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Report Reference

REPORT BY
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WO83

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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

A new nomenclature to describe pupils' progress through school was introduced in 1989. This system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to age 18 is intended to ease communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs and emphasise the importance of continuity.

The term "Reception" (R) is applied to the year group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) who attain the age of 5 during the academic year "Year 1" (Y1) is applied to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on to Y13 the year group who attain the age of 18 during the academic year:

	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Years	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

Key stage 1 of the national curriculum consists of Y1 and Y2; KS2 of Y3 to Y6; KS3 of Y7 to Y9; KS4 of Y10 and Y11 (which is the final year of compulsory education).

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The five-point grading scale used to represent the main judgements in this report is as follows:

1. Very good: many good features, some of them outstanding.
2. Good: good features and no major shortcomings.
3. Satisfactory: good features outweigh some shortcomings.
4. Unsatisfactory: some satisfactory work but shortcomings in important areas.
5. Poor: many shortcomings.

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

The school is situated in the village of Cwmbach, on the outskirts of Aberdare, Rhondda Cynon Taff. The great majority of pupils are drawn from the village and the immediate locality. The area is described as neither particularly prosperous nor disadvantaged but does include some areas that are economically disadvantaged. 25% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

There are 98 pupils, aged between 4 and 7 years of age, on the school register and they represent the full range of ability. English is the predominant language spoken at home. 21 pupils are designated as having special educational needs [SEN].

The School Development Plan [SDP] includes the following priorities:

- to raise standards in reading and writing;
- to extend the use of information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school;
- to develop the role of the SEN co-ordinator;
- to extend staff development.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

- The school is a happy and caring community which promotes appropriate values and good attitudes to learning. This is a major strength of the school.

Educational Standards Achieved By Pupils

- The quality of provision for children under five is appropriate and promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. The children's personal and social development, and their physical development, is good. Standards of achievement are satisfactory in the other areas of learning.

Reception children [4-5 years]	
Language, literacy and communication skills	Satisfactory
Personal and social development	Good
Mathematical development	Satisfactory
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Satisfactory
Creative development	Satisfactory
Physical development	Good

- In Key Stage 1(KS1), pupils' standards of achievement in the different subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) are as follows:

	Key Stage 1
English	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory

Welsh Second Language	Good
Design and technology	Satisfactory
Information Technology	Good
History	Satisfactory
Geography	Satisfactory
Art	Good
Physical Education	Good
Music	Satisfactory
Religious Education	Satisfactory

Quality of Education

- The quality of teaching was judged to be very good in 3% of lessons, good in 32% and satisfactory in 53%. The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in 12% of lessons. In the best teaching, teachers' presentations are good, lessons proceed at a good pace and resources are used effectively to support pupils' learning.
- Where teaching is less effective, expectations are not sufficiently high and tasks lack adequate challenge to extend pupils' learning. The organisation of group activities does not always ensure that the learning is purposeful and develops at a good pace.
- The school has a detailed policy for developing key skills, but strategies have yet to be implemented fully. Children under five make satisfactory progress in applying their early literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in the six areas of learning. In KS1, pupils make increasing use of their literacy and numeracy skills to support their work in other subjects. Pupils make good use of their ICT skills to gather and to present information in a range of forms. Older Y2 pupils make good use of their Welsh oral and early writing skills in aspects of their topic work.
- The school offers pupils a broad and relevant curriculum. Policies and schemes of work of good quality are available for most subjects. Teachers' individual planning is detailed, but whole school collaborative planning is insufficiently developed to ensure progression in the learning in all subjects.
- The school's provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory and pupils make consistent progress in their work. Pupils have access to a broad curriculum and benefit from the additional support provided by the class teachers, SEN teachers and the learning support staff.
- The school has comprehensive assessment and marking policies. Assessment processes are not used sufficiently in evaluating pupils' progress to inform future planning, particularly in the foundation subjects. Pupils' work is marked consistently, but they are not offered sufficient guidance on improving the quality of their work.

Management

- The head offers the school clear direction and succeeds in establishing good relationships with pupils, staff, parents, governors and the local community. The head and staff are successful in their aim of creating an ethos founded on sound values which is conducive to learning. The governing body is well informed and undertakes its responsibilities effectively. Members are highly supportive of the school. The SDP includes suitable targets for a wide range of curricular and general matters. The targets

set are being addressed and satisfactory progress is being made in seeking improvements.

- The head and governing body manage the financial resources carefully and the recent auditors' report notes that the financial administration of the school is of a good standard. The significant surplus of money that has accumulated over a number of years is planned to safeguard staffing and to provide additional classroom support. The school receives generous financial support from the parents and the local community and the money is used appropriately to purchase additional resources. The school is well maintained. The displays of pupils' work are of good quality and enhance the learning environment for pupils.

