

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

**Cwmdar County Primary School  
The Square, Cwmdare,  
Aberdare.  
CF44 8UA**

**School Number: 6742134**

**Date of Inspection: 20/03/06**

**by**

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- \* pupil referral units;
- \* independent schools;
- \* further education;
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- \* LEAs;
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- \* work-based learning;
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**Cwmdar County Primary 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 **Cwmdar County Primary School** took place between 20/03/06 and 22/03/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Dr Jim Hewitt 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 **short** 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. Cwmdar Primary School caters for pupils between three and 11 years of age, and is situated in the village of Cwmdar, a mile outside the town of Aberdare. In recent years, the village has expanded rapidly. It originally sprang up around its coal mine which has now been replaced by the beautiful Dare Valley Country Park of which its villagers are very proud. The catchment area covers a small council estate, traditional valley terraced houses and several smaller new housing estates. Children who attend the school are part of a close and caring community.
2. The present headteacher was appointed to the school in September, 1997.
3. There are currently 260 boys and girls on roll who are organised into eight mixed-ability classes and a nursery class. This total includes 25 full-time equivalent nursery places. The school has a slight preponderance of boys; especially in Year 6. The number on roll has been consistent since 2002, although there has been a reduction this year.
4. Children take up full-time placement in the reception class in the term following their fourth birthdays having previously attended nursery provision at the school. Nursery baseline assessments show that 75 per cent attain average or higher than average scores on entry and that they have well developed personal and social skills.
5. The school has gained both the bronze Eco award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.
6. The school was last inspected in February, 2000.

### The school's priorities and targets

#### 7. Aims and objectives (Parents' Information Booklet 2006)

To foster a pleasant and stimulating atmosphere which will enable us to adequately cater for the social, emotional, moral, physical, intellectual and aesthetic needs of the children entrusted to our care by:

- providing a balanced curriculum;
- fostering in every child a feeling of security, self-confidence and success;
- encouraging an awareness of moral values;
- encouraging all pupils to reach out to the limits of their capabilities;
- encouraging good relationships between the children and all with whom they come into contact.

8. Specific aims: (Parents' Information booklet 2006)

Each pupil will be encouraged to achieve the following:

- read fluently and accurately with understanding and feeling;
- develop a legible style of handwriting together with a satisfactory standard of spelling, syntax, punctuation;
- communicate clearly and confidently in both speech and writing;
- listen attentively and with understanding;
- learn how to acquire information from various sources;
- learn how to record information and findings in various ways;
- apply computational skills with speed and accuracy;
- understand the application of mathematical ideas in various situations;
- master basic scientific ideas;
- observe living and inanimate things and to recognise characteristics such as pattern and order;
- develop an awareness of self and sensitivity to others;
- be aware of the geographical, historical and social aspects of the local environment and national heritage and to be aware of other times and places;
- provide a rich background of Welsh history, tradition and culture;
- provide the opportunity of acquire a sufficient command of Welsh to allow communication in the language;
- develop agility and coordination; and,
- be able to use music, movement, drama and several forms of art and crafts as means of expression.

## Summary

9. Cwmdar County Primary is a very effective school. Since the last inspection, it has maintained high academic standards and developed a strong caring ethos. Its staff are embracing new initiatives to enable them to raise standards further across all aspects of school life. Its pupils show a high level of maturity and are well placed to move on to the next phase of their learning.

### Table of grades awarded

10. The inspection team agreed with the school's overall judgements in all but two of the key questions. In Key Question 3, the inspection team awarded a lower grade than the school because it considered that there were insufficient outstanding features to warrant a grade 1. In Key Question 5, the inspection team gave a higher grade than the school because it judged there were good features and no important shortcomings.

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

### Standards

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

12. The under-fives make good progress in acquiring and applying the key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. They use their numeracy and information and communications technology [ICT] skills well across the curriculum and are showing a strong interest and aptitude for using Welsh.

13. In key stages 1 and 2 pupils' standards and progress in the key skills of speaking, reading and writing are all good, although key stage 2 pupils do not produce a sufficient amount of extended writing across the subjects. Pupils' listening skills throughout the school and in all subjects are very good. However, although

pupils use and develop their numeracy skills in some subjects this is not consistent across the curriculum.

14. Similarly, pupils in both key stages have good information technology skills but do not use them sufficiently often across all the subjects. Pupils' listening skills in Welsh are good but, due to lack of opportunity, development and progression in speaking, reading and writing Welsh is limited. The development of pupils' creative skills to complement the work being done in other subjects is good in both key stages.

15. In end of key stage 1 statutory assessment tests, the school exceeds both local education authority [LEA] and national averages in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in the core subject indicator (which is based on the requirement to achieve at least level 2 in each of the three subjects) [CSI]. Examination of the trends indicate that results in English are improving, in maths they are consistent, but in science they are declining.

16. When compared to similar schools across four counties (data compiled by the Education and School Improvement Service [ESIS]), the results for all three subjects and the CSI are in the lower 50 per cent. When compared nationally, results are in the top 50 per cent for English, mathematics and the CSI but remain in the lower 50 per cent for science.

17. The number of higher level 3s gained exceeds the national average in English, matches it in mathematics and is below it in science. Pupils make good progress from Reception to the end of key stage 1. However, although improving overall, results do not yet match those of the previous inspection and there has been a steady decline in science.

18. The school has had consistently good results compared to LEA and national levels in end of key stage 2 statutory assessment tests. When compared with similar schools both nationally and at county level using ESIS data, the school is in the top 25 per cent for English and the CSI (which is based on the requirement to achieve at least level 4 in each of the three subjects). It is in the top 50 per cent for mathematics. In science, it is in the top 50 per cent nationally but the lower 50 per cent when the ESIS data is used.

19. The percentage of pupils who gain the higher level 5 is above national averages for English, mathematics and the CSI but is below them in mathematics. The high performance of boys in 2005 was a notable feature. They well exceeded national averages.

20. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and their behaviour is exemplary. They show an increasing awareness of the world of work and its relevance to them. Pupils have a strong awareness of equal opportunities and are very respectful of differing beliefs and cultural traditions. They have a strong sense of community awareness and are developing good skills of citizenship by participation in the school council. Their moral and social development is outstanding; and their spiritual development good.

