective links between design technology and other subjects. For example, pupils involved in designing and making bookmarks study the 'layering' effect in Monet's artwork on the interactive whiteboard and then enhance their designs by mixing paint in the primary colours and experimenting with the *'Dazzle'* computer program.
154. In year 1, pupils have a good understanding that different glues behave in different ways. They carefully choose materials to ensure that their work is well presented. They fully understand the importance of pattern and work thoughtfully and carefully to decorate their work. Their cutting, gluing and measuring skills are good. They enjoy talking about what they have made and make valid comments about their finished work.
155. Year 2 pupils have an understanding of the process of paper-making and paper recycling. They work confidently tearing, gluing, cutting and painting to develop their designs. They know how to use the blender safely and understand the dangers of misuse. Pupils take some responsibility for choosing materials and equipment and clearing away. They talk about what they like and dislike about their work making some evaluative comments.

## Shortcomings

156. Pupils do not discuss their designs in sufficient depth.

<b>Subject 6: Information Technology</b>
--

### Key Stage 1 – Good features and no important shortcomings

#### Good features

157. All pupils, throughout the school, are confident and competent using computers both in their classrooms and also the information technology (IT) suite. They develop their skills in the IT suite and apply these skills in lessons in the classroom. They quickly develop good “mouse” control. Throughout the key stage, pupils really enjoy using the interactive whiteboard. They use it for a range of purposes using good skills as they do so.
158. Year 1 pupils are familiar with correct computer terminology. They use words such as ‘enter’, ‘spacebar’ and ‘shift’ in the right context. They are familiar with many of the functions of the keyboard successfully changing size, colour and font. They delete, enter and move lines without hesitation. When they have completed their work they know two different methods of obtaining a print copy.
159. By year 2, pupils use computers with increasing levels of independence. They are familiar with computer programs for word processing and data handling. They use them effectively in a number of subjects such as English, Welsh and geography. They create effective images using paint programs and use IT music programs confidently. By the time they leave the school, pupils use the Internet to search for information.

#### Shortcomings

160. There are no significant shortcomings.

## **School's response to the inspection**

The Governing Body of Cwmaber Infants' School are happy to receive this report.

We are pleased that the Inspectors found that our pupils "make good progress and leave the school with the skills necessary to tackle the next stage of their education". The report shows that, in most respects, we have made good progress since our last inspection. Everyone at the school is very pleased with the success achieved in I.T. and D.T., which were highlighted as needing improvement in our last inspection report. Standards in Welsh were found to be good and the school makes "good provision to develop pupils' bilingual skills and their understanding of Welsh culture and heritage". Standards in Early Years were maintained. We recognise that we need to continue to improve standards in English and mathematics. It is pleasing to note that Inspectors were complimentary regarding school initiatives and strategies already in place to support these subjects. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Agency Quality Kite Mark 1 and 2 for offering pupils good support in literacy and numeracy.

The Governors are pleased to note that the Inspectors recognised the good subject knowledge of staff and that they are fully aware of the different ways in which children learn and of the requirements of the National Curriculum/Desirable Outcomes. "Teachers all plan their lessons in detail and this results in good quality teaching". Assessment arrangements are good and were found to be "an outstanding feature of the school."

We are pleased that inspectors found that relationships between staff and pupils are positive and behaviour in the school is good. We are pleased to note that Inspectors found that our pupils are well looked after in a caring environment and the school gives good attention to their support and guidance. This is an outstanding feature of the school. It is pleasing to note that Inspectors found all pupils are treated with kindness and respect and that the school has an inclusive community.

Governors are happy that the leadership and management is good and the Head Teacher and Acting Deputy Head Teacher are clear about the aims and values of the school. The Governing Body is supportive and have a good knowledge of the aims and vision of the school. "The School Development Plan is a detailed document that clearly identifies the main priorities for the ongoing improvement of the school."

It is also pleasing to note that the Inspectors decided that the key issues for action from the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. "We note that some of the recommendations arising from this inspection had already been identified by the school and these were already being addressed through the school's own Development Plan". We accept that the attendance and punctuality of some of our pupils are below average. The school has already put some measures in place to tackle this problem. These will be reviewed and augmented in order to improve the attendance and punctuality record of the school as a whole.

