

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

**CWMABER JUNIOR SCHOOL  
BRYNHAFOD ROAD  
ABERTRIDWR  
CAERPHILLY  
CF83 4BH**

**School Number: 676/2081**

**Date of Inspection: 8 - 10 May, 2006**

**by  
Miss D Morris  
WO83/16211**

**Date: 10 July, 2006**

**Under Estyn contract number: T/235/05P**

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- \* special schools;
- \* pupil referral units;
- \* independent schools;
- \* further education;
- \* adult community-based learning;
- \* youth support services;
- \* LEAs;
- \* teacher education and training;
- \* work-based learning;
- \* careers companies; and
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Cwmaber Junior 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 Junior School took place on the 8-10 May, 2006. An independent team of inspectors, led by Miss D Morris undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This summary report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

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

<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 reports.

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who attain the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who attain the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

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

The national curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Cwmaber Junior School is located in the village of Abertridwr near Caerphilly, and serves the village and the immediate locality. There are 181 pupils, between 7-11 years of age, on the school register. The school is accommodated in a modern building on a pleasantly landscaped site.
2. The school serves an area which is economically disadvantaged. 30% of pupils are registered as being entitled to free school meals, a percentage that is higher than county and national averages.
3. The school admits pupils across the entire ability range but the intake includes many less able and few able pupils. 30% of pupils are designated by the school as having additional learning needs, including four pupils who have a statement of special educational needs.
4. English is the main language spoken in the homes of most pupils and there are no pupils from an ethnic minority background.
5. The present headteacher was appointed to his post in September 1993. The school was last inspected in June 2000.

### The school's priorities and targets

6. The school's main aim is to develop the whole child, socially, physically, emotionally and intellectually, in an environment that is stimulating, purposeful and happy.
7. The school's main priorities and targets for 2005-2006 include:
  - to continue to review assessment strategies and the provision for pupils with additional learning needs;
  - to review progress and monitor the impact of whole school initiatives on the educational provision;
  - to review key skills provision across all areas of the curriculum.

## Summary

8. Cwmaber School is an effective school where pupils receive good experiences that successfully promote their learning and development.
9. The inspection team's findings match the school's self-evaluation report in four of the seven key questions. In each of the other three key questions, the inspection team's judgements are one grade lower than the Grade 1 allocated by the school. In relation to these questions, the inspection team judged the provision to be of good quality, with the priorities for further development being well focused.

## Standards

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

Pupils' standards of achievement	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	11%	75%	14%	0%	0%

## Table of grades awarded

11. The inspection team judged the work of the school as follows:

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

12. In the subjects inspected, pupils' standards of achievement are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 2
English	Grade 2
Mathematics	Grade 2
Welsh second language	Grade 2
Information Technology	Grade 1
Design Technology	Grade 3
History	Grade 2

13. Overall, pupils make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills, and they achieve the agreed learning objectives.
14. Pupils make appropriate use of their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in other subjects, and the best work is of a good standard. However, pupils do not consistently extend their speaking and reading skills in their work across the curriculum. Pupils make effective use of their number, and their information and communications technology skills in other subjects.
15. Pupils' bilingual competency is developing appropriately. Pupils of all ages communicate readily in English. An increasing number of pupils communicate with increasing confidence and understanding in Welsh.

16. Most pupils co-operate well and they show good development in their personal and social skills. Nevertheless, pupils generally do not take sufficient responsibility for their own learning by working independently on specific tasks.
17. Pupils show good development in their creative skills across the school. The vast majority of pupils make consistent progress in developing their investigative and problem solving skills.
18. In the National Curriculum assessments in 2005, pupils' attainments according to teachers' assessments in English, mathematics and science are below the county and national averages. When compared with similar schools across Wales, based on free school meals, the results overall place the school in the lower 50%.
19. In most recent years, there has been an improvement in the school's results with the percentage of pupils achieving level 5, which is the highest level, increasing. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls, although girls achieve better overall.
20. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. The vast majority of pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and they are considerate and courteous.
21. Pupils' awareness of equal opportunities is developing well and they respect the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions found in society.
22. Visits to places of educational interest, and the contributions they make to local activities, effectively extend the pupils' understanding of their own community.
23. 91% was the average level of attendance during the three terms prior to the inspection. The majority of pupils arrive punctually at the beginning of the school day.

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

24. In the lessons inspected, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
12%	65%	23%	0%	0%

25. The teachers have a good working relationship with their pupils and they support the learning effectively through praise and constructive encouragement.
26. The good and outstanding features of the teaching observed include the teachers' high expectations, interesting and stimulating presentations and the effective use of learning resources.
27. The most common shortcoming in the teaching is that the work is too teacher directed with pupils being given too few opportunities to develop their own ideas and methods of working.
28. The school has good assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress and effective use is made of the information collected to inform future teaching and learning.

