

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

**Cwmbach Nursery School  
Maeshyfyd  
Aberdare  
CF44 0DL**

**School Number: 6741011**

**Date of Inspection: 05/06/06**

**by**

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17717**

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- \* secondary schools;
- \* special schools;
- \* pupil referral units;
- \* independent schools;
- \* further education;
- \* adult community-based learning;
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- \* LEAs;
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- \* work-based learning;
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Cwmbach Nursery School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection 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 information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Cwmbach Nursery School took place between 05/06/06 and 06/06/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Luned Eleri Betts 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

"There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **full** inspection.

## 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 reach the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Cwmbach nursery school is a local authority maintained school which is situated in the village of Cwmbach near Aberdare in the Cynon valley in Rhondda, Cynon, Taf. The building itself was erected about thirty five years ago to support a socially deprived area. In recent years however the area has evolved to include more private housing with professional families. However there is still a great deal of unemployment and a number of one parent families in the village.
2. The nursery caters for children aged three and four who are admitted in the term or half term following their third birthday; all attend full time. The number of children on roll increases therefore throughout the year; during the inspection 39 children were on the register, a small number of whom come from outside the catchment area. Except for one family where English is spoken as an additional language (EAL), children are from English speaking homes. None are Welsh speakers. Many of the children entering the nursery have attended a playgroup, private nursery or crèche. Three children are looked after by the local authority.
3. The school considers its catchment area to be neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Baseline assessments undertaken within two weeks of entry, indicate that children are of average ability. Currently one child is on the register for Special Educational Needs (SEN). Seventeen per cent of them are entitled to free school meals (FSM); this figure is slightly below national percentages and well below local percentages.
4. The school has had many staffing difficulties since the last inspection. The head of Cwmbach Infant school has combined her duties with taking on the role of acting head teacher in the nursery since January 2005. A few weeks prior to the inspection a long serving teacher retired and was replaced on a temporary basis. The school had no governing body or budget until April 2006. The pre-inspection meeting for the inspection was the first meeting of the newly elected governing body.
5. The school was last inspected in September 2000.

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

6. The school's aims and priorities are to:
- promote an atmosphere of love and security;
  - promote a sense of self worth and self esteem;
  - promote self-confidence and self-motivation;
  - promote independence and concentration;
  - promote a sense of responsibility for themselves and their actions and an awareness of others;
  - promote equality of opportunity;
  - encourage the formation of relationships with peers and adults leading to co-operation and teamwork;
  - develop communication skills including self-expression, negotiation and reasoning;
  - develop listening skills;
  - develop co-ordination and
  - help children to become more effective citizens by encouraging them to take responsibility for the future of their own environment.
7. Priorities for this year are to:
- further develop the self-evaluation process;
  - further develop performance management process with clear targets;
  - analyse performance data;
  - develop a system of monitoring within the school to ensure that standards are consistently good;
  - continue to prepare for the foundation phase and
  - implement the workforce remodelling agreement.

## Summary

### Table of grades awarded

8. Children who attend Cwmbach Nursery School make good progress within a caring, stimulating environment. The quality of provision has improved significantly since the appointment of the present acting head teacher. Although the current teaching staff have only been at the nursery for a few weeks, relationships are outstanding and a good team spirit has already been established.
9. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation document in all seven key questions.

### Table of grades awarded

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

### Standards in the areas of learning

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

Inspection Area	
Under 5s	Grade 2

10. Standards in lessons observed during the inspection are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	84%	8%	-	-

11. Standards of achievement in lessons observed are higher than the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) all-Wales targets.