The school and Governing Body appreciate the thoroughness and professionalism of the Registered Inspector and her team of inspectors.

## Appendix A

### Basic information about the school

Name of School	Cwmaber Infants' School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3 – 7 years
Address of School	Bryngelli Terrace Abertridwr Caerphilly
Post-code	CF83 4FF
Telephone number	02920 831796
Head teacher	Mrs J Price
Date of appointment	April 1998
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr J Taylor
Registered inspector	Margaret Morgan
Dates of inspection	October 3 – 5 2005

## Appendix B

### School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	17	32	27	44	0	0	0	0	120

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	6	1	6.5

Staffing information	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	26:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	9:1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	26
Teacher (fte) : class ratio	1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Whole School
Autumn 2004	82.97	83.82	90.90
Spring 2005	85.00	86.96	89.27
Summer 2005	84.82	91.35	89.68

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	26
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	1

## Appendix C

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2005			Number of pupils in Y2					44	
Percentage of pupils at each level									
			D	W	1	2	3	4	
English:	Teacher Assessment	School							
		National	0	4	13	63	20	0	
En: reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	7	25	50	18	0	
		National	0	3	11	63	23	0	
En: writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	7	25	59	9	0	
		National	0	5	14	69	11	0	
En: speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	7	7	77	9	0	
		National	0	4	14	55	27	0	
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	2	16	61	21	0	
		National	0	2	11	63	24	0	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	7	7	75	11	0	
		National	0	2	10	65	23	0	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	68.2	In Wales	80

- D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements  
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

## Appendix D

### **Evidence base of the inspection**

Three inspectors spent a total of 7 inspector days in the school. The head teacher acted as the nominee. A peer assessor was also part of the inspection team. A team meeting was held prior to the inspection.

Inspectors visited:

- 27 lessons or part lessons
- All classes
- Acts of collective worship
- A range of extra-curricular activities

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- Staff, governors and parents before the inspection began
- Senior managers, teachers, support and administrative staff and groups of pupils during the inspection

The team also considered:

- The school's self evaluation report
- 34 responses to the parents'/carers' questionnaire
- A comprehensive range of documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection
- A range of pupils' work

The inspection team also held post inspection meetings with staff and governors

## Appendix E

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Margaret Morgan Registered Inspector	Context Summary Recommendations Appendices Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 English Welsh (Second Language) Information Technology.
Denise Shields Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4 and 5
Caryl Dobson Team Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 2, 3, 4 and 7 Early Years Mathematics Design Technology.

The contractor was:

Evenlode Education Ltd  
8 Fisher Close  
Duxford  
Cambridgeshire  
CB2 4XU

### Acknowledgement

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

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

**Cwmaber Infants School  
Bryngelli Terrace  
Abertridwr  
Caerphilly  
CF83 4FF**

**Summary for Parents**

**School Number: 6762347**

**Date of Inspection: 3 – 5 October 2005**

**by**

**Margaret Morgan  
WO49/5542**

**Date: 5 December 2005**

**Under Estyn contract number: T/080/05**

© Crown Copyright 2005

This Report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the Report specified.

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.

### Basic information about the school

Name of School	Cwmaber Infants' School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3 – 7 years
Address of School	Bryngelli Terrace Abertridwr Caerphilly
Post-code	CF83 4FF
Telephone number	02920 831796

Head teacher	Mrs J Price
Date of appointment	April 1998
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr J Taylor
Registered inspector	Margaret Morgan
Dates of inspection	October 3 – 5 2005

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	17	32	27	44	0	0	0	0	120

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	6	1	6.5

### A SUMMARY REPORT FOR PARENTS

Cwmaber Infants School 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 Cwmaber Infants School took place between 3 – 5 October 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Margaret Morgan undertook the inspection. Estyn,

a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

- Grade 1** good with outstanding features
- Grade 2** good features and no important shortcomings
- Grade 3** good features outweigh shortcomings
- Grade 4** some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
- Grade 5** many important shortcomings.

There are three types of inspection.

For **all** inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject sections.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports on all subjects.

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a standard inspection.

