

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

**CWMAMAN INFANTS SCHOOL  
Fforchaman Road  
Cwmaman  
Aberdare  
CF44 6NS**

**School Number: 574/2125**

**Date of Inspection: 2 – 3 November 2004**

**by**

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**Date: 7 January 2005**

**Under Estyn contract number: T70/04P**

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**Cwmaman 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.

The inspection of **Cwmaman Infants School** took place between 2 and 3 November 2004. An independent team of three inspectors, led by Stephanie James Rgl 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:

<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

## Year groups and key stages

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

The school serves a close-knit, stable community in the village of Cwmaman, on the outskirts of Aberdare. There are 92 pupils on roll in the Reception, Y1 and Y2 classes and a further 28 children attend the nursery class full-time. Children are eligible to start nursery on their third birthday and enter the reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. Ninety nine per cent of pupils are of white ethnic origin and from English speaking homes. Twenty per cent of pupils are on the register of special education needs (SEN). Information from baseline assessments shows that children's attainment on entry to nursery is below average.

Parents and carers are very supportive of their children and many extended families live in the neighbourhood. There is a high level of unemployment in the area because of the closure of a number of businesses. Forty six per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. There are a variety of social problems, including vandalism to the school building. Since the last inspection in 1995, a computer suite has been added and £70,000 spent on the nursery unit. Facilities for pupils with disabilities have been built.

For five years the headteacher led the local nursery and junior schools, as well as the infant school. She has led the infant school alone since the closure of the nursery and the appointment of the deputy head of the juniors as acting headteacher in September 2003. The deputy head of the infants was seconded to the post of acting headteacher at another infant school in January 2004.

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

The school's main aims are to:

- Create a happy school in which pupils of all abilities achieve success.
- Provide a curriculum that contributes to the all round growth and development of every child, with no discrimination regarding gender, race, culture or special need.
- Develop positive personal qualities and social values.
- Build pupils' confidence and self-esteem, celebrating achievements.
- Develop pupils' curiosity in the world and understanding of changes in the community.
- Build on children's early knowledge, understanding and skills to establish a solid foundation for what follows.

The school's main targets for the year 2004-2005 are to:

- Improve standards in writing both in presentation and quality.
- Explore the possibility of achieving the Investors in People quality mark.
- Incorporate the teaching of thinking skills in curriculum planning.

- Continue with whole school self-evaluation to guide school improvement.
- To review communication channels between all stakeholders in the school.
- To review the two year rolling programme at KS1 in the light of the new Foundation Phase and confirm the role of monitoring.

## Summary

Cwmaman Infants is a good school with outstanding features. It has continued to improve standards since the last inspection. The inspection team agreed with all the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

### Table of grades awarded

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

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

### Standards

The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

In the early years and at KS1, pupils' progress and standards of achievement in the key skills of listening, reading and numeracy are good with outstanding features. In speaking, writing and use of information and communications technology (ICT) they are good, with no important shortcomings.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress relative to their ability and achieve the targets set for them.

Pupils develop their bilingual skills well. Pupils use Welsh naturally and confidently, relative to their age and experience.

Pupils' problem-solving and creative skills are good and applied through a variety of activities.

Although many children's attainment on entry to school is below the Local Education Authority (LEA) average, and well below the average for Wales,

pupils make very good progress and consistently meet or exceed their targets for attainment at the end of key stage 1 (KS1).

Over the last three years, the number of pupils achieving the expected level 2 in English and mathematics has generally been above the average for Wales. Their achievement in science has been slightly below the national average. The number of pupils achieving level 3 in the core subjects has been above average. When compared with similar schools, pupils' performance is well above average.

The school is very successful in enabling pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to achieve their potential. This is an outstanding feature of the school's provision.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning, are interested in their work and are able to sustain concentration when engaged in appropriate tasks. They have a good sense of what is fair and some awareness of diversity within society.

Pupils enjoy being in a friendly, caring and orderly environment. They are polite and courteous towards one another and visitors. Their behaviour throughout the school day is good.

Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, with average attendance for the last academic year being 90.3 per cent. The vast majority of pupils are punctual at the start of the school day.

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

In the lessons observed 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>
17%	83%	0%	0%	0%

One of the school's strengths is its consistently good teaching. At 100 per cent, the percentage of good or better lessons is twice the Welsh Assembly Government's target that 50 per cent of lessons should be good or better.

Throughout the school, teachers know pupils well and have very good relationships with them. A key ingredient in the good quality of teaching is that teachers believe in pupils' capacity to succeed and have high expectations of their performance.

Lesson plans are detailed and have clear learning objectives, although the purpose of lessons is not always and consistently made clear to pupils. However, activities are very well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and support staff are very effectively deployed to help pupils tackle their tasks successfully.

Teachers have very secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, particularly English and mathematics, and use a variety of successful teaching strategies that enable pupils to enjoy learning and achieve well. In the early years there is a good balance between adult-directed activities and those children choose themselves.