12. Baseline assessments indicate that, children's average ability when starting school compare favourably with other schools. End of year attainment indicates no underachievement and that all, including children identified with SEN, achieve their potential, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background
13. In the key skills of literacy, numeracy and Information and Communication technology (ICT) standards are good overall. Pupils speak coherently and begin to appreciate print; they use numbers confidently in a range of situations and use computer programmes to support their work well. Their use of Welsh is consistent and often outstanding.
14. Children quickly develop new ideas and understand what they see around them. Creative development is good and often outstanding; creative tasks are used well by children to work out how they can improve their work and understand the progress they are making. In these sessions they develop good thinking and problem solving skills; their evaluation of their work is good. They work well at all times as individuals and in smaller and larger groups.
15. Children are very aware of school rules and the need to follow them so that they can all have a good time. They therefore make good progress in their personal, social and moral development and are acquiring a sound knowledge of how to conduct themselves during their lives. Their awareness of equal opportunities and that all must have a turn is good and their respect for diversity is outstanding.
16. Their knowledge of the world of work especially in relation to occupations, within their community is good.
17. Children are well behaved throughout the school day although younger ones become restless at the end of the school day. They are all courteous towards adults and visitors.
18. The level of attendance is normally around 85 per cent but during the last two terms prior to the inspection had dropped to 77 per cent. A severe outbreak of Ecoli in the Autumn term and a widespread chicken pox epidemic in the Spring term were the main causes for low attendance. Punctuality is good.

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

19. The quality of teaching during the inspection was judged as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
29%	42%	29%	-	-

20. Where teaching displays good and sometimes outstanding features, learning objectives are clearly identified at the start of sessions, teachers have good knowledge of individual children's learning needs, they use open-ended questions to find out what children know and have high expectations of them.

21. Arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting children's attainment and progress are good and meet statutory requirements. In addition to the daily informal discussion that take place between school and home, termly parent/teacher interviews are arranged. Annual reports are of good quality.
22. The overall quality of the provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. The curriculum provided is broad and balanced, fulfils statutory requirements and provides access for all.
23. Curriculum planning which is in the process of being revised clearly indicates the activities individual members of staff will be undertaking and the learning outcomes of these activities. It is differentiated for different ages and abilities. Although there is a policy for key and basic skills and they are identified in weekly planning, provision for them is not fully embedded. Although the grouping of children sometimes inhibits social development, it is good overall.
24. Children's spiritual development is good. Provision for furthering moral development is good; children know what is right and wrong and know that it is expected of them to follow the four simple school rules and that this will benefit all.
25. The school's provision for the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is good with some outstanding features. Provision for using both Welsh and English is outstanding.
26. Library books are taken home as homework but there is little evidence that home-school tasks enhance curriculum provision.
27. Children have a good awareness of the world of work. Role-play areas foster this as do visitors, such as the fireman, who tell them about their work.
28. The school is very much a part of its community; links are good. Visits to the community and beyond enrich the curriculum. Partnership with industry is enhanced by links with a local supermarket for example, while partnership with the infant school allows the children to visit to see theatre companies.
29. Increasing partnership with parents is enriching curriculum provision. Parents accompany children on visits and often send objects in to school to enhance children's experiences. 'Language and Play' sessions, newly arranged for parents, contribute to community regeneration.
30. The care of all children in this happy school is a high priority of all staff. Children know they are valued and feel secure in school.
31. Good care is taken of children as they arrive in the morning. Good communication between adults working in the school, ensures that all messages related to who is picking up a child are shared. All adults in the school are aware of the correct child protection procedures to be followed and have received in service training.

32. Parents say that induction arrangements ensures that starting school is something to look forward to, with children settling quickly and happily into the nursery routines and that their children are confident to move on to the infant school.
33. The school's policy for SEN is good; it is comprehensive and complies with the Code of Practice (CoP). Parents speak highly of the support from outside agencies that the acting head teacher has accessed to support their children. Provision is good.
34. Although staff have not received any training relating to children with EAL make good progress. Good policies are in place to ensure that all children are treated fairly. Tolerant race relations are promoted across all areas of learning and this is an outstanding feature of the school. The accommodation poses no difficulty for someone who is disabled.
35. A number of health and safety issues were discussed with the head teacher during the inspection including the uneven surfaces on the paths and play area outside. The building and play area are secure.