Ethos of the School

- The quality of the school's provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is good. Staff know the pupils well and take a keen interest in their personal development and welfare. They offer pupils praise for positive effort and achievement. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture and a growing awareness of other cultures. Most pupils are well behaved and their attendance levels are satisfactory.
- Partnership with parents and the community, schools and other institutions is good. Parents are kept well informed about the life and work of the school and new initiatives, such as the Share and Family Numeracy projects, succeed in involving parents more closely in their children's education. The school values opportunities to enhance pupils' learning by establishing close links with the community and with local businesses.

School Improvement

- The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing a number of the key issues identified for attention in the previous inspection report. Issues relating to classroom organisation and the monitoring of standards of achievement remain to be addressed further. The SDP identifies relevant issues for attention and sets suitable targets for improvement in a number of areas. The detailed action plans outline clearly the tasks to be undertaken and satisfactory progress is being made in addressing the targets set.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Pupils' standards of achievement are very good in 3% of lessons, good in 32% and satisfactory in 62%. Standards of achievement are unsatisfactory in the remaining 3% of lessons.

- The provision for the under-fives is appropriate and promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Children's personal and social development, and their physical development, is good. Standards in the other areas of learning are satisfactory.
- In KS1, pupils' listening skills are good. Standards in speaking, reading and writing are satisfactory. More able pupils achieve good standards in their work. Standards in mathematics and science are satisfactory.

- Standards in Welsh second language, information technology, art and physical education are good. Standards in design and technology, history, geography, music and religious education are satisfactory.
- Girls perform better than boys in all subjects. The school is addressing the under achievement of boys by reviewing teaching approaches and by targeting specific aspects of literacy and numeracy. Pupils with SEN make consistent progress in their work.
- The school's results in the NC assessments improved year on year from 1998 to 2000 and compared favourably with the national and Unitary Authority's (AU) averages. The results in 2001 were below the national averages and the school failed to achieve its targets.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills Across the Curriculum

- Children under five achieve satisfactory standards in the key skills of language and communication, numeracy and ICT in the six areas of learning.
- In KS1, pupils listen well and the more able respond readily during class discussion. They are ready to answer questions but the great majority of pupils offer only brief responses. Pupils read satisfactorily and the more able read fluently and accurately, but they do not use their reading skills sufficiently to gather information from books. Pupils write for different purposes in their work across the curriculum. A significant number of pupils do not write frequently enough or in sufficient length when recording their experiences and observations in other subjects.
- Pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactory and they make increasing use of their mathematical skills in their work in other subjects. In science, pupils use their skills purposefully to gather and to record data. In design and technology, more able pupils measure reasonably accurately when making pop up cards.
- Pupils make good use of their ICT skills to support their work in many subjects. They use their skills well to gather and present information in a range of forms and for different purposes. In geography, pupils collect and display information on weather patterns and can describe their findings accurately. In science, older Y2 pupils can compile and use a simple database competently.
- Pupils enjoy their Welsh lessons and have a good understanding of basic patterns and vocabulary. They make extensive use of their oral skills in a good number of lessons including music and physical education. During collective worship, they listen to a story in Welsh and respond accurately when asked to recall the main points. More able pupils are beginning to record aspects of their topic work in Welsh.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural Development

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

- The school conforms with the statutory requirements regarding daily worship. The services have a Christian atmosphere and they contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils and staff value the contribution of the local vicar. Pupils participate in religious festivals, such as the harvest festival, and end the day singing simple prayers.
- Pupils generally show care and concern for each other and play co-operatively together. Older pupils are able to state some of the school rules. Pupils are encouraged to share and understand the importance of fairness and of working together.
- The school is a caring environment where pupils are polite and friendly to each other and to adults. Teachers and other adults who work with the pupils provide suitable role models and establish supportive relationships with them. Pupils are aware of the needs of others and are involved in regular fund raising events and in collecting money for good causes.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the Welsh culture through topic work and lessons in subjects such as history, geography, music, dance and art. There is good use of incidental Welsh with all ages throughout the school day. Pupils celebrate St David's Day, perform Welsh folk dances and sing Welsh songs.
- Pupils have a good awareness of other traditions and cultures through a study of costumes and food from other countries. They know a good number of songs from different countries around the world.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Standards of behaviour overall are good.

- Pupils are aware of the school rules and respond positively to rewards and praise used by the staff to promote good behaviour.
- Appropriate procedures are in place to identify and eliminate bullying.
- Pupils show courtesy and consideration to others.
- The behaviour of a small minority of young pupils disrupts the learning of other pupils in the class.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance rates are satisfactory.

- Good attendance is rewarded through awarding certificates.
- The head monitors attendance and works closely with the Education Welfare Officer. Parents are encouraged to notify the school when their child is absent, but there are a significant number of unauthorised absences.
- The school has set itself targets to improve attendance and satisfactory progress is being made towards meeting these targets.

- The school's system for completing attendance registers complies with the requirements of the Welsh National Assembly.
- Punctuality overall is good.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching was judged to be very good in 3 % of lessons, good in 32 % and satisfactory in 53%. The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in 12 % of lessons.