21. Although pupils are, in many respects, model learners; their ability to organise their own learning in terms of working collaboratively or through independent research or experimentation is more limited. Similarly, their ability to evaluate their own work and that of others and to identify how they can improve what they do is at an early stage. The school recognises the need to develop pupils' skills in these areas further.

22. The school recognises that the average rate of attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection is below the LEA and national averages and is seeking to address this.

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

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

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
18%	57%	25%	0%	0%

24. Although the percentages are good and higher than the Welsh Assembly Government's [WAG] targets for 2007, they just fall short of the outstanding results achieved in the previous inspection. Teaching, however, continues to be a major strength of the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have developed excellent working relationships with pupils where learning and mutual respect are the prime considerations. They work very hard to ensure that all pupils have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum.

25. In the lessons awarded a grade 1, teachers challenge and stimulate pupils of all abilities, using a wide range of varied and well-structured strategies and interesting resources. In these lessons, teachers create structured situations effectively for pupils to develop their independent learning skills, intervening only when necessary to support some and extend others.

26. In most lessons, teachers plan well and deliver lessons which have a clear format. They question pupils in a way which draws on their experience and understanding and they deliver clear explanations and instructions. Good use is made of learning support assistants [LSAs], parent volunteers and other professionals. However, there are shortcomings in teachers' confidence and ability to teach bilingual skills.

27. In lessons judged to have some shortcomings, the pace of delivery is slow and only a limited number of teaching styles are used to bring the subjects to life. Lessons are overly teacher-directed with pupils sat on the floor for long periods of time or pupils are required to consolidate learning through worksheets rather than investigation.

28. The school has effective policies and procedures for assessment in the core subjects. In key stages 1 and 2 pupils' work is assessed effectively and graded on a termly basis according to National Curriculum [NC] levels. Samples of assessed work are collected in pupils' folders to provide a record of achievement. A system

for producing portfolios of pupils' work is being developed. Assessment in the foundation subjects, however, is less frequent and detailed.

29. Data from end of key stage statutory assessment tests, National Foundation for Educational Research [NFER] tests, Cognitive Abilities Test [CAT] predictors are used to analyse strengths and weaknesses and to inform planning. Spelling, reading and mathematics tests are conducted regularly and work is marked according to school guidelines; although the quality of written feedback is variable.

30. A system of individual target setting has been introduced very recently and pupils and staff are currently identifying how to use these to best effect. Annual reports conform to statutory requirements and parents are given regular opportunity to discuss the children's progress with staff.

31. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with a good range of stimulating and interesting experiences to which all have equal access. Provision is very good for pupils with special education needs [SEN] and the school is developing effective strategies for challenging and extending more able pupils further.

32. Policies and schemes of work conform to statutory requirements. In the main, there is good provision for delivering the key skills but this is not consistent across all subjects and some key skills are more effectively delivered than others. The development of bilingualism, for example has not been given a high priority although the provision for *y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is good in some subjects. In sum, the school has not developed a coherent system for measuring continuity and progression in the key skills.

33. Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In particular, the comprehensive personal and social education [PSE] scheme of work is delivered very effectively. Initiatives involving group discussion ['circle time'], 'Bully Buddies', the school council and charitable fund raising exercises all ensure that pupils develop into well balanced, aware individuals with a strong sense of right and wrong. The school ensures that pupils are involved in initiatives to develop their understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship.

34. A good range of out-of-hours curricular provision, educational visits and visitors to the school further enriches pupils' learning. Links with parents and the community are very good. The Home School Association provides generous financial support and organises social events and there are strong links with local schools and colleges.

35. The care, support and guidance provided for pupils is an outstanding feature of the school. Induction and transition arrangements are carefully planned and implemented. There are effective policies and procedures in place to monitor pupils' attendance, punctuality, behaviour and performance. The school is effective in promoting the health and fitness of its pupils and all staff are aware of procedures relating to health and safety, risk assessment and child protection.

36. The provision made for pupils with SEN is very good enabling them to access the curriculum fully and achieve their best. The school is introducing some exciting initiatives for more able and talented pupils. A positive school ethos together with effective strategies and policies ensure that pupils' behaviour and general social and emotional development is very good. They have a strong awareness and respect for differences in language, religion, culture and traditions. The importance of mutual respect, kindness and tolerance is given a strong emphasis in the life and work of the school.

### **Leadership and management**

37. The headteacher and senior management team [SMT] provide clear direction and a common purpose for the school. They are continually seeking ways to maintain and improve the consistently high standards it has so far achieved. The school's policies and practices promote equality of opportunity and take good account of local and national initiatives.

38. The headteacher and deputy headteacher carefully monitor and evaluate the performance of teachers and LSAs through observation and are now further developing the role of subject leaders in this area. Subject leaders are well informed about their subjects and play a vital role in raising standards.

39. Performance management systems for teachers and the general professional development of staff is good although a formal system of appraisal for all staff is not yet in place. The governing body [GB] is well informed and very supportive of the headteacher, of the staff and of the pupils. They are very committed and take their responsibilities seriously acting as critical friends and helping set the strategic direction of the school.

40. The school has produced a good self-evaluation report which contains a lot of detailed information although not all the areas of the Common Inspection Framework are covered in sufficient depth. In producing the report, the school has relied upon the school development plan [SDP] rather than seeking to obtain the views of all interested parties directly in a formal way. The head teacher is actively addressing this.

41. The SDP itself is a good working document. It is the product of established systems of self-evaluation and the school has drawn upon outside agencies such as ESIS to help it analyse data, identify priorities and set realistic and appropriate targets at all levels; particularly in the core subjects and for pupils with SEN. It is seeking to extend good practice to the foundation subjects and to individual target setting for all pupils.

42. However, although the achievement of priorities for development identified in the SDP is reviewed regularly, the criteria for measuring their success is often described in general terms and lacks precision. The SDP identifies personnel, timescales and allocates a good range of human and physical resources to its identified priorities but more work is required on rigorously measuring and monitoring achievement across all areas of provision.

43. The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues identified in the previous inspection and, overall, has maintained the high standards observed then.

44. The school has sufficient number of well qualified and trained teachers, LSAs, administrative and other supporting staff to enable it to deliver every aspect of the curriculum fully and appropriately. They receive good professional development and planning, preparation and assessment time is well used. LSAs make a very effective and valuable contribution to pupils' care and learning.