Teachers ask challenging questions and encourage pupils to explain their thinking strategies. Teachers and support staff emphasise key vocabulary in

order to develop pupils' linguistic skills. Lessons are well paced and maintain pupils' interest. Teachers treat all pupils consistently and equally.

Pupils' bilingual competence is fostered very well through the incidental use of Welsh throughout the school day.

Arrangements for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' progress are very good. The school uses its analysis of the results of tests and assessments highly effectively to form teaching groups, plan activities and set targets for achievement. Pupils understand their individual targets for improvement. The quality of annual reports to parents is good and they meet statutory requirements.

The school responds very well to pupils' learning needs and provides equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils enjoy coming to school and benefit from its warm, friendly atmosphere. The curriculum caters well for the whole range of pupils' needs and is very well planned. There is a very well attended programme of extra-curricular clubs for year 2 pupils, which they really enjoy.

Partnerships with parents, the community, other schools, individuals and organisations enrich the learning experiences of pupils. There is a strong commitment to life-long learning and parents participate in a number of skills courses.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and the provision for personal and social education (PSE) is very good. There is appropriate emphasis on studying the traditions, history and culture of Wales.

The provision for additional learning needs is outstanding and one of the factors underlying the school's success in raising the achievement of all pupils. Pupils with SEN are very well supported.

Good equal opportunities policies reflect the school's commitment to equality of access and opportunity, though not enough is done to challenge gender stereotypes.

The school succeeds in its aim of creating an ethos that encourages positive values and attitudes. Pupils feel happy, safe, secure and well looked after.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher, whilst adopting a collegiate approach to the management of the school, provides very good leadership and a clear direction to its work. There is a strong, mutually supportive team spirit amongst all staff, who work for the good of the pupils. The school successfully achieves its aims, priorities and targets.

The cycle of staff self-evaluation and appraisal is well established. Their continuing professional development is effectively linked both to their personal targets and to priorities identified in the school development plan (SDP).

Members of the governing body are well informed, committed to the school and involved in setting its strategic direction. They make regular visits to look at pupils' work and hold discussions with members of staff in order to monitor the quality of its provision.

Subject leaders are well informed about standards of achievement and areas for improvement in the core subjects, through the moderation of assessed work. Such moderation is, however, at an early stage of development in the foundation subjects. Subject leaders do not yet gather first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching but have, themselves, recognised this as an area for improvement.

The school's self-evaluation process is thorough and has recently begun to draw upon the views of all interested parties in order to identify strengths and areas for development. The two self-evaluation reports produced prior to the inspection give a good picture of the process of self-evaluation and clear judgements about the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's judgements about its performance are accurate and match those of the inspection team.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. All the key issues found then have been effectively addressed.

All staff are appropriately qualified to teach the National Curriculum (NC) and religious education. Resources are well deployed to enrich the quality of teaching and learning. The provision of resources is linked to priorities identified in the SDP.

This is an old school, with spacious accommodation which is in good condition and state of repair. Staff have worked hard to produce an attractive environment for pupils, which is having a positive effect on pupils' learning.

The school operates very smoothly. The school administrator carries out daily routines effectively and the lunchtime staff work efficiently. The accommodation is kept clean and is well maintained by caretakers and cleaners.

The school's budget is wisely and carefully managed. Surplus funds have resulted in advantageous staffing ratios, major capital expenditure and additional resources.

Overall, the school provides good value for money.

## **Recommendations**

The school now needs to:

- R1. maintain the good standards achieved;
- R2. further develop the role of subject leaders to include:
  - evaluation of the quality of teaching and;
  - moderation of assessed work in the foundation subjects.

The school has already identified the need to develop the role of subject leaders in its SDP.

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

## Standards

### Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?

#### Grade: 1 Good, with outstanding features

1. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
2. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
3. Children under five make very good progress in applying the key skills of listening, reading and numeracy in their work across the curriculum. In the key skills of speaking, writing and using ICT they make good progress.
4. Pupils in KS1 maintain the good standards achieved in key skills in the early years. In listening, reading and numeracy, standards are good, with outstanding features. Pupils continue to listen very attentively to their teachers and to one another. They read for a wide variety of purposes and with expression. They are quick and confident in using their mathematical knowledge. In speaking, writing and use of ICT, standards are good. Pupils speak with increasing confidence, write for a range of purposes and use ICT tools and information sources effectively to obtain and present information.
5. Pupils with SEN make good progress relative to their ability and achieve the targets set for them. There is little difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils know about their own strengths and weaknesses and understand what they need to do to improve.
6. Pupils develop their bilingual skills well. The Welsh language is integrated effectively into the everyday life of the school and pupils use it naturally and confidently, relative to their age and experience. By the end of KS1 they understand instructions, have good pronunciation and can read and write simple sentences in Welsh.
7. Pupils' problem-solving skills are good. For example, they show flexibility in the strategies they use to solve mathematical problems and explain them well. Their creative skills are also good and expressed through activities such as art and role-play.
8. Baseline assessments indicate that children's attainment on entry to school is below the LEA average and well below the average for Wales. Pupils make very good progress and consistently meet or exceed their targets for attainment at the end of KS1.
9. Trends over the last three years show that the number of pupils achieving at least level 2 in English and mathematics is above the average for Wales, except in 2003, when there was a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. Their achievement in science is slightly below the national average. The number of pupils achieving Level 3 is above the national average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, their performance is well above average.