- Teachers have a secure understanding of the majority of the subjects that they teach and make appropriate use of a range of teaching methods. They use resources effectively to support pupils' learning.
- Where the teaching is good, and occasionally very good, activities are well matched to lesson objectives and good use is made of cross-curricular links to extend pupils' understanding. During whole class sessions, teachers' presentations are clear and purposeful, the questioning is pertinent, activities proceed at a good pace and plenary sessions are used effectively to reinforce the learning.
- Where there are shortcomings in the teaching, teacher expectations are insufficiently high and tasks lack challenge to extend pupils' learning. During discussion periods, pupils are not consistently challenged to extend their oral contributions and thereby enrich their language. During group activities, the pace of work is uneven and often slow.
- In the reception classes, the organisation of group activities does not ensure that lesson objectives are met. Teachers and support staff guide pupils well, but adult intervention is insufficient to challenge pupils and to extend their learning.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good.

- Suitable policies offer clear guidelines and procedures for assessing and responding to pupils' achievements.
- The arrangements for completing Baseline Assessment and end of Key Stage assessments are appropriate. Teacher assessment and statutory Baseline Assessment are used to set appropriate class targets for the under fives. Information received from the Nursery school, where most pupils attend, is acknowledged.
- In KS1, assessment information from published tests and teacher assessment is used effectively to set three ability levels of targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy. A tracking sheet of pupil progress supports and verifies group target setting.
- There is a comprehensive policy on responding to pupils' work. Most marking in pupils' books praises work, but comments do not offer pupils advice on how to improve

their work. Good work is celebrated and rewarded with stickers and achievement certificates.

- Samples of pupils' work are kept in individual folders. Samples are annotated with dates and clear explanation as to the significance of the piece of work.
- Assessment records include core subject checklists and comment sheets which are completed appropriately. Most foundation subjects are assessed against the level descriptions with the date achieved. The information gained from the assessment of foundation subjects is not used sufficiently to inform future planning.
- The school has an open door policy which offers parents an opportunity to discuss their children's work. Parents are invited to parents evenings each term to discuss their child's work. These meetings are valued by parents and are generally well attended.
- The annual reports to parents include relevant information on pupils' progress, but areas for development are insufficiently highlighted. Comments on the foundation subjects are not specific enough and tend to focus on the activities experienced.

5.3 Curriculum

The school provides a broad, balanced curriculum that includes all NC subjects and religious education.

- The curriculum for the under-fives is appropriate and promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Teachers' planning is detailed but does not always result in activities that extend children's learning. The management of group activities does not ensure that learning objectives are met. During outdoor play sessions, opportunities are missed for extending children's physical and language skills through effective adult guidance and intervention.
- The school has an extensive range of curriculum policies and schemes of work which have been updated to reflect current national requirements. They are of a good standard and offer clear guidance on subject development across the school.
- The curriculum is presented through a combination of topic and subject teaching. The whole school system of long, medium and short-term planning ensures consistency of approach. Individual teacher planning is detailed and ensures satisfactory progression in the core subjects. In a number of foundation subjects, expectations are insufficiently high to ensure consistent progression in pupils' knowledge and skills as they proceed through the school.
- The curriculum is differentiated for the mixed age and ability groups in classes, but tasks lack challenge to extend pupils' learning. This shortcoming affects standards in a good number of subjects.
- Whole-school planning highlights opportunities for promoting the key skills across the curriculum. These opportunities are used effectively to promote pupils' ICT skills, but are insufficiently developed to extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

- The curriculum is enhanced by visits to places of educational interest and by after school clubs. In art and history, the work of visiting experts is integrated effectively into curriculum planning and directly into class activities.
- The school has a home school contract and the regular homework provided reinforces and extends pupils' learning.
- Good attention is paid to the 'Cwricwlwm Cymreig' in the displays around the school, in class topics and through specific lessons in subjects such as geography, history and music.
- Personal and social education (PSE) is not formally taught, but the whole ethos of the school and the relationship between teachers and pupils promotes this dimension.
- All pupils have equal opportunities to access the whole curriculum.
- Pupils with SEN are well supported and fully integrated into the life of the school.
- No pupils have been disapplied from NC requirements.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

The quality of the school's provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is good.

- The atmosphere in the school is happy, safe and caring.
- Staff know the pupils well and take a keen interest in their personal development and welfare. Arrangements are in place to deal with pupils who are ill or who have an accident. The school makes appropriate provision for first aid.
- Pupils are well supervised during playtimes and they readily turn to adults when help and support is needed. During outdoor play activities in the reception class, adult guidance is insufficient to monitor and to support the learning.
- The school has a good range of policies to promote health and safety and the general welfare of all pupils.
- The school applies the UA's child protection policy, and staff are trained in its requirements.
- There is good liaison with external agencies, and specialist support is utilised as required.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with Special Education Needs

The provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory.

- The requirements of the SEN Code of Practice are properly met. There are 21 pupils on the school's SEN register with the great majority being older pupils. No pupil is currently in receipt of a formal statement. The early identification of pupils' needs, linked to the provision of additional support, receives insufficient attention.