29. The school responds well to pupils' general learning interests and needs and they all receive equal opportunities to access a broad and balanced curriculum. Teachers' planning does not always ensure that pupils' literacy skills, particularly their speaking and reading skills, are consistently extended across the curriculum.
30. The school makes effective use of appropriate learning experiences to nurture pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is well reflected in the daily life and work of the school.
31. The school's partnerships with the vast majority of parents are good and there are productive links with the local community and with other schools in the area.
32. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good and fully conforms to the requirements of the Code of Practice.

### **Leadership and management**

33. The headteacher's leadership is an outstanding feature of the work of the school. He has a clear vision of the future direction of the school and is pro-active in planning and securing further improvements. The staff collaborate effectively to ensure progress and development in pupils' learning.
34. The school has very good procedures for evaluating its educational provision and for setting targets. Good use is made of the information collected to improve standards further. In the subjects inspected, co-ordinators offer good, and sometimes very good leadership in developing provision in their subject areas.
35. The school development plan includes appropriate targets for improvement and regular progress is made in achieving the main targets set. The budget is effectively managed by the headteacher in consultation with the Governing Body.
36. The Governing Body meets regularly and fulfils all its management and legal responsibilities. Members offer the headteacher good support in guiding the strategic direction of the school. Their role in monitoring quality and standards is developing appropriately in some areas, such as information and communications technology, but overall this remains an area for further development.
37. Certain matters relating to the school building, which are currently receiving the attention of the headteacher, the Governing Body and the Local Education Authority, were discussed further.
38. The self-evaluation report produced by the school prior to the inspection is of very good quality and clearly identifies the school's strengths and the areas that require improvement. There are good links between the self-evaluation process and school development planning.
39. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has successfully addressed the key issues identified in the report.

40. The school has sufficient teachers and support staff to carry out its work. There is good investment in resources and equipment; they are of good quality and are used effectively overall. Appropriate use is made of the local environment and areas of educational interest to enhance pupils' learning. The school provides good value for money.

## Recommendations

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

- R1. maintain the good standards and improve further the standards in subjects and areas where shortcomings have been identified;
- R2. continue to extend pupils' English and Welsh speaking skills;\*
- R3. build on the good practice in teaching and learning by extending the opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas and methods of working;
- R4. extend the very good practice in subject leadership, and develop further the governors' role in the self-evaluation process;
- R5. work with the Local Education Authority in addressing, as soon as possible, the issues discussed in relation to the building.\*

*(The school has included aspects of the recommendations marked with \* in its development plan.)*

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

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

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

Pupils' standards of achievement	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	11%	75%	14%	0%	0%

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

44. Pupils' standards of achievement in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 2
English	Grade 2
Mathematics	Grade 2
Welsh second language	Grade 2
Information Technology	Grade 1
Design Technology	Grade 3
History	Grade 2

45. Overall, pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve the agreed targets and goals. In most of the subjects inspected, pupils gain new knowledge, skills and understanding consistently as they move through the school.

46. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress overall and achieve the targets set for them.

47. Pupils make appropriate use of their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in other subjects and the best work is of a good standard. However, pupils do not consistently extend their speaking and reading skills in their work across the curriculum. Pupils apply their number, and information and communications technology skills effectively in other subjects. In best practice, pupils make increasing use of their Welsh vocabulary in aspects of their work.

48. In the National Curriculum assessments in 2005, pupils' attainments according to teacher assessments are below the county and national averages in English, science and mathematics. When compared with similar schools across Wales, on the basis of free school meals, the pupils' attainments in each subject are in the lower 50%. The school's results overall, that is the core subject indicator, place the school in the lower 50% in Wales.

49. In most recent years there has been an improvement in the school's results as the percentage of pupils achieving level 5, which is the highest level, is increasing. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls although the girls achieve better overall.
50. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their bilingual competence. An increasing number of pupils communicate confidently and accurately in English. Pupils demonstrate an interest in learning Welsh and are developing the confidence and the ability to use the language in different situations.
51. Most pupils work together harmoniously and show good development in their personal and social skills. Pupils relate well to each other and to adults.
52. Pupils show good development in their creative skills. Most pupils' learning and problem solving skills are developing consistently.
53. Pupils are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and can evaluate their progress through structured self-review activities. In best practice pupils can discuss what they have to do to improve.
54. The vast majority of pupils' attitudes to their learning, the interest they show in their work and their ability to sustain concentration are good.
55. Most pupils work hard in lessons and readily join in the range of activities provided. Pupils' ability to work more independently is improving in those classes where pupils are encouraged to use their subject knowledge and skills in undertaking investigative tasks. Practice is not consistent across the school.
56. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. Most pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and they move around in an orderly manner.
57. Pupils have a good awareness of equal opportunities issues and have respect for the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions within society. Curriculum topics ensure that diversity is acknowledged and understood positively.
58. Visits to places of interest and involvement in local activities help to extend pupils' understanding of their own community. Pupils have a broad awareness of the world of work but their entrepreneurial skills are less well developed.
59. Attendance averaged 91% for the three previous terms. Most pupils arrive at school on time. Punctuality during school hours is very good. The school takes good account of current requirements in recording pupils' attendance.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

60. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement of grade 1 made by the school in the self-evaluation report. There are good, and sometimes outstanding features to the teaching but there is scope to extend these features further across the school.

61. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
12%	65%	23%	0%	0%

62. Overall, teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and of the common requirements of the NC. They take advantage of every opportunity to develop the Welsh dimension within a good number of subjects.

63. Lessons are well structured to include a range of suitable activities, and staff use a variety of teaching strategies and resources to motivate and challenge pupils. The system of grouping pupils by ability for English, mathematics and science successfully extends pupils' knowledge and skills in these subjects.

64. Overall, pupils' bilingual competency is effectively fostered. There are good opportunities to develop pupils' Welsh vocabulary and language patterns in Welsh lessons and in additional short sessions at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. This is good practice.

65. In the lessons with outstanding features, the following characteristics are evident:

- teachers have high expectations;
- tasks and activities consistently extend pupils' learning;
- staff plan effectively for a variety of cross-curricular links;
- skilled questioning enables pupils to explore issues in increasing depth.

66. In the lessons with good features, the following characteristics are evident:

- lesson objectives and success criteria are clear and are shared with the pupils;
- pupils are actively involved in evaluating their own learning;
- initial teacher presentations are purposeful and reinforce previous learning;
- lessons proceed at a good pace and plenary sessions are used effectively to review pupils' progress.

67. Where the teaching is less effective, the following characteristics are evident:

- the work is too teacher directed and pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their own ideas and methods of working;
- the pace of teaching is slow,
- in a minority of lessons, pupils are offered insufficient guidance on the tasks to be undertaken.

68. Good procedures are in place to guide and support pupils, and a common code of behaviour permits pupils to work without hindrance. All teachers and other adults in the school successfully promote equality of opportunity and actively challenge stereotypical views.
69. The quality of assessment is good. The headteacher, as the assessment, recording and reporting co-ordinator, offers good leadership in developing assessment procedures and in ensuring that the outcomes are used effectively to guide the teaching and learning. The assessment policy outlines the school's commitment to 'Assessment for Learning' and offers useful guidance on strategies to aid accurate assessment and encourage peer and self-assessment.
70. The school meets statutory requirements for assessing and reporting on end of key stage National Curriculum outcomes. Written reports to parents celebrate pupils' achievements and give helpful guidance on how to support their children.
71. There is a clear whole school marking policy and in best practice teachers give pupils feedback that effectively suggests the way forward.
72. Accurate portfolios have been compiled in all subjects with staff meeting regularly to moderate work. These give effective guidance for the moderation of pupils' work. Samples of pupils' work are annotated and levelled appropriately against National Curriculum criteria.
73. Records of Achievement files are compiled for all pupils. These include annual 'best fit' judgements against National Curriculum levels in the core subjects, and build up a profile of progress through the school. There are also samples of current work chosen by the pupils in the foundation subjects.
74. An effective range of assessment strategies is used to gather qualitative and quantitative evidence on pupils' progress including on-going teacher assessment and more formal assessments at the end of each unit of work. The use of standardised tests assists the school in evaluating the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. The analysis of data identifies trends and informs future planning.

### **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**

75. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement of Grade 1 made by the school but judges that the school demonstrates consistently good features (Grade 2).
76. The school offers a broad, balanced curriculum with a wide range of learning experiences that caters effectively for the varying needs of all pupils.
77. Most pupils are registered in mixed age classes but they are re-grouped by ability for English and mathematics. Older pupils are also ability grouped for science. In foundation subjects, pupils are taught in year groups. This

organisation effectively ensures coverage of both core and foundation National Curriculum requirements.