10. The school is very successful in enabling pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to achieve their potential. This is an outstanding feature of the school's provision.
11. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, are interested in their work and are able to sustain concentration when engaged in appropriate tasks. Almost all pupils work hard in lessons, readily join in the range of activities provided, and show enthusiasm for their work. They have a good sense of what is fair and have some awareness of diversity within society.
12. Pupils enjoy being in a friendly, caring and orderly environment and they are polite and courteous towards one another and visitors. Their behaviour throughout the school day is good.
13. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory with average attendance for the last academic year being 90.3 per cent. The vast majority of pupils are punctual at the start of the school day.

**The quality of education and training**

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

**Grade: 1 Good, with outstanding features**

14. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
15. The inspection team observed lessons in a range of National Curriculum subjects. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
17%	83%	0%	0%	0%

16. One of the school's strengths is its consistently good teaching. At 100 per cent, the percentage of good or better lessons is twice the Welsh Assembly Government's target that 50 per cent of lessons should be good or better. Teaching meets learners' needs very effectively.
17. Throughout the school, teachers know pupils well and have very good relationships with them. They have high expectations of their behaviour and encourage and praise them judiciously for their efforts. This is an integral part of the school's ethos and, as a result, pupils' self-esteem blossoms and they have a positive attitude to their work.
18. Another key ingredient in the good quality of teaching is that teachers believe in pupils' capacity to succeed and have high expectations of their performance.
19. Lesson plans are detailed and have clear learning objectives, although the purpose of lessons is not always and consistently made clear to pupils. However, activities are very well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and support staff are very effectively deployed to help pupils tackle their tasks successfully.

20. Teachers have very secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, particularly English and mathematics, and use a variety of successful teaching strategies that take account of differences in pupils' learning styles. The use of multi-sensory techniques, visual aids, artefacts, rhymes and puppets captures the interest and attention of pupils.
21. In the early years there is a good balance between adult-directed activities and those children choose for themselves. Group activities are well planned to consolidate and extend whole class introductions and discussions.
22. Teachers ask challenging questions and encourage pupils to explain their thinking strategies. Teachers and support staff emphasise key vocabulary in order to develop pupils' linguistic skills. Lessons are well paced. Teachers are observant and skilled at employing alternative strategies to refocus pupils' attention if they begin to lose concentration.
23. Teachers treat all pupils equally but they do not challenge gender stereotypes sufficiently.
24. Pupils' bilingual competence is fostered very well through the incidental use of Welsh in a range of contexts throughout the school day.
25. Arrangements for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' progress are very good. This is a model of very good practice. An efficient, effective and manageable system, which is clearly linked to improving standards, is being implemented.
26. The school's assessment policy provides clear, concise guidelines for a variety of procedures that are closely linked to curricular planning. Marking follows the guidelines of the policy and is consistent and accurate. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and indicate how the content can be improved.
27. All teachers keep diaries. In the Early Years, teachers use photographic evidence very effectively to record children's progress. Good use is made of the information gained from baseline assessments to plan appropriate activities.
28. Literacy targets are broken down in fine detail so that they are clearly understood by all teachers. A formal reading test has recently been introduced to determine pupils' reading ages. The school has also designed a useful assessment sheet for pupils at the end of their year in the reception class.
29. Older pupils are assessed thoroughly using standard assessment procedures. There is a very good system for recording pupils' progress which is used to set targets for individual improvement as well as informing the teaching and learning. The school has a Record of Achievement file for each pupil.
30. Teachers demonstrate good understanding of National Curriculum levels in the core subjects and regularly compare and moderate their assessments of pupils' work. Core subject leaders have developed collections of assessed work to help them in their moderation exercises. A similar system is being introduced for foundation subjects.

31. Teachers' weekly plans include a section on assessment and an evaluation of the work that is effectively used to inform future planning and ensure that all pupils understand their individual targets.
32. The school uses its analysis of the results of tests and assessments highly effectively to form teaching groups, plan activities and set targets for achievement.
33. Regular meetings are held with parents. The quality of the annual written reports on pupils' progress is good and they meet statutory requirements. They provide clear judgements on pupils' achievements and give a good indication of how pupils can improve their work. Parents are invited to make a written response to the report.