### **Leadership and management**

36. The acting head teacher leads and manages the school well. She gives a positive and clear direction to the work of the school. New staff are becoming extremely aware of their roles; lines of communication are clear. A great deal has been achieved in a very short time.
37. The newly appointed governors are receiving appropriate training and are enthusiastic about their new role but they do not yet play a part in the school's self-evaluation and its management at present.
38. A comprehensive self-evaluation report compiled by the acting head teacher shows a good awareness and understanding of the school's existing strengths and where it needs to develop.
39. However, there is little evidence of an established culture of self-evaluation in the school before the present acting head commenced her duties. In the years following the last inspection progress was slow. During the last school year however, progress has been good especially in curriculum planning but issues highlighted in the last report related to the building and some safety issues, which the school has been unable to address because of the high financial implications, remain unsolved.
40. A good monitoring programme has been established. The effectiveness of monitoring has been limited because the head is not on the premises every day and because of recent changes in staffing.
41. There is a sufficient number of teachers for the children who attend the nursery. An outstanding feature is the quality of the support assistants in the school. Their expertise and experience is recognised fully and they play a full

and highly effective part in day to day activities. They provide exemplary cover for sessions when teachers have their planning, preparation and assessment time. All adults who work in the school fulfil their roles well and contribute greatly to the good quality of life in the nursery.

42. The inside of the building is well cared for and provides an enchanting environment for children. Very good use is made of teaching areas inside the building. The 'outside classroom' is an outstanding feature where children can play freely on large equipment, role-play in the cottage and wander and discover for themselves amongst trees and foliage in the green area.
43. The exterior of the building however is poor. The fabric of the building generally is in a bad state of repair and needs redecoration, the flat roof is leaking and windows are in poor condition. Pathways at the entrance gate and around the school and playground are uneven and dangerous and need resurfacing.
44. Resources for playing and learning are outstanding and of good quality. They are used purposefully and enhance the quality of experiences provided significantly. Spending is monitored regularly by the acting head teacher but the new governing body have not yet been able to develop their role in this aspect. The school provides good value for money.

## Recommendations

In order to move the school forward, the staff and governing body need to:

- R1. refine curriculum planning and further develop the planning for key skills;
- R2. continue to develop the school's monitoring procedures in order to establish a rigorous self evaluation process;
- R3. develop the role of the newly established governing body;
- R4. improve the fabric of the building and its general outside appearance;
- R5. respond to health and safety matters identified during the inspection.

Recommendations 1 and 2 are identified as matters to be prioritised in the present School Development Plan. The school has been corresponding with the LEA for some time with regard to recommendations 4 and 5.

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

## Standards

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

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

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

46. Standards in lessons observed during the inspection are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	84%	8%	-	-

47. Standards of achievement in lessons observed are higher than WAG all-Wales targets.

48. The overall quality of the provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. During the inspection standards for nursery aged children in the areas of learning were judged as follows:

### Standards in the areas of learning

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

Inspection Area	
Under 5s	Grade 2

49. Baseline assessments indicate that children's average ability when starting school compare favourably with other schools. End of year attainment indicates no underachievement. All regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background achieve their potential; however less able children do not benefit sufficiently from working with more able children so that they can emulate and improve standards and further their social development.

50. Developments during the past year in curriculum provision indicate also that there is a continuous improvement in children's performance including children with SEN; they are all well prepared for moving on to the next stage of their learning. Children with EAL make good progress and achieve good standards.

51. In the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT standards are good overall. Pupils speak coherently and begin to appreciate print; they use numbers confidently in a range of situations and use computer programmes to support their work well. Their use of Welsh is consistent and often outstanding; they enjoy using newly learnt vocabulary and phrases.
52. Children make good use of the range of suitable play areas for structured and unstructured learning. Full involvement in these activities enables them to quickly develop new ideas and understand what they see around them. Creative development is good and often outstanding; creative tasks are used well by children to work out how they can improve their work and understand the progress they are making. In these sessions they develop good thinking and problem solving skills.
53. Children's knowledge of the world of work especially in relation to occupations, within their community is good.
54. At all times children work well as individuals and in smaller and larger groups. They are eager to proceed with their tasks and waste no time in completing them. When working with others they behave sensibly and fully respect what others are doing or what they especially want to play with. They are all courteous towards adults and visitors.
55. Children are very aware of school rules and the need to follow them so that they can all have a good time. They therefore make good progress in their personal, social and moral development and are acquiring a sound knowledge of how to conduct themselves during their lives. Their awareness of equal opportunities and that all must have a turn, is good and their respect for diversity is outstanding because children are constantly reminded that people have different dress and customs.
56. The level of attendance is normally around 85 per cent but during the last two terms prior to the inspection it had dropped to 77 per cent. A severe outbreak of Ecoli in the Autumn term and a widespread chicken pox epidemic in the Spring term were the main causes for low attendance. Punctuality is good.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

57. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self evaluation report.
58. The quality of teaching during the inspection was judged as follows with the teaching in four of the fourteen lessons seen graded as outstanding:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
29%	42%	29%	-	-

59. Where the teaching displays good and sometimes outstanding features:
- learning objectives are clearly identified at the start of sessions, learning experiences are focused and of appropriate length for the young age of the children;
  - teachers have good knowledge of individual children's learning needs and of the areas of learning. There is an emphasis on 'doing' and careful regard is taken of the age, ability and concentration span of the children;
  - purposeful opportunities are provided for children to explore, investigate, discover, create, practise and consolidate their developing skills, understanding and attitudes;
  - teachers use open-ended questions to find out what children know and extend their understanding;
  - they have high expectations of children, praise efforts and develop their self esteem and confidence;
  - teachers manage the behaviour of children well and use support staff effectively to support pupils' learning;
  - they use their voices effectively to capture the interest and imagination of all children and
  - teachers have outstanding relationships with children and other adults in the school.
60. A carefully planned, team approach to teaching ensures that the talents of all adults are well used. However, on a few occasions staff are 'tied' to planned indoor activities and consequently there is limited opportunity for outdoor learning.
61. Cross-curricular teaching is a major strength of the school: the whole school theme of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' is imaginatively taught across all areas of learning.
62. Teachers makes good use of a range of appropriate and stimulating resources to help their teaching and organise the environment well to enrich teaching and learning.

63. Teachers' use of bilingualism is an outstanding feature of the school. Teachers, as well as support staff, use incidental Welsh very well to question, give instructions and to comment.
64. Arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting children's attainment and progress are good and meet statutory requirements. In addition to the daily informal discussion that take place between school and home, termly parent/teacher interviews are arranged. Annual reports are of good quality and focus on the six areas of learning outlined in the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
65. The acting head teacher, working in co-operation with other head teachers in the cluster group, has recently compiled an assessment booklet to record individual children's progress in all areas of development. This information, along with evidence gained from baseline tests, is well used to group children for tasks, track their progress and plan appropriate future learning activities. Teachers are beginning to develop useful individual portfolios of children's assessed work.
66. Through teachers' sensitive questioning and praise, children are developing an awareness of their own personal achievements and targets. A constant question asked of children is 'Do you think you could do anything to make it even better?'

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

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

67. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
68. The overall quality of the provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and pupils make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. The curriculum provided is broad and balanced, fulfils statutory requirements and provides access for all.
69. Policy documents are in place for all areas of learning. Curriculum planning that is in the process of being revised involves weekly planning sessions, which include all adults concerned. It is based appropriately on three suitable themes, which provide imaginative links between curriculum areas. It clearly indicates the activities individual members of staff will be undertaking and the learning outcomes of these activities. Planning has already successfully embraced changes in the forthcoming foundation stage.
70. Planning is differentiated for different ages and abilities. The consistent grouping of children according to ability is rigid and although this raises standards for the more able it sometimes impacts on progress made by less able children and on the social development of all. However, good

opportunities to socialise and interact are provided; when eating lunch children develop consistently good social skills. Children are given responsibilities and are eager to do them well.