45. The budget is prioritised very effectively to ensure a good range of resources for every age and subject. Very good use is made of the halls and the computer suite. Generally, the school is clean and appealing and displays not only add to the positive ethos but provide a very good learning resource. The exterior of the school provides ample space for play and has been made functional and attractive; however, there is no playing field for physical education activities or garden to enhance the science curriculum.

46. The school budget is very well managed and monitored in accordance with identified priorities. The school has been successful in attracting extra funding for specific initiatives such as the 'Safe Route to School' project. It provides very good value for money.

## Recommendations

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

R1 continue to develop the role of the subject leaders to ensure that identified good practice in teaching is extended across all learning situations.

R2 extend current strategies to develop all pupils' independent learning and enquiry skills including recent initiatives for the 'more able and talented'.

R3 ensure that planning and practice in developing of pupils' key and bilingual skills is systematic and consistent across all subjects and age groups.

R4 further embed target setting and marking procedures for individual pupils to give them a clear understanding of how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.

R5 improve attendance figures so that they are in line with local and national averages.

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.

**A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.**

## Standards

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

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

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

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

49. Children under five make good progress in acquiring and applying key skills. They listen attentively to their teachers and support staff, and follow instructions well. Speaking, pre-reading and writing skills develop well in the nursery class and, in the reception class, children build on this to achieve good standards. The under-fives make good progress in developing their numeracy skills, and make good use of ICT to enhance their learning. Children in the Early Years are developing useful bilingual skills. They can make statements about the weather, identify most of the colours in Welsh and sing some simple Welsh songs. Reception children count to 10 in Welsh.

50. In key stage 1, pupils' standards and progress in the key skills of speaking, reading and writing are good. Pupils think carefully and express themselves confidently. They use a variety of decoding strategies to recognise words when reading, and can correct mistakes themselves. Their listening skills are very good, they pay close attention to the teacher and to each other; and follow instructions well.

51. In key stage 2, pupils' reading skills are good. They read fluently and with expression. They are able to describe the characters in a story, and can make sensible predictions about how the plot may develop. They can express opinions about a book and make comparisons with other books they have read. Pupils participate well in group reading activities, and present their work well to the class in a plenary session.

52. Key stage 2 pupils' speaking skills are good, and their listening skills are very good. Good progress is made in writing where pupils complete accurate and well-presented work in a variety of genres. However, they have insufficient opportunities to develop their extended writing across the subjects because of the overuse of worksheets.

53. Mental mathematics skills are good in key stage 2 and pupils show progress in recording, presenting and interpreting data, in science and geography. Year 6 pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of symmetry in creating a patterned tile in design technology. However, generally, across the full range of subjects, pupils in key stage 2 make insufficient use of their skills in numeracy.

54. Pupils in both key stages make good progress towards, and frequently exceed, the targets and goals the school sets for them in the core subjects of English,

mathematics and science. Those with additional learning needs including those with SEN make good progress relative to their abilities and the goals set for them.

55. At key stage 1, the school exceeded both LEA and national averages in the 2005 end of key stage statutory assessment tests in the core subjects and in the CSI. Figures showing three-year averages reveal that results in English are improving after a decline in 2001-3, performance in mathematics has remained steady but that there has been a consistent decline in science. Although the 2005 results are good, the school has not replicated the outstanding results gained in the three-year period around the previous inspection in 2000 but has been moving towards this over the past three years.

56. When compared with similar schools in the LEA and neighbouring counties (using ESIS data) the school's results are in the lower 50 per cent for all three subjects. When compared nationally, they are in the upper 50 per cent in all but science. In 2005, the boys just outperformed the girls in mathematics and science and the girls outperformed the boys in English. The school exceeded national averages in English for attainment of the higher level 3, matched the averages in mathematics but fell below them in science. Overall pupils make good progress from their baseline assessments in the reception year to the end of key stage 1.

57. The school has consistently outperformed most other schools at both county and national levels in end of key stage 2 assessment tests in the core subjects and the CSI with a continuous trend of improvement since 2001. When the school's results for 2005 are compared with similar schools using both ESIS and national data, the school is in the top 25 per cent in English and in the CSI (which is based on the requirement to achieve at least level 4 in all three subjects). It is in the upper 50 per cent for mathematics. In science, the school is in the upper 50 per cent when compared with similar schools nationally and in the lower 50 per cent when compared with schools in the LEA and neighbouring counties.

58. In 2005, the boys outperformed the girls in all three subjects and recorded significantly better results than boys nationally. The school recorded very good results for the attainment of the higher level 5 in English and science both of which exceed national averages. However, results in mathematics have fallen below national averages. Overall pupils make very good progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2.

59. Overall, the development of pupils' skills in using information technology is good. However, there was insufficient evidence of the consistent use of ICT across the full range of subjects and across the key stages. Best use of ICT was made by older pupils in geography, history, science and design technology. Year 4 and year 5 pupils, for example, make good use of branching databases. Year 6 pupils can use desk top publishing in writing reports and a 'paint' package to design a tile in the style of William Morris.

60. In both key stages, pupils' listening skills in Welsh are good, but they have little opportunity to use Welsh in speaking, reading and writing and so their skills are limited. Key stage 1 pupils can count to 15 in Welsh and demonstrate good pronunciation in singing a Welsh folk song. Year 6 pupils read their short paragraphs

aloud well and with expression. However, pupils make insufficient use of incidental Welsh in the school day and so do not extend their vocabulary or improve fluency.

61. Pupils are developing good creative skills and have produced stimulating creative work across a range of subjects. Year 1 pupils have produced portraits in the style of Augustus John, following a visit to the Glynn Vivian Gallery. Pupils in both key stages have produced good observational and imaginative drawing in a variety of media, they have created interesting collages and effective three-dimensional work in a number of curriculum areas.

62. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good across the school. The under-fives remain contentedly on task, and conform to classroom routines. Almost without exception, pupils in both key stages are enthusiastic learners who enjoy their work. They listen carefully to their teachers and co-operate readily with adults and with each other. They are keen to answer questions in introductory sessions, work with concentration on given tasks, and are happy to share their work with others in plenary sessions.

63. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are courteous and polite to staff and to each other, and pleasant as they welcome visitors. They enjoy pleasing their teachers and respect them. The high value they place on what their teachers say has a very positive effect on their learning. Care is shown by older pupils towards younger pupils, and the good behaviour and attitudes of older pupils influence the younger ones to a significant degree.