- In KS1, younger pupils are given satisfactory support within the classroom by their class teacher. Eighteen pupils, mostly older Y2 pupils, receive additional support once a week from visiting SEN teachers. The visiting teachers withdraw the pupils, generally in small groups or individually, and these sessions are well planned and effective.
- The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) collaborates closely with the support teachers and class teachers.
- Individual Education Plan (IEPs) are in place for all identified pupils and include clear targets. The targets are set by the teachers and SENCO and mainly address pupils' literacy skills. There is insufficient consideration given to supporting children who have basic problems with number skills. Some IEP targets continue for more than a term and are not specific enough to show short-term progress.
- The school has a range of recording systems to track pupils' progress and the information is shared by the staff. IEP targets are reviewed with parents through parent meetings. The parents appreciate the supportive liaison and feel they are kept well informed.
- A good range of learning resources, including ICT, is used with the older pupils to improve literacy skills.
- Most pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress, and a small number make good progress.
- Appropriate liaison exists with the support agencies.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and other Institutions

Partnership with parents, community, schools and other institutions is good.

- Parents are kept well informed by the school prospectus, newsletters, school reports and regular meetings. New initiatives, such as the Share and Family Numeracy projects, successfully extend the good links with parents.
- Staff know the pupils well and take a keen interest in their personal development and welfare.
- Funds raised by the 'Parent Club' are used for educational visits and the purchase of equipment for the school.
- Staff and pupils benefit from the good pastoral, curricular and administrative links that exist with the Nursery and Junior Schools.
- The school plays an important part in the village community and contributes to local events. Members of the community, such as the policeman, nurse and fireman, visit the school to talk to the pupils.
- There is a good partnership with the initial teacher training colleges.
- Good support is provided by the officers of the UA in developing new initiatives.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

The school has a satisfactory partnership with industry.

- There are few opportunities for the school to develop links with industry, but there is a continuing effort to forge new and stronger links with local businesses.
- Visits to local businesses and visitors to the school extend pupils' knowledge of the work place. The school is actively involved in a mini enterprise with a local business and succeeds in developing pupils' awareness of the needs of customers. Pupils have contributed to a re-cycling project and have fostered links with the local sports club.
- The school takes advantage of the training and support available from the Training and Enterprise Council and the Education Business Partnership to extend the management skills of members of staff.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

The quality of the school's self-evaluation processes and planning for improvement is good.

- Good systems are in place to evaluate the quality of the provision. The head evaluates teachers' short term planning and uses her regular teaching role to monitor class work. Teachers evaluate the work covered with their pupils on a fortnightly basis and pupils' responses to different aspects of the work are identified and recorded. Non contact time is allocated to curriculum co-ordinators to evaluate the quality of provision in their respective subjects. Reports are produced on the work seen in individual lessons and strengths and weaknesses are identified. All these initiatives provide useful information which is collated and shared by staff.
- The school's self-evaluation programme assists collaborative planning and the setting of targets in the SDP, but the process does not focus sufficiently on standards of work and pupil progress to ensure improvements in standards of achievement. Members of the governing body visit the school to discuss subject development with individual co-ordinators. As yet, reports to governors do not include information derived from the school's self-evaluation programme.
- The SDP provides a useful structure for the development of the school. It identifies relevant issues for attention and sets suitable targets for improvement in a number of areas including the curriculum, staff development, pupil behaviour and teaching and learning in the early years. Responsibilities for the work to be undertaken are noted, timescales are set, finance is identified and the success criteria listed. No evaluation of the previous SDP is included, but the governing body receives termly reports from the head on the progress made in implementing the current action plans.
- In KS1, the results of NC tasks and tests are analysed and the information gained is used to set school targets. Individual and group targets are set at the beginning of each year and are reviewed on a termly basis. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for improvement.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

The quality of leadership and efficiency is good.

- The head offers the school clear guidance within a supportive framework. She succeeds in establishing good relationships with pupils, staff, parents, governors and the local community. Management policies are of good, and occasionally very good quality and offer a clear way forward for the future development of the school.
- The staff collaborate well and are highly committed to the school. Job descriptions indicate clearly the duties and responsibilities to be undertaken by each member of staff. Whole school curriculum responsibilities have been shared amongst the teaching staff and planning roles are undertaken effectively.
- The governing body is well informed and takes a lively interest in all aspects of the life of the school. Members visit the school on a regular basis to meet the staff, view school documentation and to update their knowledge of school developments. The presentations made by the curriculum co-ordinators succeed in developing members' knowledge of curriculum matters.
- The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are informative and well presented.
- The general budget is managed carefully by the head and the governing body with the support of the UA's finance officer. School priorities as listed in the SDP are costed and every effort is made to ensure best value for money. A significant surplus of money has accumulated over a number of years and is planned to offset the impact on staffing of decreasing pupil numbers and to provide additional classroom support. The most recent auditors' report notes that the financial administration of the school is of a good standard.
- The school's day to day administration is good. The head is well supported by the clerical assistant.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

Resources are managed effectively.