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

<b>Grade: 1 Good, with outstanding features</b>
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34. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
35. The school responds very well to pupils' learning needs and provides equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum caters well for the whole range of pupils' needs and is very well planned.
36. There is good provision to ensure that all pupils acquire basic and key skills. Planning for the development of pupils' key skills is comprehensive and well co-ordinated. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark.
37. Pupils enjoy coming to school and benefit from its warm, friendly atmosphere. There is a strong community spirit and the quality of relationships is very good. Members of staff are good role models and pupils are effectively encouraged to be thoughtful and supportive towards each other. Pupils in year 2, for example, are aware of the fact that they are role models for younger pupils. Classroom rules, which in some classes have been written by the pupils themselves, are clearly displayed.
38. Teachers make good provision for children aged under five, through a well-planned carousel of activities. Some tasks involve the whole class, others small groups of children and there are regular opportunities for children to choose their own activities. In nursery and reception classes the curriculum is interesting and motivating. The development of pupils' bilingual skills starts very effectively in these classes.
39. The school offers good opportunities for out-of-school learning that complement and extend the curriculum. They include a programme of art, science and physical education clubs, which are very well attended, each in turn, by pupils in Y2. Pupils say that they really enjoy these clubs.
40. Partnerships with the community, other schools, voluntary agencies and a number of individuals, local organisations and public safety, health and welfare authorities are good and enrich the learning experiences of pupils. Parents support the school in fostering close links with the community. Good use is made of training programmes for parents and the community

and there is a strong commitment to life-long learning, where parents participate in a number of courses to develop their skills.

41. Pupils' experiences are enhanced and enriched through their participation in a range of charity fund-raising events and also from the range of visits made to the school by individuals and performing groups. They also benefit from work-related activities and visits and there are examples of local businesses supporting school events.
42. There is a good range of policies and guidelines to ensure the general safety and well-being of pupils whilst attending school and when on educational visits.
43. The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. As a consequence, pupils have a sense of ownership of, and responsibility to, the school and its environment. Generous contributions to charitable organisations demonstrate pupils' concern for those less fortunate than themselves.
44. Daily assemblies include a meaningful act of collective worship. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher create good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development on these occasions. The pupils develop greater understanding of their own and other people's lives and the impact their actions have on others. They also gain insight into religious belief and commitment. Prayers and poems, which have been written by the pupils, are used during services. Opportunities are sometimes missed, however, for pupils to sing hymns to an accompaniment during this time. Members of the local clergy visit regularly and services are held occasionally in the local church.
45. Pupils listen to music from across the world during assembly. Pupils are aware that they live in a multi-faith society and opportunities are taken in several subjects to raise pupils' awareness that they live in a multicultural society.
46. The successful development of pupils' bilingual skills is effectively integrated into the life of the school. There is appropriate emphasis on studying the traditions, history and culture of Wales. They visit places of interest and celebrate St David's Day. They are developing an increasing knowledge of Welsh music, artists and historical figures. Pupils sing Welsh folk songs and dance Welsh folk dances.
47. The arrangements for pupils' personal and social education (PSE), including health and sex education are very good. Provision has been enhanced through the integration of a new PSE scheme of work across the curriculum, as well as in-class discussions known as 'Circle Times.'
48. Teachers encourage people from different occupations and professions to speak to pupils about their work. The contribution of the police and fire services, together with health professionals and artists, has a positive impact on pupils' learning and understanding of the world of work.
49. Pupils are aware of environmental issues such as litter. There are good links with local industries to develop pupils' understanding of recycling.

These experiences have helped pupils gain some understanding of the importance of sustainable development.

50. Pupils' experiences across the curriculum enable them to acquire a range of skills and a positive attitude to learning. A programme has recently been introduced to encourage pupils further to develop their skills in problem solving and working together.

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

<b>Grade: 1 Good, with outstanding features</b>
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51. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
52. The school succeeds in its aim of creating an ethos that encourages positive values and attitudes. There is a good relationship between staff and learners and between the school, parents and the local community. Pupils feel happy, safe and secure. They say that teachers treat them fairly, look after them and that they like coming to school. Parents believe that all pupils are valued and treated equally.
53. The clearly defined and comprehensive induction programme for reception and older pupils creates a welcoming and supportive environment for new admissions. Good transitional arrangements exist for learners between KS1 and KS2.
54. The school values parental support for the benefit of both pupils and staff. The responses from the pre-inspection parental questionnaire indicate that, in return, the school receives the full support of parents and carers for its efforts and work. They play a very important part in the school's activities and contribute in a variety of ways including helping with reading and supporting school trips.
55. A range of useful information is provided for parents and carers, which includes the school prospectus, newsletters, induction and Basic Skills Agency information, 'Catch Up' records and the Annual Governors' Report to Parents. A home-school agreement is in place, which parents sign when their children start school. The school meets statutory requirements in relation to the information provided for parents and carers.
56. Registers are marked in accordance with statutory requirements and registration is administered effectively. Although there are no targets set for improving attendance, clear guidance is provided for staff, pupils, parents and carers on the procedures to follow in the event of unexpected absence. Good working arrangements exist with the school's education welfare officer.
57. The provision for additional learning needs is outstanding and one of the factors underlying the school's success in raising the achievement of all pupils. The learning needs of individual pupils across the ability range are carefully identified and additional support is very well planned and directed at particular groups of pupils. Support staff know pupils' objectives and make a very valuable contribution to their learning.

58. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are very well supported so that they have equal access to the full curriculum. Targets in their individual education plans (IEPs) are clear and precise and teachers differentiate tasks effectively to cater for their needs. There is an expectation that they can achieve and can produce a good quality and quantity of work. The school works well with parents, governors and external agencies in reviewing the progress and needs of pupils with SEN.
59. Facilities for pupils with disabilities have recently been built to ensure that they have equal access to the curriculum and to the school.
60. The 'Catch Up' programme is very successful in raising the achievement of pupils who, though they do not have SEN, are not making the progress expected of them.
61. The headteacher is the named Child Protection Officer and the Chair of Governors acts as a link governor. All staff and non-teaching staff are well briefed and understand the protocols and procedures outlined in the school's Child Protection Policy.
62. Good equal opportunities policies reflect the school's commitment to equality of access and opportunity for all. A race equality policy is in place and rare incidents of racist attitudes are challenged and good race relations promoted. Gender equality is also promoted, though some pupils still make stereotypical choices in their activities.
63. The PSE programme helps pupils understand how it feels to be left out and the importance of friendship is promoted through 'Circle Time' and 'Healthy Week.'
64. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are well explained and the strategies are effective, with the emphasis placed on encouraging and praising positive behaviour. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or aggressive behaviour, but when such incidents have arisen in the past staff have applied the school policies and procedures promptly and effectively. Pupils know what the school's procedures are, should any bullying occur.

<b>Leadership and Management</b>
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**Key question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?**

<b>Grade: 1 Good, with outstanding features</b>
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65. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
66. The headteacher, whilst adopting a collegiate approach to the management of the school, provides very good leadership and a clear direction to its work. Staff and governors review the aims of the school once a year to reflect on their core mission and to ensure that they all understand and share its main aims and values. The school successfully achieves its aims, priorities and targets.

67. There is a strong, mutually supportive team spirit amongst all the staff, who work for the good of the pupils. All staff and governors are involved in the formulation of policies and reach a consensus on how they are to be implemented.
68. All members of staff have detailed job descriptions. Their professional development is improved through the performance management cycle, which is linked both to personal targets and to school priorities identified in the SDP. In discussion with the head teacher, members of teaching and support staff identify their strengths and targets for improvement. Well-chosen in-service courses help staff achieve their targets and have a positive impact on the school's provision and standards achieved.
69. Staff are regularly promoted. The deputy headteacher is currently an acting head at a local infants school. The head teacher is a mentor on the national Professional Headship Induction Programme and has won the Teaching Awards Trust for Primary Head Teacher in Wales 2004.
70. The school takes good account of national priorities and works well with other partners, such as local colleges and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, in the training of student nursery nurses and learning support assistants.
71. Governors are well informed, committed to the school and involved in setting its strategic direction. They, too, have clear role descriptions, which set out ways in which they can support the school and how they can monitor its performance. Individual governors are linked to particular subjects or aspects of the school.
72. Members of the governing body make regular visits to the school, look at pupils' work and displays and hold discussions with the members of staff with whom they are linked in order to monitor how well pupils achieve. They have benefited from training on a number of relevant issues provided by the LEA.
73. The governing body meets regularly and fulfils its regulatory and legal requirements.

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

<b>Grade: 2 Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
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74. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
75. The school's self-evaluation process is thorough. It has recently begun formally to draw upon the views of pupils and parents, as well as staff, governors and external bodies such as the LEA and Basic Skills Agency in order to identify strengths and weaknesses.
76. Subject leaders monitor the quality of teachers' planning and pupils' work and ensure that the schemes of work for which they are responsible are implemented in practice. They are well informed about standards of achievement from the results of assessment in the core subjects. They are not yet as fully involved as they could be in gathering first hand evidence of

the quality of teaching, an aspect of the self-evaluation process that they, themselves, have identified as an area for improvement. Moderation of assessed work in foundation subjects, with a view to identifying ways of improving pupils' performance, is at an early stage of development.

77. The headteacher analyses, very carefully, data from baseline assessments of children's attainment in nursery and reception classes and NFER and teacher assessments in KS1. She uses this data to track pupils' progress, set realistic, but challenging targets for all pupils and to improve the quality of the school's provision.
78. The SDP is a comprehensive document that underpins all efforts to address the needs of the school. Qualitative and quantitative targets are set and progress towards their achievement is monitored throughout the school year and reported on by the head teacher at termly governors' meetings. Areas of priority are fully resourced in terms of time, training and finance.
79. The headteacher and other relevant members of staff monitor the effectiveness of new initiatives and evaluate the extent to which they result in improvement. Further action is taken when necessary. For example, a new approach to the teaching of spelling improved the performance of pupils in KS1 by fifty per cent, but was found to be unsuitable for the under-fives and the school therefore returned to the methods it formerly found to be successful with children in the early years.
80. The school produced two self-evaluation reports prior to the inspection. The first, based on the European Foundation Quality Model of Excellence, gives a very good picture of the processes of self-evaluation and development planning established by the school. The second, based on the new framework for inspection, gives a clear and concise judgement of how well the school is performing in relation to the seven key questions. The school's judgements on its performance are accurate and match those of the inspection team.
81. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. All the key issues found then have been effectively addressed.