71. Although there is a policy for key and basic skills and they are identified in weekly planning, provision for them is not fully embedded.
72. Children's spiritual development is good. A sense of awe and wonder prevails both within the classrooms and the 'outside classroom'. Children say prayers at suitable times during the day and are aware that they are thanking God. Provision for furthering moral development is good; children understand what is right and wrong and know that it is expected of them to follow the four simple school rules and that this will benefit all. Provision for children's personal and social education including health issues is consistently good.
73. The school's provision for the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is good with some outstanding features. Children are made very aware that they are Welsh and of the importance of using local produce. Provision for using both Welsh and English is consistently outstanding.
74. Very effective opportunities are provided for children to understand that different people across the world celebrate in different ways and that people who live in their community may dress differently and have unusual names. Global citizenship values are presented in simple but effective ways; fund raising for Children in Need enhances this further. Girls and boys are treated equally and no stereotyping was observed.
75. Children are aware of paper recycling but the school has not yet looked at other ways of contributing to sustainable development. However children are made aware of healthy eating as part of the theme 'Myself- and are made aware that getting a drink of pure water from the fountain provided is good for them. Children have not yet been introduced to simple entrepreneurial practices such as selling cards for a profit.
76. Children have a good awareness of the world of work. A role-play area built around the character of Bob the Builder provides children with a good understanding of what tools are used and that protective clothing must be worn. Children listen to many visitors such as the fireman, who tell them about their work.
77. Visits enrich the curriculum with a day in Aberdare park highlighted by staff and parents as being an extremely rewarding experience. Visits to the infant school are now included in curriculum planning when children can see presentations by theatre companies. The school is very much a part of its community; links are good. Partnership with industry is enhanced by links with a local supermarket. The provision of placement opportunities for child care students is good.
78. The increasing partnership with parents is enriching curriculum provision. Library books are taken home as homework but there is little evidence that

home-school tasks enhance curriculum provision. A home/school agreement is in place with parents encouraged to support their children's learning. They accompany children on visits and often send objects in to school to enhance children's experiences. 'Language and Play' sessions newly arranged for parents contribute to community regeneration. During the pre-inspection meetings and questionnaires almost all parents expressed their satisfaction with the school.

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

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

79. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
80. The care of all children in this happy school is a high priority for all staff. Children know they are valued and feel secure in school. The quality of relationships between adults and children is a strength. The warm, welcoming and pleasant atmosphere was praised by parents who feel confident that their children are happy. They say that they are always informed if their child has an accident or seems unwell in school.
81. Good care is taken of children as they arrive in the morning. Good communication between adults working in the school, ensures that all messages related to who is picking up a child are shared.
82. During very hot weather great care is taken to protect children from the sun. Hats are worn in the 'outside classroom' and a gazebo erected to shade a role play area.
83. The school's provision for induction is good. Parents say that the arrangements ensure that starting school is something to look forward to, with children settling quickly and happily into the nursery routines and that their children are confident to move on to the infant school.
84. The school has a range of good policies and procedures in place to ensure that children are appropriately cared for and protected. Responsibilities for child protection are appropriate. All adults in the school are aware of the correct child protection procedures to be followed and have received in service training.
85. Risk assessments are undertaken before children are taken out on visits and parents encouraged to accompany the group.
86. Provision for SEN is good; the school's policy for SEN is comprehensive and complies with the Code of Practice. The head teacher is the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. Parents speak highly of the support from outside agencies that the acting head teacher has accessed to support their children.

87. The school plans carefully to meet the learning needs of all children. Children know and understand their school rules and respond well to routines.
88. Although staff have not received any training relating to EAL children with EAL make good progress. Good and effective policies are in place to ensure that all children are treated fairly and have the opportunity to develop their full potential. Although there are no children with physical disabilities at present the accommodation poses no difficulty for someone who is disabled.
89. A number of health and safety issues were discussed with the head teacher during the inspection including the uneven surfaces on the paths and play area outside. The building and play area are secure.
90. Race relations are promoted across all areas of learning in a very effective manner; this is an outstanding feature of the school. For example, a display celebrates one child's family culture and is enhanced by photographs and clothes belonging to the family. A new Asian doll was welcomed as a friend during the inspection.
91. Good care plans are in place for looked after children.

## Leadership and management

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

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

92. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
93. The school's aims and values are clearly reflected in the daily life of the school. The inspection team endorse the statement in the school's prospectus 'Cwmbach nursery is happy with everyone working together, creating a special environment where the children are of paramount importance'.
94. The acting head teacher leads and manages the school well. She gives a positive and clear direction to the work of the school and has had to take on most of the curriculum responsibilities herself because the current teaching staff have been in post for only a short time. However, staff are becoming extremely clear of their roles; lines of communication are clear. A great deal has been achieved in a very short time.
95. A range of good management policies have recently been put in place to ensure good management and consistent approaches.
96. Good decisions are made regarding the deployment of teaching and support staff. This ensures that their obvious creativity positively influences the learning of the children.
97. The commitment of staff to professional development is enhanced by the open plan design of the school, which enables them to observe and learn from each other.
98. An appropriate programme of in-service training is in place. The acting head teacher and staff have received training on the foundation phase and are adapting their practice in the light of the proposed developments.
99. Procedures for providing teachers with planning, preparation and assessment time have been appropriately established as have performance management procedures.
100. The school development plan is an effective document, which is clearly costed and notes the time needed for the completion of priorities.
101. The newly appointed governors are receiving appropriate training and are enthusiastic about their new roles.