78. The school has an inclusive culture with appropriate differentiation and support providing equal access to the curriculum for all, including pupils with additional learning needs.
79. There is a whole school approach for key skills incorporated into all schemes of work and teachers' short term planning. The good practice of providing pupils with effective opportunities and tasks to develop their speaking skills should be extended further across the school.
80. The school gives appropriate attention to the Framework for Personal and Social Education of the Qualifications Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales. The Personal and Social Education curriculum includes a weekly class circle time, and the School Council enables pupils to be part of the school's decision-making process.
81. 'Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig' (The Welsh Curriculum) is well promoted across a range of curriculum areas including English, history, geography and art. A gallery of winners from the annual Eisteddfod features prominently in the school entrance hall. There is focused teaching time to develop pupils' bi-lingual skills and in best practice this good work is effectively reinforced throughout the school day.
82. Educational visits are an integral part of the topic planning and help to place the learning outcomes in a meaningful context. The school offers a varied programme of successful and popular extra-curricular clubs involving all staff. Activities include sport, music, art, science and dancing and these extend and enrich the curriculum.
83. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Daily acts of collective worship, sometimes led by visiting local clergy, include opportunities for pupils to prepare presentations focusing on the consequences of people's actions, with singing and music making a positive contribution to these occasions. However, pupils have limited opportunity for prayer and personal reflection.
84. The Personal and Social Education, English, geography and religious education curriculum particularly support pupils' cultural development. Pupils also participate in local musical and arts events, and have the opportunity to work with visiting authors and artists.
85. The school's partnerships with parents, the infant and secondary schools, and the local community are good. The school operates an open door policy and parents are invited into the school regularly to share assemblies, special performances, curriculum presentations, fund raising events and open evenings.
86. There are well-established curriculum and transition links with the local infant and the receiving secondary schools. They include visits by teachers and pupils make visits to the respective schools prior to transfer. A good feature is the booklet made by year 3 pupils and given to the year 2 children, to answer questions and allay fears. The school has forged good working links with a teacher-training institute and regularly provides experience for student teachers.

87. The school makes good use of the local community to support the wider curriculum. The Gwent police liaison team work with all year groups as part of the Personal and Social Education programme, local businesses support the annual maths week, and children are involved in musical and art activities. Health and educational professionals participate in the Health Week activities
88. Pupils' show a developing awareness of environmental issues and the impact they have on their school and the community. The school is working towards the Eco-schools' bronze award with the current focus on recycling. Following a successful grant application, all pupils were involved in designing and making a mosaic illustrating the locality from past to present that is now displayed on the main school wall.
89. Pupils' understanding of the world of work is enhanced by links with local business and specific projects such as the study of the re-development at Cardiff Bay. Older pupils have been involved in establishing a healthy eating tuck shop as part of the Healthy School award. Further development of pupils' entrepreneurial skills is a future target in the self-evaluation report.

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

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

90. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement of grade 2 made by the school in the self-evaluation report.
91. The school has a caring ethos where pupils feel valued and supported. The headteacher, who is the additional learning needs co-ordinator, has a good knowledge of all the pupils, their families and the community as a whole.
92. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. Fifty four pupils have been placed on the schools' additional learning needs register and they receive good support and guidance from the school's additional learning needs co-ordinator, class teachers and support staff. All pupils receive equal access to the school curriculum and activities. Pupils make good progress overall.
93. The school adopts an inclusive approach to supporting pupils with additional learning needs. Pupils are taught in smaller classes with some differentiation in all lessons. The differentiation of tasks could be developed further by ensuring that all tasks offer pupils appropriate challenge and incorporate practical activities.
94. The Local Education Authority provides some specialist support including language support and 'catch up' reading. The support from the Educational Psychologist has been particularly effective, providing assessments, advice and strategies to support the school in working with pupils with additional learning needs.
95. The school's initial assessment of pupils who may have additional learning needs centres on literacy development. The individual education plans focus on

reading and spelling skills and now need to be developed further to encompass all aspects of the pupils' difficulties including attention, communication, speaking, listening and motor skills.

96. Effective procedures are in place to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Registration is conducted efficiently, in accordance with statutory requirements and the school complies with attendance requirements. A good working partnership has been established with the Education Welfare Officer.
97. There are good links with parents who are encouraged to attend two formal parents evenings per year, and to contact the school at any time. Parents of pupils with additional learning needs have an additional termly meeting to discuss progress. The parents feel confident in approaching the school staff to discuss any issues they may have. Pupils are involved in evaluating their own progress at a level they can understand.
98. Induction arrangements, procedures for sharing information and steps taken to ensure pupils are confident during the transition from the infant school are good. Links with the high school are well established and pupils move on with confidence.
99. The headteacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection, the deputy headteacher assumes this role in his absence and all staff have had training in child protection issues. Child protection policies are clearly recorded and all members of staff and the governors are aware of the correct procedures.
100. Four members of staff have attended training and established the 'Student Assistance Program' to meet the more complex social and emotional needs of pupils and provide access to an adult they can approach if they are in difficulty. Although in the early stages of development, this scheme has already proved valuable for a small number of pupils.
101. The school is working towards the Healthy Schools Award and the Eco-Schools Award. A healthy tuck shop operates at break time although some pupils bring crisps and snacks. Toast is provided during the morning giving an opportunity for pupils to have breakfast at school if they wish. Drinking water is available to pupils at all times.
102. All pupils are actively encouraged to participate in all school activities including after school clubs regardless of gender or special needs. Governors' reports indicate that no racial incidences occur.
103. The school has a positive approach to behaviour management and circle time is seen to be an integral part of the weekly timetable. Any incidences of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.
104. The school has an action plan in place, in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act, that identifies steps to be taken to improve access to the curriculum, provision of information and physical access to the school. The school building is not fully accessible for wheelchair users. There is a disabled toilet facility near the entrance and hall, but this is not accessible on an internal route from any of the classrooms.