64. At 92%, the average rate of attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection is below the LEA average and below the national averages for all schools in Wales and for similar schools in Wales. Most pupils attend school regularly and the majority are punctual in their arrival at the start of the school day. Absences are caused mainly by illness but an increasing number of family holidays in term time adversely affect the overall rate.

65. Pupils throughout the school respond readily to class rules and are very aware of the importance of fair play. They understand the importance of equal opportunities in their own lives and in the wider world. In discussion, they clearly state their belief in the necessity for showing respect to others regardless of gender, age, race, beliefs or ability. Through all their work, but particularly in religious education and PSE lessons, pupils learn to respect the diversity of beliefs and cultural attitudes and traditions in society. The moral and social development of the pupils is very good and a strength of the school. Pupils' spiritual development is also good, although the pupils would benefit further from more regular opportunities to pause and reflect.

66. Pupils' awareness of the world of work is developing. Through participation in the school council, pupils learn about the responsibilities of citizenship and community obligations. Pupils have taken part in the Cwmdare Community Action Team litter collection, and they have planted bulbs locally. Members of the community are invited to concerts and plays in the school, and the pupils have participated in community carol singing.

67. Pupils generally achieve high standards and learn well. Learning is most effective in carefully structured situations where pupils are given opportunities to manage and organise their own learning through individual research, group investigation or collaborative experimentation. However, the development of pupils' skills in learning how to learn is not consistent across subjects and year groups. Frequently, designated tasks allow little scope for the pupils to organise their own learning without adult direction and supervision.

68. Additionally, pupils' ability to evaluate their own work and the work of others across the curriculum, and to make meaningful suggestions on how improvements may be made, is just developing. Some good examples were observed in art, mathematics, design technology, creative writing and physical education lessons, but this is not a consistent feature of lessons in all subjects throughout the key stages. The school has recognised the need to develop pupils' skills in these areas further and is developing strategies to accomplish this.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

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

70. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
18%	57%	25%	0%	0%

71. The percentages given exceed the WAG targets for 2007 but do not quite reach the outstanding comparative percentages achieved in the previous inspection.

72. Teaching continues to be a major strength of the school and, following recent changes in staffing, there is now a good blend of youth and experience on the team. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and use their specialist skills and interests well to enhance the quality of lessons.

73. The excellent relationships teachers have established with pupils is an outstanding feature. Lessons generally have a strong sense of purpose and direction and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and whole class involvement regardless of ability, race or gender. Pupils and staff have a shared understanding of appropriate classroom behaviour in the learning situation.

74. Teaching across the school has many good features. Teachers plan well and use a good range of resources and materials to enliven and enrich lessons according to pupils' age and ability. Lessons are well structured with teachers providing clear introductions which recap previous learning and then identify learning objectives which are subsequently consolidated throughout the lesson. Teachers question pupils well, valuing their contributions and drawing on their experiences to illustrate key points. Clear explanations and demonstrations further consolidate learning.

75. Good use is made of LSAs, parents and other education professionals to enhance and enrich the learning experience and provide additional support for individuals and groups of pupils. This is a well-organised aspect. Overall, however, there are shortcomings in most teachers' confidence and ability in developing pupils' bilingual skills. Teachers do not take the opportunity to rehearse language patterns as incidental opportunities arise and there is a subsequent lack of progression in the development of pupils' skills.

76. In lessons that are judged to have outstanding features, pupils of all abilities are engaged, stimulated and challenged throughout. The lessons are delivered at a brisk pace with a variety of teaching strategies and resources used to maintain interest and pupil involvement. Effective intervention by the teacher, based on very good knowledge of pupils' abilities and learning styles, helps pupils to overcome difficulties

and provides further challenge and extension for the more able pupils. Through the creation of very well structured situations pupils are given the opportunity to develop their independent learning skills by enquiry, investigation, experimentation and first hand practice.

77. In lessons which are judged to have good features but some shortcomings, the pace is slow and the range and flexibility of strategies used does not maintain pupil involvement. Pupils are sat on the floor or taught as a group for too long and there is an overuse of worksheets. The lesson is not brought to an appropriate end where pupils discuss and evaluate what they have learnt. In such overly teacher-directed lessons, pupils are given insufficient opportunity to explore, experiment or develop strategies to help them become independent learners.

78. The school's assessment policy is clear and comprehensive, and the procedures effective.

79. The quality of assessment in the nursery class and baseline assessment in the reception class is good. Following baseline assessment, appropriate targets are set to enable children to achieve the Desirable Outcomes in the six areas of learning. Assessment is used well throughout Early Years to inform both short and long term planning and to meet the needs of pupils with differing abilities and needs.

80. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils' work in the core subjects is assessed effectively and subsequently graded on a termly basis according to National Curriculum [NC] levels. Examples of such work are collected in a portfolio in English and collections of samples of pupils' work are being made in mathematics and science. In the foundation subjects, assessment is less rigorous. Pupils' work in each subject is graded one to three on an annual basis, as a general indication of pupil achievement for the next year teacher.

81. An analysis of national tests scripts and teacher assessments at the end of the key stages is used, together with a range of standardised tests such as NFER tests in English and mathematics, to highlight strengths and weaknesses in the core subjects, and to inform priorities in long term planning. CATs are completed in the summer term of year 5 to help predict levels of attainment in core subjects at the end of the key stage.

82. Pupils' work is marked regularly according school guidelines. Constructive comments, which explain clearly how pupils may improve their work, are made in the core subjects, though not consistently, and again this process does not extend sufficiently to the foundation subjects. Tests in spelling and mental mathematics are given weekly.

83. The active role of pupils in the assessment process, in setting their own targets is a developing one. Although, the school has recently introduced a system of individual target-setting with older pupils this has not yet embedded and needs more refining to ensure that pupils clearly understand what they need to do to improve specific aspects of their work.

84. A comprehensive range of reading tests are conducted regularly and all reading records are kept and shared with parents and then transferred to other teachers in subsequent years. Pupils' work generated as a result of termly assessments in the core subjects is graded and collected in the pupils' folders to provide a record of achievement. Effective use is made of a pupil progress chart to track individual progress in reading and in core subjects.

85. Annual reports to parents conform to statutory requirements. They provide detailed observations on achievements, and the way ahead for pupils. Formal opportunities are given to parents to meet their children's teachers in the autumn term, and to discuss their children's progress and the report itself in the summer term with their teachers and LSAs.