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

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

82. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
83. All staff are appropriately qualified to teach the NC and religious education. Resources are well deployed to support the teaching of the NC and religious education and to enrich the quality of teaching and learning. The provision of resources is linked to priorities identified in the SDP.
84. Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard and projector. The school has a computer suite that is made available to the local community for two half-day sessions per week. The main hall is used for physical education and assembly and there is a separate canteen for lunchtimes. There is a

very well resourced library. The nursery class has recently been extended and refurbished.

85. The under-fives and KS1 pupils play in a safe, secure outdoor area. The yard is divided into four and pupils play purposefully with the playground games and equipment provided. The yard and equipment are timetabled for separate use by children under five and KS1 pupils.
86. This is an old school, with spacious accommodation which is in good condition and state of repair. Members of staff have worked hard to produce an attractive environment for pupils. This is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. Throughout the school, colourful displays enhance the environment and help to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.
87. The school operates very smoothly. The school administrator carries out daily routines effectively and the lunchtime staff work efficiently. The accommodation is kept clean and is well maintained by caretakers and cleaners.
88. The school's budget is wisely and carefully managed. For five out of the last six years the school has benefited from having 40 per cent of the headteacher's salary 'saved' because she has managed two other schools. Surplus funds have resulted in an advantageous staffing ratio, major capital expenditure and additional resources.
89. Teaching and support staff are very effectively deployed to have the maximum impact on the standards pupils achieve. For example, the large number of pupils in Y2 is split into two smaller groups in the mornings and every class in the school has a designated class assistant or nursery nurse.
90. A draft budget is presented to the governing body early in the financial year. It is monitored regularly and purchases are prioritised according to need. Governors are aware of the need to be prudent with funds and are proactive in planning for the future. They have a planned contingency fund to take account of falling rolls.
91. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

## **The school's response to the inspection**

The inspection findings recognise that we have maintained and improved the high standards identified in the last inspection. We are pleased that the inspection team agreed with all the judgements made by the school during the self-evaluation process.

Strengths of the school such as, consistently good teaching, high expectations, pupils' attitudes to learning, provisions for additional learning needs and strong partnerships have been identified as outstanding features. The dedication and contribution of all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are acknowledged, as is the quality of relationships in the school.

The report confirms that we are achieving our aim of creating an ethos that encourages positive values and attitudes. Our school is a happy, safe and secure place in which our children can develop.

An action plan will be put in place to address the two recommendations in the report. Maintaining our high standards and further developing the role of the co-ordinator are inexorably linked and we feel confident that we can address these issues. Staff will have the opportunity to develop their monitoring skills and observe good practice. Together with the governors we are already discussing the way forward and our action plan will be detailed in the SDP of 2005.

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

## Appendix A

### Basic information about the school

Name of School	Cwmaman Infants School
School type	Foundation
Age-range of pupils	3-7
Address of school	Fforchaman Road Cwmaman Aberdare Rhondda Cynon Taff
Post-Code	CF44 6NS
Telephone Number	01685 875862

Head teacher	Mrs Carol Parker
Date of appointment	January 1994
Chair of Governors	Mr Howard Davies
Registered Inspector	Stephanie James
Dates of inspection	2-3 November 2004

## 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	28	31	24	38	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	122

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	5	1	5.5

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	1:20.7
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	1:14
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	23
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1:26

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	R	KS1	Whole School
Autumn 2003	87.3%	91%	89.2%
Spring 2004	86.9%	88.4%	87.7%
Summer 2004	90.9%	91.9%	91.4%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	46
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

## Appendix C

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2004		Number of pupils in Y2:	36					
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
English:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	6	11	53	31	0
		National	0	4	14	63	20	0
En: reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	8	8	47	36	0
		National	0	4	14	55	27	0
En: writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	6	6	81	8	0
		National	0	5	14	69	11	0
En: speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	17	53	31	0
		National	0	3	12	63	22	0
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	6	6	64	25	0
		National	0	2	11	63	24	0
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	6	8	56	31	0
		National	0	2	10	66	22	0

### Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English according to teacher assessment

In the school	83	In Wales	79
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D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements

W Pupils who are working towards level 1

## Appendix D

### The evidence base of the inspection

- A team of three inspectors was present in the school for five inspector days.
- Pre-inspection meetings were held with parents and the governing body to discuss the life and work of the school.
- 47 questionnaires completed by parents were analysed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff with specific responsibilities and support staff.
- School policies, schemes of work and other documentation were examined.
- 18 lessons or parts of sessions were observed.
- Samples of pupils' work from across the ability range, in a variety of subjects and from each year group were examined.
- Discussions were held with pupils about their work and life in school.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during playtimes, lunchtimes and at the beginning and end of sessions.
- Inspectors attended assemblies and observed extra-curricular activities.
- Inspectors attended post-inspection meetings.