- The school is staffed by suitably qualified and experienced teachers. They attend a wide range of in-service training (INSET) courses and this training is having a positive effect on teaching approaches. The INSET programme is suitably linked to teachers' individual needs and to school priorities as identified in the SDP.
- The nursery assistants are appropriately qualified and attend additional training courses to extend their knowledge and skills. The assistants and the ancillary staff provide good quality support and make an important contribution to the work of the school.
- The school building is well maintained and standards of cleanliness are very good. Displays of pupils' work create a bright, colourful and inviting environment for pupils. The hard surfaced play areas are marked for a variety of games and are used extensively by pupils. Pupils do not have access to a green area at present, but the school is working with the UA in seeking to develop a field adjacent to the school as additional play area.

- The school has sufficient resources of good quality to meet the needs of the NC and they are used effectively to support pupils' learning. The school receives generous financial support from the parents and the local community and the money is used appropriately to purchase additional resources.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Provision for the under fives

The education provision for the under fives, taken overall, is appropriate and successfully promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Children's personal and social development, and their physical development, is good. Standards in the other areas of learning are satisfactory.

Good features

- The children's personal and social development is good.

Children are happy to come to school and have settled well. Most children play well together during the day taking turns and sharing. They show concern for each other and have developed good relationships with the adults who work with them. The children are developing independent skills in dressing. They take their shoes off for physical education sessions and replace them with minimal assistance.

- The children's language and communication development is satisfactory.

Children listen well to a story and respond satisfactorily to questioning. A small number of children can recollect a story, identifying the main events. Most children know their letter sounds and can identify the main characters in the reading scheme. A few children can read their first books independently. Most children overwrite or under-write with increasing control and a significant number can write their name correctly. Children colour in pictures with good control. They enjoy writing at the writing table and a few children make good attempts to write words independently.

- The children's mathematical development is satisfactory.

Children count forward and backwards to 10 correctly and more able children can count to 20 and recognise numerals to 10. They record numerals satisfactorily. Most children can match, sort and name two dimensional (2D) shapes and identify long and short objects correctly. A few children use mathematical vocabulary correctly.

- The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.

More able children can talk about their home and a few children know their address. Through role play, children act out real life situations in the home corner. Most children have a basic understanding of the jobs of people in the village, including the postman and fireman. Children can describe the weather simply and know there are differences in seasons. They know that it is hot in the summer and cold in winter and can name some of the clothes they would wear. Their ICT skills are developing satisfactorily.

- The children's creative development is satisfactory.

Children know the words to a range of songs and sing with enthusiasm in both English and Welsh. They listen to music and can name some instruments, such as piano, drum and pipes, by the sound they make. Their ability to clap in time to music is developing satisfactorily. Children observe the detail of faces and can produce a collage face with correct detail. They print effectively using a variety of materials and tools. Children have worked with a visiting ceramics artist to produce 3D clay models of themselves. These are of good quality.

- The children's physical development is good.

During physical exercise sessions, most children respond quickly to instructions and are developing a satisfactory awareness of space. They move their bodies with increasing control to depict the actions of animals such as snakes and elephants. A large number of children can pedal two wheel bikes with good control. Children handle a range of small equipment, such as paintbrushes, glue sticks, crayons, plastic tools and construction equipment, satisfactorily.

Shortcomings

- A significant number of children have limited vocabulary and do not talk about their experiences in an extended manner.
- The children's understanding of number processes is insecure.
- There is no clear structure to play activities, including outdoor activities, and as a result children's investigative and discussion skills are insufficiently extended.
- During art activities, children make few choices and do not present their own ideas sufficiently.

English

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils' listening skills are good. Most pupils listen attentively and respond correctly to questions.
- Pupils' speaking skills are satisfactory with more able pupils recalling information correctly.
- Standards in reading are satisfactory. More able pupils read accurately and confidently and achieve good standards. They talk about the story and can identify characters and the main features.
- Most pupils know the letter sounds and names and can identify the initial sounds of a range of words. They can segment simple words correctly. Older pupils can read and write high frequency words correctly.

- Standards in writing are satisfactory. At the beginning of the key stage, more able pupils can write a simple sentence following a pattern independently. Older pupils are beginning to produce extended pieces of writing with neat joined handwriting. Children can make their own books which are attractively presented.
- Pupils are familiar with the terms author and illustrator. Older pupils know that a collection of poems is known as an anthology.
- Pupils select books appropriately from the library, which develops the range of stories read and shared.