**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**

86. The findings of the inspection team differ from the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report in which the school gave this area a grade 1. The inspection team considers the learning experiences provided for pupils have many good features. However, more is required before provision for key skills, including bilingualism; spiritual and cultural development; work-related education and the development of entrepreneurial skills can be judged as outstanding.

87. The curriculum provided for pupils across the school is broad and balanced with a good range of stimulating and interesting experiences. In the Early Years, termly planning and individual lessons, draw the six areas of learning together in a skills-based curriculum, to provide effective opportunities to learn through practical experiences. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the pupils make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

88. Policies and schemes of work for NC subjects and for religious education in key stage 1 and key stage 2, and in the areas of learning for the under-fives all conform to all statutory requirements. A number of them have been revised recently to ensure progression and flexibility in learning. Teachers of similarly-aged pupils plan together to ensure that pupils have equal access to the range of learning experiences provided. Boys and girls have equal opportunities in every aspect of school life.

89. Provision for meeting the needs of pupils with SEN is good; but, despite the school's commitment to developing a more challenging curriculum for more able pupils, planning and classroom practice do not reflect this principle consistently across the key stages and across all subjects. However, cross-curricular literacy and problem-solving weeks have provided stimulating and rewarding experiences for pupils across the key stages.

90. The provision for teaching the key skills of literacy, numeracy, ICT, bilingualism, creativity, problem-solving, personal and social development, collaborative working

and independent learning has good features but some shortcomings in particular areas. The school has not developed systems to evaluate how effectively it is delivering the key skills in the different subjects. For example, extended writing across the curriculum is constrained by overuse of worksheets and planned opportunities to develop numeracy and ICT across the range of subjects is inconsistent. However, pupils have benefited greatly from a week of focussed problem-solving activities, although planned opportunities to apply such approaches in subjects other than in mathematics are few.

91. The key skills are not systematically integrated into long and medium term planning at a whole school level to enable the school to identify pupils' progression and development. Although teachers have identified the use of some key skills in their lesson plans, current short-term planning procedures do not ensure balance across the range of subjects nor what specific key skills targets are in a particular lesson.

92. Out-of-hours curricular provision such as rugby, football and netball enrich key stage 2 pupils' experiences in physical education and encourage their social development. The after-school Science club, the choir, and the lunchtime recorders, woodwind and guitar tuition are a valuable extension to the school curriculum. A number of visitors including the community police officer, local clergy and church groups, health visitors and the fire service come to school regularly, and a variety of visits to museums, heritage sites, places of worship, theatres and areas of contrasting geographical features also enrich the pupils' curricular experience.

93. Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Personal and social issues are covered well in the comprehensive PSE scheme of work and delivered effectively through discrete lessons and in 'circle time'. Members of the school council understand their role as representatives, and a 'Bully Buddy' system ensures that pupils develop negotiating skills in the playground situation. Pupils' awareness of their responsibilities as citizens is raised by collecting for a wide range of good causes.

94. Collective worship contributes very well to the pupils' awareness of moral issues, but is less effective in their spiritual development. Overall, although pupils study a range of different religions in their religious education lessons, opportunities for them to reflect on spiritual matters are inconsistent.

95. There are some good examples of *y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* in geography, history and art, but provision is not consistent. The school pays very good attention to the diversity of life and cultures in the world through its religious education and geography curriculum.

96. Links with parents and with the community are very good. A significant number of adults provide valuable support in the classroom for example with the 'Catch Up' reading and history projects and with out-of-school activities such as running the football club. The very active Home School Association provides generous financial support and organises social events. School events are very well supported and the school works closely with the Cwmdar Community Action Team. All volunteers have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau.

97. There are strong links with the receiving comprehensive schools and surrounding colleges for further education. Schools share facilities and expertise and are developing cross-phase bridging units in the core subjects. The school provides good quality training and work experience for child care and sports science students but as yet is not involved in partnership with an initial teacher training university.

98. Visits and visitors help to raise pupils' awareness of the world of work both past and present. However, experiences are not systematically planned so that pupils develop a progressive understanding of the world of work and staff have not undertaken placements in business or industry as part of their professional development. This was the situation at the previous inspection. The school receives considerable sponsorship from local businesses; for example, to enrich the library and provide football kit or provide labour and materials for the garden project.

99. Opportunities for pupils to develop skills required to support economic development are good. All pupils have the opportunity to take responsibility by undertaking monitor roles. The recently established school council develops pupils' understanding of decision making and manages its own budget although there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their entrepreneurial skills through small business ventures.

100. The school attends well to national priorities for lifelong learning and community regeneration. The school hosts a range of family literacy and numeracy courses as well as *Language and Play* courses to enable parents to help their children with their learning and increasingly involve them in school life. Former pupils run after-school clubs. Pupils, in turn, see adults as lifelong learners. Pupils are involved in community initiatives such as litter collection and bulb planting. They take part in joint events such as carol services and the summer fayre.

101. Pupils develop a very good understanding of their responsibility for the environment and are involved in recycling projects. The school has gained the Eco Challenge bronze award in this field and is working towards the Silver. The school council has worked with outside agencies to produce the 'Safer Route to School' plan and was successful in securing a substantial grant to develop a cycling path and lighting that will benefit and strengthen the links with the community.

102. Pupils' awareness of global citizenship is raised through the cultural exchange programme operated by a neighbouring special school. Pupils learn about life in America and also some basic Italian from visiting students. They support charities for children less fortunate than themselves in projects such as Operation Christmas Child.

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

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

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

104. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported very well in a happy and nurturing environment. The school has a very positive ethos in which every pupil is valued and included. This is an outstanding feature.

105. The school has a very positive partnership with parents. Regular letters keep them well-informed about events and there is good daily informal contact. Family learning courses are very well attended. The overwhelming majority of parents in their responses to the questionnaires and responses at meetings prior to, and during, the inspection were very positive about the school. They praised the school for its ethos and the good quality education provided for their children, particularly those with special needs. They feel very welcome and can voice any concerns readily should they have them. A significant number of parents provide valuable support both in the classroom and helping with out-of-school activities.