## Summary

During their time at Cwmaber Infants School, pupils make good progress. They leave the school with the skills necessary for them to tackle the next stage of their education.

### Table of grades awarded

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

## Standards

### Areas of Learning

In the early years, standards in the areas of learning are as follows:

Area of Learning	Nursery	Reception
Language, literacy and communication	3	3
Personal and social development	2	3
Mathematical development	2	3
Knowledge and understanding of the world	2	2
Creative development	2	2
Physical development	2	3

The overall quality of provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Many children start school with very limited skills and experiences. However, in nursery and reception classes, they make good progress overall. They settle into school quickly and soon adapt to school routines.

### Subjects

Standards in the subjects inspected at key stage 1 are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1
English	3
Mathematics	3
Welsh (Second Language)	2
Design and Technology	2
Information Technology	2

In many cases, from starting points that are considerably below the average, the majority of learners, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background make good progress. By the end of key stage 1, the majority exceed the targets that the school sets for them.

Pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons observed during the inspection are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0%	52%	43%	5%	0%

Overall, pupils achieve good standards in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils with SEN achieve well relative to their age and ability and those pupils with the capacity to achieve higher standards also maximise their potential.

Pupils achieve appropriate levels in the acquisition of their key and basic skills but there are some shortcomings. Pupils' listening skills are good and so are their information and communications technology and bilingual skills. They have a good understanding of the

culture and heritage of Wales through *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*. Their personal and social skills along with their ability to work with others are also good. However, there are some limitations in pupils' ability to use speaking, reading, writing and mathematical skills for a range of purposes. Their ability to improve their own learning and also their problem solving and creative skills have some shortcomings.

Over the past few years, pupils' National Curriculum key stage 1 teacher assessment results have exceeded the targets set in conjunction with the LEA following their baseline scores. Pupils make good progress by the end of key stage 1, but results remain below LEA and all-Wales averages. However, the overall trend over the past five years is improving. Boys' results have shown improvement but girls' results are generally significantly better than those of boys.

During the academic year 2004–2005, 41 per cent of pupils received free school meals. When Cwmaber pupils' 2005 key stage 1 National Curriculum teacher assessment results are compared with those in similar schools (English medium school with between 41 and 48 per cent of pupils entitled to receive free school meals), they are between the bottom 25 per cent and the average for mathematics and average for English and science.

Few pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. Some more able pupils are aware that they have targets. They talk about the targets they have already achieved but are unaware of the next steps needed for improvement.

Overall, pupils are well motivated and have good attitudes to their work and school life. Almost all pupils sustain concentration and work productively, especially when work is challenging and exciting. Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils behave well as they move around the school and when outside at play. Pupils, when given the opportunity, work well independently. However, their skills for life long learning do not develop consistently and systematically across the school.

Attendance rates are well below the national and LEA average and also below those for similar schools. They have declined from the time of the last inspection. A small minority of pupils is frequently and persistently late each day, often missing the introduction to their lessons.

Pupils' progress in their personal, social, moral and wider development is good with no important shortcomings. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of equal opportunities and the diversity of other cultures. However, pupils' spiritual awareness is less well developed.

### **The quality of education and training**

In the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching is as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
7%	74%	11%	4%	0%

During the inspection, teaching was consistently good in nursery classes and key stage 1. Teaching assistants and the nursery nurse make a valuable contribution to lessons and

they provide good support for pupils. The school is fortunate to benefit from several volunteers who offer valuable support in classes.

Generally teachers challenge pupils to do their best. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Expectations of behaviour are high and in the majority of lessons, teachers create a calm, purposeful working environment.

Teachers all plan their lessons in detail and this subsequently results in good quality teaching. They take into account what pupils have learnt previously; they consider the differing needs and abilities of learners and plan how the key and basic skills can be incorporated into lessons. However, despite the detail contained in plans, planning for reception children is not always appropriate. Some lessons are formal in nature and do not always cater for the active involvement of young children.

Teachers consistently ensure equality of opportunity and treat all pupils, irrespective of their race, gender or ability equally. Teachers mark work regularly, congratulating pupils on their success but they do not regularly indicate how they might improve the quality of their work or remind pupils of their targets for improvement.