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

**Grade 3:** Good features outweigh shortcomings.

102. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
103. A comprehensive self-evaluation report compiled by the acting head shows a good awareness and understanding of the school's existing strengths and where it needs to develop. The findings of the inspection team match the judgements made in the self-evaluation report on all seven key questions.
104. The current school development plan identifies clearly what changes and developments are needed. Recommendations in this report are priorities, which the school have already highlighted in the school development plan.
105. However there are some shortcomings in the self-evaluation process as there is little evidence of an established culture of self-evaluation in the school before the present acting head commenced her duties. Even though the action plan following the last inspection report showed in detail how the key issues identified were to be addressed, there is no evidence that progress in achieving targets set were reviewed. In the years following the last inspection therefore progress was slow. During the last school year however, progress has been good especially in curriculum planning but issues highlighted in the last report related to the building and some safety issues, which the school was unable to address because of the high financial implications, remain unsolved.
106. A good monitoring programme has been established. The acting head teacher has observed the quality of teaching and has focused other observations on specific aspects of the curriculum and standards. The effectiveness of monitoring has been limited as the head is not on the premises every day and that the current teaching staff have only been at the school for a short time. Teachers record effective evaluations on their lessons. Weekly planning sessions, which involve all adults, are establishing a strong commitment to improving quality and standards.
107. An appropriately good start has been made on involving the children in self-evaluation as they have been given opportunities to evaluate their work. 'Listening to Learners' is one of the school's current priorities.
108. The school is aware that parents do not play a part in the school's self-evaluation process. They are addressing this by ensuring that parents are now informed more fully about what their children are doing and learning while in school; they have not yet sought parents' opinions on aspects of school life.
109. As the governing body was only set up a few days before the inspection they are not yet part of the self-evaluation process.

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

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

110. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
111. There is a sufficient number of teachers for the children who attend the nursery. For the first part of the year the class has one qualified teacher but as numbers increase during the school year a second teacher is appointed to cater for the needs of younger children. Both teachers are used well to cater for different ages and abilities.
112. An outstanding feature is the quality of the support assistants in the school. Their expertise and experience is recognised fully and they play a full and highly effective part in day to day activities. They provide exemplary cover for sessions when teachers have their planning, preparation and assessment time.
113. A volunteer adult is used well for a weekly library session and other classroom duties. All adults who work in the school fulfil their roles well and contribute greatly to the good quality of life in the nursery. The school secretary carries out her duties efficiently. Job descriptions identify their responsibilities clearly.
114. The inside of the building is well cared for and provides an enchanting environment for children. High quality displays of their work creates a sense of pride and celebration. The school is kept exceptionally clean and tidy; good arrangements are in place for converting the main teaching area to a dining room at lunch time, and clearing away afterwards. The building is secure with security locks on all external doors.
115. Very good use is made of the main classroom area for both structured learning and free play. Two small teaching areas, where groups of children are withdrawn, are used very effectively for direct teaching. However, space is limited for adults as the only other small room is used by the school secretary, acting head teacher and all staff.
116. Storage areas are used well to ensure that all resources are available for teaching staff. An open area leading to the 'outside classroom' is used imaginatively for sand and water play and for creative activities.
117. The 'outside classroom' is an outstanding feature where children can play freely on large equipment, role-play in the cottage and wander and discover for themselves amongst trees and foliage in the green area.
118. The exterior of the building however is poor; the fabric of the building generally is in a bad state of repair and needs redecoration, the flat roof is leaking and windows are in poor condition. Pathways at the entrance gate

and around the school and playground are uneven and dangerous and need resurfacing.