106. Induction arrangements for the Early Years are carefully planned and implemented. The pre-school courses and Link Up sessions are used effectively to familiarise children with their new school and entry is staggered at the beginning of the year. The separate Nursery prospectus and SEN booklet provide parents with very useful information and guidance. Effective procedures including a 'Buddy' system are in place to support pupils who join the school at a later stage. Parents confirm that pupils quickly learn the routines and settle well into school life.

107. There are well established transition arrangements with the receiving secondary schools. Year 6 pupils, for example, are involved in cross-phase design technology and art projects where they use sophisticated equipment and produce good quality products. Former pupils confirm they were well-prepared for the next stage of their education

108. The high quality of personal support and guidance for pupils is an outstanding feature. The policy is integrated into all aspects of the school's activities and the outcome is reflected in the pupils' caring and thoughtful attitudes.

109. There are effective policies and procedures in place to monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality, behaviour and performance. Although pupils' attendance is very carefully monitored and the school strictly follows guidelines set in cases of sickness, the school recognises that it has some way to go in meeting its own target of achieving the higher LEA averages.

110. Older pupils have responsibilities as prefects and monitors and through their involvement in the school council and the recently introduced 'Bully Buddies' system, they help to resolve conflicts. They take their responsibilities seriously and show commitment to their roles. Teachers apply policies for behaviour management consistently and all adults in the school are very good role models.

111. Pupils' behaviour is monitored very closely and when required action is taken to support pupils who may experience difficulties. There have been no exclusions in the past eleven years. Arrangements to encourage pupils to behave well are extremely effective. This is evident in the very high standards of pupils' behaviour.

112. The school promotes health and fitness for pupils through a wide range of extra curricular activities. Pupils have been involved in a Healthy Living Week. Parents fully support the school's initiative of fruit-only breaktimes.

113. The adults in the school are well aware of pupils with particular needs and are knowledgeable about procedures in the event of accidents and emergencies such as how to help pupils with identified allergic reactions. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy: risk assessments are systematic and all staff are alert to issues relating to the well-being of pupils. There is an effective policy and sound procedures for child protection. The headteacher and his deputy are nominated officers. Teachers and support staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and there is a named link governor. However, training for all staff needs regularly updating.

114. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding. The special educational needs co-ordinator [SENCO], who has extensive experience and is well qualified in this field, manages provision excellently. Eleven per cent of pupils are on the school's SEN register but there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need.

115. All of the pupils are fully integrated into mainstream classes and receive additional classroom support either individually or in small groups. Small groups are withdrawn on a timetabled basis for intensive support but the work done parallels that being done in the main class.

116. The school has established effective procedures to identify pupils with SEN early and teachers apply appropriate strategies to ensure all pupils with SEN are taught all the subjects of the National Curriculum. All school documentation and procedures are fully in accordance with the latest Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs.

117. With the support of the SENCO, class teachers ensure pupils with SEN make good progress through very careful and patient monitoring of their needs. Pupils work through individual educational programmes [IEPs] devised by the SENCO and the class teacher. The IEPs, which are monitored and reviewed regularly, are carefully integrated into overall short-term planning. Parental input to these is highly valued. Assessment records, examination of pupils' work, reviews of ongoing IEPs and discussions with pupils show that they make good progress.

118. Some pupils need intensive support with literacy and receive this directly from the LEA learning support service. Others need ongoing support and this is provided very effectively through the Catch Up scheme which is run by an LSA and parent volunteers she has trained. Pupils enjoy the sessions, understand their own needs and comment positively on their progress.

119. There is no stigma attached to attending any of the support sessions and all staff work hard to ensure that there is a positive and constructive attitude to those with additional problems. This is a very strong feature of provision.

120. Pupils are well-supported by several dedicated and effective LSAs together with a range of trained and committed external professionals such as the educational psychologist, the occupational therapist, physiotherapist, LEA speech

and language teacher, the LEA learning support and the behaviour support teams with whom the school has very good links. The SEN governor plays an active role in monitoring provision.

121. The school has been aware for some time that very able and gifted children also have additional needs and it has begun the process of producing individual programmes to extend these pupils. It has also committed itself to being a pilot school for the Challenge Award given by the National Association for Able Children in Education [NACE]. This is in the very early stages of implementation but the school is currently identifying strategies to enable it to challenge and stimulate further not only its more able pupils but all pupils through a range of extension and enrichment activities.

122. Pupils' behaviour is very good. This is due to the application of a clear policy and effective strategies, combined with an ethos of mutual respect and understanding. There is a comprehensive framework of personal guidance and support. This includes specific lessons on personal, social and health-related topics, sometimes from outside agencies together with effective use of time for group discussions to develop personal, emotional and social skills. In addition, there is a fairly-applied and commonly understood rewards and sanctions system.

123. During the inspection, no incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour were seen, but suitable procedures are established to deal promptly and effectively with them, should the need arise. There have been no exclusions for eleven years but where pupils need additional guidance very good support is provided by the behaviour support team.

124. The school actively promotes equal opportunities for all pupils, including those with physical disabilities. Support for the integration of pupils with acute physical needs is outstanding. Very high priority is given to ensuring full access to the curriculum for all, and the emotional, physical and mental well being of pupils is at the heart of the provision of care. Pupils confirm that they are happy to come to school, and that they feel that they are treated fairly and equally by the teaching and support staff.

125. Pupils' effort and success are celebrated in displays of good work and outstanding achievements. Parents are informed of their children's achievements. The school is proactive in dealing with underachievement, and actively engages parents' support in working towards improvement.

126. Every opportunity is taken in the religious education, geography and PSE curriculum and in assemblies to encourage pupils to understand the importance of respecting difference in language, religion, culture and traditions. The importance of mutual respect, kindness and tolerance is given a strong emphasis in the life and work of the school and again this is an outstanding feature.

## Leadership and management

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

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

127. The findings of the inspection team differ from the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report in which the school gave this area a grade 3. The inspection team considered that the concerns identified by subject leaders in the development of their role were largely being addressed and that leadership and management of the school had many good features and no important shortcomings.

128. The headteacher and the SMT give clear direction to the school in the identification and achievement of priorities for development. The school has consistently performed well against local and national criteria and the headteacher is determined to maintain these high standards and to use identified best practice to extend and challenge all of its pupils to achieve their best in preparation for the next phase of their learning.