105. Health and Safety policies, including fire prevention and first aid are in place, and appropriate procedures are followed. Risk assessments are held for important activities at the school. Suitable procedures are in place for dealing with appeals and complaints.

## **Leadership and management**

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

#### **Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features**

106. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement of Grade 1 made by the school in the self-evaluation report. The outstanding features of the provision include the quality of the headteacher's leadership and management, the strong commitment of all partners to the school's core aims and values, and the consistent emphasis on social inclusion.
107. The school is led with clear direction and vision by an experienced headteacher. He demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the needs of the school and is proactive in planning and securing further improvements. Under his leadership, the school has gained the Basic Skills Agency's Quality mark for the second time. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the staff.
108. The school places pupils' development at the heart of its provision. Shared values and norms about learning and behaviour, which promote equality for all, are very well reflected in its work. A range of management and curricular policies has been produced that sets clear guidelines for promoting pupils' well-being, safety and progress.
109. The teachers and support staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and they work well together. They make a valuable contribution in creating a disciplined and caring environment for pupils.
110. The school takes account of national and local priorities. It is currently working within the Healthy Schools Initiative and is working towards the Eco Bronze Award. The development of pupils' information and communications technology skills receives good attention in all classes and effective use is made of the interactive whiteboards. Through the School Council, pupils receive appropriate opportunities to influence certain aspects of the life of the school. The school collaborates well with other schools in devising curriculum policies, planning writing projects for pupils, and organising music and sport activities.
111. Performance management structures are in place involving focused staff appraisal that contributes to effective professional development. There is a strong commitment to ensuring the continuing professional development of staff. It is guided by the demands of the school development plan or teachers' individual development needs. There is good use of national grants and links with a range of providers to offer staff effective opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills.

112. The school has developed a comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision, which succeeds in improving standards.
113. The school development plan sets appropriate and realistic targets. Relevant processes are in place for setting and reviewing targets and good progress is being made in addressing the main targets set.
114. The Governing Body, which includes a number of new members, is very supportive and involved in the life of the school. Governors know their roles and contribute effectively to strategic planning. Their role in monitoring standards and quality is developing appropriately in some areas, such as information and communications technology, and additional learning needs, but there is scope to extend this role further.
115. The Governing Body meets regularly and fulfils its regulatory and legal responsibilities. School policies and documentation give good attention to statutory requirements.

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

#### **Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features**

116. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement of grade 1 made by the school in the self-evaluation report. The outstanding features of the provision include the examples of the high quality of the leadership offered by subject co-ordinators, the range and effectiveness of monitoring and evaluating strategies, the efficient use of data and the impact of the processes in improving standards and quality.
117. The headteacher, governors and staff are fully committed to raising standards and improving the provision in the school. A self-evaluation programme and timetable is in place and notes the subjects and areas of learning to be evaluated. The programme is implemented effectively, and the findings inform the aims and targets of the school development plan.
118. The role of the co-ordinators in leading and evaluating their subjects is a strength of the school, with some outstanding examples in mathematics and history. Co-ordinators have a very good overview of the quality of provision and standards in their subjects, using a range of monitoring strategies including listening to learners, scrutiny of pupils' work, and data analysis. Co-ordinators of the core subjects also undertake classroom monitoring annually with foundation subjects being monitored on a three year rolling programme. Detailed subject reports are presented to staff and governors termly for the core subjects and annually for the foundation subjects.
119. Co-ordinators support staff with comprehensive guidance, practical support and quality resources. Following analysis of the evidence, whole school professional development targets are set in the core subjects promoting a whole school approach to improvement. There is a rolling programme for targets in foundation subjects, which are appropriately reviewed by the co-ordinators with detailed reports and analysis, for the headteacher and staff.

120. All staff are included in the self-evaluation process and the views of governors, parents and pupils are taken into account. The governors with a link responsibility for information and communications technology, and additional learning needs, work closely with the school to monitor developments in these areas. Pupils are consulted about aspects of school life through the School Council. The views of parents and carers are sought through questionnaires, the range of parents' evenings that are held, and through their representatives on the Governing Body.
121. The headteacher and staff set measurable targets by which they can evaluate quality and standards. There is good use of available data to track pupil performance. End of key stage assessments are carefully analysed and the school compares its performance to local and national statistics to ensure appropriate actions occur to raise standards as required.
122. The school development plan is well focused and clearly shows the school's priorities with costings, responsibilities and timescales noted. Staff and governors are involved in the construction of the school development plan and the headteacher provides detailed reports on progress to the Governing Body on a termly basis enabling them to analyse trends over time.
123. The self-evaluation report produced prior to the inspection is a detailed document outlining the strengths of the school and identifying areas for development. The inspection team agrees with the school's judgements in four of the seven key questions. Where the team has awarded one grade lower than the school's Grade 1, there is much agreement but the team considers the work to have good features and no important shortcomings (Grade 2).
124. The school has made good progress since the last inspection having successfully addressed the key issues through a detailed action plan. Standards have improved in subjects such as design technology, history and Welsh second language, and in aspects such as the organisation of mixed age classes.