119. Resources for playing and learning are outstanding and of good quality. They are used purposefully and enhance the quality of experiences provided significantly. Spending is monitored regularly by the acting head teacher although the new governing body have not yet been able to develop their role in this aspect. The school provides good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Under 5s: Grade 2

#### Language, literacy and communication skills

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

#### Language, literacy and communication skills

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

##### Good features

121. Children listen intently to the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and develop good listening skills when teachers provide added comments on the story and question their understanding of it. The majority speak clearly and are eager to join in conversations with adults. They are able to relate the sequence of events in their lives, offer their own opinions and give their own explanations; many can give extended answers to questions. They say the words of a number of rhymes clearly. They can use a number of descriptive words to describe their 'bear hunt' outside. They handle books correctly and understand how story books work. Children can tell and recall a story in their own words and can make simple predictions about what comes next, often using picture clues successfully. Some older children recognise initial sounds and know the sounds of letters of the alphabet. More able ones can recognise their own names and those of their peers. They make marks on paper using a range of writing equipment and while role-playing show an understanding of the purposes of writing. They have an outstanding knowledge of a range of Welsh words and phrases, which they use competently.

##### Shortcomings

122. There are no important shortcomings

#### Personal and social development

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

##### Good features

123. Children show genuine co-operation in their play. They take turns, share well and behave with respect and affection for other children and adults. Older nursery children are able to concentrate for longer periods of time and listen attentively and remember instructions. They can recite the school rules and

explain where they are to be found. They enjoy dressing up and only ask for help when they have really persevered first. Before cooking porridge they know it is important to wash their hands. Break times are happy, social occasions where daily helpers serve their friends with milk or chilled water. All children sit together and chat happily during lunch times remembering to thank adults. They have all developed good table manners and use their cutlery appropriately.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no important shortcomings.

### **Mathematical development**

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

#### **Good features**

124. Children have a good understanding of number. Younger children count confidently to five in both Welsh and English, while older ones count to ten and beyond. According to age and ability they are able to match many number symbols and sounds and can identify which number comes next in a series of cards. They sing a range of number rhymes eagerly and make appropriate actions. Children also have a good understanding of basic concepts related to sequence. They begin to understand mathematical language such as 'less' and 'more' and use mathematical terms related to shape, position and size appropriately. They are beginning to understand how information can be recorded by simple graphs as they record the ways they travel to school and how many of their friends like porridge. Older children understand simple concepts related to capacity and use terms like 'empty' and 'full' when realising that some containers take more liquid than others and that sand when wet is heavier than when it is dry.

### **Shortcomings**

125. There are no important shortcomings but children do not handle coins and develop an awareness of the use of money on a daily basis.

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

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

#### **Good features**

126. Children are excited and curious to find out about the world around them. They know what fire fighters do and enjoy looking at the fire engine. They know that if you are sick a nurse or doctor can make you better. Through stories they know that honey is made by bees and from tasting it on their

porridge, they know it has a lovely taste. They use computer programs and the listening station independently and know that books and television programmes give them information. They are beginning to understand the idea of time and that there is a sequence of events in school. They have a growing appreciation of seasonal changes and relate their own experiences to the times of the year; they know that plants start growing in the Spring. All children show a good awareness of the importance of caring for their environment. They treat their toys and equipment with respect and most are enthusiastic about tidying up. They know that money is needed to buy things they need and can talk confidently about the local shops.

### **Shortcomings**

127. There are no important shortcomings.

### **Physical development**

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

#### **Good features**

128. Children establish a good awareness of space as they wander inside and play vigorously outside. Their mobility and physical control develops very well in the many different settings provided where they need to move in a variety of ways in confined and open spaces. Children show good climbing and pushing skills on large equipment and use a variety of actions such as walking, running and jumping to move from one activity to the other. Both older and younger children are able to dress themselves successfully in role-play situations. They steer and balance a range of tricycles and bicycles well. They handle containers in sand and water adeptly and have good control over their pouring and digging actions. They control a range of writing and painting equipment well and handle the parts of the computer, including using the mouse to move objects around the computer screen confidently. All handle table top equipment such as jigsaw pieces competently and use cutting and gluing equipment confidently.