129. The headteacher and GB have carefully blended the skills of their experienced staff with good new appointments. Staff are deployed well and planning, preparation and assessment time used effectively. This, together with good use of staff in recent initiatives such as the Catch Up scheme, the NACE 'Challenge Award' and the Language and Play Club, ensures the headteacher is forging a strong and talented team.

130. The school's policies distinctly promote equality of opportunity for all regardless of gender, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or disability and this is very evident when talking to pupils about aspects of school life or of the wider world. This is an outstanding feature. The school takes good account of national initiatives such as sustainable development and global citizenship which are built into strategic planning. There are very good developments originating from the local cluster group of primary schools, which the headteacher leads, and there are productive links with local secondary schools. The school is in the early stages of developing its provision for bilingualism and for initial teacher training.

131. Appropriate systems are in place for setting targets for teachers both through the performance management system and through curriculum, managerial and environmental targets identified in the SDP. However, many of these in the SDP are not rigorously quantified and make precise evaluation of success in raising standards difficult. Similarly, although they indicate areas for development in their self-evaluation, foundation subject leaders are at an early stage in setting rigorous and challenging targets for improvement in provision and standards in their subjects.

132. In the core subjects, data is well analysed and both realistic and challenging targets are set for age groups of pupils and for those with SEN. Very recently, the school has introduced systems of individual target setting for all older pupils and for more able pupils; these are not established and have yet to embed.

133. The headteacher and deputy headteacher carefully monitor and evaluate the performance of teachers and LSAs through classroom observation, examination of planning and scrutiny of pupils' work. The school and staff benefit from an effective performance management system and suitable strategies and provision for professional development arise from this. However, neither the headteacher nor the deputy headteacher have undertaken nationally provided courses for their own development in their current managerial roles.

134. The school has also identified the need to devise a comprehensive process of appraisal for all staff to ensure their professional needs are met and that they all receive regularly updated training in important aspects of school life relating to issues such as child protection, risk assessment or first aid.

135. The GB is very supportive of the headteacher, staff and pupils and governors are well informed by the headteacher through half-termly reports. The chair of governors is very committed to the school and well informed. He works closely with the headteacher and is actively involved in the daily life and work of the school.

136. Link governors in the core subjects, SEN and child protection have received appropriate training and help to monitor provision in the school. Many governors also visit regularly and are very supportive of the Home School Association, the school council and all school celebrations and events.

137. Governors have clearly defined roles and responsibilities that they take seriously. All major sub-committees are in place and meet their responsibilities well. Governors act as critical friends and help to set the strategic development of the school. Decisions on spending priorities are focused on the school's needs and governors make every effort to secure best value for money.

138. The GB meets statutory requirements in full.

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

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

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

140. The school has produced a good self-evaluation report which identifies strengths and areas for development in each of the key questions and also provides evidence to support its judgements. The inspection team agree with the school's overall judgements in the five key questions relating to standards, teaching, care, self-evaluation and value for money.

141. In key question 3, whilst the inspection team consider that the learning experiences provided for pupils successfully meet both their needs and interests and those of the wider community and have awarded a grade 2; there is insufficient evidence to warrant a grade 1. In key question 5, the inspection team have given a

higher grade than the school's judgement of grade 3 because it considers that the school has moved some way to addressing its own identified shortcomings.

142. The report itself provides a great deal of detailed information. However, this is not presented in a readily accessible format and whilst some elements of the individual key questions are considered in some depth, others are only touched upon. Further, the formal production of a self-evaluation report is a recent development and the document itself has been generated, in the main, by information from the SDP rather than the data generated as a result of thorough whole school self-evaluation informing the planning.

143. The school has, however, good systems in place for on-going evaluation of several aspects of its performance and provision and these have been clearly identified in its monitoring and evaluation policy document. Teachers' planning and pupils' work are monitored and evaluated by subject leaders and the SMT. Formal lesson observation and feedback to teachers is conducted by the SMT.

144. However, the school has identified that this process needs to be extended to all subject leaders and that observation should be clearly focussed on developing particular teaching strategies. Subject leaders produce annual evaluations of provision and progress in their subjects and identify priorities for development which inform the SDP and are discussed by the GB. These vary in quality.

145. The school has recognised that, whilst teachers, the link advisor from the LEA and the governors have been formally involved in self-evaluation, it needs to obtain and consider more widely the views of everyone with an interest and involvement in the school. This means developing formal systems for consulting the pupils, their parents, all the staff in the school, and outside agencies including other LEA staff, schools, health authority staff, social services, and representatives from the local community and industry in order to gain a full picture. The school has identified the need to develop a self-critical culture in order to improve constantly its provision and thereby raise standards.

146. Although the school's initial self-evaluation document has not fed into planning, many aspects of school life have been well evaluated either through outside agencies such as ESIS, or through external marking of end of key stage assessment tests together with the school's own current systems. Information from this has been carefully analysed to produce realistic and challenging academic targets for groups of pupils and to identify priorities for development in the SDP.

147. Progress in achieving the identified priorities is subsequently reviewed on a termly basis and subsequent adjustments made to the strategies for achieving them. The school very clearly identifies personnel, timescales and provides a very good range of human and physical resources to ensure their achievement. However criteria for measuring success are not always identified or are couched in vague terms and not all aspects of standards and provision are covered.

148. The school has made good progress in meeting the key issues for action identified in the previous inspection in relation to improving provision and standards

for the under-fives in physical education, in its improved assessment, recording and reporting systems, and in its development of the role of curriculum coordinators.

149. Through the actions taken to achieve the targets and priorities identified in the SDP, the school has maintained the high standards achieved in the previous inspection and as, end of key stage assessment results show, there is an overall upward trend in the core subjects of English, mathematics at both key stages and in science at key stage 2.

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

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

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

151. There is a sufficient number of teachers with suitable qualifications to teach every aspect of the curriculum fully and appropriately. The very good programme for in-service training [INSET] ensures that teachers continuously extend their knowledge of the curriculum and current good practice.

152. The school's strong commitment to continuous professional development is closely linked to priorities identified in the performance management programme and in the SDP. The teachers' commitment to personal professional development provides a good model for the pupils.

153. Although the role of subject leaders is not fully developed to include the observation of lessons in the monitoring of standards, responsibility for coordinating subjects is fairly shared between the staff. Teachers are released regularly from their classes for planning and preparation, and supply cover is provided by two part-time teachers who add significantly to the range and level of expertise in the school. The headteacher does not have charge of a class.