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

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

125. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement of Grade 1 made by the school but judges that the school demonstrates good features (Grade 2). Certain matters relating to the school building, and the use of the library as a learning resource remain to be addressed further.
126. The school has a sufficient number of suitably qualified teachers to teach every aspect of the curriculum. There is a good balance of experienced and recently qualified staff. The staff/pupil ratio offers the opportunity for pupils to be taught in small classes.
127. Staff have appropriate job descriptions and are deployed effectively and efficiently throughout the school. The Local Education Authority provides some support staff to work with specific pupils with additional learning needs. The school secretary and a school support assistant work closely with staff to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school.

128. The arrangements for providing teachers with periods for planning, assessment and preparation (PPA) are implemented effectively. Staff PPA time is covered by an experienced teacher who is an integral part of the school staff. Performance management systems are in place for all teachers and administrative support, with an informal system of appraisal for the school caretaker.
129. The school building and site is clean, tidy and well maintained by the school caretaker and cleaning staff. During playtimes, the school playground is small for the number of pupils on roll. The School Council is working with staff to make some improvements and hopes to secure funding for covered benches. There are sufficient toilets for the number of pupils in the school and these are clean and well maintained. Access to areas within the building is limited for pupils and adults with a physical disability.
130. Good use is made of space within the school for teaching and learning. Certain matters relating to the school building, which are currently receiving the attention of the headteacher, the Governing Body and the Local Education Authority, were discussed further.
131. The school entrance is bright and welcoming, both outside and in the main foyer. Classrooms and corridors contain colourful displays of a range of pupils' work.
132. In the subjects inspected, the school has a good range of resources that are appropriate to pupils' ages and needs. The school has very good information technology resources, including interactive whiteboards, which are used regularly and effectively. In addition, there is a designated computer suite for whole school use, which is timetabled once a week for courses run by Ystrad Mynach College.
133. Each class has a small book corner with a limited range of books, both fiction and non-fiction, which are used appropriately by the pupils. Subject resources are maintained centrally and updated as the need arises. The school library is generally under-resourced and is not used sufficiently as a learning resource.
134. The school makes good use of a range of outside facilities and providers including local artists, historical sites, museums, local businesses and the YMCA Sports Centre to enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils learning experiences.
135. Staff development is guided appropriately by the demands of the school development plan and teachers' individual needs. Training for staff in key areas of additional learning needs, particularly communication and differentiation would benefit the existing inclusive practice and meet the needs of the high percentage of pupils with additional learning needs in the school.
136. The headteacher and governors meet regularly to plan and monitor spending decisions to ensure that the school's targets are met. Last year the budget reserves were within 5 per cent, which is in line with the Audit Commission's recommendations. Accessing sources, such as Communities First and the General Teaching Council, raises additional funding to support school and teacher priorities for development. Friends of Cwmaber also provide valuable funding for the school.
137. The school offers good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### English

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

#### Good features

138. Pupils listen courteously to adults and their peers. They pay careful attention to and reflect on the contributions of others in class sessions and assemblies, responding appropriately when questioned.
139. The majority of pupils speak clearly and participate appropriately in whole class and group discussion, making relevant contributions. The more able pupils contribute to discussion with increasingly specialised vocabulary and are able to adapt their delivery to suit the audience. In drama, they are able to assume the role of different characters and perform convincingly.
140. Most pupils read fluently and with expression, varying the delivery in response to the story line and punctuation. Less able pupils are able to use a range of strategies to interpret text including phonic knowledge and context clues.
141. Older pupils read fiction and non-fiction books from a variety of genre, some choosing advanced texts. They can talk about books they have enjoyed giving reasons for their choice. Pupils' research skills using the Internet are developing very well through work across the curriculum.
142. Pupils write effectively in a variety of forms showing awareness of the key elements of a genre. The more able effectively redraft their work and can identify areas for improvement. The best work is well presented with good handwriting, punctuation and grammar.
143. All pupils use information technology effectively to present their work.

#### Shortcomings

144. A significant number of pupils lack the confidence to speak in an extended manner in different situations

### Mathematics

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

#### Good features

145. Most pupils have a secure grasp of number processes and apply them accurately in different contexts. By the end of the key stage, pupils use and apply combinations of operations accurately to calculate number tasks.