Shortcomings

- A significant number of pupils use a limited range of vocabulary and offer only brief responses to questions.
- A good number of pupils lack confidence in talking about the content of stories, finding it difficult to recall main events, predict endings or discuss characters.
- Pupils' ability to write in different forms is insufficiently developed.
- A small number of pupils across the key stage do not read fluently or accurately.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils count and order numbers accurately. They can count forwards and backwards in different steps, double familiar numbers and identify odd and even numbers correctly. More able pupils have a secure understanding of place value. Most pupils understand the operations of addition, subtraction and multiplication. They handle fractions of a half and quarter confidently.
- During mental arithmetic sessions, pupils respond quickly and accurately. In Y2, the more able pupils can explain their methods of reasoning.
- Pupils recognise and can name 2D shapes and more familiar 3D shapes. More able pupils can describe their properties accurately. Older Y2 pupils create symmetrical patterns and can recognise reflective symmetry. Pupils identify, match, sort and count coins correctly and can calculate change. They use non-standard and standard units competently to measure in different contexts. Pupils can tell the time on the hour.
- Pupils gather information and record it satisfactorily in the form of simple tables and block graphs.
- Pupils make good use of their IT skills to practise their number skills.

- Older Y2 pupils apply their knowledge and understanding of mathematics satisfactorily in their work in subjects such as science and design and technology.

Shortcomings

- The skills of more able pupils are insufficiently extended.
- Pupils of lower ability have an insecure understanding of the number process when calculating.
- Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of mathematical language, but their ability to discuss their work and to explain their thinking is less well developed.

Science

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils observe closely and make accurate observations about what they see. More able Y2 pupils can predict sensibly.
- Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of life processes and living things. They understand the importance of a healthy diet and can list healthy and unhealthy foods. They can name and label parts of the body correctly. More able pupils can describe the effect of exercise and rest on pulse rate.
- More able pupils can describe the basic conditions, such as food, water and light, that animals and plants need to survive. They recognise that living things grow and are familiar with the life cycle of the butterfly and the frog. Pupils name parts of the flower correctly.
- Pupils are familiar with the sources of light and can name them correctly. They can sort materials into groups and describe their properties satisfactorily using appropriate terms.
- Pupils record their findings satisfactorily in the form of tables and drawings. Older Y2 pupils make good use of their ICT skills to present their findings. They can create a simple database and produce a graph of their findings.

Shortcomings

- The knowledge and skills of more able pupils are insufficiently extended.
- Pupils' awareness of the principles of a fair test is limited.
- Pupils' ability to discuss their work clearly using scientific terms is less well developed.

- Pupils record accurately on appropriate worksheets and in the form of tables and illustrations, but their ability to make a written record of their findings in their own words is underdeveloped.

Welsh Second Language

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils make good use of incidental Welsh and respond confidently to greetings and instructions.
- During discussion sessions, pupils listen well and answer questions correctly using the patterns that they have learned. More able pupils respond in full sentences and can use different tenses accurately. The great majority of pupils speak with intelligible pronunciation and intonation.
- More able Y2 pupils can initiate and sustain a simple conversation using familiar sentence patterns. They can ask and answer questions independently.
- Pupils know a number of songs and hymns, and sing clearly.
- Y2 pupils can collectively read a story with familiar dialogue. They read accurately and with good understanding.
- Pupils use familiar sentence patterns and basic vocabulary correctly when they complete written tasks. More able pupils can write simple sentences independently.

Shortcomings

- The reading and writing skills of the more able pupils are insufficiently extended as they progress through the school.

Design and Technology

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils use a suitable range of materials and components to make a variety of products including simple puppets, sunglasses cases and boxes. They can make choices with regard to the materials to be used to make their products.
- Most pupils display good cutting and joining skills. More able pupils can measure and mark out materials to make a pop up card. Pupils can investigate different ways of making simple joints to make jointed figures showing movement.
- In one class, pupils use their skills well to investigate, design and make a model car. This work is of a good standard.

- Pupils can assemble and rearrange construction materials satisfactorily to create different models and structures. Samples of work demonstrate pupils' ability to use kits to make a simple car and trailer.
- Pupils record their work in words and pictures satisfactorily. They are beginning to record what they like or dislike about their products. In one class, pupils use their ICT skills effectively to record how they make boxes.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' investigating and designing skills are insufficiently extended.
- Pupils' ability to talk about their ideas and to suggest improvements as they work, is limited.

Information Technology

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils use computers confidently and with increasing independence. They use their IT skills regularly and for a range of purposes.
- They make good use of reinforcement programs to enhance their language and mathematics skills, and of art programs to create pictures and patterns linked to their studies in other subjects. They can add simple text to their pictures and change the size of shapes.
- Pupils' word processing skills are satisfactory, and good in the work of older Y2 pupils. Pupils can change the font and print their work independently.
- With support, more able Y2 pupils use CD Roms successfully to collect information.
- Pupils use listening centres purposefully to listen to stories.
- Pupils make effective use of their IT skills in their work in subjects such as science, history and geography.

Shortcomings

- There are no major shortcomings.