154. Support staff in the classroom, such as nursery nurses and classroom assistants work very well with teachers in planning, teaching and recording pupils' progress. They display outstanding patience and care in their dealings with the pupils. The Language and Play course and Catch Up reading support programme are very effectively delivered by support staff, and the INSET programme ensures their continuous professional development. Administrative and lunchtime supervisory staff have a significant positive influence on the effective daily routines of the school.

155. The budget is prioritised very effectively to ensure sufficient resources for every age group and subject across the curriculum. The core subjects are very well resourced, and there is a good collection of musical instruments, including tuned and untuned percussion. There are plenty of materials for creative aspects such as art and design technology, and physical education is generously resourced.

156. The quality of the resources is good; they are well organised and accessible to staff and pupils, and they are used regularly and effectively in lessons. Classrooms

are well stocked with books and equipment, and the library is well used to support pupils' reading and information gathering, but it is rather short of both reference books and fiction.

157. The school has developed a very well resourced computer suite, which is timetabled for use by all pupils for the development of ICT skills. It contains one of the school's three interactive whiteboards, and has access to the internet. There are computers in every classroom to enhance the development of ICT skills across the curriculum. These are also connected to the internet.

158. The hard work of the caretaker and cleaning staff ensures that standards of cleanliness in the school are very good. Classrooms are a good size, particularly in the Early Years and for older pupils in Key Stage 2, and very creative use is made of overflow areas in the halls for a variety of activities. The two halls are used well for physical education lessons, assembly and serving school dinners. The limited storage space is used very effectively, to meet the growing demands of the curriculum. The displays of pupils' work are of a very high standard. They are a good teaching resource and make a significant contribution to the ethos of the school.

159. The school has a suitable soft play area for the under-fives, and the yard is appropriately marked for formal and informal games. There is ample space for play with a soft ball at play times. Planters and seating areas provide the pupils with an attractive outdoor environment. However, the school has no playing field for the further development of physical education activities, or garden to enhance the science curriculum.

160. The school budget is well managed, and the GB monitors spending regularly and effectively. Priorities for expenditure are closely linked with the performance management cycle, continual professional development of staff and the SDP. The school has been successful in attracting extra funding for specific initiatives such as the 'Safe Route to School' project.

161. The school provides very good value for money in producing well-balanced pupils with excellent personal and academic skills suitably equipped for the next phase of their learning.

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

The governors and staff welcome the findings of the report and would like to thank the inspection team for their professional approach and manner throughout the inspection.

We are pleased that the findings show that we have maintained high academic standards since our last inspection and that the care, support and guidance we give to our pupils is an outstanding feature of the school. We are proud that our pupils are recognised as enthusiastic learners with exemplary behaviour and outstanding moral and social development. The teachers' skill and dedication, alongside the valuable contribution of the support staff, are duly recognised. Importantly, the report mentions that we are mostly successful in achieving our aims and objectives as stated in our 'Information to Parents' booklet.

An action plan will be put in place to address the recommendations of the report. We believe we can successfully develop the role of subject leaders, develop pupils' individual learning, develop bilingualism, improve attendance and consolidate marking and target-setting procedures for individual pupils.

Preparation for improvements within these areas has already begun and will be further developed throughout the summer term. This will form the basis of our school development plan for the forthcoming year. The governors will report to parents through their annual report on the progress being made.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Cwmdar County Primary School
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	The Square, Cwmdare, Aberdare
Postcode	CF44 8UA
Telephone number	01685 871198

Headteacher	Paul Davies
Date of appointment	September, 1997
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Alun Maddox
Registered inspector	Dr Jim Hewitt
Dates of inspection	20/03/06 – 22/03/06

## 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	25	22	35	30	28	42	34	44	260

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	10	2	11.1

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	23 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	8 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	n/a
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	29
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1 : 1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of School
Autumn 2005	93.3	91.6	92.9
Summer 2005	91.6	93.2	91.3
Spring 2005	87.4	91.1	91.6

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	10
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

### Appendix 3

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2005			Number of		26		
			pupils in Y2:				
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	12	62	27
		National	0	4	12	64	20
En: reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	12	62	27
		National	0	4	14	56	27
En: writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	19	62	19
		National	0	5	14	69	12
En: speaking and listening	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	8	62	31
		National	0	2	11	64	23
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	8	69	23
		National	0	2	10	64	24
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	8	73	19
		National	0	2	9	66	24

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	88	In Wales	81

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

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2005							Number of pupils in Y6		28		
Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	39	36
		National	0	0	2	0	1	4	15	46	31
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	54	39
		National									
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	54	36
		National	0	0	2	0	1	3	15	47	32
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	68	21
		National									
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	57	39
		National	0	0	2	0	0	2	11	51	34
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	39	54
		National									

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	71	In the school	89
In Wales	72	In Wales	

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

## Appendix 4

### Evidence base of the inspection

A team of three inspectors spent a total of seven inspector days in the school. The headteacher attended team meetings and acted as nominee on the inspection team. Additionally, a peer assessor took a full part in the process over the inspection period.

The inspectors observed:

- 28 lessons or part lessons at the school, covering all classes;
- acts of collective worship;
- pupils throughout the school day including breaktimes, lunchtimes and when entering and leaving school; and,
- extra-curricular activities.

The team considered:

- a wide range of pupils' past and present work;
- comments from the pupils about their school;
- 73 responses to the parents'/carers' questionnaire; and,
- the school's self-evaluation report, development plans, policy documents, schemes of work and other documentation;

Before and during the inspection the team held discussions about the life and work of the school with:

- parents of pupils at the school;
- the headteacher and staff;
- the governing body; and,
- representatives of agencies linked to the school.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Jim Hewitt Registered Inspector	Context, Summary, Recommendations, Appendices, Contributions to: Key Question 1 Key Question 2 Key Question 4 Key Question 5 Key Question 6
Rhiannon Harris Team inspector	Key Question 1 Key Question 2 Key Question 3 Key Question 7
Caterina Lewis Lay Inspector	Key Question 3 Key Question 4 Key Question 5
Paul Davies Nominee	Supplying information for the inspection team Attending team meetings
Catherine Archard Peer assessor	Observing lessons, Examining pupils work, Contributing to team meetings

The contractor was:

Celtic Inspection Services Unit  
Cardiff School of Education Enterprise Centre  
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### Acknowledgement

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