146. Most pupils' mental skills are developing well and they can calculate the answers to number problems quickly and accurately. More able pupils develop their own techniques to solve problems and they can explain their reasoning effectively.
147. Pupils can apply their knowledge well to calculate problems involving measures of time, length, weight, and capacity. They can choose the appropriate units of measurement for different tasks. Pupils' estimating skills are good.
148. Pupils apply their mathematical skills well to solve problems and carry out investigations. In best practice, Year 5 and year 6 pupils apply their skills well to real life situations and contexts.
149. More able pupils use mathematical language confidently and demonstrate a good understanding of a range of terms.
150. Pupils use their information and communications technology skills confidently to handle data and to produce mathematical graphs and charts. Year 6 pupils enter, store, interrogate and present data in a range of forms and can effectively analyse and discuss the information presented.

### **Shortcomings**

151. A small number of pupils across the age range have an insecure grasp of mental strategies in number work.

## **Welsh second language**

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

### **Good features**

152. Pupils respond accurately to instructions and greetings. They understand the phrases used during the lessons and use them accurately to respond to questions. Most pupils speak with good pronunciation and intonation.
153. Most pupils listen intently and with interest to teacher presentations. In best practice, pupils use a range of patterns and vocabulary appropriately to converse with others and to participate in dialogues.
154. Pupils read accurately with clear expression and suitable intonation. Older pupils display a good understanding of the content of the material read.
155. Pupils write for different purposes and record their experiences appropriately using a range of patterns and relevant vocabulary. In best practice, pupils make effective use of information technology, including the interactive whiteboard, to support and enhance their learning.

### **Shortcomings**

156. In a small minority of classes, pupils' ability to use a range of language patterns and vocabulary in speaking with others is insufficiently extended.

## Information Technology

### Key Stage 2      Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

#### Outstanding features

157. Pupils acquire and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills of information technology in different contexts and to increasingly challenging situations as they progress through the school. Older pupils have the ability and confidence to work independently, selecting the appropriate program to undertake a given task successfully.
158. Pupils demonstrate confidence and skill in using a range of applications and can make a critical judgement on the contribution of information technology to their work. Pupils in year 6 can reflect on how they produce a piece of work, describe the different programs and how they use them, and compare the merits of different applications to achieve specific outcomes.

#### Good features

159. Pupils can manage their work well including saving and accessing their files. They know that all teaching resources can be accessed on the school server and are able to log on to both this and access their individual work as required.
160. Pupils can organize text, incorporating images and sound to prepare information for an audience. They add and alter pictures and text confidently to suit a given purpose.
161. Pupils use word processing packages effectively using the tools to edit and improve their work. Older pupils have a very good awareness of the way in which information technology may be used to refine and present their work.
162. Pupils enter, store, interrogate and present data in a range of forms. In subjects such as mathematics, pupils understand the usefulness of spreadsheets to organise data and to work out calculations. Older pupils are confident in adding data to a spreadsheet and investigating variables and outcomes.
163. Pupils demonstrate confidence in using control software when working with LOGO. They input instructions correctly and confidently to make different shapes and patterns.
164. Pupils regularly use the Internet to collect and access information to support their investigations and research across the curriculum. During lessons, they use the interactive whiteboard successfully to explore and solve problems across a wide range of subjects.
165. Pupils have a good knowledge of the variety of uses for information technology outside school, including industry and commerce, for example, the use of scanners in supermarkets and product design. Pupils have collaborated very successfully in developing a school web site.

#### Shortcomings

166. There are no significant shortcomings.

## Design Technology

**Key Stage 2          Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.**

### Good features

167. Pupils generally work with a suitable range of tools and materials to make different products and models.
168. Pupils understand the need to consider the purpose before designing any products. In best practice, they undertake research using the Internet, books or actual materials to gain additional information. Pupils in year 3 can conduct a thorough investigation into different types of bread products including reviewing pupils' likes and dislikes. Year 5 pupils use the Internet effectively to gather information about bridges before designing their own models.
169. Pupils demonstrate appropriate designing and making skills when making desk tidies, puppets and games. Individuals have a good understanding of the requirements of the task and demonstrate this in their designs. In best practice, pupils can formulate detailed instructions to produce their products, try out the product, analyse how successful they are and discuss how they could make improvements.

### Shortcomings

170. Pupils' knowledge and skills do not develop consistently as they move through the school.
171. Pupils' ability to evaluate their products effectively and to suggest improvements is insufficiently extended.
172. In a small minority of classes, pupils do not use a sufficient range of resources, tools and materials, which inhibits their design and making skills.

## History

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

### Good features

173. All pupils are developing a good sense of chronology. They are familiar with chronological frameworks and make good use of timelines to sequence events in different historical periods.
174. Pupils can select, recall and organise historical information using good vocabulary. They present their results in a variety of ways including different writing forms and graphical representation. In their Victorian study, year 5 pupils write diary entries about life in the town and letters describing the effect of the coming of the steam train showing empathy with people of that time. Pupils in year 4 can compare crime and punishment today with the Tudor times, and give their own interpretation through role-play.