## Appendix E

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Ms Stephanie James Registered Inspector	Context Summary and recommendations Key question 1 (1.1-1.9) Key question 2 (2.1-2.8) Key question 4 (4.10-4.18) Key question 5 Key question 6 Key question 7 (7.4-7.7)
Ms Helen Adams Lay Inspector	Key question 1 (1.11-1.12) Key question 3 (3.8, 3.12-3.14) Key question 4 (4.1-4.9)
Ms Helen Smith Team Inspector	Key question 1 (1.10, 1.13-1.16) Key question 2 (2.9-2.12) Key question 3 (3.1-3.7, 3.9-3.11) Key question 7 (7.1-7.3)

### *Acknowledgement*

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

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

**CWMAMAN INFANTS SCHOOL  
Fforchaman Road  
Cwmaman  
Aberdare  
CF44 6NS**

**by**

**Stephanie J James Rgl  
W267/78911**

**A Summary Report for Parents**

**School Number: 574/2125**

**Date of Inspection: 2 – 3 November 2004**

**Cwmaman 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.

The inspection of **Cwmaman Infants School** took place between 2-3 November 2004. An independent team of three inspectors, led by Ms Stephanie James 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.

#### **Basic information about the school**

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Ms Stephanie James Registered Inspector	Context Summary and recommendations Key question 1 (1.1-1.9) Key question 2 (2.1-2.8) Key question 4 (4.10-4.18) Key question 5 Key question 6 Key question 7 (7.4-7.7)
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## **Context**

### **The nature of the school**

The school serves a close-knit, stable community in the village of Cwmaman, on the outskirts of Aberdare. There are 92 pupils on roll in the Reception, Y1 and Y2 classes and a further 28 children attend the nursery class full-time. Children are eligible to start nursery on their third birthday and enter the reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. Ninety nine per cent of pupils are of white ethnic origin and from English speaking homes. Twenty per cent of pupils are on the register of special education needs (SEN). Information from baseline assessments shows that children's attainment on entry to nursery is below average. Parents and carers are very supportive of their children and many extended families live in the neighbourhood. There is a high level of unemployment in the area because of the closure of a number of businesses. Forty six per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. There are a variety of social problems, including vandalism to the school building. Since the last inspection in 1995, a computer suite has been added and £70,000 spent on the nursery unit. Facilities for pupils with disabilities have been built.

For five years the headteacher led the local nursery and junior schools, as well as the infant school. She has led the infant school alone since the closure of the nursery and the appointment of the deputy head of the juniors as acting headteacher in September 2003. The deputy head of the infants was seconded to the post of acting headteacher at another infant school in January 2004.

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

The school's main aims are to:

- Create a happy school in which pupils of all abilities achieve success.
- Provide a curriculum that contributes to the all round growth and development of every child, with no discrimination regarding gender, race, culture or special need.
- Develop positive personal qualities and social values.
- Build pupils' confidence and self-esteem, celebrating achievements.
- Develop pupils' curiosity in the world and understanding of changes in the community.
- Build on children's early knowledge, understanding and skills to establish a solid foundation for what follows.

The school's main targets for the year 2004-2005 are to:

- Improve standards in writing both in presentation and quality.
- Explore the possibility of achieving the Investors in People quality mark.
- Incorporate the teaching of thinking skills in curriculum planning.
- Continue with whole school self-evaluation to guide school improvement.
- To review communication channels between all stakeholders in the school.

- To review the two year rolling programme at KS1 in the light of the new Foundation Phase and confirm the role of monitoring.

## Main Findings

Cwmaman Infants is a good school with outstanding features. It has continued to improve standards since the last inspection. The inspection team agreed with all the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

### Table of grades awarded

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

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

### Standards

- The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils are making good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- In the early years and at KS1, pupils' progress and standards of achievement in the key skills of listening, reading and numeracy are good with outstanding features. In speaking, writing and use of information and communications technology (ICT) they are good, with no important shortcomings.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress relative to their ability and achieve the targets set for them.
- Pupils develop their bilingual skills well. Pupils use Welsh naturally and confidently, relative to their age and experience.
- Pupils' problem-solving and creative skills are good and applied through a variety of activities.
- Although many children's attainment on entry to school is below the Local Education Authority (LEA) average, and well below the average for Wales, pupils make very good progress and consistently meet or exceed their targets for attainment at the end of key stage 1 (KS1).