### **Shortcomings**

129. There are no important shortcomings.

### **Creative development**

**Grade1:** Good with outstanding features

#### **Outstanding features**

130. The children's ability to communicate and express their imagination and creativity is an outstanding feature of the nursery. Role-play and imaginative

drama is extremely well developed, for example, children enjoy dressing up and 'being' the Three Bears in their outdoor playhouse. They very successfully take on the voices and characters of the bears and imaginatively dramatise the story.

### **Good features**

131. Children use a variety of materials in their paintings, drawings, printing, collage work and clay models. They make choices about the materials and media they would like to use and are beginning to comment on what they like and dislike about the work of others. They produce attractive representations of the blossom tree in the nursery garden and are able to explain how they produced their work. They sing tunefully in both English and Welsh and enjoy producing their own woodland walk music, using percussion instruments and their voices.

### **Shortcomings**

132. There are no important shortcomings.

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

The Inspection findings recognise that in most respects we have good standards with some outstanding features. We are pleased that the inspectors found that the children's use of Welsh and their understanding of Cwricwlwm Cymreig to be outstanding features. Opportunities offered to the children in creative work and the resources for playing and learning are also highlighted as understanding features. The inspectors comment about the 'outdoor classroom' where children can play freely in an enchanting environment was especially pleasing. The skill and dedication of the teachers and the experienced, high quality support staff are duly acknowledged in the report. Most importantly, the inspection report makes clear the elements that make our school what it is. In particular the report confirms that our school is a happy, secure place where children are cared for in a friendly stimulating environment.

An Action Plan will be put in place to address the recommendations of the report. Refining our curriculum planning to include the key skills in all areas and to further develop our monitoring and Self-Evaluation processes are aspects we believe we can confidently address. Staff and the newly formed Governing Body will continue to address the Health and Safety issues identified by the inspectors in the report.

Where it is possible to do so, staff and governors will address the recommendations before the end of the school year. Refining our planning to include the key skills in afternoon activities and developing the Self-Evaluation and Monitoring processes will be priorities for us. In addition, to establish the newly formed Governing Body and the induction of new staff will also be addressed.

The LEA will be regularly informed of the condition of the building and the tarmac areas and hopefully these will be improved as a matter of urgency.

The Post Inspection Action Plan and the School Development plan will be presented as one document. A copy of the PIAP / SDP in response to the inspection recommendations will be sent to all parents. The governors annual report to parents will report on the progress the school is making on the inspection recommendations.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Cwmbach Nursery School
School type	Nursery
Age-range of pupils	3-4 years
Address of school	Maeshyfryd, Cwmbach, Aberdare
Postcode	CF44 0DL
Telephone number	01685 874274

Head teacher	Val Parker (Acting)
Date of appointment	January 2005
Chair of governors	Mrs P Kathrens
Registered inspector	Eleri Betts
Dates of inspection	June 5-6 <sup>th</sup> 2006

## Appendix 2

### 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	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	39

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

Staffing information	
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	10:1
Teacher (fte): class ratio	2:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of School
Summer 2005	86.3%	-	-
Autumn 2005	77%	-	-
Spring 2006	78.1%	-	-

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	17%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	-

## Appendix 3

### Evidence base of the inspection

Three inspectors spent a total of five inspector days in the school. The acting head teacher of the school was the nominee. A team meeting was held prior to the inspection.

Inspectors visited:

- 14 sessions or part sessions.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- Staff, governors and parents before the inspection began;
- Acting head, teachers, support and administrative staff and groups of children during the inspection.

The team also considered:

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

The inspection team also held post inspection meetings with the staff and governing body.

## Appendix 4

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Eleri Betts Registered Inspector	Context of the school, summary report, recommendations and the evidence base for the inspection, Key Questions 1, 3, 6, 7, Language, literacy and communication, Mathematical development, Physical development.
Gwilym Davies Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1,3,4,7.
Caryl Dobson Team Inspector	Key Questions 2, 4, 5, Personal and social development, Knowledge and understanding of the World, Creative development.
Val Parker Acting Head teacher Nominee	Providing information.

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### Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the staff, governing body, parents and pupils for their courtesy and help during the inspection.