175. Pupils are aware that there are a range of sources that inform us about the past including photographs, documents, books, visits and the Internet. Year 6 pupils have talked to a senior citizen about World War 2 and can explain how everyday life has been affected by the war, referring to artefacts seen at an exhibition.
176. More able year 6 pupils are able to distinguish between fact and opinion. They can discuss the different viewpoints about the causes of the Second World War and make sensible suggestions about how life would be different if Germany had won.
177. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of the history of the locality from their mining study. Year 5 pupils can use a range of documents to answer questions relating to the 1901 Senghennydd mining disaster.

### **Shortcomings**

178. Pupils' ability to draw conclusions about the past using artefacts is underdeveloped.

## School's response to the inspection

179. The Staff and Governing Body of Cwmaber Junior School take great pride in this report and are very pleased that the inspection findings acknowledge our strengths and confirm that this is an effective school. The report is a true and accurate picture of the school and gives due recognition to the skill and dedication of all members of the teaching and support staff, together with the Governors, with a clear and strong team ethos in evidence.

We are pleased to note the inspectors found that pupils' standards of achievement in lessons are well above the national targets and that they make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. We are extremely proud of our pupils and were very pleased that inspectors also found that they achieve good standards in their personal and social development, and understand the school's expectations for courtesy, good behaviour and positive attitudes. Good working relationships exist between the teachers and pupils, with learning being supported through praise and constructive encouragement. The good and outstanding features of the teaching observed included high expectations, interesting and stimulating presentations and effective use of learning resources, incorporating the extensive use of ICT across the curriculum.

We greatly value our role in the community and foster open and friendly working relationships with parents, feeder schools and other organisations. We are pleased that the report confirms that these are good features. Additionally, it was celebrated that visits by the school to places of educational interest effectively extend the pupils' understanding of the wider community.

The school prides itself on always seeking continuous improvement and higher achievement through self-evaluation. The report identifies areas of clear strengths, including examples of outstanding practice by both management and subject co-ordinators in evaluating progress and also in identifying strategies to further raise standards. In the subjects inspected, co-ordinators offer very good leadership in developing provision in their subject areas. The school's assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress are effective with the information being used to inform future teaching and learning. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs was found to be good and due recognition given to the fact that the school has been awarded the Basic Skills Agency Quality Kite Mark (on two consecutive occasions), in support of literacy and numeracy.

The staff appreciated the supportively professional and effective manner in which the inspection was undertaken and would like to thank the inspectors for their reflective and productive discussions and observations. The report also celebrates the good progress made by the school since the previous inspection. The report will clearly assist future developments and enable the school to move forward cohesively.

An action plan will be put into place to address the recommendations of the report and a copy will be sent to all parents. The governors' annual report to parents will report on the progress we are making in addressing the recommendations made.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Cwmaber Junior School
School type	Primary/Junior
Age-range of pupils	7-11
Address of school	Brynhafod Road Abertridwr Caerphilly
Post-code	CF83 4BH
Telephone number	02920 832231

Headteacher	Mr D Davies
Date of appointment	September 1993
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr S Thomas
Registered inspector	Miss D Morris
Dates of inspection	8-10 May, 2006

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	-	-	-	-	45	47	45	44	181

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	8	0	8

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	22.6:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25.9
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection		
Term	KS2	Whole School
Spring 2005	91%	91%
Summer 2005	91%	91%
Autumn 2005	93%	93%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	29.8%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	1

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2005							Number of pupils in Y6		41		
Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School							27	44	29
		National					1	4	15	47	32
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School						2	27	41	29
		National					1	3	15	47	32
Science	Teacher assessment	School						2	15	46	37
		National						2	11	51	35

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment			
In the school	66%	In Wales	74%

- D Pupils who are exempted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum  
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence  
F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence  
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

## Appendix 4

### Evidence base of the inspection

- A team of four inspectors who were present in the school for 9 inspector days undertook the inspection.
- Pre-inspection meetings were held with the parents and the Governing Body to discuss the life and work of the school.
- Parents completed 15 questionnaires and they were carefully analysed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff with specific responsibilities and support staff.
- The school's documentation was examined.
- 34 lessons were observed, as well as other parts of teaching sessions.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from the whole ability range in every year-group reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils about their work and the life of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during break-times, lunch-time and the beginning and end of school sessions.
- The inspectors attended daily services.
- Post-inspection meetings were held with the staff and the Governing Body.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Miss D Morris Registered Inspector	Summary, Key Questions 1, 2 (teaching), 5. Subjects: mathematics, Welsh second language.
Mrs C Phillips Team Inspector	Key Questions 2 (assessment), 3, 6. Subjects: English, history.
Mrs C Brunton Team Inspector	Key Questions 4, 7. Subjects: information technology, design technology.
Mrs M Donovan Lay Inspector	Contributions to key questions 1, 3, 4, 7
Mr D Davies Headteacher	Nominee

**Contractors:** Pembrokeshire LEA  
Education Department  
County Hall  
Haverfordwest  
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### **Acknowledgement**

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