- Over the last three years, the number of pupils achieving the expected level 2 in English and mathematics has generally been above the average for Wales. Their achievement in science has been slightly below the national average. The number of pupils achieving level 3 in the core subjects has been above average. When compared with similar schools, pupils' performance is well above average.
- The school is very successful in enabling pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to achieve their potential. This is an outstanding feature of the school's provision.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, are interested in their work and are able to sustain concentration when engaged in appropriate tasks. They have a good sense of what is fair and some awareness of diversity within society.
- Pupils enjoy being in a friendly, caring and orderly environment. They are polite and courteous towards one another and visitors. Their behaviour throughout the school day is good.
- Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, with average attendance for the last academic year being 90.3 per cent. The vast majority of pupils are punctual at the start of the school day.
- The quality of education and training
- In the lessons observed 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>
17%	83%	0%	0%	0%

- One of the school's strengths is its consistently good teaching. At 100 per cent, the percentage of good or better lessons is twice the Welsh Assembly Government's target that 50 per cent of lessons should be good or better.
- Throughout the school, teachers know pupils well and have very good relationships with them. A key ingredient in the good quality of teaching is that teachers believe in pupils' capacity to succeed and have high expectations of their performance.
- Lesson plans are detailed and have clear learning objectives, although the purpose of lessons is not always and consistently made clear to pupils. However, activities are very well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and support staff are very effectively deployed to help pupils tackle their tasks successfully.
- Teachers have very secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, particularly English and mathematics, and use a variety of successful teaching strategies that enable pupils to enjoy learning and achieve well. In the early years there is a good balance between adult-directed activities and those children choose themselves.
- Teachers ask challenging questions and encourage pupils to explain their thinking strategies. Teachers and support staff emphasise key vocabulary in order to develop pupils' linguistic skills. Lessons are well paced and maintain pupils' interest. Teachers treat all pupils consistently and equally.

- Pupils' bilingual competence is fostered very well through the incidental use of Welsh throughout the school day.
- Arrangements for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' progress are very good. The school uses its analysis of the results of tests and assessments highly effectively to form teaching groups, plan activities and set targets for achievement. Pupils understand their individual targets for improvement. The quality of annual reports to parents is good and they meet statutory requirements.
- The school responds very well to pupils' learning needs and provides equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils enjoy coming to school and benefit from its warm, friendly atmosphere. The curriculum caters well for the whole range of pupils' needs and is very well planned. There is a very well attended programme of extra-curricular clubs for year 2 pupils, which they really enjoy.
- Partnerships with parents, the community, other schools, individuals and organisations enrich the learning experiences of pupils. There is a strong commitment to life-long learning and parents participate in a number of skills courses.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and the provision for personal and social education (PSE) is very good. There is appropriate emphasis on studying the traditions, history and culture of Wales.
- The provision for additional learning needs is outstanding and one of the factors underlying the school's success in raising the achievement of all pupils. Pupils with SEN are very well supported.
- Good equal opportunities policies reflect the school's commitment to equality of access and opportunity, though not enough is done to challenge gender stereotypes.
- The school succeeds in its aim of creating an ethos that encourages positive values and attitudes. Pupils feel happy, safe, secure and well looked after.

## **Leadership and management**

- The headteacher, whilst adopting a collegiate approach to the management of the school, provides very good leadership and a clear direction to its work. There is a strong, mutually supportive team spirit amongst all staff, who work for the good of the pupils. The school successfully achieves its aims, priorities and targets.
- The cycle of staff self-evaluation and appraisal is well established. Their continuing professional development is effectively linked both to their personal targets and to priorities identified in the school development plan (SDP).
- Members of the governing body are well informed, committed to the school and involved in setting its strategic direction. They make regular visits to look at pupils' work and hold discussions with members of staff in order to monitor the quality of its provision.
- Subject leaders are well informed about standards of achievement and areas for improvement in the core subjects, through the moderation of assessed work. Such moderation is, however, at an early stage of development in the foundation

subjects. Subject leaders do not yet gather first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching but have, themselves, recognised this as an area for improvement.

- The school's self-evaluation process is thorough and has recently begun to draw upon the views of all interested parties in order to identify strengths and areas for development. The two self-evaluation reports produced prior to the inspection give a good picture of the process of self-evaluation and clear judgements about the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's judgements about its performance are accurate and match those of the inspection team.
- The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. All the key issues found then have been effectively addressed.
- All staff are appropriately qualified to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. Resources are well deployed to enrich the quality of teaching and learning. The provision of resources is linked to priorities identified in the SDP.
- This is an old school, with spacious accommodation which is in good condition and state of repair. Staff have worked hard to produce an attractive environment for pupils, which is having a positive effect on pupils' learning.
- The school operates very smoothly. The school administrator carries out daily routines effectively and the lunchtime staff work efficiently. The accommodation is kept clean and is well maintained by caretakers and cleaners.
- The school's budget is wisely and carefully managed. Surplus funds have resulted in advantageous staffing ratios, major capital expenditure and additional resources.
- Overall, the school provides good value for money.

### **Key issues for action**

The school now needs to:

- R1. maintain the good standards achieved;
- R2. further develop the role of subject leaders to include:
  - evaluation of the quality of teaching and;
  - moderation of assessed work in the foundation subjects.

The school has already identified the need to develop the role of subject leaders in its SDP.

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

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