History

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the concept of the passage of time within their own lifetime. More able pupils can sequence photographs correctly to illustrate the periods of development from childhood to old age.
- More able pupils can identify historical differences from a study of photographs and artefacts from different periods. They have some factual knowledge of the lives of famous Welsh people.
- Pupils' understanding of how people lived and worked in the past is enhanced by the contribution of visitors to school and through visits to the local museum. Through role play situations, pupils begin to develop empathy with people from the past. They can name and draw different artefacts correctly and can describe some of their purposes.
- More able Y2 pupils are beginning to use books to locate information about the past. They use their ICT skills effectively to select and print information linked to their class topic. Younger Y2 pupils use their ICT skills well to sequence pictures indicating the passing of time.
- Pupils record their observations satisfactorily in the form of drawings and sentences.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' knowledge and skills are insufficiently extended.
- The ability of a good number of pupils to use historical terms is limited.

Geography

Standards are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils have a secure knowledge of local features in their village, such as the church, library post office and supermarket, and can name them correctly. Most pupils know their address and can record it accurately.
- Pupils' mapping skills are satisfactory. Most pupils can sequence and name the main features of the journey Little Red Riding Hood makes to Granny's house. They can draw features on a class plan and use an ICT program correctly to produce a plan of an imaginary town. Older pupils can draw and label a route through the village.
- Pupils observe changes in the weather and can describe weather conditions using the correct terms. They use their ICT skills competently to record their observations.

Shortcomings

- Pupils are insufficiently aware of places beyond their own immediate locality.
- A good number of pupils' make insufficient use of geographical vocabulary.
- Pupils' mapping skills are insufficiently extended.

Art

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils successfully explore a range of media including paint, pastel, crayon and pencil.
- They study the work of other artists and are able to create pleasing work in the style of individual artists. They produce portraits in black and white, and in colour, to reflect the style of Renoir and Augustus John. They use red and yellow colour wash appropriately to produce sunset pictures in the style of Turner.
- Pupils experiment with a range of materials, textures and colour to produce attractive collages. They work effectively with a ceramics artist to produce 3D pottery figures of themselves which are of a good standard.
- Pupils are developing the use of line to enhance their drawings. Older pupils produce drawings with increasing detail.

Shortcomings

- Pupils find it difficult to describe some of the features of the work of the famous artists they have studied.

Music

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils know a range of songs in many styles and from different cultures. They sing broadly in tune and with satisfactory expression.
- Older pupils can clap and tap a steady beat in time with others.
- Pupils listen well to music and can name more familiar instruments correctly.
- Pupils are familiar with a range of percussion instruments and know how the sounds are produced. They can play a simple accompaniment to a song on a tape using a variety of instruments. They keep to a steady beat and listen carefully to other performers.

Shortcoming

- Pupils have limited knowledge of musical terms.
- Pupils' ability to compose and appraise music is underdeveloped.

Physical Education

Good features

Standards are good.

- Pupils respond appropriately to instructions and understand the importance of warming up the body before exercise.
- Pupils are suitably dressed for physical exercise with older pupils changing independently. Pupils are able to carry and replace equipment safely.
- Older pupils demonstrate good recall of a Welsh folk dance. They perform the dance accurately and enthusiastically.
- Pupils use space effectively. They travel on different parts of their body in different directions and with good control.
- Older pupils demonstrate good control when travelling with a bat and ball and can use hockey sticks to dribble a ball.
- More able Y2 pupils can devise their own scoring system for a game. They collaborate effectively in groups and pairs.
- An after school club adds to the range of opportunities available to pupils and improves their skills.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' ability to evaluate their performance and that of others is insufficiently developed.

Religious Education

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

No specific lessons were observed in KS1. Evidence was obtained from discussion with pupils and recorded work.

- Pupils understand that the Bible is a special book and that it contains stories about Noah's Ark, Moses and Jesus. Older pupils can accurately recall familiar stories about Jesus.
- Pupils understand the importance of sharing. They show concern for those with less and are keen to share fairly.
- Older pupils have recorded the story of the Creation and can recall the main features.
- Older pupils have written a class prayer related to friendship. Prayers are said at the end of the day with reverence.

- Older pupils show some understanding of the church as a place of worship and of Christian celebrations such as the christening and wedding services.
- Pupils can discuss another religion at a simple level referring to relevant artefacts, festivals and songs.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' recall of Bible stories is limited.
- Pupil's knowledge of other religions is insufficiently developed.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last Inspection

The school has made satisfactory progress in responding to a number of the key issues identified in the previous inspection report, but some aspects require further attention.

Key issues identified in previous report.

The school should:

- **raise standards in art and IT and address the shortcomings where they exist in other subjects.**

Since the last inspection, standards of achievement in art and IT have improved. By now, pupils achieve good standards in both subjects. The school has reviewed the shortcomings highlighted in other subjects in the report. The revised schemes of work are being implemented throughout the key stage and the additional resources purchased are being used effectively to support pupils' learning. The school has invested in appropriate training and support for teachers and this is having a beneficial effect on teaching approaches. The subject co-ordinators regularly monitor the planning and organisation of the subjects for which they are responsible. The findings are shared during staff meetings.