Assessment arrangements are good. The staff have a very comprehensive view of pupils' abilities through their regular assessment of learners' achievements and progress. This is an outstanding feature of the school. All statutory assessment requirements are fully met. However, the school does not ensure that all pupils fully understand what their targets are and how best to achieve them. Reporting procedures are very good. Annual reports are clearly presented and offer parents and pupils the opportunity to make comments.

The school responds well to pupils' needs and provides a broad, balanced curriculum that meets legal requirements. A broad range of extra-curricular opportunities enhances the basic curriculum. The provision for pupils with additional needs is good. No pupil is disadvantaged because of his or her social background or ability. Equality of opportunity is clearly evident in the school.

The school makes good provision to develop pupils' bilingual skills and their understanding of Welsh culture and heritage. There is a well-planned programme to develop pupils' understanding of the world of work. The provision for developing pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship is in the very early stages of development. Environmental issues have been addressed successfully through the development of the school grounds.

Pupils are well looked after in a caring environment and the school gives good attention to their support and guidance. There are clear policies and procedures to ensure everyone's health, safety and welfare. However, the governing body does not take a sufficiently active role in overseeing the school's health and safety arrangements; too much reliance is placed on the head teacher. Child protection arrangements are clear, secure and well documented and known to all that work in the school.

The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) ensures very good procedures are in place for the early identification of learners with additional needs. When necessary, outside agencies and professionals work closely with the school to support pupils very effectively. This is an outstanding feature.

Positive behaviour is encouraged through class reward systems and pupils are regularly praised for their good behaviour. The school places great importance on the development of good self esteem in pupils. Pupils are treated with kindness and respect and the majority of pupils respond well.

The school is an inclusive community. Fairness, tolerance, equality and respect for different views and values are clearly promoted. Pupils, whatever their gender or social background have equal opportunity to take part in all activities.

## **Leadership and management**

The governing body, the head teacher and the acting deputy head teacher are clear about the aims and the values of the school. Staff are familiar with the school motto 'Only our best is good enough', and, at all times work with the pupils to implement its principles.

The governing body is supportive and is regularly provided with information about the school's performance and activities. Governors have good knowledge of the aims and vision of the school and a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development.

Documentation including policies and schemes of work are thorough, well managed and organised. Subject leaders have relevant knowledge and expertise in the areas for which they are responsible.

Senior managers are aware of how the school's performance compares with other similar schools. They are increasingly aware of the importance of self-evaluation and its role in improving standards and provision and as a result the views of pupils, parents, governors and staff are considered seriously.

Based on the information obtained from a variety of sources, the school produces an annual school development plan that is clearly focussed on improving standards of pupils' work. Clear, precise priorities are set and success or failure is measured at the end of the year. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection. All the key issues for action identified at that time have been addressed successfully. Standards continue to show upward trends. The majority of pupils exceed the targets set for them.

The quality of the self-evaluation report prepared for the inspection has good features that outweigh some shortcomings. The inspection team agreed with the school's grades in four out of the seven key questions. In each case where there was a difference, the inspection team allocated one grade lower than that given by the school itself. The self-evaluation processes established by the school are comprehensive and take into account the views of all interested parties. In the main, the areas suggested for further development by the school are similar to those identified by the inspection team.

The school makes good use of its resources. They are effectively managed and monitored by the staff and governing body. An outstanding feature of the school is the way the finance committee of the governing body very carefully analyses the school's developmental needs and allocates resources accordingly. For example, the governors have very recently appointed an additional part-time teacher in the school to cater for the large number of children in the nursery. Spending decisions are very well matched to priorities and the school offers good value for money.

## Recommendations

In order for the school to continue to improve, it needs to:

- R1 Undertake further work to improve standards in English and mathematics, paying particular attention to reducing the difference between girls' and boys' attainment \*
- R2 Ensure greater consistency in the planning for and the teaching of the under-fives
- R3 Improve attendance and punctuality
- R4 Ensure pupils have an understanding of precisely what they have to do to improve the quality of their work \*

(Those recommendations marked with an asterix have already been identified in the school development plan as requiring further development)

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, head teacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.**