- **improve teaching organisation in one class in order to reduce the size of groups during whole class lessons.**

The school has reviewed its internal organisation and a new class has been established to reduce pupil numbers in the reception class. The two class teachers plan their work collaboratively, but this is a new arrangement and aspects of classroom organisation have yet to be established. This remains an aspect for continuous review. In most classes, whole class teaching is well organised and routines and procedures are clearly understood by pupils. The organisation of group activities is less effective. Lesson objectives are not clearly understood by pupils and the pace of learning is uneven. School documentation identifies the features of good practice and offers clear guidance on classroom organisation.

- **accelerate the implementation of the planned monitoring programme with a focus on the evaluation of standards;**

Good systems are in place to evaluate the quality of the provision, but the process does not focus sufficiently on standards of work and pupil progress to ensure improvements in standards of achievement. This remains a key issue.

- **extend the existing good assessment system to include the assessment of foundation subjects;**

The school has developed comprehensive assessment and marking policies. Pupils' progress in most foundation subjects is assessed and recorded on a termly basis. Progress in religious education is assessed annually. The information acquired from the assessment procedures is not used sufficiently in planning units of work to extend pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in most of the foundation subjects.

- **continue with the sound progress already made in the overall school development;**

Since the last inspection, curriculum and general policies of good quality have been formulated and the schemes of work have been revised to reflect current requirements. This detailed and comprehensive planning does not always result in activities and practice that consistently improve pupils' learning in all subjects. The SDP identifies relevant issues for attention and sets suitable targets for improvement in a number of areas. Detailed action plans outline clearly the tasks to be undertaken and satisfactory progress is being made in addressing the targets set.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school needs to:

- maintain the good standards and raise standards in subjects and aspects which are satisfactory by giving attention to the shortcomings noted;
- raise expectations, and use the planning and assessment processes more effectively to plan tasks that consistently extend pupils' learning;
- extend pupils' use of key skills to support their work across the curriculum;
- improve the organisation of group activities and ensure sufficient pace in the teaching and learning;
- use the monitoring processes more rigorously to evaluate pupils' progress and to improve standards of achievement.*

(* included in the SDP)

APPENDIX

School Data

A. Basic information about the school

School's Name	Cwmbach Infants School
School Type	LEA maintained/Community
Age range of pupils	4-7 years
School Address	Bridge Road Cwmbach Aberdare Rhondda Cynon Taff
Postal Code	CF44 OLS
Telephone number	01685871141

Name of Headteacher	Mrs V. Parker
Date of Appointment	1:1:96
Chair of the governors/ The appropriate authority	Rev. B. H. Sharp
Registered Inspector	Miss D Morris
Date of Inspection	19-20 November, 2001

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year Group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total

Number of pupils		40	25	33					98
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<i>Number of teachers</i>			
	Full time	Part time	Full time equivalent (FTE)
Number of teachers	5		5

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio, excluding nursery and special classes	19.6 :1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	24
Teacher : class ratio	1.25 :1

<i>Attendance in percentages for the three terms prior to the inspection.</i>				
	N	R	KS1	Whole School
Spring 2001		89	89	89
Summer 2000		91	92	91.5
Autumn 2000		90	90	90

Number of pupils excluded during the 12 previous months.	0
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C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT RESULTS END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2001

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2001								
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	23	58	19	0
		National	0	4	14	64	18	0
Reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	26	55	19	0
		National	0	4	14	57	25	0
	Test/Task	School	0	3	23	55	19	0
		National	0	4	14	56	26	0
Writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	32	55	13	0
		National	0	5	14	70	11	0
	Test/Task	School	0	10	16	71	3	0
		National	0	6	11	74	9	0
Speaking and Listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	29	71	0
		National	0	3	12	64	21	0

MATHEMATICS	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	23	58	19	0
		National	0	2	10	65	23	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	10	52	39	0
		National	0	2	7	63	27	0
SCIENCE	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	23	58	19	0
		National	0	2	11	70	17	0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school:	74%	In Wales:	80%

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

D. Evidence base of the inspection

The school was inspected over a period of 2 days. The team consisted of 3 inspectors including the lay inspector. During this period:

- 34 teaching periods or parts thereof were attended.
- Pupils were questioned about their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.
- Pupils were heard reading and samples of their work were examined.
- The school's documentation was studied including the schemes of work, teachers' planning notes and pupils' assessment records.
- Attendance registers were examined.
- Inspectors attended assembly and acts of collective worship.
- Pre inspection meetings were held with the head, the staff and the governing body.
- Six parents attended the parents' meeting. The 36 questionnaires returned were analysed.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Name	Role	Sections of the report	Subjects (section 7)
Miss D Morris	Registered Inspector	1, 2, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 8.1, 8.2, appendix	Mathematics, science, Welsh second language, design and technology, information technology, history, music
Mrs S Painter	Team Inspector	4.1, 5.2, 5.5	Under- fives, English, geography, art, religious education physical education
Mrs E Taylor	Lay Inspector	4.2, 4.3, 5.6, 5.7	

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